



Saint lucia florida microgrids

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Today (Feb 1), the U.S. Trade and Development Agency awarded a technical assistance grant to Saint Lucia's National Utilities Regulatory Commission (NURC) that will advance the country's renewable power generation infrastructure and energy sector resilience. USTDA's assistance will help develop an enabling regulatory environment for renewables and assess the feasibility of implementing six solar-plus-storage microgrids at critical facilities in Saint Lucia. The NURC selected the Colorado-based RMI to carry out the assistance.

"USTDA's portfolio across the Caribbean has a strong focus on helping island economies such as Saint Lucia to develop resilient and sustainable energy infrastructure," said Ambassador Vinai Thummalapally (ret.), USTDA's Acting Director. "USTDA is linking its partners to U.S. solutions that will help mitigate the impact of climate change, which has a disproportionate impact on the people of the Caribbean."

USTDA's technical assistance will advance Saint Lucia's efforts to build resilient microgrid infrastructure that can withstand severe weather events and provide continued power supply to hospitals, schools, communications towers, and water treatment plants. The assistance will enable NURC to prepare, develop and de-risk Saint Lucia's first aggregated critical facilities microgrid project, with the goal of providing an enabling regulatory environment that could allow future replication.

This activity supports USTDA's Global Partnership for Climate-Smart Infrastructure, which connects U.S. industry to major clean energy and transportation infrastructure projects in emerging markets. It also supports the Biden Administration's Small and Less Populous Island Economies (SALPIE) Initiative.

The U.S. Trade and Development Agency helps companies create U.S. jobs through the export of U.S. goods and services for priority infrastructure projects in emerging economies. USTDA links U.S. businesses to export opportunities by funding project preparation and partnership building activities that develop sustainable infrastructure and foster economic growth in partner countries.

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The Caribbean Island of St. Lucia is known for its beautiful beaches, lush rainforests, and colorful coral reefs. But for some of the almost 200,000 people that live on the island, another incredible resource is affecting their daily lives -- the nearly 15,000 solar panels that are producing clean, reliable, electricity from the island's first utility-scale solar farm.



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The island's utility company, St. Lucia Electricity Services Limited (LUCELEC), with support from RMI, completed the 4 megawatt system just north of Hewanorra International Airport in August 2018. And in the first three years of operation, it produced 24.7 million kWh of electricity -- enough to power 3,500 homes -- saving 1.5 million gallons of diesel and more than \$3 million.

The journey to the solar farm actually began in 2015 with a case study. RMI was hired by the Government of Saint Lucia to develop a National Energy Transition Strategy for the island. The island was shipping in diesel for the sole electric plant on the island and it was costly. "Of course, Saint Lucia is very vulnerable to climate change. But nobody was thinking of that in 2015. It was really related to cost," says RMI's Kaitlyn Bunker, one of the analysts who produced the transition strategy. "They were ready to make a change in their energy system."

This solar farm was the first large utility-scale solar farm in the region. This meant a steep learning curve for the government and the utility. RMI's expertise was crucial, bringing multiple stakeholders together to collaborate and create an inclusive process. "We demystified the process to procure a solar farm using World Bank best practices, and we really drove down pricing because we brought a bigger procurement pool to the table," says Chris Burgess, RMI's projects director.

The project also demonstrated the need for philanthropic support at the concept and preparation phase to unlock private finance to bring the project to fruition. "For every dollar in philanthropic funds, we unlocked \$17 in private investment," says Burgess. "This is the highest leverage ratio the UNDP ever had."

But Saint Lucia didn't stop there. The island has a goal to have 35 percent of its electricity be supplied by renewable energy by 2025, which means not only more solar farms, but also distributed renewables.

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