Energy storage for resilience barbados

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Meet some of our passionate problem-solvers, constructive creatives and inspiring innovators

Moving to net zero within a decade could transform the economy of Barbados.

Globally, government attitudes around decarbonisation have changed. No longer a ‘nice to have’ distant goal, it’s something every government must actively work towards. But if you are a small country with limited resources and an outdated energy system, how do you start moving towards net zero?

That was the question facing the island nation of Barbados in 2019, when its Ministry of Energy, Small Business and Entrepreneurship (MESBE) set an ambitious target for 100% renewable energy and carbon neutrality by 2030. With a clear ambition but no firm plan, the ministry drafted in Mott MacDonald to help come up with one.

“It’s transformational to go from what they currently have to where they want to be,” says Christian Kaufmann, a senior energy strategy and innovation consultant and our modelling team leader on the project. “And it involves a lot of stakeholders – across the transportation, tourism and agriculture industries, the end customers and so on.”

100%targeted renewable energy in Barbados by 2030

3%renewable energy use starting point

The scale of that transformation is apparent when looking at the country’s present energy mix. Barbados expects to consume 1277GWh of electrical energy by 2030, but most of its supply now is derived from imported fossil fuels. In 2019, oil accounted for 92% of primary energy use, with natural gas making up another 5% and renewables just 3%.

Given the volatility of the global oil market, the insecurity of supply, and the availability of new low-cost renewable energy technologies, the Barbados government understandably wants to change this mix. The question posed to us was “how?”

We began by talking to a variety of stakeholders in the Barbados energy and economic ecosystem, before collecting and processing data from a wide variety of sources. We then devised three proposals for how the country could transition to net zero within a decade.

It was a daunting task, but the prize for our client made it worthwhile, as Christian explains:

“They’re currently generating carbon intensive electricity at a very high price. They have to import fuel, which is expensive, while at the same time having the vast indigenous renewable resources of a sunny, windy Caribbean island that they could easily tap into.

“There’s an opportunity for the country to move forward in a way that has economic potential, and this masterplan could set out the direction of travel for the next 10 years.”

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