

DMRE finally gazettes IRP2023, major plant build on cards

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5 Jan 2024

South Africa needs a massive power plant construction programme to ensure adequate electricity supply up to 2050, a government planning document gazetted for public comment on Thursday showed.



A man walks beneath electricity pylons during frequent power outages caused by its ageing coal-fired plants, in Orlando, Soweto. Source: Reuters/Siphwe Sibeko

Africa's most industrialised economy has suffered power cuts for more than a decade which have held back growth, reaching record levels last year lasting up to 10 hours a day.

The latest iteration of the government's [Integrated Resource Plan](#) (IRP) analysed different options to close the power shortfall over the period up to 2030, and the period from 2031 to 2050.



This is how the government is tackling the transmission crisis

Lindsey Schutters 27 Dec 2023



Up to 2030, the plan said the deployment of "dispatchable" power generation options like gas-to-power must be accelerated, and where technically and commercially feasible, the planned shutdown of coal-fired plants should be delayed to retain capacity.

“ Dispatchable facilities can be ramped up or down depending on power system needs. ”

Between 2031 and 2050, the IRP said ways to ensure security of supply included different combinations of nuclear power, renewables, clean coal, and gas.

"In the period between 2031 and 2050 the system will require a massive new build programme with significant capacity required in just over a decade from now," the IRP said.

South Africa was once seen as a poster child for the energy transition away from polluting coal-fired power plants that still provide the bulk of its electricity needs.

But a worsening of its power crisis has forced the government to rethink and potentially delay its strategy of closing old coal stations in an effort to keep the lights on.

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