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Réseau Sortir du nucléaire > Archives > Revue de presse > **SizeWell : EDF nuclear site 'in danger without deal on funding'**

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SizeWell : EDF nuclear site 'in danger without deal on funding'

The energy giant warns ministers on new Sizewell station

[Emily Gosden](#), Energy Editor

EDF has threatened to abandon work on a proposed nuclear plant in Suffolk unless it receives assurances from the government this year that a viable funding model exists.

Simone Rossi, EDF Energy's UK chief executive, said that rapid progress was needed on the development of the sister project to its 19.6 billion Hinkley Point C plant in Somerset because promised cost savings would not materialise if there was a significant delay between work on the two.

Mr Rossi's comments will worry the government because new nuclear power stations are a core part of its vision for Britain's sources of energy in the future, with existing ageing reactors being shut down.

Hinkley Point C is Britain's first new nuclear project in a generation and is due to start operating in 2025. It will generate 3.2 gigawatts of electricity, 7 per cent of the country's power needs.

EDF, the French state-controlled energy giant, wants to build a near-identical plant at Sizewell in Suffolk. However, the plans have been thrown into doubt by intense criticism of the high costs of Hinkley Point, which EDF is building only because of a 35-year contract locking consumers into paying potentially billions of pounds in subsidies.

Nuclear developers including EDF and Hitachi, of Japan, which wants to build a plant on Anglesey, are in talks with the government over alternative financing models that could reduce the costs to consumers. EDF does not need to strike a deal on Sizewell with the government this year, but Mr Rossi wants to be confident that it will be possible to reach an agreement.

"This is the year where we need to understand whether this whole thing is really feasible or not," he told *The Times*. "If we were to conclude that maybe it's not feasible, then at that point maybe we say we are not in a position to continue the project."

EDF is pushing for a regulated asset base model similar to that used for the Thames Tideway tunnel, under which the developers would start receiving income while building the project.

Both the National Audit Office and public accounts committee have urged ministers to consider alternatives. However, some in government are thought to remain nervous about construction cost overruns.

Mr Rossi has promised that Sizewell should be a fifth cheaper to build than Hinkley Point because EDF will be able to replicate much of the design work and will have a fully qualified workforce and supply chain ready to transfer across. However, he warned that a delay could jeopardise this. A lull of six months could be surmountable, but two years or more would be a problem.



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