

Solar industry algiers

The Middle East's solar power industry has come a long way, but it needs to work faster if the region is to meet its energy transition targets, according to the MesiaSolar Outlook Report 2023.

Romain Riche, international development director at Mesia (Middle East Solar Industry Association), told AGBI that the key challenges were accelerating the pace of implementing renewable projects, ensuring availability of supply chains and making sure the region's grid infrastructure is resilient enough.

Riche added that the Cop28 climate conference in Dubai this year should be a catalyst for more renewable projects in the region, as well as the emergence of the green hydrogen sector.

Algeria has the most untapped potential for solar development, according to Mesia's Solar Outlook Report 2023. It is Africa's largest nation by land mass - and where we begin our look at the key solar projects and targets in the Mesia countries.

Solar power is expected to contribute about 1,000mw, under the government's Solar 1000 project. This consists of 10 solar stations with capabilities ranging from 50mw to 300mw. Five have been announced so far. The total capacity of solar photovoltaic energy connected to the grid in 2021 was 12mw.

In January, Bahrain's Ministry of Electricity and Water announced that it had received seven bids for its 72mw multi-site, solar PV project. Five proposals have been accepted.

Last October, the government in Manama launched a tender for construction of a solar park with at least 100mw capacity in the Southern Governorate. Once built, it could power more than 17,000 homes and offset about 170.4 million kg of carbon each year.

While Egypt was hosting the Cop27 summit last November, its government signed 16 agreements with international, regional and local consortiums that will add almost 55gw to its solar and wind power production.

In December the IFC - part of the World Bank - approved a financing deal for Dubai's Amea Power to build, own and operate Abydos, a 560mw solar facility in the Aswan province, and Amunet, a wind power project in the Red Sea area with a capacity of 505mw.

They will be Egypt's biggest solar and wind power projects and are set to deliver renewable energy at the lowest price in Africa: \$20 per megawatt-hour and \$30 per mwh respectively.

Abydos and Amunet will reduce Egypt's annual carbon footprint by 1.7 million tons and meet the needs of 1



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million Egyptians for electricity. Construction is scheduled to begin this month on both facilities. The solar plant is expected to be finished in 18 months according to IFC.

Egypt ranks third in the Arab world in terms of the share of renewables in its electricity generation, according to Mesia. Solar capacity is expected to hit 7.71gw by 2030 while wind capacity is forecast to reach 5.64gw.

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