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Friday, 11/13/2015 | 10:08

Ground broken for Nam Ngum 3 power plant

Nam Ngum 3 hydropower plant project will be able to generate income of about 1.24 trillion kip (US\$152 million) annually once construction is completed and it commences commercial operation.

The plant, which is located in Longchaeng district of Xaysomboun province saw construction officially commenced on Wednesday after many years in the study and preparation phase.

It is a major power plant project in the country that the government has assigned Electricite du Laos (EDL) to develop and operate. The project will have two sets of Francis type turbine generators with the single unit capacity of 240 megawatts (MW) to be installed in the powerhouse.

EDL's Managing Director, Mr Sisavath Thiravong, said at the ground breaking ceremony that the project will have an installed capacity of 480 MW and will be able to generate about 2,345 million kWh of energy annually.

It is expected that once operational, Nam Ngum 3 will generate income for the country totalling about 1.24 trillion kip per annum.

The ceremony was organised at EDL's head office in Vientiane, witnessed by Deputy Prime Minister Somsavat Lengsavad, energy developers, officials from the provinces of Xieng Khuang and Xaysomboun, the Ministry of Energy and Mines and the Chinese Embassy to Laos.

The project will have an investment cost of about 10.54 trillion kip (US\$1.29 billion), in the form of a loan from a Chinese bank. The construction work will be undertaken by a Chinese company, Sinohydro, and is expected to take five years to complete, with works finished in 2020.

The project also includes the construction of 110km of 230kV transmission line from the project site to a 500kV substation in Naphear village, Phaxay district of Xieng Khuang that will contribute electricity to the grid at 500kV.

So far the developers have built two camps for staff, a 22kV transmission line to the project site, an access road and a bridge.

The developer will also relocate about 150 families that will be impacted by the project development. It will also participate in the development of education, health, road construction and upgrades in the area.

It is also expected to create more than 1,500 jobs and boost tourism in the region.

EDL's Power Plant Development Department Deputy Director, Mr Vongsakoun Yingyong, said yesterday that the project was formerly granted to a Thai investment company in 1994 and the investor extended the agreements with the Lao government many times, however



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Then, in 2013, the government assigned EDL to develop the project instead. The Lao government intends to use the profits from hydropower sales to fight poverty.

In recent years, the energy sector has played a part in social development, notably in the fields of education, human resources, health care, and job creation.

Twenty-seven power plants are currently operational with an installed capacity of about 3,304MW, including 11 plants that have an installed capacity of 405MW which are operated by EDL.

The 16 other plants, which have a combined installed capacity of 2,899MW, are operated by independent power producers.

Laos is aiming for a total installed capacity of about 12,000MW by 2025, the Ministry of Energy and Mines said.

Th e abundant resources of the Mekong River and its tributaries give Laos the potential to produce more than 25,000MW of electricity.

VIENTIANE TIMES



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