

Concession of 40% of the Territory of the Republic of Moldova for Exploration Purposes: 10 Major Issues

Author:
Denis Cenusa

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■ Executive Summary

This Position Note aims at clarifying the main aspects related to the concession of geological exploration works (oil, gas) in the Republic of Moldova, with subsequent exploitation.

This Note includes an objective analysis of the concession stages, from the first public consultations of the Government Decisions on Concession of 7 July 2016 to the moment when the Concession Agreement was signed with the US company Frontera Resources International (Corporation) LLC, on 2 January 2017.

To develop this Note we consulted the materials published on the web pages of the following institutions: the Ministry of Environment, Government of the Republic of Moldova, Official Gazette, the concession company, as well as the official documents (Concession Agreement and others) posted on social networks by the Minister of Environment, Valeriu Munteanu.

The Position Note identifies the problematic aspects related to the conduct of public consultations, selection of the civil society representative, setting up the conditions to select the concessionaire company, and preparation of Concession Agreement. In addition, a particular emphasis is on conditions of how the environmental protection will be ensured during the term of the agreement, which together with potential exploitation works may last up to 50 years.

This Paper issues a number of recommendations aimed at solving the gaps related to decision-making transparency and concession procedures. Moreover, we put forward some proposals to the Ministry of Environment and to other relevant authorities to eliminate the existing uncertainties among the population related to the exploration works of 40% of the country's territory.

■ Description of the issue

Moldova is an extremely vulnerable country in terms of energy security. Moldova depends 100% on imports of natural gas and oil and about 80% (out of the consumed electricity) on supply of electricity, currently imported from Transnistrian region. To lessen this energy handicap and to increase the country's energy security, the authorities must diversify the resources and routes of energy supply. These objectives underpin the projects of energy interconnection with Romania, developed with assistance from Romania and EU, but yet unfinished.¹

However, the authorities decided to lessen the energy dependence by finding and possibly exploring the energy resources from the country. Given the long-lasting chronic budget constraints, the Government applied less expensive methods of attracting investments needed to explore the geological potential of the country. In this context, the government decided to transfer the right of prospecting, assessment, and possibly subsequent exploitation of the country's mineral deposits to a foreign company, through concession. Previously (1995-2007), a number of attempts have been made to conduct exploration works through concession, but for various reasons, all of them failed.²

The legal procedures of granting concession to explore the country's resources started in 2016, when the Government accepted to grant concession for hydrocarbon (gas and oil) geological exploration works. At the same time, the executive assigned the Ministry of Environment in charge of conducting the tender for selecting the relevant company.³

In March 2017 already, the executive and the selected company – Frontera Resources Corporation LLC, signed a Joint Declaration Protocol regarding the exploration of Dobrogea region from Southern part of Moldova, on the Ungheni-Basarabeasca line. It also includes the autonomous territorial unit of Gagauzia. The entire territory covers an area of 12,125 square km or about 40% of the country's territory (South-East and South-South-East directions).⁴ The Concession Agreement signed on 2 January 2017 had preceded the Declaration. According to this contract, the executive grants the right to explore for 50 years, including up to 10 years for the initial exploration stage.⁵ At the same time, the subsequent potential exploitation could not exceed 40 years. The company undertakes to invest USD 6 million in the first 5 years and about USD 50-100 million if it finds and then exploit the hydrocarbon resources.

The government's decision to grant exploration concession to the US company Frontera Resources International LLC gave rise to numerous perplexities that need to be clarified punctually and pertinently. The perplexities mainly relate to inconsistencies noted at the concession tender, selection of the winning

¹ Cenusa D., Nutu O., The Bridge over the Prut, version 2.0: the electricity interconnection between Romania and Moldova, Expert-Grup, Expert-Forum, 19 January 2017, The Bridge over the Prut, version 2.0: the electricity interconnection between Romania and Moldova, <http://expert-grup.org/en/biblioteca/item/1365-podul-de-pest-prut-varianta-20/1365-podul-de-pest-prut-varianta-20>

² In 1995, the authorities conceded the prospecting of hydrocarbons (gas and oil) for 20 years to Redeco LTD – an US company, but the concession agreement was effective until 2007, when it terminated due to the failure to comply with the investment obligations.

³ GD No 890 approving the 2016-2018 Action Plan of the Government, Official Gazette No 217-229 of 22 July 2016.

