



**S'wak offers RM6 billion for Bakun hydro project**  
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The Sarawak government has offered RM6 billion to buy over the Bakun hydroelectric project from the federal government, said Sarawak Chief Minister Abdul Taib Mahmud.

"We have made our bid (RM6 billion), the bid is flexible in the sense that if the method of payment can be made lighter we can increase a bit more, but there is limit to what we can pay," he told reporters after attending an Aidifitri open house at Kem Penrissen Batu 8 in Kuching today.

Taib (*right*) said the negotiations on the matter (the state buying over the project) were still ongoing and that a final decision had yet to be reached.

According to him, the federal government had yet to put a price tag on the project which is estimated to have incurred costs exceeding RM7.3 billion.

The Bakun project, Malaysia's largest hydroelectric dam, is located on the Balui River in the upper Rejang River basin, some 37km upstream from Belaga.

The hydroelectricity project was first mooted in the early 1980s by the federal government to diversify the country's power sources and was first awarded to Ekran Bhd, a company controlled by Tan Sri Ting Pek Khing.

The physical work on the dam started in 1994. Sarawak Hidro was established to take over the project's development and management in 2000 after the Asian financial crisis of 1997-98 crippled the project.

At end-2002, a Sime Darby-led consortium won a competitive tender to undertake the civil works for the dam for less than RM1.8 billion.

The Bakun Dam, the second tallest concrete rock-filled dam in the world, is expected to be completed this December.

About 300 MW of hydropower from the first turbine are expected to be generated by the middle of next year. It will have the capacity to generate 2,400 MW of power when all eight turbines are in place by 2012.

- *Bernama*

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