

# Gulf-wide electricity grid ready by May 2010 – official

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A regional Gulf Arab electricity grid costing \$1.4bn will begin full operation in May 2010, a top official of the regional authority in charge of the link-up said on Monday.

Phase one of the project linking the power grids of four Gulf member states has been completed while two others will be shortly linked Ahmed Ali Ebrahim, a systems director of the authority told a conference.

"The actual...commissioning of phase one has started and trial operations and load tasks will go on till May 2009 and by summer it will be operational," Ebrahim said.

"We expect the whole (Gulf) inter-connection will be operational by May 2010," he said.

A power exchange and trading agreement is expected to be signed within the next two months.

"Allocation of capacity would be on auction basis, there can be a secondary market for trading," Ebrahim said.

In March 2008, an official at the authority said the link-up would be ready by early 2009

The Gulf states are building the grid to help meet spiraling demand for power.

In the first phase, the grids of Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and Qatar have been linked and that of Oman and the United Arab Emirates are to be linked in phase two.

The body, called Gulf Cooperation Council Interconnection Authority (GCCIA), is a joint stock company owned by the six gulf states.

The grid's first phase will have a capacity of 1,200 megawatts.

The project cost is being met by member states in proportion to the benefits they can get from it.