

Rosatom Chosen as Finnish Nuclear Plant Finalist

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Fennovoima, Finland's No. 3 nuclear power company, has signed a project development agreement with Rusatom Overseas, a subsidiary of state-owned nuclear energy firm Rosatom, to build the Hanhikivi 1 nuclear power plant unit.

Direct negotiations with Rusatom Overseas to build a 1,200 megawatt nuclear power unit at a greenfield in Northern Finland began in April. Since February, Fennovoima had been holding talks with Japan's Toshiba as well, but from now on the company is negotiating only with Rusatom Overseas, it said in a statement Wednesday.

Also, Rusatom Overseas is considering acquiring a 34 percent share in Fennovoima, the statement said.

Fennovoima CEO Juha Nurmi told Reuters that Rosatom's medium-sized reactor turned out to be more suitable for its needs than Toshiba's and said Rosatom's interest in taking a stake

in the project also played a role.

A final decision on the supplier for the nuclear power unit is to be made by the end of the year by Fennovoima's 60 owners, representing industry, trade and energy sectors from all around Finland.

Two pressurized water power reactors designed in Russia have been operating in Finland for decades. The new plant corresponds with IAEA and EUR requirements and will be adapted in accordance with Finnish national safety standards.

Meanwhile, Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said Tuesday that preliminary talks had been completed with Russia about building a new nuclear power plant in his country, and the project just needs President Vladimir Putin's approval to go ahead, RIA Novosti reported.

Iran has the Russian-built Bushehr nuclear power plant, whose construction was first started by Siemens in 1974 and was continued by Russia's Atomstroieksport in 1998 after almost two decades of being mothballed. The station has been running at full capacity since last August.

In April, the former Iranian manager of the Bushehr plant said Iran planned to build a new 360 megawatt nuclear power plant in the south of the country. In February, Iran's foreign minister said Tehran expected to start joint work with Russia on a second power unit at the Bushehr plant.

Although Bushehr nuclear power plant has been approved by the International Atomic Energy Agency, Russia's participation in the project to increase its capacity has not been welcomed by the United States. U.S. officials repeatedly expressed concerns that Iran may use the reactor in Bushehr to develop materials needed for nuclear weapons.

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