

France gives Shs6 billion for works on dams

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KAMPALA. The French government has offered Uganda Shs6.3 billion to undertake studies aimed at exploring the power generation capacity at four potential hydro-dam sites.

Eng Harrison Mutikanga, the Uganda Electricity Generation Company Ltd (UEGCL) chief executive officer, said the feasibility studies are underway for the 6.5mw Okulacere in Arua district, Nabuyonga in Mbale (5.4MW), Agbinika in Yumbe (2mw) and Maziba in Kabale (1mw).



Infrastructure. A Chinese engineer shows a view of the Karuma Hydro Power Dam to officials last year.
PHOTO BY JULIUS OCUNGU.

He said UEGCL would by the end of next year have completed designs

and the Environmental Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) report that will be reviewed by National Environment Management Authority (Nema) as well as the Resettlement Action Project (RAP).

Eng Mutikanga said the grant would also be used to undertake the review and update of previous studies on the rehabilitation and upgrade of other smaller hydro-electricity plants in the country.

"With UEGCL on track for the completion of Isimba and Karuma dams — two of the country's most ambitious energy projects expected to double the power output, we have secured Shs6.3b from French Development Agency for other small hydropower projects in the country," he said.

The chief executive of the electricity generation company made the comments last week during the flag off of 20 engineers and operation and maintenance managers heading out for a 12-week specialised in hydro-power plants' operation and maintenance training at Kafue Gorge regional training centre in Zambia.

UEGCL and the Association of

Power Utilities of Africa (APUA) are sponsoring the Shs719.2m hands-on training.

According to Eng Mutikanga, UEGCL plans to set up its own training centre for capacity building of staff and the independent producers of hydro-electricity.

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Human resource: The engineers and operation and maintenance managers are undergoing a 12-week specialised in hydro-power plants' operation and maintenance training at Kafue Gorge regional training centre in Zambia.

UEGCL chief of operations, Eng George Tumusingwire, said the skilling of the 20 engineers now in Zambia is being fast-tracked to have a reliable manpower base ahead of the completion and commissioning of Isimba and Karuma hydro dams. Both dams will add 783 megawatts of electricity to the country's current installed 860 megawatt electricity.

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"We don't want to hire people from out of the country to work at these dams next year, that is why we have decided to take our own staff for capacity building in preparation for this."

ENG GEORGE
TUMUSINGWIRE,
UEGCL CHIEF OF
OPERATIONS

