

Alstom to build Israeli hydro power storage plant

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File picture of water being discharged from a reservoir at the Shuikou Dam in southeastern China's Fujian province on May 24, 2005

French engineering group Alstom has won a contract worth 120 million euros (\$163 million) to build Israel's first hydroelectric storage facility, the company said on Thursday.

The deal covers also an agreement to provide operating and maintenance

services for 18 years.

The group, which provides energy engineering services and has many other interests including the construction of high-speed trains, said that the project "represents Alstom's first entry into the Israeli hydro market."

The new facility will be "the country's first pumped storage [power station](#)."

However Alstom noted that it already had strong experience "in the Israeli [power generation](#) market with respect to existing steam plants and gas plants."

The new plant, 60 kilometres (37 miles) east of Haifa, would increase Israel's [power generation capacity](#) by 2.5 percent, Alstom said.

"It will contribute to increasing the reliability of electricity supply and will provide an important tool to control the demand and distribution of electricity."

The principle of the pumped storage facility works on electricity from other power stations, during the times of day of low consumption, to pump water up to a high-level reservoir from which it can be drained during peak hours to generate electricity, which otherwise cannot be stored in big quantities.

The announcement from Alstom came the day after Dutch pension asset manager PGGM, one of the biggest in the Netherlands, said it was divesting from five Israeli banks because they finance Jewish settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories.

That decision came a month after a major Dutch water supplier ended a

partnership with an Israeli water company which supplies Israeli towns and Jewish settlements in the occupied West Bank.

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