

- [Home](#) »
- [Home of Issue #559](#) »
- [About Us](#) »
- [News](#) »
- [Politics](#) »
- [Economy](#) »
- [Social/Society](#) »
- [Business](#) »
- [Culture](#) »
- [Sports](#) »
- [People](#) »
- [Site Search](#) »
- [Archive](#) »
- [Electronic Version](#) »
- [How to subscribe](#) »
- [Contact Us](#) »

[Top of Page](#) 

Newsletters

 



247352
235
TOP-GE 107



Green light for construction of Khudoni hydropower plant

Print version 

  The Indian company Trans Electrica LTD and the Georgian government are in intensive talks over the construction of a controversial new hydropower plant (HPP) in Khudoni, in Georgia's mountainous Svaneti region.

Estimated at a value of \$ 1 billion, the Khudoni project is the first Indian venture in Georgia's energy sector. Preparation works are scheduled to start this year, with construction works due to kick off in 2012. The HPP is expected to be put into operation in 2017.

"One-and-a-half years ago, we signed an agreement with the Indian company Continental Energy to study the technical and economic capacity of Khudoni," said Nika Gilauri, Prime Minister of Georgia at a government session on April 21.

He declared that the research, which was finished last week, shows that the construction of the hydro plant would be commercially viable, despite the fact that it would require "huge investments and [at the] same time the construction process will be complicated."

The government has stressed the project's importance, pointing to the wider context of Georgia as a fledgling exporter of energy. In 2010, Georgia sent 1,400 billion kWh electricity to export, 15% of the country's total electricity generation. The Ministry of Energy claims that Georgia is capable of increasing exports fourfold in the coming years, producing approximately five billion kWh electricity a year by 2017 when the HPP units are expected to be put into operation. By 2015, President Mikheil Saakashvili has claimed that Georgia will have 17 new stations across the country.

While the authorities are busy calculating the expected economic benefits, environmentalists have raised concerns about the impact of the proposed Khudoni project. Manana Kochladze of Green Alternative, local NGO working on environmental issues claims that the construction of such a large HPP is "always very risky."

"Yes, we will have huge electricity exports, but [this will lead to] sinking the country under water and into eco-migration," Kochladze told *Georgia Today*.

The construction of the proposed Khudoni HPP will require the relocation of people living in and nearby the village of Khaishi which will be covered with water by the dam. The project will require the relocation of around 300 households. No decision has yet been made as to whether any of these households will be offered new homes.

"The investor is obliged to provide alternative housing for the village dwellers," Mariam Valishvili, Deputy Energy Minister told *Georgia Today* in a telephone interview. "Since the investor is a foreigner, we are convinced that international standards of compensation will apply."

The Khudoni project will be developed on the Enguri River, whose energy resources are estimated at about 3,530 MW capacity, with a total power production potential of 10.3 billion KWh. Out of the given amount, 5.5 billion KWh has already been utilized through the Enguri HPP (which generates around 35 % of Georgia's electricity) and a smaller unit, the Vardnili HPP Cascade.

Two projects have been tabled to utilize the Enguri River's remaining potential, the Khudoni HPP and the proposed Tobarai HPP, which is set to be constructed on the upper bank of the Enguri River at elevations of 510m and 1060 m respectively.

The construction of the Khudoni HPP has long been a controversial topic. Construction started in the late 1970s under Soviet rule, and was just as contentious then. In the late 1980s construction works were put on hold amid mass protests against project.



Add a comment...

Post to Facebook

Posting as Natalia Ksovreli ([Change](#))

Facebook social plugin

[Top](#) | [Go Back](#)

[Top of Page](#)

Copyright ©2006, "Georgia Today"

Using materials of the site the reference on "Georgia Today" with the indication of the author is obligatory
Webmaster