South Africa launching nuclear energy plan

The South African government plans to award contracts to build a fleet of new nuclear power stations to meet the country's growing demand for electricity and reduce its dependence on fossil fuels

South Africa's twin-reactor Koeberg nuclear plant

Power output: Construction of up to eight new reactors, generating total of 9,600 megawatts – will meet 23 percent of South Africa's energy needs by 2030. First reactor to be commissioned by 2023

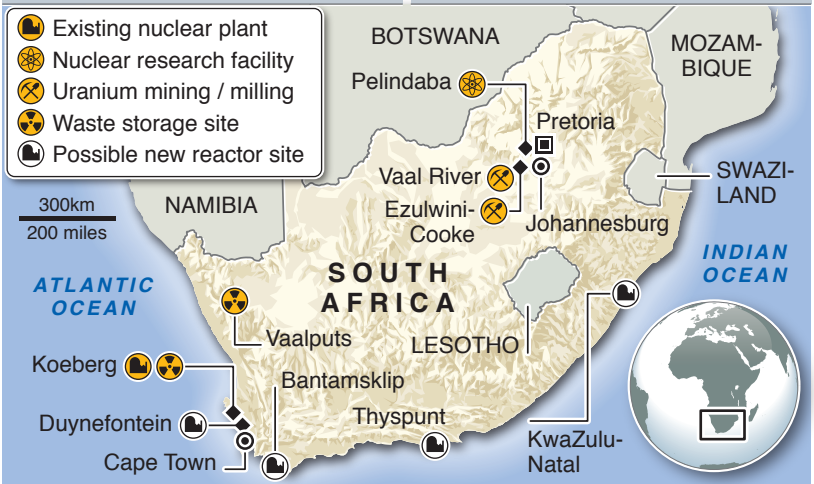
Cost estimates: Range from $37 billion to $100 billion, spread over 15 years

Procurement process: Seven countries competing to win reactor contracts – Canada, China, France, Japan, Russia, South Korea and United States

Preferred bidders: To be announced by April 2016. Russia's state-owned ***Rosatom*** seen as frontrunner due to close historical ties between Moscow and South Africa's ruling African National Congress

Nuclear expansion: Seeks to address electricity shortages that have caused widespread blackouts in South Africa since 2008

Fossil fuels: Reliance on coal-fired plants expected to fall from current level of more than 85 percent to 65 percent by 2030



Sources: World Nuclear Association, wire agencies

Picture: Wikimedia