⁴ Government of the RM, Press release, 3 March 2017, <http://gov.md/ro/content/o-companie-americana-va-investi-pest-6-milioane-de-dolari-si-va-crea-pest-300-de-locuri-de>

⁵ Frontera Resources Corporation, Press release, 3 March 2017, <http://fronteraresources.com/recent-news/frontera-resources-and-government-of-moldova-sign-protocol-of-joint-declaration/>

company, conditions in which the public consultations took place and other procedural gaps associated with this concession. The below analysis focuses on the most sensitive issues:

- Transparency of concession;
- Conduct of concession tender;
- Contractual peculiarities.

Defective Decision Making Transparency

Issue 1. There are a number of inconsistencies and contradictions in the conduct of public consultations. The Ministry of Environment started the public consultations of the GD on Concession of 7 July 2016 and set the deadline for collection of recommendations on 27 July, which corresponds with the minimum of 15 business days for the whole consultation process.⁶ Nonetheless, the Government adopted the decision on 20 July already⁷, which means one week earlier than the deadline set for public to submit their recommendations (see *Annex 1*). Consequently, it seems that while the Ministry of Environment was collecting recommendations about the draft from the public, the Government adopted the decision.

Issue 2. The worst aspect about transparency in the decision making process is the adoption of GD No 1439 on granting the right to geological exploration, with further exploitation, on 30 December 2016, when the Government did not hold any sessions. Consequently, it is not clear in what legal condition the Government adopted the Decision on granting concession works to Frontera Resources International, which already entered into force on 2 January 2017 (Official Gazette). On the same day – on 2 January, the Ministry of Environment and Frontera Resources International signed the Concession Agreement.

UPDATE: As a result of reactions followed by the publication of the Position Note on March 17, it was found that draft of the government decision on transferring the right to conduct the geological exploration works has been included on the agenda of the Government meeting of December 21 2016. The proceeding note of the Government's meeting of December 21 specifies that the Minister of Environment Valeriu Munteanu requested to change of the agenda in order to include the draft decision of concession. However, the Gazette Official indicates December 30 as a reference date of the adoption of the Government Decision no.1439. Therefore, we had no way of knowing precisely when the government held the meeting. However, this remark does not undermine the findings of the Position Note concerning the identified shortcomings in the decision making process.

Issue 3. Public consultations were held only in Romanian language (state language), although the object of concession targets a big portion from the southern part of the country, where inhabitants use Russian language as language of communication (autonomous territorial unit of Gagauzia, Taraclia, etc.). Even if the Law on Decision Making Transparency does not specify expressly that the documents for public consultations shall be submitted only in Romanian language (state language), it forces public authorities to ensure that all the stakeholders participate in public consultations. Therefore, publishing draft documents only in Romanian

⁶ Law No 239 of 13.11.2008 on Decision Making Transparency

⁷ <http://lex.justice.md/index.php?action=view&view=doc&lang=1&id=365933>

language⁸ did not lead to a higher participation, but on the contrary, decreased the participation of Russian speaking citizens and associations.

Concession tender held in the absence of tougher conditions and with an insufficient participation of the civil society

Issue 4. The criteria for selecting the concessionaire company, stipulated in the GD of July 2016,⁹ are rather incomplete. Thus, the Government included as criteria only the following: experience, investment capacity, availability of advanced technologies, but overlooked the importance of internal financial situation of the potential concessionaires. These aspects are important and could have been communicated during the public consultations that lasted a short period, specifically only 9 days (See *Issue 1*). The aspect related to the financial situation of the company would have hindered the selection of the Frontera Resources International that according to available public information registers a weak financial performance.¹⁰

Issue 5. The analysis of the conditions in which the tender for selecting a civil society representative as a member of the Bid Selection Committee (Order No 100 of 25 July 2016 of the Ministry of Environment) was organized reveals a number of gaps that could have influenced the objectivity of the tender:

- The criteria set by the Ministry of Environment for the selection of a civil society member were restrictive and sufficient to discourage a large participation of the civil society. Specifically, the Ministry requested for the following: in-field scientific degrees and in-field national and international publications. As these requirements are very specific, they allow abuses when selecting the appropriate candidates. At the same time, these requirements may be regarded as excessive and irrelevant, considering the already high criteria for the candidate from the civil society and namely: license in geology, oil and natural gas areas and at least 10-year experience in the area. (See *Annex 2*)
- The concession tender conditions, specified in GD No 895 of 20 July 2016, provided only for one civil society representative, which in the end was selected from the academic environment – Valerian Cibotaru¹¹, who works in an academic institution subordinated to the Academy of Science, the head of which is a member of Government. However, given the object of concession (exploration and then exploitation of 40% of the territory from the southern part of the country), the Government should have extended the number of representatives from the associative sector to at least two persons, and also to involve organisations from non-government sector located in the regions involved (Ungeni-Basareabeasca districts). In addition, the selection criteria could have included experience in transparency and public procurements procedures, with a view to attract civil society representatives specialized in anti-corruption policies. Such persons would add value to the Concessionaire Selection Committee.

