

School energy storage eritrea

Eritrea will soon join the global solar boom with a €5.7million fund bringing clean power to two rural villages that currently rely on small diesel generators.

“Electric choice there is either diesel generators or zero electricity,” says Daniel Davis, director of hybrid power systems at Solarcentury, the UK-based firm that was selected to build the two solar and storage-based mini-grid projects.

The selected locations are agricultural communities, Areza and Maidma, which currently have very limited, unreliable and costly energy supply and no grid access. Solarcentury’s pilot program will seek to provide power for income generating activities and for schools and clinics.

“The West manages to use a lot of electricity to do stuff, I’m sure they will as well,”, says Davis.

Solarcentury considers such first-time projects as showcases for the future of solar power in Africa. Its initial projects in Kenya received a lot of media attention, with the cabinet secretary for the Ministry of Energy and Petroleum in Kenya attending one system launch.

“The fear hurdle is about not wanting to be first to experiment with technology that hasn’t been proven on the continent,” Davis adds. “With this new slightly more complex system, people will say that this stuff does work.”

The aim of the development is to bring quality sustainable electricity, to a remote off-grid location by installing a mini-grid PV hybrid system, with energy storage batteries and backup generators.

“Photovoltaics are the cheapest form of power on the planet,”, says Davis. “Particularly in Eritrea it’s blessed with an abundance of sunshine”.

The system will use Canadian Solar panels, and SMA invertors. The favoured lithium-based batteries are being kept secret, by request of the battery supplier, until the project is launched.

Initial development of the project is underway with topographical surveys, inspection, roadway planning and design already finished.

Davis says: “We should be on site at the end of September early October to begin prep work. The main solar batteries and generator kit is coming in November or December”.



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Solar companies can benefit from opportunities in Africa where they can operate without the subsidies that were initially needed by the solar industry in Europe. Eritrea is one of the less developed markets in Africa and seen as a budding prospect.

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