

Electricity distribution guyana

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THE Gas-to-Energy (GTE) project remains a significant flagship initiative for the government, with the administration last week securing an additional GY\$5 billion from the National Assembly for the project. But GTE itself is just one piece of building a more reliable, affordable and accessible electrical system in Guyana. Electrical grids are generally divided into three parts: generation, transmission and distribution. Each plays a vital role in providing reliable power. Guyana Power and Light (GPL) currently oversees all three elements.

Generation is the production of the electricity itself, and GTE promises to be a major change for Guyana's power generation. The transition from an antiquated heavy fuel oil plant to a modern natural gas-fired plant promises to dramatically slash emissions, protect air quality and reduce wholesale power costs by as much as 50 percent. Transmission, meanwhile, is the process of moving that electricity at high voltages across long distances from generation to local communities. And finally, distribution is how electricity gets to houses and businesses.

Natural gas plants are ideally suited to supporting renewable energy, since they can come online and switch offline very rapidly to preserve a steady flow of electricity during changing wind and sun conditions. But that capacity depends on having transmission and distribution systems in place to facilitate it. Improving access to electricity in the hinterlands and incorporating the Amaila Falls hydropower facility into the grid will also require major investments in long-distance transmission lines. Due to the growing influx of oil and gas revenues, Guyana is finally in a position to make these kinds of investments for the future. More reliable and cheaper power could help a wide range of Guyanese industries be more competitive globally and reduce burdens on thousands of households.

While the GTE project will undoubtedly be transformative, it is important to set expectations. The project will help households and businesses enormously by cutting the high costs of electricity that have traditionally held Guyana back. But when it comes to preventing outages, a more reliable generation source is just the first piece of the puzzle. Continued investments in a modern and resilient transmission and distribution system like those the Government is beginning to make are vital.

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In preparation for the 300-megawatt (MW) Wales gas-to-shore power plant's late 2024 completion,

government has commenced plans to upgrade the Guyana Power and Light's (GPL) distribution grid and is awaiting evaluation of tenders for the installation of new electricity lines and substations, the Office of the Prime Minister announced.

"We are moving to modernise the grid, to install the new transmission lines and substations for the integration...", the Office of the Prime Minister said in response to questions from the Stabroek News. "The tender is already out for that [the lines" transmission upgrade]... We are also doing a study... by the time the gas-to-shore project is completed the grid will be upgraded and ready to receive that [power]."

Technical issues continue to plague GPL's Deme-rara Berbice Intercon-nected System (DBIS) which serves about 90 percent of the country's coastline where the majority of the 750,000 population lives. There are periodic power outages or shutdowns.

Reference was made to the tender, which was published last December when government issued a call for proposals for the project. It had said that the tender would have been opened on January 31. It is unclear what has caused the delay. All bidders were asked to submit their proposals together with an original proposal security in the fixed amount of US\$4,000,000 no later than 09:00 hrs on Tuesday January 31, to the National Procurement and Tender Administration Board (NPTAB). That entity's website has no record of the tender or postponement.

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