Syria solar energy market

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This will only take a second!

Bordering the eastern Mediterranean Sea, solar radiation in the Syrian Arab Republic is abundant. The number of hours of sun a year varies from 2,820 to 3,270. In comparison, sunlight on overcast days varies between 38 and 45 per year. This makes the region well-suited for solar energy harnessing. Starting in 2021, regions under government control have been addressing a significant power shortage due to a scarcity of fuel and a sharp increase in diesel prices. As a result, the government has resorted to solar panels to ease the emergency, as renewable energy in Syria is "the magic solution" to the crisis.

The conflict in Syria has been ongoing for a decade, involving President Bashar al-Assad, as well as both domestic and foreign forces. The UN estimates that more than 306,000 civilians lost their lives during this 10-year period from 2011 to 2021. In 2008, the country produced 406,000 barrels of oil per day, generating $3.2 billion in oil sales in 2010. However, with the uprising and the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) seizing the oil infrastructure, production collapsed to only 24,000 barrels daily. Furthermore, following the onset of the conflict, the country’s power generation capacity has decreased by roughly 75%.

The ceasefire has not improved living conditions for Syrians, as they are still dealing with runaway inflation. In fact, about 90% of the population lives below the poverty line. Many people have to push their cars on foot because they can’t afford fuel. Those who can afford it often spend hours waiting in long queues at the petrol station.

The Syrian Ministry of Electricity raised electricity prices significantly (100% to 800%) in November 2021 due to high production and support expenses. As a result, some regions in the country experienced frequent power cuts. In light of this, Bashar al-Assad amended Law No. 32 of 2010 on the Syrian electric sector, allowing the government to buy electricity from renewable energy schemes in the private sector. As companies generating electricity from solar energy have excess electric production, instead of storing the surplus in batteries - which is expensive for them - it is optimal for them to distribute the excess through the government"s electricity network.

Committed to transforming the electricity landscape and increasing the adoption of renewable energy in Syria, the government is aiming to have 10% of electricity generated from solar power by 2030.

The Syrian Ministry of Electricity is currently managing the construction of a 100kW solar power plant in the town of Sargaya, which is scheduled to be completed by the end of 2023. The project is estimated to cost more than SYP 81 billion (equivalent to around GBP 125 billion) and to have an annual production of 150,000 panels. It aims to generate enough electricity to power approximately 100 houses - bringing reliable energy to the local residents.

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On September 2, 2013, the Federal Republic of Germany, the United States of America and the United Arab Emirates – along with the National Coalition of Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces (SOC) – signed The Syria Recovery Trust Fund (SRTF). Over the following months, multiple European countries joined the SRTF which aims to finance projects in sectors such as health, water, electricity and food security, to name a few.

With an increased demand for health care services, there’s an urgent need for reliable access to electricity and clean water. Responding to this demand, the fund approved a new project in February 2023, titled “Provision of Solar Power and Clean Water to Healthcare Facilities in Ar-Raqqa and Deir-ez-Zor.” This initiative aims to provide a stable and eco-friendly source of solar energy to 14 health care facilities through the installation of solar panels on their premises. The total budget for this project is approximately SYP 242 million, which is roughly equivalent to GBP 372 million. The project is expected to benefit more than 58,000 residents living in the vicinity of these health care facilities for a duration of 12 months.

The recent installation of solar panels is bringing about positive changes in the Syrian Arab Republic. The use of renewable energy sources, such as solar power, is improving access to clean water and health care services for the residents. Additionally, it’s creating new employment opportunities and decreasing the country’s reliance on imported resources. These advantages spell hope for greater achievements with renewable energy in Syria.

– Abigail RochPhoto: Pixabay

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Web: https://kary.com.pl/contact-us/
Email: energystorage2000@gmail.com
WhatsApp: 8613816583346