

Solar energy for homes guinea

The construction of two 35-megawatt power plants and a 30-megawatt plant are underway in the gold-rich regions of Kankan and Siguiri, the energy ministry said in statement Friday.

The solar projects would bring 180 megawatts of new capacity online in a country with a total installed generating capacity of just 1,200 megawatts in 2022, according to BloombergNEF data. Guinea imports about 130 megawatts of power from neighboring Senegal and Ivory Coast, but that's insufficient to meet demand.

"The solar power plants will support sustainable development and strengthen our energy autonomy," the ministry said, without specifying the project's cost or source of funding.

Guinea vies with Australia as China's largest supplier of bauxite, a reddish ore used to make aluminum. It also has the world's largest untapped reserves of iron ore. Still, most of the nation lives in poverty, lacking access to electricity and other basic services.

Friday's announcement comes at a time when China has been stepping up renewable energy investments across Africa, pledging more than \$1 billion toward wind and solar projects between 2015 and 2018 alone, according to a database by the Boston University Global Development Policy Center.

UK-based InfraCo Africa and France-based Solv?o Energie have signed a 25-year power purchase agreement (PPA) with Guinea's national power utility, Electricit? de Guin?e (EDG), ahead of the country's first on-grid photovoltaic (PV) plant being built.

InfraCo Africa, a co-investor and developer of infrastructure projects in Africa funded by the British, Dutch and Swiss governments, and Solv?o Energie are developing the 40MW Khoumagueli solar project, which is set to be Guinea's first grid-connected solar plant. The PPA signing follows a concession agreement for the project, signed in February 2019. InfraCo Africa has committed \$2.8m to the project and expects the plant to go online by early 2023.

Gilles Vaes, chief executive of InfraCo Africa, said in a statement that the signing is a "key milestone for the Khoumagueli solar project, which will deliver reliable, affordable power to Guinea's homes and businesses".

Benjamin Attia, a senior research analyst at consultancy Wood Mackenzie, notes that "40MW of solar is not a lot in the grand scheme of things, but the Guinean grid has less than 600MW of installed capacity".

He stresses that, unlike in the US or Europe, solar energy projects in the region are "additive, not substitutionary", meaning that the electricity generated does not simply replace pre-existing fossil fuels; instead, this project contributes to meeting electricity demand and reducing outages.



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In a June 2020 report entitled "Global photovoltaic power potential by country", the World Bank illustrated the clear gap between Africa's high solar power potential and its meagre installed capacity.

The planet's daily solar PV potential is thought to be 3.0-5.0 kilowatt/hours (kWh) worldwide, and Guinea finds itself in the higher end of this scale at 4.44 kWh -- testament to the country's solar energy potential. However, the country has installed just 13.4MW worth of solar potential up until 2018, World Bank figures show. This is less than half that of Ireland, which has the world's smallest solar potential, according to World Bank figures.

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