Tirana thermal energy storage

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Transforming the global energy system in line with global climate and sustainability goals calls for rapid uptake of renewables for all kinds of energy use. Thermal energy storage (TES) can help to integrate high shares of renewable energy in power generation, industry and buildings.

This outlook from the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) highlights key attributes of TES technologies and identifies priorities for ongoing research and development.

In addition, TES forms a key part of the energy transition investment package available to countries for post-COVID recovery. Investments in TES, along with renewables, energy efficiency and electrification, can strengthen health and economic infrastructure, drive short-term recovery and align energy development with global climate and sustainability goals.

IRENA"s Innovation Outlook series analyses rapidly emerging renewable energy technologies (RETs) and examines ways to enhance their competitiveness. Each outlook identifies technology-, industry- and policy-related challenges and assesses the potential breakthroughs needed to accelerate the uptake.

The different kinds of thermal energy storage can be divided into three separate categories: sensible heat, latent heat, and thermo-chemical heat storage. Each of these has different advantages and disadvantages that determine their applications.

Sensible heat storage (SHS) is the most straightforward method. It simply means the temperature of some medium is either increased or decreased. This type of storage is the most commercially available out of the three; other techniques are less developed.

A disadvantage of SHS is its dependence on the properties of the storage medium. Storage capacities are limited by the specific heat capacity of the storage material, and the system needs to be properly designed to ensure energy extraction at a constant temperature.[9]

Most solar thermal power plants use this thermal energy storage concept. The Solana Generating Station in the U.S. can store 6 hours worth of generating capacity in molten salt. During the summer of 2013 the Gemasolar Thermosolar solar power-tower/molten-salt plant in Spain achieved a first by continuously producing electricity 24 hours per day for 36 days.[18] The Cerro Dominador Solar Thermal Plant, inaugurated in June 2021, has 17.5 hours of heat storage.[19]

A steam accumulator consists of an insulated steel pressure tank containing hot water and steam under pressure. As a heat storage device, it is used to mediate heat production by a variable or steady source from a variable demand for heat. Steam accumulators may take on a significance for energy storage in solar thermal

energy projects.

Solid or molten silicon offers much higher storage temperatures than salts with consequent greater capacity and efficiency. It is being researched as a possible more energy efficient storage technology. Silicon is able to store more than 1 MWh of energy per cubic meter at 1400 ?C. An additional advantage is the relative abundance of silicon when compared to the salts used for the same purpose.[25][26]

Another medium that can store thermal energy is molten (recycled) aluminum. This technology was developed by the Swedish company Azelio. The material is heated to 600 ?C. When needed, the energy is transported to a Stirling engine using a heat-transfer fluid.

"Brick toaster" is a recently (August 2022) announced innovative heat reservoir operating at up to 1,500 ?C (2,732 ?F) that its maker, Titan Cement/Rondo claims should be able cut global CO2 output by 15% over 15 years.[33]

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