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Bahrain inked an agreement Tuesday for a 72-megawatt (MW) solar power project in a significant stride toward sustainable energy.

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Bahrain's Vision 2030 outlines measures to protect the natural environment, reduce carbon emissions, minimize pollution, and promote sustainable energy. Bahrain is committed to designing energy efficiency policies and promoting renewable energy technologies that support Bahrain's long-term climate action and environmental protection ambitions. Endorsed by Bahrain's Cabinet and monitored by SEA, the National Energy Efficiency Action Plan (NEEAP) and the National Renewable Energy Action Plan (NREAP) set national energy efficiency and national renewable energy 2025 targets of 6 and 5 percent, respectively, with the NREAP target increasing to 10 percent by 2035.

Bahrain reached its six percent energy efficiency target in 2019, six years ahead of schedule. According to official sources, Bahrain's energy efficiency will improve as government ministries implement the NEEAP, primarily through a new green building code permit for all new construction. Bahrain will have to produce 280 megawatts of electricity from renewables by 2025, increasing to 710 megawatts by 2035, to meet the country's renewable energy targets. According to official sources, Bahrain will rely primarily on solar, wind, and waste to energy power generation to reduce carbon emissions and achieve national renewable energy targets.

Bahrain's proposed renewable energy pipeline consists of solar, wind, and waste to energy technologies, with plans to capture the majority of Bahrain's renewable energy mix from solar power. Some of Bahrain's key solar initiatives include: planning for a solar farm project on the Askar landfill, delivering 100 megawatts of renewable power; a 50-megawatt initiative to install solar panels on the roofs of hundreds of government-owned buildings, and the potential installation of "floating solar" technologies to be deployed for power generation in Bahrain's territorial waters in order to address the problem of land scarcity for larger solar farms.

Offshore renewable energy development presents an opportunity to pursue large-scale generation and achieve higher renewable energy targets. Bahrain has a good wind regime and shallow waters conducive to the installation of near shore or offshore wind farms. Other offshore renewable energy options include connecting Bahrain and its GCC neighbors through an integrated network of infrastructure facilities with renewable energy capabilities, such as causeways and railway systems.

Bahrain is planning a heat waste recovery pilot program, where excess heat generated by Aluminum Bahrain (Alba), the world's largest single-site smelter outside of mainland China, can be captured and converted to electricity. Like other GCC states, over half of Bahrain's annual electricity consumption is due to the extensive use of air conditioning because of the warm Gulf climate. As a result, Bahrain is looking to utilize the practice of "district cooling" to increase the efficiency of air conditioning by as much as 50 percent.

Bahrain generates approximately 2.6 kg of solid waste per person per day. To better manage solid waste challenges, Bahrain's Ministry of Works is currently overseeing a project implemented by an international consultancy to analyze and determine waste materials available for recycling, conversion to agricultural products, or electricity production through incineration at the Askar landfill. Bahrain is also exploring options for international investment in plasma gasification--a process which converts waste into resalable byproducts, including hydrogen, electricity, and construction materials.

Bahrain Economic Development Board -

Bahrain Ministry of Works, Municipalities Affairs and Urban Planning -

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