ECOFIN AGENCY · DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

DRC mobilises $30m to launch Mbombo 20MW hydro plant

Saga deep read · 29 October 2026 · Score 58

The Democratic Republic of Congo plans to mobilise $30 million through its Industry Promotion Fund (FPI) as the initial tranche of financing for the Mbombo hydropower project, a $120 million public-private partnership located on the Lulua River in the Central Kasai region. The 20 MW facility represents one of the country's efforts to extend electricity access beyond the capital and major mining corridors, targeting a province where industrial and agricultural activity has historically been constrained by chronic power shortages.

The $30 million FPI allocation is intended to launch construction, with the remaining $90 million expected to be covered through the PPP structure — though the article does not specify which private partners have been identified, nor does it confirm whether a concession or construction contract has been signed. The project is therefore best characterised at this stage as a financing commitment to a PPP development, ahead of any formal contract award or financial close.

The Mbombo plant's 20 MW nameplate capacity is modest relative to DRC's flagship hydropower ambitions, but its significance is regional. Central Kasai has long been economically marginalised, and a reliable power supply could catalyse agro-processing, light manufacturing, and improved living standards for a population largely off the national grid. The Lulua River site would serve as anchor infrastructure for the broader economic development agenda the government is pursuing in the province.

For the energy infrastructure sector, the project follows a pattern common in Sub-Saharan Africa: government-anchored equity through a national development fund, with private capital and technical expertise brought in via PPP arrangements. The $120 million total project cost and 20 MW output imply a capital intensity consistent with run-of-river or small reservoir hydro designs in challenging logistics environments — though the article does not specify the plant type or construction timeline.

DRC holds some of the most significant hydropower potential on the African continent, and Mbombo adds to a pipeline of smaller provincial projects intended to complement the grand-scale Inga development ambitions. Whether this project advances to construction will depend on the government's ability to structure the remaining $90 million in private financing and navigate DRC's historically difficult project execution environment.

Why this matters to partners and clients of Saga

Norwegian service companies should monitor this project but hold outreach to procurement, as no construction contract or tender has been announced — the story describes a financing commitment to a PPP, not a signed agreement. When the project moves toward financial close and an EPC or equipment procurement process opens, Norwegian firms with hydro-civil or electromechanical supply chain expertise could explore subcontracting or equipment supply roles. Relationship-building with the FPI and any emerging PPP sponsors would be the appropriate near-term step.

PARTNER ANGLES

- **Service:** Engineering consultancies with small hydro or run-of-river project development experience could position for feasibility, ESIA, or owner's engineer roles as the PPP structure is formalised.
- **Pipeline:** Firms experienced in water conveyance and penstock supply for hydro schemes should monitor procurement channels once an EPC contractor is appointed.
- **Subsea/FPSO:** Limited direct relevance, but marine and underwater survey contractors could find ancillary scope in river bathymetry or dam foundation assessment work at the Lulua River site.

- **Drilling:** Geotechnical drilling contractors may find near-term scope in site investigation campaigns required before construction financing is finalised.

Original source: Ecofin Agency →

Saga Advisory

General: info@saga-advisory.com · saga-advisory.com

STAVANGER · CAPE TOWN