

## Off-grid solar namibia

The Ministry of Mines and Energy (MME) is the sole administrator of the Solar Revolving Fund (SRF). The SRF is a credit facility established by MME to stimulate demand for the utilization of renewable energy technologies in the rural areas, especially for communities living in off-grid areas, but also to urban clients. The SRF is an element of the Off-Grid Energisation Master Plan for Namibia (OGEMP) whose objective is to provide access to appropriate energy technologies to rural areas.

The Solar Revolving Fund is a credit facility established by MME in 1996, and to stimulate demand for the utilization of renewable energy technologies in the rural areas, especially for communities living in off-grid areas, but also to urban clients. SRF is an element of the Off-Grid Energization Master Plan for Namibia (OGEMP) whose objective is to provide access to suitable renewable energy technologies to off-grid areas. The Fund offers subsidized loans to Namibian citizens at a fixed interest rate of 5% per annum for 5 years.

Namibia's solar market is booming with the country attracting fresh investments and new players. With a focus on both grid-connected and off-grid projects, the country aims to connect 80% of its population to renewables by 2025.

This surge is fuelled by strong regulatory support, abundant resources, a drive for diversification and the growing demand for decentralized power systems.

Blessed with 300 days of sunshine per year and offering a climate well-suited for solar generation, Namibia represents a viable solar energy market.

High solar irradiation levels coupled with an open, desert landscape provide a strong foundation for the development and expansion of solar panel systems.

Despite the potential for solar deployment, much of the market remains largely untapped, presenting lucrative opportunities for investors and project developers alike. This untapped potential makes the country a highly attractive solar play and is a key driver behind the expansion of the market in 2023.

Currently, an estimated 60% of Namibia's power is imported from regional countries via the Southern African Power Pool, and while hydropower accounts for a large share of the energy mix, biomass and diesel-fired power generation are still heavily relied upon. As such, the government is prioritizing the diversification of both the energy mix and the broader economy, expanding investment into renewable energy to support alternative energy sources, job creation and revenue generation.

Under efforts to diversify, the government has partnered with foreign stakeholders for the construction of large-scale green hydrogen facilities - of which solar represents a major part. Examples include the \$10

billion, 350,000 tons per year Tsau//Khaeb National Park project, spearheaded by Hyphen Hydrogen Energy. The project will utilize 7 GW of renewable capacity and will create 3,000 permanent jobs in addition to 15,000 jobs during the four-year construction phase.

Additionally, companies located in off-grid areas are deploying their own solar systems, accessible to local communities. Examples include a 5.4 MW facility constructed at the Rosh Pinah zinc and lead mine in the Karas region; a 2.5 MWh off-grid plant constructed at Gam Village in Otjozondjupa; and a 50 kWp solar system installed at the Nambwa Tented Lodge in Bwabwata National Park. In this scenario, rising demand is set to trigger newfound investment in decentralized solar.

Under efforts to attract foreign investment and private sector participation, the government has implemented a series of policies aimed at improving market clarity, transparency and fiscal support. In addition to clear renewable targets, government implemented a Renewable Energy Feed-In Premium program in April 2015, a policy designed to support development by providing a guaranteed, above-market price for producers.

July 2017 saw the implementation of the National Renewable Energy Policy, which aims to near-universal access to renewable energy by 2030, assist Namibians climb the development ladder while positioning the country as a regional leader in the deployment of renewable technologies. The policy, coupled with a series of tax incentives has attracted a strong slate of investment into the country.

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