⁸ Draft Government Decision approving the Concession for Geological Research Works -

<http://particip.gov.md/proiectview.php?l=ro&idd=3305>, Draft Government Decision on Granting the Right to Conduct Geological Exploration Works for Hydrocarbon resources in the Republic of Moldova

<http://particip.gov.md/proiectview.php?l=ro&idd=3722>

⁹ <http://lex.justice.md/index.php?action=view&view=doc&lang=1&id=365933>

¹⁰ <http://fronteraresources.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Consolidated-Financial-Statements.pdf>

¹¹ Valerian Cibotaru is the Director of the Institute of Geology and Seismology of Academy of Sciences of Moldova,

<http://igs.asm.md/node/8>

- Another problematic aspect represents the extremely short period (only 2 days) given to civil society representatives for submitting their CVs to the Ministry of Environment. (See Annex 3)
- Additional obstacles faced the CVs submitting procedures, which had to be delivered in person, directly to the institution, without the option of sending them via e-mail. This could have set up barriers particularly for the associative sector representatives from regions, who encounter difficulties in commuting to the capital city.

Environmental Protection, but with Some Exceptions

Issue 6. The Concession Agreement (page 3) makes a reference to the assessment of the environmental impact, invoking the possibility to prohibit the particular works that have a negative impact on the environment. The US company could not actually start its exploration works, unless the environmental impact assessment is done (Law No 86 of 29 May 2014). At the same time, the company takes the obligation to ensure ecological security and environmental protection during the concession period. However, the contractual provisions (page 5) are nevertheless permissive in terms of using toxic or flammable substances, particularly, the Frontera Resources International company is obliged only to “reduce the use of toxic substance”, but not to exclude them definitively. Lastly, the Agreement does not specify the sanctions imposed in case of committing actions that can have a negative impact on the environment. It also does not stipulate any possibilities to penalize the concessionaire according to the current law on environmental protection. The sole penalty applicable for the activities with a negative impact on environment consists in terminating concession agreement in case of a direct threat to the life and health of people working or living in the area of concession works (Concession Agreement, p. 13.1).

Contractual Peculiarities and Risks

Issue 7. According to the Concession Agreement (p. 2.1, 2.3, page 3), the Moldovan authorities grant the “exclusive right” for exploration of the Ungheni-Basarabeasca line to the US company. As a result, it is impossible to attract other companies in a territory that represents 40% of the country, for an extended period, guaranteed by the State. In fact, the Frontera Resources International LLC will hold monopoly with regard to exploitation for up to 10 years. Moreover, if it finds hydrocarbon resources, it receives automatically the right to exploit for 40 years.

Issue 8. The Concession Agreement (p 8.13, page 7) stipulates that in two months (60 days) after the Concession Agreement is signed, the US company should establish a trade company, to operate as a concessionaire. Nonetheless, Frontera Resources International LLC registered a company in Chisinau¹² in October 2015, which means one year and a half before signing the agreement. We hope that these are only coincidences confirming the serious long-term intentions of the US company towards exploration works in the Republic of Moldova.

Issue 9. Although the Government granted the exclusive exploration right to the US company, however, the latter has the possibility, under the Agreement (p. 8.15, page 7), to subcontract other companies to do the research works. The Government will be notified about it. Hence, by holding the monopoly for the exploration

¹² Frontera Resources International, registered on 28 October 2015, <http://companii.md/ro/companii/societatea-cu-raspundere-limitata-frontera-resources-energy/>

of 40% of the country, Frontera Resources International LLC will have the right to contract other companies without organising any tenders. The authorities will not be able to intervene in the selection and, subsequently, in the rejection of the companies selected by Frontera Resources, irrespective of their profile (offshore companies etc.).

