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RUSSIA AND CHINA PAVE THE WAY FOR GAS PIPELINE

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Russia and China were set on Saturday to approve the construction of a gas pipeline between the two countries, following a successful feasibility study, Russian gas giant Gazprom said.

"The feasibility study has been completed," Alexander Ananenko, deputy chairman of state-controlled Russian gas giant Gazprom, was quoted as saying by the Interfax news agency.

"Gazprom has completed its study for the Russian section and our strategic partner, the China National Petroleum Corporation, has carried out an equivalent study on the Chinese side," he explained.

Work on the Altai pipeline, as it is known, should start in 2008, with the Russians' first deliveries of gas to their energy-hungry Chinese neighbours starting in 2011.