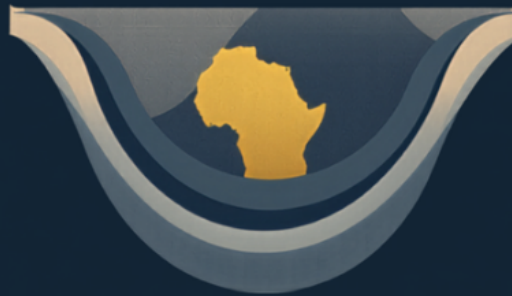




BUILD BACK BETTER INITIATIVE · SUDAN & EAST AFRICA

Evidence for Resilience – Policy. Communities. Change.

TANZANIA SWITCHES ON
2,115 MEGAWATTS
(SELF-FINANCED)



3BI

Tanzania Just Brought 2,115 Megawatts Online, Entirely Self-Financed. The Dam Sits Inside a UNESCO World



Heritage Site.

A 3Bi Situation Report on the Julius Nyerere Hydropower Project

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Tanzania inaugurated a 2,115MW hydropower dam on the Rufiji River on 22 August 2026 — fully self-financed, and built inside a UNESCO World Heritage site.

Header

Situation: Tanzania's Julius Nyerere Hydropower Project (Rufiji River) — Edition 1

Information current as of: 23 August 2026, 09:00 UTC

Headline Fact

Tanzania officially inaugurated the 2,115-megawatt Julius Nyerere Hydropower Project on the Rufiji River on 22 August 2026 — the fourth-largest dam in Africa and the largest power station in East Africa. Built by an Egyptian consortium (Arab Contractors and Elsewedy Electric) at a cost of roughly \$2.9 billion, financed entirely through Tanzania's domestic budget, the plant now supplies close to half of the electricity feeding Tanzania's national grid (The Citizen, Tanzania, 22 August 2026).

Timeline

2019: Construction begins on the Rufiji River in Rufiji District, Coast Region — inside the boundaries of the Selous Game Reserve, a UNESCO World Heritage Site (IUCN, June 2019).

June 2019: An independent IUCN review finds the project's strategic environmental assessment "insufficient," concluding it does not adequately evaluate economic viability, social and environmental impacts, or project alternatives (IUCN, 2019).

2025: Main construction is completed: a 1,000-plus-metre, 131-metre-high concrete dam; a roughly 34-billion-cubic-metre reservoir; nine 235-megawatt turbine units; seven flood-control outlets; and more than 1,000 kilometres of associated electrical cabling, transmission lines, roads, tunnels and bridges (attaqa.net, citing an Egyptian Cabinet statement, 22 August 2026).

22 August 2026: Tanzanian President Samia Suluhu Hassan formally inaugurates the plant on site in Rufiji District. Egyptian Prime Minister Mostafa Madbouly attends, representing President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi (EgyptToday; Egypt's State Information Service, both 22 August 2026).

22 August 2026: The Egyptian Cabinet credits the build to the Arab Contractors–Elsewedy Electric consortium, noting roughly 13,000 workers — most of them Tanzanian — worked on the project, alongside Egyptian technical staff (attaqa.net, 22 August 2026).



What We Know / What We Don't

We know: the plant's 2,115 MW capacity is confirmed across Tanzanian, Egyptian and industry sources. Tanzania's own grid operator reporting, via The Citizen, states the project now supplies nearly half of national grid electricity. The financing — reported as entirely domestic, with no foreign loan structure cited in Tanzanian government coverage — stands in contrast to most large African hydropower projects of this scale, which typically carry multilateral or bilateral development financing. The Egyptian consortium's construction and electromechanical role is confirmed by both Egyptian and Tanzanian sources.

We don't yet know: annual generation output is reported inconsistently — the Egyptian Cabinet statement cites approximately 6,307 gigawatt-hours per year, while an industry data profile cites approximately 5,920 GWh/year. 3Bi could not independently reconcile the two figures before this edition went to publication. No updated, post-completion environmental-flow monitoring data for the Selous ecosystem has entered the public record since IUCN's 2019 warning, so the dam's actual downstream ecological impact after roughly seven years of construction and the start of operations remains unverified. UNESCO's World Heritage Committee has not yet issued a public statement responding to the inauguration.

Do-No-Harm Note

This edition names public officials and corporate executives only in their official capacities; no individual community member or vulnerable group is identified. Given the project's location inside a legally protected, internationally recognized conservation area, 3Bi checked available reporting for named, verified community-displacement claims and found none to report as of this edition. This assessment will be revisited if credible reporting emerges.

What to Watch

- **UNESCO's next scheduled review** of Selous Game Reserve's World Heritage status, and whether it directly addresses the now-completed dam.
- **Independent, post-completion environmental-flow data** for the Rufiji River and the Selous ecosystem, which has not yet been published.
- **Reconciliation of the generation-output figures** (6,307 GWh vs. 5,920 GWh/year) by Tanzania's grid operator, TANESCO, or the project consortium.
- **Whether Tanzania's fully domestic-financing model draws comment** from Sudan's Ministry of Energy or its donor partners — Sudan's own grid-diversification push, covered in 3Bi's 22 August 2026 analytical article, currently relies on donor grants and prospective foreign investment rather than domestic capital at this scale.



Sourcing & Next Update

Primary trigger: Egyptian Cabinet statement, via attaqqa.net (22 August 2026, Arabic-language original). **Cross-checked via WebSearch:** EgyptToday (22 August 2026); Egypt's State Information Service (22 August 2026); The Citizen, Tanzania (22 August 2026); Daily News Egypt (22 August 2026); IUCN (June 2019); Power Technology data profile (accessed 23 August 2026). 3Bi will not issue a recurring edition on this story unless a significant new development occurs — a UNESCO ruling, new environmental-flow data, or a reconciled generation figure.

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