

Maseru solar storage

OnePower's health clinic electrification project provides renewable energy to 7 Partners in Health (PIH) clinics disconnected from the grid in rural areas of Lesotho. The installations utilize a hybrid solar system consisting of solar PV, battery storage, and backup generators.

OnePower partnered with Cape Town-based Sustain Solar, who offers a containerized solution enabling quick deployment, and Power Africa, who provides grant funding through the US government's COVID-19 response. Through this collaboration, OnePower is delivering clean (and quiet) electricity that is essential for storing vaccines, treating patients at night, and running medical equipment.

"My heart is so touched," said Meriam Sesi, the head nurse at the PIH clinic at Manamaneng. "Day in, day out, turning the generator on, the diesel level, the sound . . . really it was hectic for us. Silent power is with us now."

The mini-grids will be installed by the OnePower, U.S.-based non-profit organisation out of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and will reportedly supply power to 20 000 people and seven health centres via 7 300 new electricity connections.

The panels will generate up to 3.48 GWh of electricity annually, according to European finance development institution (EDFI) the Electrification Financing Initiative (Electrifi), and will generate 100 jobs during construction and six permanent roles.

The local power networks will offer clean electricity to customers for an "almost cost-reflective tariff" of LSL5/kWh (€0.28) after PowerOne received help with its business plan from EU investment body, Get Invest.

EDFI Electrifi, which said it contributed LSL75 million (€4.23 million) to the project in a mixture of a loan and investment in PowerOne stock, said the mini-grids would be mounted on solar trackers designed and built by an unspecified company in Lesotho and would also feature smart metres.

The EU-funded electrification body said the Renewable Energy Performance Platform (REPP) backed by the UK Government and managed by London-based financial services company, Camco Clean Energy had matched its equity and loan investment in a PowerOne project the former described as "Africa's second largest project-financed mini-grid transaction." PV Magazine

LSP Construction constructed the first ever Solar Farm in Lesotho in the Mafeteng District at Ha-Ramarehole. Two Phases, Phase I - 30 MWp and Phase II - 40 MWp. Phase I currently in progress:

Solar energy is increasingly one of the most sought-after forms of energy in developed countries. But that already is a problem because developing countries like Lesotho, have over the years shown little appetite to invest in solar energy. While there are several plausible reasons why less developed countries often shy away from renewable energy initiatives; including the high cost of setting up such projects, it is clear that solar energy is the future for many countries. This is especially so for countries like Lesotho that have abundant sun throughout the year.

The project will help Lesotho optimise its energy structure by cultivating solar power expertise to improve the economy and Basotho's livelihoods. The first phase of the project will supply the national power grid with 30MWp of electricity; while the second phase will have a capacity of 40MWp.

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