



Yaounde solar energy market

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A solar energy installation in the Bastos neighbourhood in Yaounde, the capital of Cameroon, March 30, 2022. Thomson Reuters Foundation/Elias Ntungwe Ngalame

Drought curbs Cameroon's hydropower-heavy electricity supply

Cameroonians suffer near daily blackouts and power rationing

By Elias Ntungwe Ngalame

YAOUNDE, Cameroon, May 27 (Thomson Reuters Foundation) - Before the University of Yaounde 1 got its solar micro-grid in 2018, erratic power supplies in Cameroon's capital meant Adamu Gilbert could not stock the fresh, chilled items he knew his customers wanted when they came to his shop near campus.

Now that he has reliable electricity from the micro-grid, which serves the university and surrounding small-scale businesses, he has a refrigerator filled with cold drinks, fruits and yoghurts - and business is booming.

"With sales from these perishables that are really loved by students, I make double the amount I used to," Gilbert told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

With more than half of its electricity generated by hydropower, Cameroon should be a poster child for renewable energy use.

But in recent years, erratic rainfall and prolonged droughts linked to climate change have hit the country's hydroelectric dams, leading to blackouts and power rationing that almost daily plunge parts of the country into darkness.

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