

At the existing nuclear power plant Kozloduy a construction plan for additional unit was recently approved by Bulgarian Government. Previously, Minister of Energy Temenuzhka Petkova said that the equipment bought for nuclear power plant Belene project will be used in the construction of a new unit 7 of NPP Kozloduy. However, this effectively means that the Government is abandoning the project for the construction of NPP Belene, since tender documentation reads that the state will contribute to the project company with the land and equipment, which will now be used for a new unit at NPP Kozloduy.

The decision on NPP Kozloduy expansion followed extensive talks with the US nuclear engineering company Westinghouse for a hybrid solution for a new unit with US technology that would make the maximum use of Russian equipment which Bulgaria has already purchased for NPP Belene. However, the Government did not provide any estimates regarding the cost of the project, only expressed hope that the unit could be operational in 10 years.

Last October, the Government allowed the Bulgarian Energy Holding (BEH) to hold talks with US companies, including those offering small modular reactors, in order to explore options for the construction of unit 7 at the approved site within NPP Kozloduy. Bulgaria had already signed an agreement on the construction of unit 7 at NPP Kozloduy with US company Westinghouse, but the project was terminated in 2015, by the first Government led by Boyko Borisov.

In December 2019, Bulgaria announced the five shortlisted companies to enter the second, binding round of NPP Belene tender. She specified that the Russian, South Korean and Chinese companies are bidding for the position of strategic investor in the project, Framatome expressed interest in supplying safety systems and financing this share of its participation, while General Electric wants to manufacture turbines and other equipment and will also self-finance this part of the project. The five were selected on the basis of their experience in building nuclear power plants, their financial stability and high credit rating. In mid-2020, the Government said that the decision on the selection of a strategic investor is delayed due to the coronavirus pandemic.