

Higashidori-1 Begins Commercial Operation

Having cleared a pre-service inspection by the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI), Higashidori-1 NPS (BWR, 1,100MW) of the Tohoku Electric Power Co. began commercial operation at 10:12 a.m. on December 8. The unit is the 54th operating reactor in Japan, and the first ever in Aomori Prefecture.

After the first public hearing was held in April 1996, Higashidori-1 was approved by the then Electric Power Development Coordination Council (EPDCC) three months later. In November 1997, the second public hearing was held, and construction began in December 1998. In December 2004, trial operation began, and first criticality was reached the following month.

Higashidori-1 was connected to the grid on March 9, 2005, with a series of tests carried out at each stage of electric output – raised in steps to 20%, 50%, 75% and 100% – to confirm performance and the soundness of all facilities. Although the start of commercial operation was delayed for two months, having been originally scheduled for October, owing to the failure in June of a main steam isolation valve to work properly, the construction in general proceeded smoothly and steadily.

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