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The EBRD and the IFC, a member of the World Bank Group, are providing EUR 20 million in loans to support the expansion of Bulgarian fuel supplier Bulmarket DM, helping introduce cleaner fuels and diversify the energy sources available to Bulgaria's smaller businesses. With EUR 10 million loans from each EBRD and IFC, Bulmarket DM will expand its existing network of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) terminals and build a new terminal to store and distribute liquefied natural gas (LNG). This will position Bulmarket DM to become the first importer and distributor of LNG in Bulgaria, the EBRD said in an announcement on its website.

"Unlike natural gas delivered via pipelines, the introduction of LNG on the market offers flexibility, as it can be transported from and to anywhere," said EBRD's Director for Bulgaria, Daniel Berg. "Opening a window to this alternative fuel - especially one that is cleaner than what is currently used by companies not connected to the natural gas grid - helps diversify energy sources available to Bulgarian companies."

Eric Rasmussen, EBRD's Director of Natural Resources, said: "This project will support the growth of an innovative local company committed to transparency and best environmental and safety standards."

Carsten Mueller, IFC Regional Industry Head of Manufacturing, Agribusiness and Services in Europe, Middle East and North Africa region, said: "The financing IFC extended to Bulmarket DM reflects our focus on alternative transportation fuels. IFC is supporting Bulmarket with funding and advice, so the company can grow its business, further increase efficiency, and offer new solutions to satisfy the demand for fuels in Bulgaria."

Vladimir Mihailovski, IFC Country Officer for Bulgaria, said: "Through this project, Bulmarket will successfully contribute to energy diversification in Bulgaria by introducing LNG into the market. In addition, their clients that are not connected to the national gas distribution grid, mainly small and medium-sized companies, will have the opportunity to use cleaner and more efficient source of energy."

Mr. Stanko Stankov, the owner of Bulmarket DM, said: "Thanks to this expansion, we will start supplying LNG to industrial companies in Bulgaria, many of which are remote and do not have access to traditional gas distribution and competitive energy sources. We will also increase the distribution of LPG in Bulgaria and the Balkans."

During a recent visit to Bulgaria, EBRD's First Vice President Phil Bennett met with Mr. Stankov and Bulmarket DM staff and discussed the Bulgarian energy market and the

company's expansion plans. The project is consistent with the LNG Masterplan of the European Commission's Innovation and Networks Executive Agency, which supports the development of LNG terminals along the Rhine-Main-Danube river axis.

To date, the EBRD has invested over EUR 3 billion in various sectors of Bulgaria's economy, with a third of this total being in the energy sector.

Source; publics.bg