



Building of Grodno hydro-electric plant is stipulated by Belarus' state innovative development plan for 2011-2015, with Br79.5bn allocated

# Water enters energy channel

Grodno hydro-electric station is unique in Belarus, with an innovative approach, laying foundations for the future launch of several modern hydro-electric stations

By Yevgeny Semiletov

## Nieman's character dictates

Some final strokes are being made to major construction works in the Grodno Region: hydro-facility tests and the decoration of surroundings. No doubt, the station is amazing in its scale. An observation platform and recreation zone is to appear for visitors, creating an attraction in the region. Water flows into the reservoir from upstream of the Nieman, covering 42km.

Energy workers and ecologists are continuing to debate the hydro-power station, which has an operational life of around 100 years (although equipment needs replacing after about 60 years). It should pay for itself within 25-30 years, with the cost of hydro-technical equipment comprising just 15-17 percent of the station's total cost. Accordingly, it is not too expensive to replace obsolete equipment, while the station can operate at least double the length of time of organic fuel

power stations, compensating for the high cost of building.

Ecologists are pleased to note that the Grodno hydro-electric station's operation will reduce emissions of carbon dioxide by around 70,000 tonnes annually while its water reservoir (covering 1,940 hectares) will expand the region's recreational possibilities, including water tourism. International contests could even be hosted. Moreover, the Avgustovsky Canal has been recently reconstructed.

Energy workers assert that Grodno's station will fit in well with the 'character' of the Nieman. How is the river 'liaising' with the station?

## Fear of flood

The village of Khomiki, in the Grodno District, is among those settlements located along the banks of the water reservoir. Svisloch, Dekalovichi, Doroshevichi and Vitki (Kvasovo Village Council) are also affected, as the Chairman of the Council, Viktor Gidrovets, notes. He tells us, "Some villagers are worried about possible



5 turbines with total power of 17MW being installed at Grodno hydro-electric plant

flooding — especially those living in Dekalovichi, which is low lying. Residents still remember the awful flood of 1958, when they had to be evacuated. Unsurprisingly, they are concerned by the future station. However, they are feeling calmer now, even those who were quite sceptical previously. Many people have benefited from the construction works, as the value of their houses — situated in this picturesque place — has

risen several fold.

In the past, water runoff from the Nieman was naturally governed; now, it is being controlled by man, so villagers actually have less to worry about regarding flooding. "Our reliable facilities and control of water flow will allow us to handle the greatest floods — even those which occur once every 200 years," explains the Director of the Directorate for the Nieman hydro-electric station's

construction, Vladimir Rukavitsyn.

## Why is the river becoming more shallow?

Villagers used to be afraid of spring floods, but Nieman water levels are actually falling. The Ministry for the Environment of Lithuania has told Belarus that, last July, the water level on its territory fell below the normal nature-protective sanitary level. The Department for Hydro-Mete-

orology, of Belarus' Ministry for Natural Resources and Environmental Protection, answered Lithuania's request for information, explaining that hot weather and little rain is the cause.

The Department for Hydrology at Grodno's Regional Centre for Hydro-Meteorology and Monitoring of the Environment explains that, this year, the Nieman's lowest water level was 30cm; however, it is now rising daily. According to Grodnoenergo specialists, as soon as the water reservoir becomes full, the water level in the Nieman will stabilise — weather conditions allowing.

Interestingly, Grodno hydro-electric station has already produced its first energy: two out of five blocks have completed 72-hour testing. According to specialists, the station will soon be ready for launch, acting as a model for other hydro-electric stations countrywide. It's a promising avenue for Belarus, enabling the country to diversify its energy supplies and strengthen its energy security.

# Park acquires new contours

One step closer to Industrial Park in Smolevichi District

By Olga Levicheva

The Economy Ministry has hosted a meeting of the China CAMC Engineering Co., the Minsk Region Executive Committee and Horizont Management Company, who are tasked with founding the joint Belarusian-Chinese Industrial Park. Its charter and constituent documents were signed, following initial decree signing by the Presi-

dent in early June.

The Park is to cover about 80 square kilometres, with 50 years of special tax concessions granted. In addition, it will boast convenient infrastructure, to support the development of electronics, biomedicine, chemistry and engineering. The Smolevichi District will soon be attracting numerous companies and extensive infrastructure: accommodation, business

offices and logistics centres. Needless to say, employment in the region will receive a substantial boost.

The Minsk Region Executive Committee has granted the founders certificates of state registration as a Technopark, explains Chairman Boris Batura. He notes, "We're proud that the Minsk Region is hosting this project — the first of its kind within the CIS. We expect

that its creation will inspire the arrival of the largest corporations from China and Europe."

China CAMC Engineering Co., the Minsk Region Executive Committee and Horizont Management Company will be working together to design and build the park's infrastructure while seeking investors to set up high-tech and competitive industries. The Chair of the



Parties are sure in success of park creation

Board, the General Director of CAMC, Luo Yan, notes that the region near the capital of Belarus was not chosen by chance. She explains, "The Minsk Region has a good industrial and agricul-

tural base. "We are delighted that the two-year efforts of the governments of China and Belarus have not been in vain and that our countries have entered a new stage of co-operation."