

Banjul solar energy policy

Gambia's largest ever renewable IPP is being developed in a West African Power Pool initiative that is intended to boost Banjul's efforts to move away from reliance on on-grid thermal generation.

National Water and Electricity Company (Nawec) is also looking to engage with IPPs interested in developing wind plants along the coast, while electricity access will be further improved by transmission and distribution upgrades.

Access to clean energy in the Gambia is set to be transformed under a new EUR 142 million initiative to harness solar power and supply clean energy across the country, backed by the European Investment Bank, World Bank and European Union.

Once operational the scheme will increase energy supply in the Gambia by one fifth and transform electricity access in rural communities through construction of a new photovoltaic plant at Jambur near Banjul, new power transmission and distribution infrastructure. The project will increase access to energy, ensure that education and health services benefit from reliable power and help to address current power shortages in the country.

The European Investment Bank support, the first engagement in Gambia by the world's largest international public bank since 1991 and largest ever financing for investment in Gambia was formally signed by Maria Shaw-Barragan, Director for lending operations outside Europe, at a ceremony in Banjul earlier today attended by Vice President Ousainu Darboe and Attila Lajos, Ambassador European Union.

"The Gambia will be the first country in Africa, if not the only country in the world, to have provided renewable energy electrification for all public school and health facilities. The Project is designed to assure the sustainable provision of electricity powered by the solar systems for at least 20 years and to lay the groundwork for a national solar energy industry to provide additional services in the future." said Attila Lajos, European Union Ambassador to the Republic of Gambia.

The European Union will provide EUR 106 million for the clean energy programme to be implemented by national electricity utility NAWEC. This includes EUR 65 million under a 25-year long-term concessional loan from the European Investment Bank and a EUR 41 million grant from the European Union budget. The project will also be supported by EUR 35.7 million financing from the World Bank.

Energy demand in Gambia has grown by 5.5% a year in recent years and the new 20 MW solar power plant to the national energy grid will both significantly increase Gambia's current generation capacity of 98MW and enable electrification of rural areas.



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At present less than half the population of Gambia have access to electricity and in rural areas only 15% of people are connected to the energy network. Electricity costs in the country are far higher than neighbouring countries and fluctuate due to reliance on imported diesel

Under the scheme all 1,000 schools and 100 health centres in rural parts of the Gambia that currently have limited electricity access are expected benefit from reliable energy supply through new connections to the national energy network and provision of off-grid solar and battery systems.

A dedicated part of the European funding will support feasibility and environmental studies, technical training, new infrastructure to connect social services and regulatory assistance to allow renewable energy to be supplied to the NAWEC.

Implementation of an energy sector program in Gambia, including (1) up to 20 MW grid-connected PV plant, (2) grid reinforcement investments, (3) electricity sector institutional and technical support and (4) off-grid PV systems installed on up to 1100 public schools and health facilities.

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