



Port louis renewable energy growth

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Mauritius has encouraged the financing and development of PV power plant projects through both international competitive bidding and joint ventures between the local private sector and international companies. For example, the Henrietta solar farm that has been operational since February 2019 with a production capacity of 17.5 MW. There have also been several initiatives led by the Central Electricity Board (CEB), the public utility company, such as the installation of PV rooftop systems on 10,000 low-income households.

As regards institutional and regulatory changes, the government created the Mauritius Renewable Energy Agency (MARENA) under the MARENA Act 2015. MARENA is empowered, among other things, to oversee and promote the development of renewable energy in Mauritius, including research and innovation. In 2017, the CEB Act was amended to allow CEB (Green Energy) Co Ltd, whose function is to promote renewable energy, to participate in power projects without having recourse to public procurement.

Because renewable energy is not entirely waste-free, the lack of a proper and efficient framework to safely dispose of used solar cells, batteries and PV panels could potentially hamper the country's goal towards achieving environmental sustainability.

Furthermore, and even though there have already been institutional changes in the energy sector recently, the proper expansion of renewable energy capacity will require further supporting policies to allow for fair and transparent development from tariff setting to technical adaptation of the grid.

In today's challenging context marked by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic that has shaken Mauritius' economy and the surge in prices of petroleum products, it is anticipated that renewable energy will play a pivotal role in the country's development.

Indeed, both solar and wind are important natural resources for Mauritius due to its location and climatic conditions which allow for all year-round intensive sunlight and adequate wind. It is anticipated that developing new technologies in these sectors will enable Mauritius to fully tap into the potential of its local renewable sources, thereby significantly maximizing their share in the energy mix.

The abovementioned incentives addressed to households and non-commercial entities with respect to supply of renewable energy will also certainly accelerate the transition into a more climate resilient country.

Furthermore, the incentives and subsidies on electric and hybrid vehicles will encourage a "greening" of the transport system in Mauritius which currently accounts for a significant proportion of energy consumption. The use of ethanol which is being produced only for export should also be encouraged.

The setting up of additional solar plants, wind farms, battery energy storage system in Mauritius as well as other hybrid renewable energy facilities with increased capacities to supply the grid, has the potential to attract both private sector and foreign investments in the production of PV cells and wind turbines, which could lead to local job creation. The energy transition framework is also expected to generate at least Rs 20 billion of private investment over the next 3 years.

There is also the potential for developing hydro power plants in view of the development of new technologies such as cascading hydro power plants, a new way to utilize low level lying watercourses for harnessing energy.

A feasibility study on the potential to develop offshore wind farms could potentially represent an opportunity for Mauritius to develop its ocean economy into an important industry to sustain economic diversification, job creation and wealth generation.

The Government confirmed in the 2022-2023 budget that, in order to finance the implementation of the country's sustainability roadmap, (i) a Carbon Credit trading framework will be prepared, (ii) an Environmental, Social and Corporate Governance (ESG) framework will be developed, and (iii) an inaugural Sustainable Bond will be issued.

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