

Commercial microgrids majuro

1. Sector Policy and Renewable Energy Targets. The RMI Government has adopted a target of 20% renewable electricity generation by 2020 and has committed to a 35% reduction of GHG emissions under its UNFCCC Paris Agreement nationally determined contributions (NDCs) compared to its 2010 baseline. Under its NDC, RMI has a long-term net-zero emissions target for its entire economy by 2050. 54% of RMI's emissions are from power generation. 90% of RMI's primary energy supply is derived from imported petroleum products.

2. Concentration of Power Generation and Consumption on Majuro. MEC, RMI's largest power utility, is responsible for electricity service throughout RMI, except for Ebeye in Kwajalein Atoll. MEC's main system on Majuro Atoll provides universal service to a population of 28,000 persons. It delivers approximately 72% of electric power consumed in RMI (with Ebeye accounting for 24%, and outer islands representing the balance).

3. High Reliance on Imported Petroleum Fuel. Diesel generation accounts for approximately 98% of the Majuro system's annual power generation of approximately 53.7 GWh. While Majuro enjoys an abundant solar resource and may have an economically viable wind resource, developing additional intermittent renewable generation beyond its current 900 kWp installed solar generation is technically infeasible without investment in network, generation, and control hardware to ensure network stability.

6. MEC Business Process and Organizational Inefficiencies. Deficiencies in MEC's business processes, including budget formulation, asset management, and maintenance, cost accounting and reporting, and capital project planning and execution, among others, are cause for concern for MEC's ability to sustain itself as a going concern. A far-reaching capacity-building and institutional strengthening program is essential to maximize value for investments under this project and future projects financed by ADB or other donors.

8. Alignment with development plans. The project is included in ADB's Country Operations Business Plan 2017-2019 and supports RMI's national energy policy and energy action plan to reduce dependence on imported fossil fuels and supply-side losses.

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Unscheduled power outages have been repeatedly happening in Majuro, and power rationing went into effect late last week as MEC power plant staff struggled to repair one of the large engines that anchors power delivery to the capital atoll.

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MEC scheduled an outage for the power plant to Laura area for powers plant maintenance Thursday December 28. But then a few days before this date postponed it to the following week Thursday. On December 28, however, power was unexpectedly shut off in the morning to the Laura area and stayed off until mid-afternoon because of "a sudden emergency issue at the plant," according to MEC.

Friday December 29, power was unexpectedly turned off to a section of Delap due to a malfunctioning transformer near the Pacific Regional Bank. Power was off most of the day in the downtown area.

"Due to a mechanical issue with the large Deutz engine, we may not have enough power to feed the entire island tonight, and power may be off in some areas of Majuro," MEC stated Thursday January 4 on its Facebook page. MEC advised businesses "to run their own generators tonight."

Further, it announced a new power outage plan for the power plant to Ejit the next day, Friday from 9am. Electricity from the "power plant to Rita will be shut down until the Deutz engine is repaired," Thursday's announcement said.

The outage continued all day Friday and about 5pm, MEC announced on its Facebook page: "Due to ongoing issues, today's planned engine repairs were unable to be completed. As a result, the rolling outages will continue tonight and tomorrow. MEC will shut down the big Deutz engine around 4am for repairs, but power will be rotated as needed. Please turn off all lights and equipment that you are not using to help keep the power on elsewhere."

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