Issue 10. The Agreement enables both parties to avoid fulfilling any obligation (including the ones related to environmental protection) in case of force majeure situations (page 10, p. 16.1) such as: natural disasters, fire, floods, war, acts of public power and etc., which mean other, non-stipulated situations. We believe that any vague provision, such as “acts of public power” and “etc.”, creates legal uncertainty and then may generate certain risks for public interest. Thus, both grantor – the Government, and the concessionaire company – Frontera Resources International can easily use them to avoid any liability for the failure to fulfill an obligation in due time or in (full or even partial) compliance with the provisions. This shows us how weak the agreement is and how easily the grantor and concessionaire can avoid liability by alleging certain decisions adopted for example by the opponent central or local public authorities.

■ Conclusions

The concession of 40% of the territory of the Republic of Moldova for exploration purposes provokes discussions and raises multiple questions because of the shortcomings in transparency and the content itself of the Concession Agreement. The 10 issues described in the Position Note reveal the following problematic aspects related to concession:

1. **Inconsistent actions of the Ministry of Environment and Government from the first stages of the concession process.** Thus, the Ministry launched public consultations of the draft GD on Concession until 27 July, while the Government approved its Decision on 20 July already. Thus, the Government ignored the calendar of the decision making transparency process followed by the Ministry of Environment, while the latter did not make publicly any objections.
2. **The act granting the right to concession is illegal.** The GD No 1439 was adopted on 30 December 2016 by the Government in a meeting that did not take place, at least as we can judge on the basis of the Government's list of meetings held in December 2016, available on the Government's official web site.¹³
3. **Public consultation were limited because information was available only in Romanian.** Although the Law on Decision Making Transparency does not request to provide information in other languages than Romanian (state language), the authorities must ensure the widest possible participation of citizens. As the object of concession is the southern part of the country, where most settlements have Russian as a language of communication, it was necessary to provide access to concession documents in Russian at the stage of public consultations.
4. **Issues related to financial situation of the selected company.** The criteria for selecting concessionaire were rather incomplete and completely excluded the aspects related to financial management and performance.
5. **Civil society was not attracted efficiently in the selection of the concessionaire company.** The Ministry of Environment organised faulty the competition for selecting the civil society representative. Thus, the requirements were rather irrelevant, the period for submitting the CV was of only two days, and the CVs were expected to be delivered in person to the headquarters of the Ministry. As a result, the Ministry of Environment selected a person, associated with the Academy of Sciences of Moldova, the head of which is a member of the Cabinet of Ministers.
6. **No sanctions are envisioned for the failure to comply with the law on environmental protection.** Although the Concession Agreement with Frontera Resources International provides for environmental protection obligations, it does not envisage concrete sanctions for violating the legislation on environment in force.
7. **Establishment of monopoly at the exploring and, possibly, exploiting phases.** The Concession Agreement grants "exclusive right" to explore 40% of the territory, but also subsequent exploitation (if hydrocarbon resources are discovered). In fact, this establishes monopoly on the exploitation works.

¹³ [http://gov.md/ro/advanced-page-type/sedinte-de-guvern?date_filter\[value\]=](http://gov.md/ro/advanced-page-type/sedinte-de-guvern?date_filter[value]=)

8. **Suspicious about the correctness of concession tender.** Frontera Resources International registered a company in Moldova (Chisinau) about one year and a half before the GD on Concession of Hydrocarbon Geological Exploration Works on the Territory of the Republic of Moldova was prepared. Furthermore, the Government representatives met with the representatives of the US company several months before the concession tender was launched.
9. **The possibility to decrease the control over the geological exploration.** According to the Agreement, the Government and the Ministry of Environment agreed that Frontera Resources International has the right to subcontract other companies to do the research works. The company will have only to notify the Moldovan authorities, while the latter will not be able to reject the subcontracted companies.
10. **The opportunities for the company and the Government (authorities) to avoid liability.** Given the vague "Force Majeure" clause on "public authorities' acts" and "etc.", both the company and the Government can avoid any liability in case of nonperformance or improper performance of the contract. The public (local or central) authorities' decisions can serve as one of the grounds invoked by the contracting parties in order to avoid meeting the contractual provisions.

Even though the authorities tried to follow the legal steps to concede the geological exploration works, eventually the process was deficient. It is found that decisions approving the concession and, respectively, the transfer of the right to Frontera Resources International were adopted with haste. Thus, in only 8 months, the Government and the Ministry of Environment succeeded to consult two draft government decisions and to conduct the selection tender (with various deficiencies described above). Also, there are many hints suggesting that Frontera Resources International started the concession process before it was communicated to the public of Moldova and that the company representatives held meetings with the Government representatives when the concession decision only started to be prepared (May 2016).

