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Save to read list Published by Sarah Smith, Assistant Editor Energy Global, Tuesday, 31 August 2021 10:10

Significant wind and solar potential and abundant biomass residues present considerable opportunities for Botswana to enhance domestic energy security and increase access to modern energy services, according to a new report published by the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA). Short-to-medium-term actions in the areas of policy, regulation, risk, and investment can create a more conducive environment for renewables development in the country, per the report.

Renewables Readiness Assessment: Botswana, developed in close co-operation with the Ministry of Mineral Resources, Green Technology and Energy Security (MMGE), complements the Botswana National Energy policy recently adopted by parliament. A prominent objective of the policy is to substantially increase the penetration of renewable energy in the country. Botswana aims to source 15% of its energy from renewables by 2030, and 36% by 2036. At the end of 2020, Botswana had 6 MW of installed renewables capacity.

“The release of this assessment coincides with parliament’s recent adoption of a National Energy Policy, a prominent objective of which is to achieve a substantive penetration of new and renewable energy in order to support energy self-sufficiency and energy security,” said Hon. Lefoko Moagi, Minister for Mineral Resources, Green Technology and Energy Security of Botswana. “This study augments ongoing national efforts to achieve this goal. Botswana is grateful to IRENA for its continued support.”

“Botswana has a significant endowment of renewable energy resources that if fully developed could stimulate sustainable, economy wide gains that benefit all Botswana,” said IRENA Director-General Francesco La Camera. “We will work closely with the Government of Botswana as it pursues a new energy future, to ensure that the recommendations of this study help inform planning and policymaking in the years ahead.”

Promoting and facilitating the implementation of a clear long-term vision for renewable energy development with binding commitments supported by data from pre-feasibility studies can help address investment risks and attract private sector participation, according to the report. The assessment also points to the integration of renewable energy beyond the power sector by developing well-aligned strategies for renewable energy in agriculture, transport, heating, cooling, and cooking.

The report also calls for the operationalisation of the Botswana Energy Regulation Authority (BERA), guaranteeing a sustainable and independent budget, as well as sufficient political independence and capacity to

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hold utilities to account for their financial and operational performance. The report highlights that a transparent grid code could be established under BERA to govern all current and future electricity generators, ensuring renewable electricity is given priority grid access, and that its dispatch is based on marginal costs.

The Summer issue of Energy Global features a varied spectrum of in-depth technical articles detailing recent projects, future projections, and technological advancements in the renewables sector, from companies including CEWEP, Enel Green Power, Turboden S.p.A., Cornwall Insight, and more.

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