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Egat to propose coal plant upgrade

B35bn in mind for two units at Mae Moh

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The Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand (Egat) plans to propose the Energy Ministry allocate 35 billion baht to develop two units of coal-fired power plants in Lampang's Mae Moh district to replace two units that are due to be decommissioned by 2020.

Mae Moh is Thailand's first coal-fired power plant, and has been operated by Egat since 1975.

Lignite coal from the Mae Moh basin serves the power plant.

Egat runs 10 units in the same location, producing 2,400 megawatts from units 4-13. Units 1-3 were decommissioned in 1999-2000.

Units 8 and 9 are to be upgraded by 300MW each.

The Mae Moh plant can supply 50% of electricity to the North, 30% to the central area, and 20% to the Northeast.

Tawatchai Jakpaisal, deputy governor of Egat, said the authority will submit its request to the Energy Ministry very soon because both decommissioned units will take roughly three years to develop and test run.

"The power generators at units 8 and 9 are nearly 30 years old and this coal-fired

power plant is one of the country's major sources of power," he said.

In 2015, Egat decided to develop the new unit — Mae Moh Replacement unit 1 (MMRP1), expecting to complete construction by late 2018. The MMRP1 has a capacity of 655MW to replace units 4-13, which have been running for 33 years with a combined capacity of 560MW.

"Units 8-9 will be Egat's next priority, to be renamed as MMRP2 with similar capacity and budget," said Mr Tawatchai.

He said MMRP 1 and 2 will come with higher technology for power generation

to raise efficiency, consume less fuel and release less emission as they aim to cope with greater demand in the near future.

Egat signed an engineering, procurement and construction agreement with Alstom Power System SA, Alstom Thailand and Marubeni Corporation to construct MMRP1.

In addition, Egat is conducting a feasibility study to replace units 10-13, which have a combined capacity of 1,200MW and will be decommissioned in 2027.

They will be named MMRP3, but the new capacity has yet to be finalised.

The decision for the MMRP3 will be based on proved coal reserves as well as electricity demand and supply in the northern area.

A revision of the national power development plan (PDP) is being carried out by Egat.

The lignite coal reserve has 400 million tonnes, and Egat consumes 16 million tonnes per year.

Energy Minister Siri Jirapongphan said energy policymakers aim to prioritise coal resources because the power generation cost is one of the lowest, followed by hydropower.

He said the PDP has set a target to enlarge coal resource for the power sector at 35-40% from 18%, while natural gas will decline to 35-40% from 68%.

The revised PDP will go through the public hearing process in mid-October and be extended for implementation during 2018-2038.



This coal-fired power plant is one of the country's major sources of power.

TAWATCHAI JAKPAISAL
Deputy governor, Egat



The Mae Moh power plant in Lampang province has been operating since 1975. Upgrades will improve capacity by 300MW per unit.