

Bids invited for N-power



A nuclear power plant in the US. (AFP)
June 23, 2008

The process for the construction of the UAE's first nuclear power plant has begun with the invitation for pre-qualification by interested contractors. According to sources, nine bidders are competing for the contract, which is likely to close in a couple of weeks.

Amec, a United Kingdom-based engineering firm yesterday said it is one of the nine who have been short-listed to manage the first of the UAE's nuclear power plants.

"We were asked to submit the initial document and we have done so. There are many more stages to go. We are expecting the contracts to be in place by the end of the year," Graham Bellwood, Regional Director for Amec in the Middle East, told **Emirates Business**.

He said the tender is now in the pre-qualification stage.

David Boath, International and Reactor Development Director for Amec, is in the UAE for a meeting with the government scheduled for today. The company is also bidding for an advisory contract, he said.

"The Abu Dhabi Government has approved to look into the feasibility of building nuclear power plants. We will be looking into the logic and feasibility of opting for nuclear power and its impact on environment," said Bellwood.

Harold Ashurst, the spokesperson for Amec in London, yesterday said that Amec was one of a number of companies that have pre-qualified for the job. Amec has a turnover of Dh17.4 billion and employs 22,000 people.

"Our officials are in the UAE for further discussions, following which additional details will be made available," said Ashurst. "The contract would involve overseeing the technical design, construction and

operation of around 14 nuclear facilities planned in the Gulf state at a cost of Dh290bn," said a report in *The Independent*.

The UAE Government in April unveiled its formal policy towards nuclear energy following consultations with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the governments of France, the United States, the UK, Russia, China, Japan, Germany and South Korea.

The white paper titled, 'The Policy of the UAE on the Evaluation and Potential Development of Peaceful Nuclear Energy', addresses the need to develop additional sources of electricity to meet the future demand. The report quoting analysis says the national annual peak demand for electricity is likely to rise to more than 40,000MW by 2020 reflecting a cumulative annual growth rate of roughly nine per cent.