



Bridging the gas gap

An upcoming pipeline project implemented by Baltic Connector Oy will help to integrate the European gas market

Finland has historically been somewhat isolated in terms of gas supply, but a major new project, headed up by state-owned company Baltic Connector Oy, looks set to change all of that, enabling the interconnection of the Baltic and Finnish gas markets via a lengthy bi-directional pipeline.

Herkko Plit, CEO of Baltic Connector Oy, has years of experience in the energy sector and sustainability is a subject he sees as a serious priority. "One of the main motivations of Baltic Connector Oy lies in moving towards a carbon neutral society," he explains. "We see gas as a way to diminish the use of coal, something everyone involved in the Paris Agreement was in favour of doing."

The European Union has played a major role in the project, thanks in part to its Energy Union Strategy, which is committed to building missing links and energy infrastructure in member states.

Financing includes a substantial European Commission funding grant of €187.5m (accounting

for 75% of the building costs) and a further €30m from the Finnish government.

The project coincides with further improvements in gas transmission systems between Estonia and Latvia and Poland and Lithuania, which together will link the Baltic countries and EU countries, with far-reaching benefits.

"Change won't take place overnight but there is great potential in the future for gas," says Plit. Once complete at the end of 2019, the project will improve regional security of supply by diversifying gas sources, as well as enabling the use of alternative sources, such as liquid natural gas and biogas.

"I often say we are building a bridge towards a carbon neutral society, although in our case, that bridge is underwater," adds Plit, referencing the 77kms of pipeline which will connect Inkoo in Finland with Paldiski in Estonia.

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The pipeline is bi-directional, enabling the transmission of 7.2 million cubic metres of gas per day.