

Solar energy buenos aires

BUENOS AIRES, Dec 23 2022 (IPS) - With large projects held back by the economic crisis and lack of infrastructure, Argentina seems to be looking at an alternative path towards a more sustainable energy mix involving small renewable energy projects, promoted by environmentally aware industries, businesses and private users.

The initiatives are aimed at covering their own consumption, sometimes with the addition of so-called distributed generation, in which user-generators who have a surplus of electricity can inject it into the national power grid and thus generate a tariff credit.

At the same time, this month saw the inauguration of the largest private solar energy park in the city of Buenos Aires, an initiative of the Argentine Rural Society (SRA), the traditional business chamber of agricultural producers.

The park was installed in the exhibition center the SRA owns in the capital of this South American country, to supply part of its consumption with an investment of almost one million dollars and more than 1,000 solar panels.

“Small private renewable energy projects and distributed generation will be the ones to increase installed capacity in the coming years, because the electricity transmission and distribution system sets strong limits on large projects,” Mariela Beljansky, a specialist in energy and climate change issues, told IPS.

Beljansky, who was national director of Electricity Generation until early 2022, added: “Otherwise there will be no way to meet the growth targets for renewable sources set by Argentina, as part of its climate change mitigation commitments under the Paris Agreement.”

Argentina presented its National Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation Plan, which includes 250 measures to be implemented by 2030, at the 27th Conference of the Parties (COP27) on climate change held by the United Nations in the Egyptian city of Sharm El Sheikh in November.

The National Secretariat for Climate Change estimated the total value of the plan’s implementation at 185.5 billion dollars, four times more than the debt Argentina incurred in 2018 with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), which has generated a sharp deterioration of the economy since then.

Although renewable sources (with wind projects in first place and solar in second place) reached a record in October, supplying 17.8 percent of total electricity demand, the energy mix continues to be sustained basically by oil, natural gas and large hydroelectric projects.

Furthermore, the country has not decided to slow down the development of fossil fuels. The main reason is that it has large reserves of shale natural gas in the Vaca Muerta field in the south of the country, which has been attracting the interest of international investors for years. The climate change plan sets the goal of using natural gas as a transition fuel to replace oil as much as possible.

The plan also includes the objectives of developing a variety of renewable energy sources (wind, solar, small hydro, biogas and biomass) and also distributed generation, “directly at the points of consumption” and connected to the public power grid, at the residential and commercial levels.

Large renewable projects experienced strong growth between 2016 and 2019, on the back of an official plan that guaranteed the purchase of electricity at attractive prices for investors, but since then there have been virtually no new initiatives.

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