In addition, the legal loopholes in the area of concession and decision-making transparency allowed for deficiencies in the selection of the concessionaire. The final quality of the concession procedure depended on the Government's and Ministry of Environment's actions. The more open and cooperative the authorities will be with the civil society representatives and media outlets in elucidating the concession aspects, the less the agreement with the American company will be affected.

Recommendations

- The Ministry of Environment should publish all the documentation on the concession: documents on carrying out the public consultations and their results, relevant explanations on the selection of the civil society representative in the Selection Committee.
- The National Anticorruption Center and Anticorruption Prosecutor's Office should examine the process and the results of the concession.
- The Law No 239 of 13 November 2008 on Decision-Making Transparency (Article 9(1)) should be amended in order to oblige the central authorities to place an announcement about starting the decision-making process on the official websites of the local public authorities and in media sources (without any exception).
- The Law No 534 of 13 July 1995 on Concessions requires amendments by introducing stricter criteria for selection tenders. The repeated tender in case of a single bidder should be introduced as a priority condition (Article 12(2)). Moreover, it should include at least three bidders in order to validate the concession tender. In another train of thoughts, this Law should include stricter requirements for environmental protection, in compliance with the new national legislation adopted by transposing

the European one (Law on Environmental Impact Assessment and the principle of Strategic Environmental Assessment).

Annex 1. Announcement about the Public Consultation on the Government Decision on the Concession of Geological Exploration Works

ANNOUNCEMENT

on starting the public consultations on the draft Government Decision approving the concession of geological exploration works, including prospecting and evaluation of useful mineral resources deposits of national importance, to detect hydrocarbon (gas, oil) accumulations on the territory of the Republic of Moldova, with their subsequent exploitation

The Ministry of Environment announces that the public consultations on the draft Government Decision approving the concession of geological exploration works, including prospecting and evaluation of useful mineral resources deposits of national importance, to detect hydrocarbon (gas, oil) accumulations on the territory of the Republic of Moldova, with their subsequent exploitation, will start on **7 July 2016**.

The goal of the draft is to streamline and diversify the energy resources of the Republic of Moldova and its development objective is to reduce dependency on imports of primary energy resources and to improve the safety of supply, diversify sources, technologies and infrastructures of energy production.

The need to develop the draft results from the sustainable management of nationally important resources.

The Republic of Moldova is the **beneficiary** of the draft

Following the draft approval it is **expected** to concede the geological exploration works, including the prospecting and assessment of the useful mineral resources deposits of national importance, in order to detect hydrocarbon (gas, oil) accumulations, and exploit them in the State's interest, to secure the State's primary energy supply and diversify the sources of energy production.

Recommendations on the aforementioned draft Government Decision can be sent until **27 July 2016** to Mr. Igor Lungu, the Lead consultant of the Natural Resources and Biodiversity Department under the Ministry of Environment, on his e-mail: lungu@mediu.gov.md and telephone number 022-204-528, or address: 9 Constantin Tanase St., office 526, Ministry of Environment, Chisinau municipality.

The draft Government Decision approving the concession of geological exploration works, including prospecting and assessment of useful mineral resources deposits of national importance, to detect hydrocarbon (gas, oil) accumulations on the territory of the Republic of Moldova, with their subsequent exploitation and the Information Note are available on the official website of the Ministry of Environment: www.mediu.gov.md/, "Decision-Making Transparency" section, or at the head office of the Ministry of Environment located on the 9 Constantin Tanase St., Chisinau.

Source: Ministry of Environment

Annex 2. The tender for selecting the civil society representative as a member of the Committee for selecting the concessionaire of the exploration works

Information Note

1. The Ministry of Environment, according to the Government Decision No 895 of 20 July 2016 on “Concession of the Hydrocarbon Geological Exploration and Exploitation Works on the Territory of the Republic of Moldova” and according to the Ministry Order No 100 of 25 July 2016, announces a tender for selecting the civil society representative as a member of the Committee for selecting the concessionaire of the hydrocarbon geological exploration works on the territory of the Republic of Moldova.

