

Bosnian state-owned power utility ERS has signed a 15.3 million euros loan agreement with UniCredit Bank Banja Luka, which will be used for the development of HPP Bistrica project. UniCredit Bank Banja Luka submitted the most favorable offer at the tender launched by ERS in February looking for a loan with one year maturity and fixed annual interest rate of up to 2.95 %.

The HPP Bistrica complex consists of three cascade hydropower plants (B1, B2a and B3) on the lower course of the Bistrica river near Foca. Combined installed capacity of the three HPPs is 39 MW, with estimated annual electricity generation of 152 GWh. The project is worth 103 million euros and the investor is "Hidroelektrane na Drini", a subsidiary of power utility ERS. The project will be built by China National Aero-Technology International Engineering Corporation (AVIC). It is expected that all three HPPs will be operational within four years. The construction started in late December 2021.

There is a lot of controversy related to this project. In 2019, "Hidroelektrane na Drini" signed an agreement for the acquisition of 51 % stake in the company that holds concession for the construction of hydropower plants on the Bistrica river for some 5.4 million euros. According to the agreement, "Hidroelektrane na Drini" acquired 38.5 % stake from Energo Bosna, 2.5 % stake from Kaldera Company and 10 % from Elektrodistribucija Pale, another ERS' subsidiary. After the acquisition Czech-based Energo Bosna and local Kaldera Company will jointly own the remaining 49 % in HPP Bistrica. "Hidroelektrane na Drini" later acquired 100 % capital of the company for a total of 10.6 million euros.

In 2008, ERS sold 90 % stake in the Bistrica project to Kaldera Company for some 3.4 million euros.