In a bid to end frequent power cuts, utility firm Kenya Power is in the process of implementing a Sh13bn underground power network project in Nairobi. The cabling project is expected to reinforce the Nairobi City Centre bulk power supply system by providing alternative supply to the existing substations.

During a press briefing at Stima Plaza, Ben Chumo, Kenya Power Chief Executive said that, the underground power network will involve installation of underground cables around the city to eliminate power interruptions that often result from interference with the overhead cables.

According to Chumo, the underground power network is envisaged to improve supply quality to customers around Nairobi.

Via the underground cabling, about 30.71km of 66kV transmission lines will be connected to the new substation. The new substation is expected to be set up in the city centre so as to provide a link between the new substation and the 6 other existing substations around the city with an aim of expanding the distribution network and reduce system losses.

Apart from the city centre substations, the underground power network will as well involve construction of 2 other substations given that the underground cabling technology is more aesthetic compared to the overhead lines. Additionally, the technology is less expensive in terms of land acquisition challenges and wayleaves requirement.

Through the underground cables, the power supplier targets to reach new customers, who will be connected to power in the ongoing government electrification programmes.

Between June 2013 and September this year, the power utility firm's customer base has increased from 2.3 million customers to five million customers, a situation that necessitated the investment in underground cabling.

Moreover, besides the underground cabling, 81 substations have been upgraded by the power supplier. In addition, 11,718km of medium voltage lines have been constructed in order to expand its distribution network between the same period.