

Hydropower leads to decline in coal consumption

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INCREASED TOUR NUMBERS The global decrease in the demand for coal has sparked interest in a tour of the top hydropower projects in Africa



HYDRO TAKEOVER The demand for hydropower has increased but coal still accounted for 29% of energy consumption in 2009



Picture by: Bloomberg
DECREASED DEMAND Source: Bloomberg The demand for coal dropped

The demand for hydro-power has put a damp-ener on the coal-mining industry in Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries, as the demand for coal dropped by 10,4% in 2009. This is the steepest decline on record, explains oil giant BP's 'Statistical Review of World Energy 2010' report.

This resulted in China becoming the largest consumer of coal worldwide, accounting for 46,9% of global coal consumption. Further, the country produced 45,6% of global supplies during 2009, the BP report says.

The upswing in the demand for hydropower has created a greater interest in hydropower projects, says Hydropower Africa project director **Nicolaas Loretz**, with this year marking the second consecutive tour of Africa's top hydropower projects, as part of the Hydro-power Africa conference and exhibition. The tour begins at State-owned power utility Eskom's Ingula pumped-storage scheme, in KwaZulu-Natal, in August 2010. Hydropower Africa is produced by South African events company Spintelligent, which is now owned by the UK Clarion Events group.

"It is one thing to talk about a project, and what is required for its success or completion, but this cannot and should not be done without visiting the project site. "Travelling to the site provides an entirely new per-spective for everyone in the value chain," he explains.

"Hydropower Africa creates a network and a medium through which new business relationships can be fostered," says Loretz.

The tour was started to provide delegates with the opportunity to experience how hydropower projects work and to meet the engineers responsible for these projects.

"As part of our mining, infrastructure and investment conference, Infrastructure Partnership for African Devel-opment, in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), we started a tour in 2005 to the Inga hydropower projects I and II, in the DRC, because of our good relationship with the government and DRC power utility Société Nationale d'Electricité (Snel).

"The tour of Inga has always provided delegates with the opportunity to see one of the biggest and most debated infrastructure projects in Africa first-hand," adds Loretz.

Meanwhile, Clarion Events has been involved in a mining, infrastructure and investment conference in the DRC, known as Infrastructure Partnerships for African Development, since 2005.

Loretz says that Snel offers a tour to Inga I and II every year after the conference.

“This tour was always a drawcard to the conference, and took place after the three-day event, at which infrastructure projects and the power supply required to facilitate mining and industry operations in the DRC were discussed,” he says.

Investors, engineers and vendors from South Africa, the US, the UK, Europe and Canada with a keen interest in the power sector and its projects attend the site visit.

About 20 people are confirmed for the August 2010 tour of the South African hydropower facilities, which includes the Ingula and Drakensburg pumped-storage schemes, the Lydenburg hydropower plant and the Friedenheim hydro plant, in Mpumalanga, while a delegation of ten people is to tour Inga, says Loretz.

“Spintelligent Events often has site visits or tours linked to its high-level niche events. “For Hydropower Africa, we visited the Drakensberg and Ingula pumped-storage schemes last year and the response was phenomenal. “This is why we have also included the Inga tour this year,” adds Loretz.

<http://www.miningweekly.com/article/hydropower-leads-to-decline-in-coal-consumption-2010-07-16>