2. The applications, containing the CVs with the relevant information on the candidate can be submitted personally by the candidate on 9 Constantin Tanase St., floor 6, office 600, Chisinau municipality, every day between 8.00 am and 5.00 pm, until 27 July 2016

3. According to Order No 100 of 25 July 2016, the criteria for selecting the civil society representative as a member of the Committee for selecting the concessionaire of the hydrocarbon geological exploration works on the territory of the Republic of Moldova are the following:

- a) citizenship of the Republic of Moldova;
- b) knowledge of the state language;
- c) lack of outstanding criminal records;
- d) BA degree in geology, hydrogeology, oil and gas;
- e) at least 10-year practical experience in the area;
- f) science degree in the area;
- g) national and international publications in geology, hydrogeology, oil and natural gas;
- h) membership to nongovernmental organisations and institutions expressing the interests of the country's citizens.

Source: Ministry of Environment

Annex 3. Stages of Concession of the Hydrocarbon Geological Exploration Works on the Territory of the Republic of Moldova

Period	Institution	Action
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20 October 2015	Frontera Resources International LLC	Frontera Resources International LLC registers a company with the same name in Chisinau.
12 May 2016	Government of the RM	GD No 586 of 12.05.2016 Amending and Supplementing Annexes 1 and 2 to the GD No 419 of 18 June 2012 ¹⁴ Approving the State-Owned Lists of Goods, Works and Services of National Public Interest Recommended for Public-Private Partnerships. As a result, Annex 2 also envisage the geological exploration, including prospecting and evaluation of useful mineral resources deposits of national importance, to detect hydrocarbon (gas, oil) accumulations, with their subsequent exploitation.
7 July 2016	Ministry of Environment	Started the public consultations on the draft Government Decision approving the concession of geological exploration works, including prospecting and evaluation of useful mineral resources deposits of national importance, to detect hydrocarbon (natural gas, oil) accumulations. ¹⁵
20 July 2016	Government of the RM	GD No 895 of 20.07.2016 ¹⁶ on the Concession of Hydrocarbon Geological Exploration Works on the Territory of the Republic of Moldova, with their subsequent exploitation, adopted by the Government, with its subsequent publication in the Official Gazette on 22 July.
25 July 2016	Ministry of Environment	Ministry Order No 100 of 25 July 2016, announces the competition for selecting the civil society representative as a member of the Concessionaire Selection Committee.
27 July 2016	Ministry of Environment	The deadline for receiving recommendations on the draft Government Decision Approving the Concession of the Geological Exploration Works, set by the Ministry of Environment. ¹⁷
29 July 2016	Ministry of Environment	Ministry of Environment Order No 102 of 29 July 2016 Establishing the Concessionaire Selection Committee.

¹⁴ <http://lex.justice.md/md/343704/>

¹⁵ <http://particip.gov.md/proiectview.php?l=ro&idd=3305>

¹⁶ <http://lex.justice.md/index.php?action=view&view=doc&lang=1&id=365933>

¹⁷ <http://www.mediu.gov.md/index.php/transparenta-in-procesul-decizional/proiecte-de-legi>

5 October 2016	Ministry of Environment	Received applications for the Concessionaire Selection Competition.
21 October 2016	Ministry of Environment	Opened the bids in the Concessionaire Selection Tender. Only two companies – Overseas Minerals Corporation and Frontera Resources International LLC – participated in the concession tender. ¹⁸ The first company was excluded for not complying with the requirements stated in the Terms of Reference. Thus, Frontera Resources International LLC had no competitors.
6 December 2016	Ministry of Environment	Started the public consultations on the draft Government Decision Transferring the Right to Conduct Hydrocarbon Geological Exploration Works on the Territory of the Republic of Moldova, with their subsequent exploitation. ¹⁹
28 December 2016	Ministry of Environment	The deadline for receiving recommendations on the draft Government Decision Transferring the Right to Conduct Hydrocarbon Geological Exploration Works on the Territory of the Republic of Moldova, with their subsequent exploitation.
30 December 2016	Government of the RM	GD No 1439 Transferring the Right to Conduct Hydrocarbon Geological Exploration Works on the Territory of the Republic of Moldova, with their subsequent exploitation, published in the Official Gazette on 2 January 2017.
2 January 2017	Ministry of Environment	Concession Agreement of hydrocarbon geological exploration works on the territory of the Republic of Moldova, with their subsequent exploitation, signed by the Ministry of Environment and Frontera Resources International LLC.

¹⁸ <http://www.zdg.md/stiri/stiri-sociale/doc-firma-care-a-primit-dreptul-de-a-concesiona-zacamintele-de-petrol-si-gaze-naturale-pe-teritoriul-r-moldova>

¹⁹ <http://particip.gov.md/proiectview.php?l=ro&idd=3722>