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13 Companies Interested in Gas Storage

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By Norma Zuniga

So far, 13 companies have requested access to the data room of the strategic storage project led by the National Center for Control of Natural Gas (Cenagas), whose tender will be launched this year.

This project consists of using an exhausted field to store 10 billion cubic feet of natural gas and thus comply with the first step of the storage policy published by the Secretary of Energy (Sener).

"What we have perceived is that there is interest from companies," said Eduardo Prud'Homme Nieves, head of the Center's Technical Management and Planning Unit.

In mid-May they published the four depleted sites - located in Tamaulipas, Tabasco, Chiapas and Veracruz - where this project could be developed.

The body will give until July 30 to companies to make nominations, that is, to comment on which field they see viable and which do not, explaining the reasons.

Prud'Homme explained that based on these comments, they will select one of the four fields to develop the country's first strategic storage, which they will propose to be used only in case of contingency.

"Strategic storage is the purchase of insurance, an insurance that would allow us in a situation of a large-scale interruption to mitigate that risk through having a stock, an inventory," he said.

Until now, Mexico does not have natural gas storage infrastructure, except for the Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) terminals.

The commitment of the storage policy is to add 45 billion cubic feet of natural gas by the year 2026, which would be equivalent to 5 days of demand.

Currently, the demand for this hydrocarbon ranges between 5.5 and 6.3 billion cubic feet per day.

The tender of the project will be launched in September, with a duration of between 4 and 6 months, so the results will be known until 2019.

The project, which will cost an average of more than 100 million dollars, would go into operation until 2022 or 2023, the official estimated.

At the same time, Cenagas must launch a tender for the purchase of the gas that will be stored in these facilities.

Also the Energy Regulatory Commission (CRE) must define a storage rate that will be charged to system users.

The Cenagas is also interested in having operational storage, which would be used to balance the system, so it is analyzing the capacity reserve for LNG in the TAR of Altamira, Tamaulip.

They are also talking with the company Cydsa for the reserve of capacity in salt caverns, whose interconnection with the National Gas Pipeline System is proposed in the "Los Cocos" valve, located 15 kilometers from the company's land in Nanchital, Veracruz.