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Firm Lays Groundwork for First-Ever Biomass Power Plant for Ivory Coast

News & Events

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New York, February 13, 2020 - The firm represented the government of Côte d'Ivoire, or Ivory Coast, in the design, financing, construction and operation of the country's first and West Africa's largest biomass power plant.

On Dec. 9, 2019, the government signed a 25-year concession agreement for the plant's construction and operation near the economic capital of Abidjan with Ivorian joint venture company Biovea Énergie, which will carry out the project.

The 46-megawatt plant is expected to cost approximately 200 million euros; Biovea Énergie plans to commence construction in the middle of this year, with the facility to be commissioned in 2023. Leaf residue from locally grown palm trees will be used as biomass fuel for the plant, which will reportedly produce enough power to meet the electricity needs of 1.7 million people, while also helping to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 4.5 million tons.

The project is being developed under the framework of the Ivory Coast's National Renewable Energy Action Plan for 2014-2030, which is aimed at increasing its share of renewable sources of energy to 42 percent by 2030.

HHR previously advised the Ivory Coast government in other energy projects to expand the generation capacity of West Africa's largest economy. In 2018, the government signed two deals: a 47 billion CFA francs (\$81.5 million) agreement for a solar-power plant with a capacity of 66 megawatts, and a 248 billion CFA francs (\$431 million) agreement for a thermal-power plant (known as Ciprel V) with a capacity of 390 megawatts. Earlier in 2019, the government signed an agreement to expand the Azito power plant in Abidjan by 253 megawatts for 225.8 billion CFA francs (\$392.9 million).

Ivory Coast, the world's leading cocoa producer, sources its electricity from a mix of thermal -- mostly natural gas -- and hydropower generation sources. The government has established goals to increase its power production

capacity by 2030 to about 6,000 megawatts to meet the country's rising demand.

Biovea Énergie is a joint-venture company, which is 40 percent owned by French utility giant Électricité de France (EDF) and 36 percent owned by French public infrastructure investor Meridiam. Biokala, a subsidiary of Ivorian agribusiness SIFCA, owns the remaining 24 percent.

Sena Agbayissah, Rhidian David and Agnès Braka-Calas worked on this matter.

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