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Ensure local participation in the oil pipeline project

Tanzanian President John Magufuli and with his counterpart President Yoweri Museveni last week laid a foundation stone for the construction of the East African crude oil pipeline (EACOP).

This follows a similar launch of the project in Tanzania in August this year. The \$3.55b venture is of great political and economic importance to regional governments and extractive industry companies — as well as the citizens of Tanzania and Uganda. The resource, if managed well, has the potential to trigger the countries' economic growth, alleviate poverty and address inequality.

According to the EACOP project brief, the 1,445km electrically heated pipeline will transport crude oil from Kabaale in Hoima district via Kiboga, Mubende, Ssembabule, Masaka, Kyotera and Rakai districts up to Tanga Port in Tanzania. 20% of the pipeline, 296km, will cross eight districts and 24 sub-counties in Uganda; while 80% of the pipeline, 1,149km, will cross eight regions and 24 districts in Tanzania and will be the longest electrically heated pipeline in the world. The pipeline will need a 30-meter right-of-way, 10 metres of which will be needed permanently for the pipeline, the other 20 metres will be returned for restoration, like agriculture. The pipeline will be two metres deep.

No trees are to be farmed within the 10-metre wide right-of-way and no structures can be built therein, but farming practices can still continue.

To avoid rising public expectations and uncertainties for the pipeline project, all information related to the project in terms of timelines, associated social and environmental assessments, risks and impacts should be publicly available in a timely, accessible and user-friendly manner not only to the project people but all Ugandans. The Government and companies should ensure that pipeline project decision-making processes and procedures are inclusive. This will ensure transparency, increase citizens' acceptability and support of the project for the benefit of our country.

Read the detailed version on www.newvision.co.ug

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