

2 Bids Received for Baltic Nuclear Plant

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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The European Union ordered the closure of the Ignalina plant in 2009 due to its design similarity to Chernobyl.

VILNIUS, Lithuania — Lithuania has received two bids to build a new nuclear power plant from Japanese and U.S. companies, the government said Wednesday, getting the Baltic state's troubled plans for a reactor back on track.

Lithuania, seeking to lessen its dependence on Russian energy supplies, wants to replace the Soviet-era Ignalina plant, closed at the end of 2009. But a tender last year failed after sole bidder South Korea's KEPCO dropped out.

Prime Minister Andrius Kubilius said after the failed tender that Russian officials sought to persuade European companies not to invest in the project.

The Energy Ministry said in a statement that the new bids were from an alliance of Japan's Hitachi and General Electric, and Westinghouse, a U.S.-based unit of Japan's Toshiba.

"The proposals are being assessed and the strategic investor shall be selected this summer," Energy Minister Arvydas Sekmoka said in a statement. "Following the selection of the strategic investor, the concession agreement will be finalized," he added.

A government official said the winner was expected to finance the project, partly in exchange for shares and electricity it can sell on the market. "But there is still a long road ahead before we can sign anything," he added.

The government has said the strategic investor could be offered a stake of up to 51 percent in a new plant and that the agreement will most likely need approval from parliament.

The proposals from the two bidders will be discussed with Lithuania's regional partners — Latvia, Estonia and Poland — as well as the European Commission, the ministry said.

(Reuters, Bloomberg)

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