

North Macedonia: Procedure for awarding concession for HPP Cebren begins

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The Government of North Macedonia made a decision to launch a concession procedure for the use of water from Crna Reka for the production of electricity, namely the construction and operation of hydropower plant Cebren.

The procedure will be conducted in two stages: the pre-qualification stage, with clear criteria that will have to be fulfilled by the domestic or foreign companies, followed by the second stage with the invitation to the qualified bidders.

Following the completion of the first stage, the Commission for the implementation of the procedure for granting a concession will organize the opening of the received prequalification bids, followed by an evaluation, after which, a list of qualified bidders who will be invited to obtain the tender documentation and to submit binding bids, will be submitted to the Government.

Procedure for construction of HPPs Cebren and Galiste is the longest tender procedure in the history of North 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.

In June 2019, 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 HPP 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 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 Cebren will be able to generate 840 GWh of electricity per year. It is estimated that construction cost would reach 340 million euros. It will be the first reversible HPP in Macedonia.