

## Botswana solar industry

Botswana is positioning itself to become Africa's solar energy powerhouse, with ambitions to produce over 8,000 megawatts of power for export, according to Vice President Ndaba Gaolathe.

Under the Integrated Resource Plan government had set a target of raising renewable energy to 30 percent of the country's energy mix by 2030 and 50 percent by 2036 with the capacity of solar set to reach 1,200 megawatts by 2026/2027.

Speaking at the National Renewable Energy Dialogue in Gaborone recently, Gaolathe emphasised that solar will play a key role as an anchor in the local energy mix.

"We, as the incoming government, are saying we can dream higher than 1,200 megawatts which is far from enough. We believe that this country has the potential to be producing 8,000 megawatts of power for export." said Gaolathe who also serves as Minister of Finance.

According to Gaolathe there are also plans for a 636 Solar Photovoltaic energy, 200MW of solar concentrated energy and 100MW of wind-generated electricity and 140MW of battery energy storage.

The Voice is a print and online newspaper based in Botswana founded in Francistown in 1993 as The Francistowner Extra, in 1999 it opened offices in the national capital, Gaborone.

State-owned Botswana Power Corp. has signed a power purchase agreement with a consortium of Chinese enterprises and other companies to construct a 100 MW solar plant in southern Botswana. The project is expected to start generation by the end of 2025.

The agreement is in place between Botswana Power and Sinotswana Green Energy, a consortium of Chinese and Botswana companies, jointly established by China Habor Engineering Co., China International Water and Electric Corp., and New Energy Company Proprietary Ltd., a local company. A tender for the project took place last year.

The deal involves an engineering, procurement and construction contract, with operation and maintenance of the power plant for 25 years. The facility is expected to start generation by the end of 2025.

"Our journey toward energy security and transition has begun in earnest and is unstoppable. This project marks another significant milestone in our national development commitments," Masisi said, adding that to date, 460 out of 565 villages in Botswana have been electrified, equating to 81% of rural electrification.

Botswana's Integrated Resource Plan seeks to secure 200 MW from renewable energy sources by 2030. The

country has also set a target of integrating 50% renewable energy into the national energy mix by 2036.

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