

## El salvador microgrid development

El Salvador's General Superintendent of Electricity and Telecommunications (SIGET) says solar now accounts for 21.1% of the nation's electricity mix, with total installed PV capacity reaching 633 MW by the end of 2023.

With utility scale solar installations accelerating, Philip Wolfe, founder of PV data consultancy Wiki-Solar, drills into the data to highlight some interesting variations in relative progress around the world.

El Salvador's Lempa River Hydroelectric Executive Commission (CEL) has started building a 17 MW solar park. It is the first to be owned, designed, planned and executed by the national authorities. It is scheduled to start operations in December 2023.

By this time next year we may be able to wave goodbye to that old chestnut about renewables endangering security of supply. Elsewhere, the price of lithium - and the products it goes into - could go either way after tanking this year.

The power plant will be connected to a 3 MW/1.5 MWh lithium-ion battery system. Lenders are the Dutch Development Bank (FMO), the French Development Agency (Proparco) and the Inter-American Development Bank.

The Finnish development financier has granted a loan of \$15 million dollars for the construction of 10 solar power plants in El Salvador. The projects are expected to be fully operational by 2019. Overall, they will have a capacity of 100 MW.

Until a few years ago, El Salvador did not usually make headlines. Unfortunately, when news did come out about the little thumb of Central America, this country so battered by history was painted more like a Dantesque scenario than an Eden. But the Salvadoran people and their land of volcanoes have always deserved more. And it may be that the redesign of this nation - which is happening live - is the redemption story that needs to be told.

Today, El Salvador is the safest country in America. For the first time in a long time, it is a country that can be enjoyed in peace. This is not only a result of security policies. There is a Side B that describes a whole series of projects that aim to renew the capacity of people to imagine and project themselves in their country and to build a Salvadoran dream: the CUBOs (Urban Centers for Wellbeing and Opportunities), new schools, hospitals, and new urban centers that revitalize the coastal area and the country's tourist and cultural heritage, among many others.

Although El Salvador is not a rich country, it is emerging as a leader in the implementation of urban initiatives



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that seek to smartly prioritize human well-being, contact with nature, and the strengthening of the social fabric. Unlike traditional Smart Cities approaches prioritizing technology over human needs, El Salvador has opted for a more inclusive and holistic model. It is also collaborating with UN-Habitat to integrate this vision into new international guidelines to share with the world.

UN-Habitat International Guidelines on People-Centered Smart Cities, a framework that Dr. Santiago Caprio, first director of the Nation Design Agency of El Salvador, is helping to develop to promote an urban transformation focused on the needs of people. people.

In this emerging paradigm, the definition of a truly smart city is independent of its use of technology. But instead, by how an ecosystem of solutions is integrated to positively impact the lives of citizens and users of the changing city. It is about promoting healthy lifestyles through thoughtful projects; a renewed sense of belonging and connection, and; good use of resources and services. All to ensure that meeting the needs of today does not jeopardize our ability to meet the needs of tomorrow - which is what makes sustainability true.

By focusing first on its citizens' needs and environmental sustainability and how technologies can serve these ends, the country is building a smart city model that can even serve as a reference for other nations. With the support of experts such as Dr. Santiago Caprio and in collaboration with UN-Habitat, El Salvador is laying the foundations for a more humane, inclusive, and sustainable urban future.

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