

Three Gorges Dam

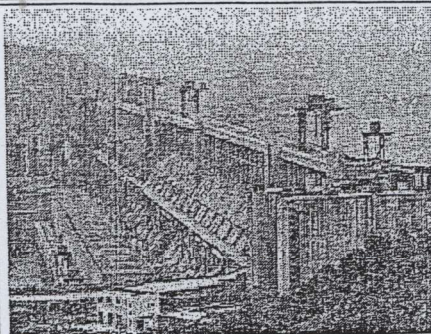
The **Three Gorges Dam** (simplified Chinese: 长江三峡大坝; traditional Chinese: 長江三峽大壩; pinyin: Chángjiāng Sānxiá Dàbà) is a hydroelectric river dam that spans the Yangtze River (Chinese: 扬/洋子; pinyin: Yángzǐ) in Sandouping, Yichang, Hubei, China.

It is the largest hydroelectric power station in the world. With a long history of planning and more than a decade of construction, the dam body was finished in 2006. With the completion of the whole site, it contains 32 main generators, each with a capacity of 700 MW. Except for a planned ship lift, all of the originally planned components of the project were completed on October 30, 2008, when the 26th generator was brought into commercial operation. Six additional generators in the underground power plant were being installed, four of which became fully operational in 2011. The last two turbines in the underground power plant are not expected to become fully operational until mid 2012. The total electric generating capacity of the dam reaches 22,500 MW.


The project produces clean electricity, prevents deadly floods downstream and enhances navigation. As of April 2009, the dam has generated 300 TWh of electricity, covering 30% its project cost according to Xinhua. The project management and the Chinese state media regard the project as a historic engineering, social, and economic success, a breakthrough in the design of large turbines, and a move towards reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

However, the dam has also flooded archaeological and cultural sites and displaced some 1.4 million people, and is causing dramatic ecological changes, including increasing the risk of landslides. The decision to build the dam has been deeply controversial in China and abroad.

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Official name	长江三峡大坝
Impounds	Yangtze River
Locale	Sandouping, Yichang, Hubei, China
Length	2,335 metres (7,661 ft)
Height	101 metres (331 ft)
Width (at base)	115 metres (377 ft)
Construction began	December 17, 1994
Construction Cost	Estimated 180 billion yuan (39 billion U.S. dollars)
Reservoir information	
Creates	Three Gorges Reservoir
Capacity	39.3 km ³ (9.4 cu mi)
Catchment area	1,000,000 km ² (386,102 sq mi)
Surface area	1,045 km ² (403 sq mi)
Geographical Data	
Coordinates	 30°49'48"N 111°0'36"E 30.83°N 111.01°E
Maintained by	China Three Gorges Dam Project