

Manager appointed for UAE's nuclear program

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CH2M Hill will act as a managing agent for the United Arab Emirates' nuclear power program, which is expected to include orders for several gigawatts of new nuclear capacity in coming years.

The US-based firm was selected by the newly-created Emirates Nuclear Energy Corporation (Enec) for an initial ten-year period. Financial details were not disclosed but CH2M Hill would be responsible for, among other things: selecting prime contractors; implementing owners' responsibilities; master program planning; and licensing. It would also ensure that the program is in line with International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) recommendations on which the country's strategy has been based.

The UAE has made nuclear cooperation agreements with France, the UK and the USA, while Areva, Total and Suez have already partnered to build a 1600 MWe EPR unit in the UAE, partly for desalination of water. Electricity demand in the UAE is expected to more than double to 2020.

Enec itself was set up by consultants at Thorium Power following dialogues between UAE officials and the IAEA. It has \$100 million in initial funding. Another forthcoming development is the creation of the Federal Authority for Nuclear Regulation, also a responsibility of Thorium Power.

CH2M Hill said it already has 500 program management staff in the UAE working on projects such as the zero-carbon Masdar City and the ADSSC Strategic Tunnel Enhancement Program, both in Abu Dhabi.