

Energy storage market analysis lilongwe

The 20 MW Golomoti PV project will include 10 MWh of lithium-ion battery storage in a first for the sub-Saharan African market, according to its London-based joint developer.

President Lazarus Chakwera - pictured here with Scottish first minister Nicola Sturgeon on the eve of the recent COP26 climate change summit - turned on his nation's first utility scale grid connected solar plant.

With the president of Malawi having switched on the nation's first utility-scale solar plant this week, a London-based multilateral development body involved in the project confirmed plans are under way to get a second grid connected by early 2022;

President Lazarus Chakwera flicked the switch at the 60 MWac Salima Solar Plant developed in the Kanzimbe neighborhood of Salima district, around 110km northeast of Lilongwe on the shore of Lake Malawi.

The InfraCo Africa Development Group backed by the governments of the Netherlands, Switzerland and the U.K. reported the inauguration ceremony in a press release yesterday which also said the 20 MWac Golomoti solar park being planned in Dedza district would be the first utility scale solar, grid-connected photovoltaic plant in sub-Saharan Africa to feature a battery of the type intended.

The update appears to indicate a setback for the latter project, given Chinese inverter maker Sungrow announced in May the Golomoti facility would be operational this year. As reported by pv magazine, Sungrow said the 20 MW/10 MWh project would feature its MV solar-plus-storage technology with lithium-ion batteries making up the storage component.

The Salima project, which was yesterday named Utility Scale Project of the Year at the awards ceremony held by the Africa Solar Industry Association, was initially developed by InfraCo Africa, Toronto-based renewables company JCM Power Corp, and South African investor Matswani Private Capital. InfraCo said Matswani was replaced by Dutch overseas development bank the FMO (Nederlandse Financierings-Maatschappij voor Ontwikkelingslanden) in the funding stage related to construction of the site.

Salima and Golomoti will both sell electricity to national utility Electricity Supply Corp of Malawi Ltd. Both power purchase agreements were signed in September 2018, with InfraCo specifying the Salima contract will run for 20 years.

JCM and InfraCo are also working on the Golomoti project, which appears to have assistance from a web of U.K. government bodies, with InfraCo describing the arrangement as receiving support from Business Energy and Industrial Strategies [sic] International Climate Finance through Innovate UK's Energy Catalyst and RINA;

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