

## Zimbabwe microgrid operation

Hakwata, Chipinge District, 3 October 2024 - In a landmark moment for rural development, a 200-kW solar mini-grid and green village model was commissioned in Hakwata village, bringing clean, reliable electricity to over 100 homes and businesses for the first time. This innovative project, valued at almost US\$2 million, marks a significant leap towards Zimbabwe's sustainable energy goals.

His Excellency President Emmerson Dambudzo Mnangagwa, who commissioned the project, stated: "The electricity access rate is 62%, with the grid electricity access rate in rural areas being around 23.4%. This figure is worryingly low, which means that Government and its development partners have to work together to increase access to modern energy in rural communities."

He added "We want to thank our partners in the CAWEP (FCDO and UNDP) for their assistance to achieving our goal of universal access to sustainable and modern energy in Zimbabwe by 2030."

The project, currently at 20% utilisation, powers 85 homes, 18 businesses, a school, a clinic, and 3 community boreholes, with ample capacity for future growth.

"This solar mini-grid is not just providing electricity; it is powering dreams, fostering equality, and catalysing sustainable development across multiple fronts," said Dr. Ayodele Odusola, UNDP Resident Representative.

The impact of this project on local livelihoods is already evident. Ms. Hamunyari Muzvuzvu, a local shopkeeper, shared her experience: "Before, I used expensive gas to power my shop's fridges. Now, with the solar mini-grid, I'm spending less on energy and earning more. I've even expanded my business to sell kitchen appliances that use electricity. This project has truly transformed my life and business."

The CAWEP initiative is a result of a strong partnership between the British Government, the Government of Zimbabwe, and UNDP. This US\$13.6 million collaboration, funded by the British, aims to bring sustainable development to often-overlooked and remote rural areas.

The British Ambassador, H.E. Pete Vowles, added, "Energy access is a fundamental right and key to economic growth. We're committed to partnering with the Government of Zimbabwe on clean energy innovation and helping to unlock climate finance."

This comprehensive approach is expected to significantly boost local economic activity, improve livelihoods, and enhance quality of life, particularly for women and girls. It serves as a model for future rural electrification efforts across Zimbabwe.

Looking ahead, similar climate adaptation projects are underway in Binga, Insiza, and Chivi Districts,



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focusing on renewable energy, irrigation schemes and improved water access. These initiatives are part of the broader CAWEP project, which runs from 2022 to 2025.

CAWEP focuses on the development of climate-resilient multiple-use water and renewable energy infrastructure in vulnerable communities. The primary goal is to...

The first solar plant of the Zimbabwe Mini-grid Solar Project (Phase III), undertaken by POWERCHINA, recently completed commissioning and began test operations, marking a significant milestone for the project.

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