Construction Works for 210 Megawatt Hydropower Plant Launched

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Groundbreaking ceremony for construction of a 210-megawatt hydropower plant, Nenskra, in mountainous region of Svaneti in north-western Georgia was held on April 23.

According to the Georgian Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources USD 630 million hydropower plant will be constructed by a Chinese corporation, Sinohydro, and operated by JSC Nenskra, a daughter company of the state-owned Georgian Railway.

“This is genuinely grandiose event, marking launch of a really historic construction,” Saakashvili said during the groundbreaking ceremony. “With our Chinese partners… we will build in five years the largest hydropower plant, ever built in Georgia since the Enguri HPP in 1978 with its capacity of 1,300 megawatts.

The ceremony marked the launch of pre-construction activities, involving building and rehabilitating roads towards the construction site. The project is expected to be completed by 2017, according to the Georgian energy ministry.

The Georgian government’s plan is a near full substitution of thermal power generation, operated on imported gas, with hydro power electricity, which accounts for about 93% of the country’s electricity generation.

Tbilisi-based environmental group, Green Alternative, said in a statement on April 23, that the construction of 130-meter rock-fill dam and its water reservoir on the first stage, followed by construction of 11.8-kilometer long derivation tunnel to divert water from Nakra river towards the river of Nenskra, would have “an extremely negative impact” on the local ecosystem. It also said that the project would require cutting of 400 hectares of forest.