

The International Finance Corporation (IFC), a member of the World Bank Group, said that it has signed an agreement with the Government of North Macedonia to carry out a preliminary assessment of the hydropower plant Cebren project.

As part of this assessment, the IFC will assess the project's value for the energy systems of the country and the region. HPP Cebren has the potential to provide North Macedonia with clean, renewable energy and allow the county to reduce its reliance on coal, which now powers most of its homes and businesses. Furthermore, the project has the potential to provide valuable energy systems services to North Macedonia and other countries in the region.

Deputy Deputy Prime Minister in charge of economic affairs Koco Angjusev said at the signing ceremony that HPP Cebren is a key to the future of North Macedonia as it would help combat climate change while providing the energy that Macedonia's growing economy so urgently needs.

IFC Vice President for Europe, Central Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean Georgian Baker said that North Macedonia has good potential when it comes to generating clean hydro-based electricity, adding that IFC looks forward to working with the North Macedonia Government and other development partners to undertake an assessment of the HPP Cebren project, which is a key initiative to enhance the country's future energy security. Procedure for construction of HPPs Cebren and 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. In early 2017, former General Director of ELEM Hristijan Micovski said that the twelfth tender will be held by the end of 2017, but it did not happen.

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.