

Kenya Opens World's Largest Single Turbine Geothermal Plant

ARCHITECTURE

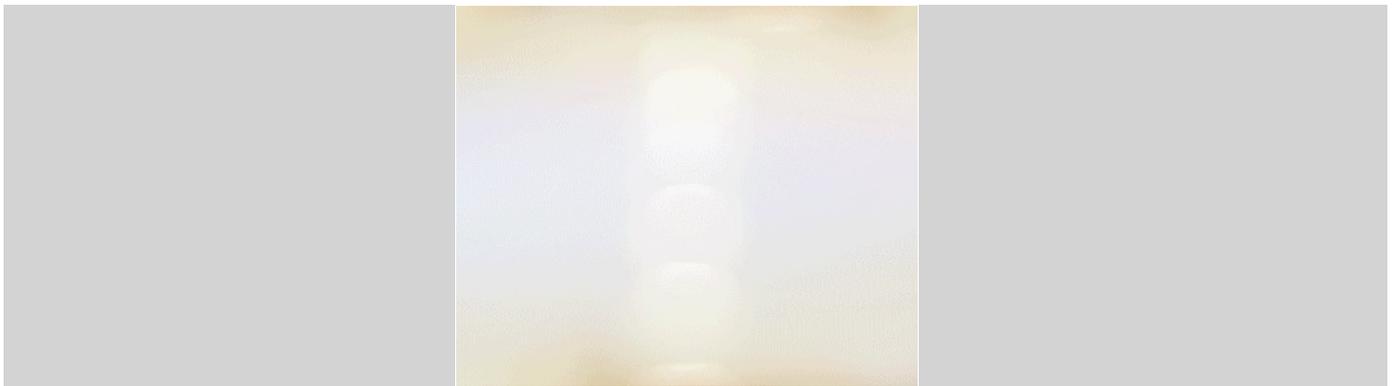
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Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta has just opened the world's largest single turbine [geothermal power plant](#), which will add 140 Megawatts (MW) to the country's national electricity grid. The project is viewed as a major boon for development initiatives and poverty reduction in [Kenya](#) and is anticipated to reduce electricity costs in the nation by 50 percent by early 2015. The Olkaria IV power plant cost \$126.5 million to build and is expected to have an immediate effect on power prices, which will result in flow on benefits to the price of essential goods and the cost of living.





The project is the fourth and largest in a series of geothermal power plants in Kenya's Eastern Rift Valley. Olkaria IV had originally been slated to open in 2012, but procurement issues caused the project to grind to a halt. Expressing his displeasure at the delays, President Kenyatta said, "We cannot keep on with this trend of stopping major projects which would transform the lives of our people. We have to really start thinking."

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Delays in the Olkaria project have hampered the implementation of a program to provide free laptops to schools. 11,000 schools needed to be connected to the nation's electricity grid for the program to go ahead, but to date only 6,000 have been connected. The remaining 5,000 schools should now be connected by April 2015. Emphasizing the plant's importance for development and poverty reduction in the nation the President added, "You cannot fight poverty if you cannot create an environment where you can create jobs. All that cannot happen if you don't have the essentials which is energy. These investments that we are making will go a long way towards empowering our people and combat social ills that have inflicted this country over the years."

The Olkaria IV geothermal plant was co-financed by the Kenyan government, the World Bank, and the European Investment Bank, among others. Now that the project is online it is expected to have the immediate impact of reducing the cost of the nation's electricity by 30 percent by the end of October as reliance on fuel-generated power falls away. In total, Kenya is estimated to have the resources for a potential 7,000 to 10,000 MW of geothermal energy production in the Rift Valley. Under the Vision 2030 program, it is planned to access 5,000 MW of that potential by 2030.

Via [Ventures Africa](#)

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