

Pumped hydro storage botswana

Today, the largest pumped storage power station in the world generates around 3,600 MW (megawatts) of renewable energy – or just over 3.4 terawatt-hours (TWh) per year. That’s enough to power the whole of Botswana each year.

In this article, we’ll take a closer look at the pros and cons of pumped storage, uncovering how it keeps our lights on when we need them most and why it’s not without its challenges.

Pumped storage is a type of large-scale, hydroelectric power generation system that stores excess energy during lower demand times and then releases that energy to generate electricity when it’s needed.

Pumped storage works by using two water reservoirs at different elevations. When there’s excess electricity, that surplus power is used to pump water from the lower reservoir to the upper one.

When electricity demand peaks, it immediately releases the stored water downhill, passing through turbines to generate electricity. It’s essentially a giant energy storage system that helps balance supply and demand for the electrical grid.

Pumped storage is a smart way to save electricity for later when it’s needed most. According to a 2021 research study, the energy cycle between the two reservoirs has a whopping 90% efficiency level – meaning that it only loses 10% of the surplus energy that passes through its turbine.

When it comes to maintaining the balance between electricity supply and demand, pumped storage is a star player. Because of its efficiency in hoarding excess energy, it’s like having a secret energy stash to use whenever there’s a blackout looming.

When electricity demand suddenly skyrockets, pumped storage springs into action with a lightning-fast response time. It can quickly generate power to meet the increased demand and prevent any strain on the electrical grid.

Whenever you’re enjoying a hot shower or binge-watching your favourite show during a peak demand period, you can thank pumped storage for keeping the power flowing smoothly.

With a little TLC, pumped storage infrastructure can be a durable workhorse for decades to come. Regular maintenance is key to keeping the turbines, pumps, and reservoirs in good shape. Just like those ol’ faithful cars that keep ticking along with regular tune-ups.

Constructing the reservoirs and infrastructure for pumped storage can come with a hefty price tag. The need



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for two carefully located reservoirs, pumps, and turbines, plus the intricate engineering work involved, all adds up to substantial upfront costs. And let's not forget about the maintenance costs down the line.

Given that gravity plays quite a significant role in pumped storage, it's not possible to set up shop just anywhere – a pumped storage system needs the right setting, like hilly terrain or mountains and valleys, to work effectively.

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