

During his visit to HPP Tikves, General Director of Macedonian power utility ELEM Hristijan Micovski said that the twelfth tender for the construction of large hydropower plants on Crna Reka river is expected to be launched by the end of 2017.

The realization of this important project should enable the optimal utilization of hydropower potential of Crna Reka river. According to experts, Crna Reka catchment area hydro potential has special interest for Macedonia due to its ability to accumulate water in order to be used for electricity production at times of year when it is most needed.

According to Micovski, over 30 companies have submitted 14 proposals for technical solution of the project, which are currently considered by the renowned consulting company Fichtner. By the end of June, it will prepare a feasibility study for the project and decide which of these solutions is the most appropriate. He said that among 30 companies interested in the project are renowned companies from Turkey, Russia, Greece, China, two local companies and one Italian-French consortium, as well as one Swiss company that has nuclear power plants in its portfolio, but also operates as electricity trader and supplier. Procedure for construction of HPPs Cebren and HPP Galiste is the longest tender procedure in the history of Macedonia. Both HPPs will be built on Crna Reka River, and they are offered as a package, not individually, although there were talks that only HPP Cebren would be built. Construction works for both HPPs are estimated to last 7 years. HPPs Cebren and HPP Galiste along with existing HPP Tikves should become one hydro cascade system.

HPP Cebren is more than 40 years old project, and it envisages construction of three-unit reversible power plant, with 333 MW turbine output and 347 MW pump capacity (overall). HPP is predicted to be constructed near to village Manastir, 7 km upstream of the bridge Rasimbegov Most. HPP Cebren will be able to generate 840 GWh. It is estimated that construction cost would reach 340 million euros. It will be the first reversible HPP in Macedonia. With its large accumulation area, this HPP will also be used for regulation of natural flows of river Crna Reka. This accumulation is the first of three power plants in the cascade so its operation defines operation of downstream HPP Galiste and HPP Tikves. A small dam, the Orlov Kamen, is intended as a bottom basin for HPP Cebren reversible units. Overall capacity of HPP Cebren's storage lake should be 37,000 to 40,000 cubic meters. HPP Galiste is also an old project, and it will also be built on Crna Reka River, downstream from HPP Galiste and upstream from HPP Tikves. HPP Galiste will have 193 MW output, and annual generation of 262 MW. Power plant has very low capacity utilization factor of only 15.5%. That is why this project itself is not too attractive and that is probably one of the reasons why both projects, HPP Cebren and HPP Galiste, are offered in the same package.