# Central africa backup power

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In a landmark move toward sustainable development, the Central African Republic has inaugurated a groundbreaking 25-megawatt solar park, equipped with battery storage, situated in the Danzi village, just a short distance from Bangui. This ambitious project, launched under the auspices of President Faustin-Archange Touadera and Ousmane Diagana, Vice President of the World Bank for Western and Central Africa, aims to power approximately 250,000 people in the capital city, effectively doubling the nation’s electricity generation capacity.

The inauguration ceremony highlighted the country’s resolute commitment to reducing reliance on fossil fuels, pivoting instead towards cost-effective renewable energy sources. With only 35% electrification in Bangui, 8% in major provincial areas, and a mere 2% in rural communities, the Central African Republic views investments in the energy sector as pivotal to fostering growth and broadening access to electricity for sustainable development.

President Faustin-Archange Touadera underscored the significance of the Danzi solar park, emphasizing its multifaceted impact on the lives of citizens. “This transformative project extends beyond mere electricity provision to households; it encompasses illumination for schools and hospitals, refrigeration capabilities, and amplified electricity accessibility for businesses, both small and large, in Bangui,” Touadera remarked.

The fruition of the Danzi solar park stems from a collaborative effort between the government and the World Bank, facilitated by grant funding from the World Bank’s International Development Association (IDA). This initiative builds upon the successes of the Emergency Electricity Supply and Access Project (PURACEL) and the Water and Electricity Upgrading Project (PASEEL).

Ousmane Diagana, the World Bank Vice President for Western and Central Africa, emphasized the project’s significance in bolstering productivity and job creation. “Energy serves as a vital economic artery. The increased electricity access for health centers, schools, and businesses is poised to enhance productivity and foster job opportunities,” Diagana stated.

Notably, the solar park is set to replace more than 90% of energy currently generated through diesel fuel, generating an annual revenue exceeding $4 million for the National Electricity Company. Additionally, it’s forecasted to curtail emissions by a substantial 670,674 metric tons of CO2. This effort aligns with broader strategies, such as the Electricity Sector Strengthening and Access Project (PARSE), aimed at promoting electrification beyond the capital city through mini-grid initiatives and distributing solar kits to households, public entities, and businesses.

The successful realization of this milestone project was facilitated by government support mechanisms and

effective coordination between the Ministry of Development, Energy, and Hydraulic Resources alongside the World Bank.

This monumental investment signals the inaugural step in a series of clean energy ventures slated for the Central African Republic. Plans include the development of large-scale solar energy, mini-grid installations, and off-grid solutions for households and public entities. By 2030, it is anticipated that nearly half of the nation’s population will have access to electricity, a significant leap from the current 16%

Intelligent insights & conversations with global power industry professionals

Source: The Conversation - Africa - By MJ (Thinus) Booysen, Professor in Electrical & Electronic Engineering, Stellenbosch University

South Africa"s electricity utility Eskom has made it clear that "loadshedding" - rolling scheduled power cuts - isn"t going to end any time soon. This reality, and President Cyril Ramaphosa"s announcement during his annual state of the nation speech on 9 February 2023 that tax incentives for solar power use are imminent, mean that many people are considering alternative electricity supply systems for their homes.

But deciding on the best system isn"t a simple matter. There"s a bewildering array of jargon to sift through and many elements to consider, from the right kind of inverter to the size of your solar panels.

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