Solar energy for businesses myanmar

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Solar energy is just beginning to gain some traction in Myanmar, a country that has been gradually opening up its economy and society to the world since 2011. Demand for energy has been growing fast, in parallel with the ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) member"s economy, and solar energy is competing against a variety of conventional, as well as alternative low- or zero-carbon, energy resources for its share of Myanmar"s energy mix.

Renewable energy, in the form of large-scale hydroelectric power, already accounts for around 60%, the single largest share, of Myanmar"s electricity generation mix. The country also has an abundance of natural gas, an important export and the source of hard, foreign currency export revenues, as well as domestic power generation.

Solar could play a big role in achieving Myanmar"s energy access, renewable energy and climate change goals, as well as go a long way towards setting Myanmar firmly on a sustainable development pathway, however. Levels vary widely across this geographically diverse Southeast Asian nation, but on the whole, Myanmar is endowed with an abundance of solar energy resource potential,

"Myanmar has incredible potential for solar energy: the International Growth Centre has estimated Myanmar"s solar potential to be 51.973 TWh (terawatt-hours) annually," according to FinerGreen and ABO Wind, the authors of the SolarPower Europe Emerging Markets Task Force"sMyanmar research report, which was released in May.

However, there is still a lot of work to be done by the government to unleash this solar potential and attract foreign direct investment in the solar industry in Myanmar.

A nation of some 55 million and growing as of a 2014 census, just 42% of Myanmar households had access to electricity, according to the first, June 2019 nationwide assessment of distributed energy market potential in Myanmar, which was produced by Smart Power Myanmar, a national platform with a mandate to advance a modern energy ecosystem in the country.

Myanmar is one of the most poorly electrified countries in Southeast Asia, with an average electrification rate of 39% at the end of 2017. According to the Germanwatch Global Climate Risk Index, Myanmar was also one of the countries that was most affected by extreme weather events in the years between 1997 and 2016. The country would therefore benefit from decentralized power generation solutions, like solar.

That said, Myanmar"s economy grew from 5.6% to 8% from fiscal year 2011 to 2015, fueled by strong growth in the construction, manufacturing and services sectors, according to the Asian Development Bank"s (ADB) December 2016 Myanmar: Energy Sector Assessment, Strategy and Road Map report. ADB forecast that GDP

growth would accelerate to 8.3% in fiscal year 2015 and continue around that level in 2016.

"This optimistic projection is based on the country"s abundant natural resources; strategic location at the crossroads of Asia; and a large, youthful population. To realize it, however, the country needs to successfully implement extensive reforms and integrated policies, build basic infrastructure, and tackle many bottlenecks. The development of energy sector is key to the country"s future," the ADB report authors wrote.

Myanmar is able to produce between 2.9 gigawatts (GW) and 3.1 GW of electricity, according to media sources. Recent estimates by the World Bank forecast energy consumption in Myanmar would grow at an average 11% rate out to 2030. The World Bank also forecast that peak electricity demand would rise to 8.6 GW by 2025 and 12.6 GW by 2030.

Half the electricity produced in Myanmar is consumed in Yangon, its largest city and commercial hub. Rolling blackouts and brownouts are common occurrences across the country, however. Furthermore, electricity consumption per capita ranked among the lowest in the world at just 110 kilowatt-hours (kWh) as of 2011, according to ADB"s 2016 report. That compares to a world average of 3,000 kWh per capita and an average of 174 kWh per capita for least-developed countries.

"According to the Ministry of Electricity and Energy (MOEE), there are 10.9 million households in Myanmar of which only 4.71 million are on the national grid. Myanmar"s National Electrification Project (NEP) aims to supply electricity to nearly 700,000 households in more than 8,000 villages by 2021," according to SolarPower Europe"s Myanmar research team.

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