

Madagascar utility-scale energy storage

The project consists of an 8 M W solar PV plant that is scheduled to be operational in 2022 and a 12 MW wind farm that will be commissioned in 2023. Both facilities will be connected to an 8.25 MW battery and will cover 60% of the annual electricity consumption of the Fort-Dauphin mine, located in the south of the island.

The project will be owned 80% by Rito Tinto and 20% by the government of Madagascar and will power the ilmenite mine of QIT Madagascar Minerals (QMM) in Fort Dauphin, southern Madagascar.

The plant will comprise an 8 MW PV array featuring 18,000 solar panels - set to be commissioned in 2022 - and a 12 MW wind farm consisting of five turbines that is planned for 2023. Both will be connected to a lithium-ion storage system with a capacity of up to 8.25 MW.

It will be built and operated by CrossBoundary Energy (CBE) which has signed a 20-year power purchase agreement with QMM. "The park will supply all of QMM's electricity demand during peak production periods, and up to 60% of the demand," said Rio Tinto in a video conference. "Thanks to this public-private funded project, we are aiming for less load shedding on the network and a reduction in the price per kWh, to make the price of electricity accessible to everyone and attractive to all investors," added Jocelyn Raharimbola, governor of the Anosy region.

QMM hopes to reduce its annual carbon dioxide emissions by around 26,000 tonnes and its purchases of heavy fuel oil by 8,500 tonnes per year. "The Fort-Dauphin mine could be the first in the group to become carbon neutral in 2023," said Stéphane Leblanc, Rio Tinto Iron and Titanium executive director. "Globally, our group has also raised its targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions, by less than 15% by 2025, and by less than 50% by 2030."

The project is also an opportunity to foster local expertise. QMM and CBE are working with local authorities to develop manufacturing capabilities for equipment for the renewable energy industry at Ehoala Park, a 15-hectare industrial area open to national and international investors.

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The first utility scale solar power plant in the country, the Ambatolampy power plant was built by Green Yellow Madagascar and commissioned in 2018 as a 20MWp plant. GY Madagascar will begin work on the second phase to extend the plant to 40MWp with 5MWh of battery storage in June 2021. Commissioning is expected by the end of 2021.

The first phase of the development was funded by finance partners Soci?t? G?n?rale, GarantCo (the guarantee division of the Private Infrastructure Development Group and the Africa Guarantee Fund), alongside the Banque Malgache de L'océan Indien and BNI Madagascar.

Hassanein Hiridjee, Axian Group CEO pointed out the expansion of the Ambatolampy power plant is in line with their objective to increase access to energy to the Malagasy people by means of clean, sustainable and affordable energy.

"It is our pride to be able to implement this project in an extremely short timeframe, given the current ... constraints we are experiencing for about a year. It was a real challenge."

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