

News from Fascinating Projects

## **\$1.5 billion Hwange Thermal Power Expansion Project in Progress**

***Project to build the largest power generation plant in Zimbabwe, with maximum power of 1520 megawatts, being financed by Export-Import Bank of China***

Reported by [Tasiyana Siavhundu](#) in Zimbabwe

3 October 2019 – Gweru, Zimbabwe - Zimbabwe is currently in power turmoil and the country has reached high and unprecedented levels of load shedding. Locally generated electricity is unable to meet local demand and the power utility imports additional electricity from South Africa's Eskom and Hydro Cahora Bassa of Mozambique. The electricity import bill has however been rising and this has been one of the sources of worry for a government whose fiscal space is in shambles. Kariba Hydropower Station, which is currently the largest power generation plant in Zimbabwe, is constrained with dropping water levels and not enough is electricity is produced.



*Hwange Thermal Power Plant, Zimbabwe*

The \$1.5 billion Hwange Thermal Power Expansion Project is underway as Zimbabwe endeavours to implement sustainable solutions to power shortages that are retarding industrial capacity and bedeviling the economy at large. This brownfield project is situated in Hwange, Matabeleland North Province, Zimbabwe. In addition to the recently commissioned Kariba South Hydropower Extension Project (completed in March 2018),

the Hwange Expansion project is, in the long-run, expected to substantially add to the national power grid and lift the nation out of lingering power woes.

The scope of the project is addition of two power generating units (unit 7 and 8) to the existing 6 units that were commissioned more than three decades ago and after Zimbabwe got independence from the British colonial rule. According to the Zimbabwe Power Company (ZPC), the two units will add a capacity of 600 megawatts, translating to 65% of the existing capacity of the old six units. ZPC is a subsidiary of the state enterprise and power utility Zimbabwe Electricity Supply Authority (ZESA Holdings). After completion, the project is going to be the largest power generation plant in Zimbabwe, generating a maximum possible power of 1520 megawatts and beating the recently improved Kariba Hydropower station by 470 megawatts.

The project, which was reported by ZPC to be about 18% complete as at 30 June this year and whose construction is expected to be complete in 42 months, commenced on the 1<sup>st</sup> of August 2018. The project is therefore expected to be completed in the first month of the year 2022 although ZPC anticipates unit 7 to be commissioned by mid-2021. Temporary works in progress for the project include Electro-Mechanical (E&M) Warehouse construction, Contractor's camp, temporary offices, batching plant and workshops, the site levelling works for the power plant.

Sinohydro (Chinese government owned hydropower engineering and construction company), who has recently completed the Kariba South Hydropower Extension Project in Zimbabwe, are also the contactors of the Hwange Thermal Power Expansion Project. The project is mainly financed through a \$billion loan facility from the Export-Import Bank of China.

Whilst current efforts by Zimbabwe in refurbishing and improving existing hydro and thermal power plants are commendable, some experts feel that energy related policies need to be re-considered if the nation is to achieve sustainable power generation. Many call for renewable energy revolution, particularly targeting exploitation of solar and biomass resources.