



# Off-grid solar saint kitts and nevis

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Between 1623 and 1783 control switched between the French and British until finally it came under permanent British sovereignty. This remained the position until the islands became independent in 1983. Throughout this period the economy was dominated by sugar cultivation but a cut in EU subsidies which benefited all Caribbean cane producers was progressively reduced in the 1990's so finally in 2005 the mill was closed and sugar cultivation ceased.

Nevis has the most educated population in the Caribbean per capita with 98% literacy rates. This results from a peculiar history associated with the early decline of sugar. Nevis had a particularly sweet and high yield from sugar but was dominated by the British but frequent attacks of the island by pirates and French proxies forced the plantation owners out of the country and led to high levels of local land ownership compared with St Kitts which still has many landless labourers.

Both Nevis and St Kitts are ideal for solar power with long sunny days throughout the year but the growth of renewables has met resistance from the local grid companies. Each island has its own electricity company Nevis has had electricity since 1954.

Most power on both islands is generated by diesel generators (95%) with 3.9% of wind and only 1.77% of solar. There are high power losses of 20% on Nevis and 17% on St Kitts suggesting maintenance problems.

The airport has a 1 mW solar farm and the government estimate a potential 16mW of solar power at a rate of 5 kWhrs per m<sup>2</sup> over the whole island. They also operate a solar loan scheme to encourage the take up of solar installations.

The island has looked at the development of geothermal power but the capital cost is high and would require a "partner". The nearest is Puerto Rico, more than 400 kms from Nevis.

These attractive islands are perfect for the widespread use of solar energy and Off grid installer can help clients on both islands to take advantage of the massive resources of free solar power. Electricity prices of US\$0.29 per kWhr means a rapid payback of less than 10 years.



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