



N djamena energy storage for renewable energy

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A contracted 32MW solar-plus-storage project just north of Chad's capital N'Djaména is one step closer to fruition after the African Development Bank (AfDB) provided it with an €18 million (US\$19.6 million) loan with a partial risk guarantee.

The loan is part of the development financier's US\$20 billion 'Desert to Power' initiative to install 10GW of solar across the Sahel by 2025. It will cover interconnection infrastructure including a double-circuit 33kV overhead transmission line, two 33 / 90kV transformers at a substation and a 4MWh battery system, according to an AfDB release.

The Djermaya solar project is being billed as among the first utility-scale solar ventures in the central African state and its first electricity sector private-public-partnership. The plant's backers estimate that it will increase the country's electricity capacity by 10%.

Currently, the entirety of Chad's 125MW power generation comes from diesel and more than 13 million people nation-wide lack access to power, according to USAID statistics. In rural communities, access rates are as low as one percent.

The Djermaya project's backers include British-headquartered developer Aldwich International Limited and a consortium of project shareholders that includes InfraCo Africa and Smart Energies. The firms sit alongside Chad's Renewable energy and Finance ministries, as well as the project off-taker, state-run Sociéte Nationale d'Electricité (SNL).

InfraCo Africa, part of the Private Infrastructure Development Group (PIDG), has committed US\$3 million for project development and leveraged US\$0.8 million in grants from its sister PIDG company, the Technical Assistance Facility (TAF). The TAF grant has also funded legal advice for the Government of Chad to support preparation and negotiation of project documents. The project has also secured a €6.35 million (nearly US\$7 million) commitment from the EU-Africa Infrastructure Trust Fund (EU-AITF) to build a transmission line and substation to connect the solar plant to the grid.

Other solar projects are in the works in Chad. In early 2019, the energy minister signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for a 120MW solar project with UAE-based developer Amea Power. And a year prior, another UAE developer, Almaden Emirates Fortune Power, signed an agreement with the government for a 200-400MW plant.



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