

LONDON, April 29 (Reuters)

# High prices force out bidders as UK nuclear site prices soar

## Intense competition has sent bid prices to more than triple the original reserve price for one of the three nuclear power station sites up for sale in Britain

A 30-day multi-million pound auction for farmland to build new nuclear power plants in Britain could end on Wednesday after one of the consortiums pulled out, sources close to the process said.

A consortium of Spain's Iberdrola, France's GDF Suez and Scottish & Southern Energy declined to comment on reports they had stopped bidding for land to build new nuclear power plants in Britain.

**According to the Financial Times newspaper the three firms have pulled out of the auction for land at three nuclear sites because the bids by competing utilities have been too high.**

The government wants private companies to build enough new nuclear power plants to at least replace Britain's existing reactors, most of which will be shut over the next 10 years, and Europe's biggest utilities have been lining up to do it.

Other utilities keen to build new nuclear power plants in Britain are France's EDF, and a joint venture between German rival utilities E.ON and RWE.

Spokespersons for the firms in the Iberdrola-led consortium in Madrid, Paris and Scotland declined to comment on whether the three had pulled out of the bidding which is in 30th day.

Two bids were placed on Tuesday, bringing the total number of bids for the three sites to 55, one source close to the process said. If no further bids are placed on Wednesday morning the auction will end.

Each bid must be 5 million pounds (\$7.36 million) higher than the previous one. Britain's Nuclear Decommissioning Authority launched the auction in March for 999-year leases on land near three of its nuclear power stations in the UK, at Wylfa in north Wales, Oldbury in Gloucestershire, western England and Bradwell in Essex, southeastern England.

(Reporting by Daniel Fineren and Muriel Boselli; editing by James Jukwey  
NUCLEAR/LAND (daniel.fineren@reuters.com; +44 207 542 3083; Reuters Messaging:  
daniel.fineren.reuters.com@reuters.net)

**COPYRIGHT**