



Papua new guinea rural microgrids

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The United States government, through the U.S. Agency for International Development, has committed \$1.86 million (USD 1.2 million) to support the development of a solar-powered microgrid in Papua New Guinea's Central province.

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) will partner with Singapore-based clean energy company WEnergy Global to install a renewable energy microgrid that it hopes will serve as a model for rural electrification in Papua New Guinea (PNG).

While no specifics about the size of the Central province microgrid have been provided, USAID Administrator Samantha Power, who announced the funding during a visit to PNG at the weekend, said the off-grid system will connect at least 800 households and 30 businesses to electricity, thereby improving clean energy access for at least 4,800 people in the region.

The launch of the Central province project comes after USAID earlier this year helped fund a microgrid featuring a 90 kW rooftop solar system at the Pimaga Rural Hospital in the Southern Highlands province.

Both microgrids are part of the USAID's PNG Electrification Partnership, a five-year project launched in 2018 to spark investments from the private sector in off-grid areas and support the PNG government's goal of connecting 70% of the population to electricity by 2030 and 100% electrification by 2050.

Challenging terrain, poor infrastructure, and a largely rural and remote population has made it difficult to pursue large-scale electrification via a national grid. But with the costs of renewable energy technologies decreasing in recent years, USAID said off-grid electrification presents a viable alternative to providing baseline electricity services.

"We know that expanding access to clean electricity is a key priority in PNG," Power said, adding that the new microgrid is expected to "demonstrate the commercial viability of such projects and serve as a proof point for additional private sector investments."

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EU-STREIT PNG preparing to install micro grid solar panels in selected public facilities to support cocoa, vanilla and fisheries entrepreneurs as well as livelihoods of rural communities.

To create an enabling environment for cocoa, vanilla and fisheries entrepreneurs and to generate real possibility for economic growth that will enhance the livelihoods of rural communities, the UNDP under the EU-Funded Joint UN STREIT PNG Programme, is closing in on preparatory works with stakeholders to install solar generated clean and renewable electrical energy in the Sepik region of Papua New Guinea.

In a one-day workshop organised by the Programme in Wewak, East Sepik Province, on Thursday 23 June, participating stakeholders from Division of Education, Sepik Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) Mission, Division of Health and Catholic Health Service came together to discuss and gauge feedback from beneficiaries on the installation of micro grid solar systems in six identified facilities.

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