

Hungarian Minister without portfolio, who is in charge of the project for the expansion of the country's sole nuclear power plant Paks, Janos Suli said that the application for obtaining a permit for the production of reactor vessels for two new units has been submitted to the National Atomic Energy Office (OAH).

Minister Suli said that The VVER-1200 reactor vessels will be produced over a period of about three years in the Russian city of Volgodonsk, under the supervision of Russian and Hungarian experts, adding that the OAH assessed the request for issuing a permit for the implementation of Paks 2 project as extremely thorough.

In early October, OAH said that the documentation submitted for the project for the expansion of nuclear power plant Paks by building two additional reactors is not convincing enough for the issuance of the implementation permit by the regulator. The deadline for the issuance of the permit expired on 30 September. As it was already extended by three months, no further extensions were permitted and OAH requested the project company to submit supplementary application.

The statement from the OAH said that the documentation submitted is very thorough in many respects, but in order for the authority to be satisfied that all the requirements are fully met, further assessment and analysis are needed in some areas, taking into account the recommendations from the IAEA mission carried out in parallel with the licensing process. To this end, the OAH will order a further completion of the licensing procedure.

With this delay, it is very unlikely that the new units will be operational before 2030, when the permits for the operation of the two existing reactors expires. MVM, the plant's operator, is already considering the extension of their operational life.

Currently, NPP Paks provides about a half of Hungary's total electricity generation and the new nuclear capacity will be even more significant following the closure of coal-fired TPP Matra.