

Lusaka electricity

ZESCO (acronym for Zambia Electricity Supply Corporation Limited) is a state-owned power company in Zambia. It is Zambia's largest power company producing about 80% of the electricity consumed in the country. ZESCO represents Zambia in the Southern African Power Pool.

The company operates nine hydropower stations with a potential combined capacity of 2,217.5MW and eight small thermal power plants with a combined potential capacity of 11.3MW resulting in a total of 2,228.8MW. Due to poor maintenance and substandard practices, these capacities are not achieved.

ZESCO has formed power purchase agreements with private companies that own power plants in Zambia. It purchases the power produced and feeds it partially into the national grid, with a higher portion resold to neighboring countries. GL Africa Energy provides the national grid through ZESCO with over 105MW of power under this agreement.

In June 2022, ZESCO signed a 13-year Bulk Supply Agreement (BSA) with Copperbelt Energy Corporation (CEC) Plc. The power supply limit under the BSA was set at 380MW. ZESCO projects that they will earn an estimated US\$150.0 million per annum from the agreement. These earnings are expected to translate into an estimated US\$2.0 billion over the lifetime of the BSA.

In July 2022, at the 94th Agricultural and Commercial Show in Lusaka, the managing director of the National Utility ZESCO, Victor Mapani announced that the company plans to deploy Electric Vehicle (EV) charging stations across the country in an effort to accelerate and promote the transition to EVs and enhance carbon emission reduction. But has made no forward effort to this commitment.

Energy Minister, Makozo Chikote, explained that this decision was prompted by the imminent depletion of ZESCO's water allocation at Kariba Dam, expected to result in a 300-megawatt shortfall.

Speaking in Lusaka on Friday during a media briefing on the energy situation, Chikote further noted that scheduled maintenance at Maamba Collieries in September 2024 was anticipated to create an additional 135-megawatt deficit.

To mitigate the deficit, ZESCO and other traders are importing 496 megawatts of electricity from the region, but this still leaves a net deficit of 1,014 megawatts, necessitating more than 12 hours of power rationing across the country.

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