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New Energy

Congo Picks Symbion to Tap Methane-Filled Lake

- New York's Symbion plans \$300 million Makelele block project
- Three North American companies win gas bids, oil minister says



Lake Kivu *Photographer: Luke Dennison/AFP/Getty Images*

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New York's Symbion Power won a bid to produce electricity from methane trapped in a lake in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, the country's oil minister Didier Budimbu Ntubuanga told Bloomberg.

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Symbion's Chief Executive Officer Paul Hinks confirmed the company won the Makelele methane gas block on Lake Kivu with its partner Renewable Energy Developments. The company proposed a 60-megawatt gas-to-electricity project, in one of the world's least-electrified nations.

"This is a large investment with a price tag of at least \$300 million," Hinks said by email. "We are also considering investing in our own private transmission network so we can wheel the power we produce across the region."

Read: [Symbion Seeks to Grow Africa Energy Footprint With Congo Gas Bid](#)

Lake Kivu is shared by Congo and Rwanda and contains enough methane to produce an estimated 700 megawatts of electricity over more than 50 years. The methane, produced in part by microorganisms in the lake, is dissolved in its deep waters.

The development of electricity production from the lake is part of Congo's plan to expand energy access from about 10% of the population to 32% by 2030.

Symbion has developed two projects on the Rwandan side of the lake, which it sold in 2019. The electricity from its Makelele concession will go to the trading hub of Goma and the North and South Kivu provinces, Hinks said.

A Canadian company and another US company won bids for two other gas blocks on the lake, Budimbu said, without naming them.

Read: [Congo Unveils Companies Bidding for Lake Kivu Gas Production](#)
