

## Solar energy for the environment maputo

According to documents shared with Portuguese news agency Lusa, the renewable energy project will also "allow the creation, directly and indirectly, of more jobs, contributing to the economic growth" of Moamba, a district in Maputo Province. The roughly 142-square-hectare site is situated in Matunganhane, a village near the Corumana Dam. In addition to state-owned power utility Electricidade de Moçambique (EDM), the project involves a number of private companies through the operating entity Central Solar de Corumana.

Mozambique plans to implement solar energy in at least five other locations - Dondo, Lichinga, Manje, Cuamba and Zitundo - by 2030 for an estimated capacity of 1,000 MW, promising a "true solar revolution."

That revolution is getting off to a small, but promising start. Electricity production from solar grew by nearly 14 percent to 19,688 megawatt-hours (MWh) in the first quarter of 2024, up from 17,328 MWh during the same period last year.

To be sure, solar still represented just 0.4 percent of energy production during the same period, with a single hydroelectric facility - the massive Cahora-Bassa Hydroelectric Plant - accounting for more than 82 percent. But as climate change-related droughts become increasingly common, energy production from dams like Cahora-Bassa will dip, increasing the importance of building other renewables.

Mozambique plans to do just that, with 200 to 500 MW of new onshore wind capacity set to come online by 2030 along with "at least" 1,000 MW of solar. By 2050, the aim is to have at least 7.5 gigawatts (GW) of solar installed and up to 2.5 GW of wind capacity, allowing the country to export green energy while still retaining enough domestically to supply industrial consumers.

According to the non-technical summary (NTS) of the environmental impact study (EIS) which is now the subject of public consultation, the project, in addition to the state-owned electricity company, involves private companies from VBC, through the operating entity Central Solar de Corumana.

A document to which Lusa had access to today states that the project is in line with the objectives of the Strategic Plan of the Government of Mozambique for the energy sector. "This is a renewable energy project that will help the Government of Mozambique achieve its goal of universal electrification by 2030 and that will allow the creation, directly and indirectly, of more jobs, contributing to the economic growth of the district of Moamba and the province of Maputo," it reads.

The solar power plant will be built on an area of approximately 142 hectares, next to R802 between S7 to Massingir, in the village of Matunganhane, Moamba district, 6.5 kilometres from the Corumana dam.

Electricity production from solar parks in Mozambique grew by almost 14% in the first quarter of 2024, but

still represents less than 0.5% of the total, according to official data previously reported by Lusa.

According to the budget execution report from January to March, electricity production in six large solar parks in the country, and by other smaller plants, amounted to 19,688 MegaWatt-hours (MWh) in this period, compared to 17,328 MWh in the first three months of 2023.

Despite the growth in production, solar parks only accounted for 0.4% of total production in Mozambique in the first quarter. Production is led by hydroelectric plants, with 84.6%. The Cahora-Bassa Hydroelectric Plant produced 82.2% of all electricity in Mozambique up to March.

Mozambique plans to implement solar power plants in at least five parts of the country by 2030, estimating that it will introduce a capacity of 1,000 MW of electricity production into the grid, promising a "true solar revolution".

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