

Gornja Drina dam, a joint hydropower plant construction project of Serbia and Bosnia got the green light

The planned HPP cascade comprises Buk Bijela (93 MW), Foča hydroelectric facility (44 MW), and the Paunci unit, which is envisaged for the capacity of 43 MW. The Commission for Protection of Competition of Serbia has officially given the green light to state-owned electricity producer Elektroprivreda Srbije (ERS) to run a joint venture for the construction of the controversial Gornja Drina dam hydropower system in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The project firm established with Elektroprivreda Republike Srpske - ERS for the 180.9 MW project is called Hidroelektroenergetski system Gornja Drina and is to be based in Foča, in BiH's southeast near the border with Montenegro.

ERS got an environmental permit for the largest unit in February after the first one was annulled. In the meantime, environmentalist groups filed a complaint with the Espoo Convention Implementation Committee because Bosnia and Herzegovina didn't carry out a transboundary environmental impact assessment of the planned dam.

According to the decision, the project of the construction of HES Gornja Drina envisages the construction of hydropower plants Buk Bjela, Foca, and Paunci, whose total installed power would be 180.9 MW. EPS will access HES Gornja Drina after the decisions of the Supervisory Board and the Government of Serbia and, based on the investment it will make, it should acquire a 50-60% stake. The beginning of the construction of the HPP Buk Bjela has been announced for January 2021, whereas, for the other two HPPs, the beginning of the construction is scheduled for 2023.

Other such projects are in the pipeline in the area, for instance, the 35 MW Sutjeska hydropower plant. They have caused an uproar among environmentalists, who are pointing to the potential devastation of nature and habitats and insist there were breaches in the licensing procedure.

Source: constructionreviewonline.com