South korea grid modernization

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The 345kilovolt (kV) North Dangjin-Shintangjeong transmission line, which holds the record for the longest-delayed power grid project in South Korea due to a 12-year-and-6-month delay in completion, has officially started supplying power ahead of its formal completion next month.

According to the Ministry of Trade, Industry, and Energy (MOTIE) on Nov. 28, the 345kV North Dangjin-Shintangjeong transmission line began operating on Nov. 22 and is set for formal completion next month. Initially planned for completion in June 2012, the project faced significant delays due to fierce opposition from local residents, marking it as a representative case of conflicts surrounding power grid infrastructure.

With the activation of the North Dangjin-Shintangjeong transmission line, Korea Electric Power Corporation (KEPCO) expects to supply 1.3 gigawatts (GW) of power to the West Coast region, alleviating significant power generation constraints. Additionally, the new line is projected to reduce annual power purchase costs by approximately 350 billion won (approximately $250.75 million). This development is also expected to accelerate investments in next-generation display technologies in the strategically designated industrial zones of Cheonan and Asan.

Lee Ok-heon, director of powerpolicy at the MOTIE, stated, “The 345kV North Dangjin-Shintangjeong transmission line exemplifies delays caused by local opposition and lack of cooperation from municipal authorities regarding permits and approvals.” He added, “If the Special Act on Power Grids is passed, a new governance model involving the central government and local governments will emerge, enabling the discovery of regionally inclusive models and a paradigm shift in ensuring public acceptance of power grids.”

Kepco has selected GE to build a high-voltage DC energy highway.

South Korea took action this month to strengthen its grid in preparation for a major boost in renewable energy generation.At the beginning of the month, the state-owned Korea Electric Power Corporation (Kepco) picked U.S. infrastructure provider GE Power to build a 4-gigawatt high-voltage DC (HVDC) transmission link from the east of the country to the capital, Seoul, in the northwest.

The $320 million contract “will increase the stability and reliability of the Korean electrical transmission grid by adding new routes for power supply,” said GE Power in a press release.

The project will be delivered through KAPES, a joint venture that Kepco set up with GE in 2012 to carry out

HVDC and flexible AC transmission system work in South Korea and beyond.

KAPES and GE are due to design and supply a 500-kilovolt HVDC bipole with two converter stations, including valves, cooling, converter transformers, filters, switchyards and control systems. It is GE’s fourth major HVDC contract in South Korea.

In the late 1990s, GE built a 300-megawatt, 101-kilometer (63-mile) point-to-point submarine HVDC interconnection linking South Korea’s Jeju Island with the mainland. In 2009, the company supplied converter stations for a 400-megawatt HVDC scheme.

In 2014, through KAPES, GE built a 1.5-gigawatt, 35-kilometer HVDC connection to transmit energy from South Korea’s coal-fired Dangjin power plant to the city of Pyeongtaek and the Seoul metropolitan area. The project is due to be completed at the end of 2019.

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Web: https://kary.com.pl/contact-us/
Email: energystorage2000@gmail.com
WhatsApp: 8613816583346