Bissau energy storage for backup power

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A solar power plant with a capacity of between 20 and 30 MW is currently being planned with the support of the World Bank, which is now seeking consultants to carry out a feasibility study for the project.

The World Bank has launched a tender to seek consultancy companies interested in carrying out a feasibility study for the construction of a solar-plus-storage solar park in Guinea Bissau, West Africa.

The international financial institution said the project will have a power range of 20 MW to 30 MW, and that it will aim to stabilize power supply in the country, as well as providing additional lower cost generation.

The feasibility study will represent Phase I of the project, while Phase II will include the launch of a tender for the design and construction of the power plant.

The deadline to submit bids for Phase I is April 10, 2018. The selected consultant is expected to carry out a GIS analysis to assess land constraints and propose up to three sites for project development with input from the local government, the World Bank said in the tender document.

The inclusion of a storage system in the project was conceived to provide grid stabilization, extend power generation to evening hours, and provide ancillary services to the grid, it added. The solar facility will sell power to the national utility EAGB under a long-term PPA.

Guinea Bissau, which has one of the lowest electrification rates and highest electric service costs in Africa has, to date, not seen much progress in the field of solar energy. Currently, it covers around 90% of its demand with imported petroleum fuels and power imports from Senegal.

According to a recent report from the same World Bank, the local government should now concentrate investments on rehabilitating and removing bottlenecks in the existing power network, while also adjusting energy prices to reflect the real economic cost of imported fuels. Furthermore, the report reveals that over half of the installed generation capacity is out of service, and that around 40% of the produced electricity is currently being lost (or stolen) in the distribution network.

According to another recent report from the African Development Bank, the country has only 11 MW of installed generation capacity, almost all of which is represented by conventional thermal generation. "Real capacity is only 8 MW, only 5 MW of which is available 24 hours per day due to the maintenance required and the inability of the electric power utility to obtain the necessary fuel," the report"s authors stressed.

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