

RGM: TOWARDS A MORE FLUID AND HOMOGENEOUS NETWORK



INTERVIEW WITH MATHIEU RUSSAC
RGM Project Manager

The Renforcement Gascogne Midi (RGM) project involves the construction of a pipeline 61.8 km in length connecting Lussagnet in the Landes to Barran in the Gers, with the installation of a new compressor station in Barbaïra (Aude). A strategic project, RGM will serve to increase distribution capacity as part of the merger of the North-South markets through the creation of the Trading Region France. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) standards at the site have been exemplary. Project leader Mathieu RUSSAC provides a greater insight into the RGM project.



WORK ON THE ROUTE D'ARTAGNAN

As the first European horse-riding trail, the Route d'Artagnan connects Lupiac in the Gers, the home village of the famous musketeer, to Maastricht in the Netherlands. According to Alain LIBÉROS, president of the Association Européenne de la Route d'Artagnan (European Association for the Route d'Artagnan, or AERA), *"[the trail] symbolises the revival of the spirit of the musketeers at the service of the promotion of European citizenship, solidarity, diversity and friendship among the peoples of Europe"*. Having been asked to do so by the commune during the meetings held with elected representatives to prepare for the Renforcement Gascogne Midi, it has been an honour for Teréga to be involved in such a convivial and dynamic project, highlighting both deep local integration and a resolutely European commitment – two shared ambitions.

Cladding operation at the RGM site. ↓



WHAT IS THE AIM OF THE REINFORCEMENT GASCOGNE MIDI PROJECT?

The aim of this major national gas transportation network is to ensure the nationwide distribution of gas. The infrastructures linking northern and southern France have suffered from congestion. One consequence of this has been a difference in distribution prices between the two regions. In short, through the Renforcement Gascogne Midi project, Teréga is providing a solution to relieve congestion in the network and iron out regional price differentials. RGM will also lead to increased transit capacity, improve exchange flows and contribute to greater security of supply.

WHAT IS THE MAIN STRENGTH OF THE PROJECT?

Its main strength is its territorial integration, which is both respectful of local populations and environmentally friendly. The RGM project draws on our expertise in biodiversity preservation, water management and the reduction of the environmental footprint. Our approach is based on three core prin-

“WE HAVE DEVELOPED SUSTAINABLE RELATIONSHIPS WITH ALL THE ACTORS IN THE AREAS AFFECTED BY THE PROJECT. ”

cles: avoiding difficult or challenging areas by opting for the routes with the least impact, reducing environmental impacts through specific technical solutions such as the dry crossing of waterways (conservation fishing, substrate restoration and construction of bypasses) and, as a last resort, off-setting. As part of these off-setting measures, Teréga has acquired 8 hectares of mature woodland and 3 hectares of wetlands of major ecological significance in an effort to promote biodiversity.

IS CONSULTATION KEY?

Human, economic and agricultural activities have been a major focus. True to our culture of dialogue, we have engaged in

extensive consultation with all the relevant actors in the areas affected by the project, including elected representatives, local residents, farmers and industrialists. Our approach has paid dividends since we have signed reciprocal easement agreements with all of the owners of the various plots of land through which the pipeline passes. We have also developed sustainable relationships with the 20 affected communes and their mayors. With their ears always close to the ground, the Teréga teams have been reaching out throughout the project to local residents through public meetings and regular newsletters updating residents on the progress of the work. Close engagement with local residents enables us to be responsive and to provide quick answers tailored to their questions and grievances.

WHAT IS THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF THE PROJECT AT A LOCAL LEVEL?

The companies in charge of this construction site have recruited over 10% of the workforce from the surrounding areas. Their employees live close to the route of the pipeline, generating additional income for local restaurants, hotels, garages and shops. The economic impact arising from the construction of the infrastructure in the regions of Nouvelle-Aquitaine and Occitanie is currently estimated at 10% of the total cost of the project.

WHAT ARE YOU MOST PROUD OF?

What makes me most proud is seeing a close-knit team succeed in delivering an infrastructure of this scale within such a short time frame, all thanks to our skill and experience in managing complex, multidisciplinary projects, whether in relation to administrative engineering or the construction of engineering works. The key ingredient of our expertise is the sheer human energy we're able to harness. Every person involved in the project is proud to be involved in this collective endeavour - you can see that, and it's very exciting. —

61.8KM

OF UNDERGROUND GAS PIPELINES

900MM

IN PIPE DIAMETER

representing, in terms of raw materials, 20,000 tonnes of steel, 20% of which is recycled

1.20M

MINIMUM BURIAL DEPTH

85 BARS
MAXIMUM PRESSURE

1 ADDITIONAL COMPRESSOR

compressor at the Barbaïra compressor station, with a power of 7 MW

1 INTERCONNECTION GRID at Lussagnet

4 NEW OR MODIFIED BLOCK-VALVE STATIONS in the communes of Sion, Castillon-Debats, Barran and Auch (North)

JULY 2017:
start of construction work

OCTOBER 2018:
facility put into service