

Solar energy cook islands

The impact of the project will be increased energy security in an environmentally sustainable manner. The outcome will be an increased access to a higher share of electricity generated by renewable energy sources.

The Cook Islands is a Pacific island country divided into two island groups with an estimated total population of 18,600 people. The northern group consists of seven low-lying and sparsely populated coral atolls, while the southern group consists of eight fertile volcanic islands. About 92% of the population lives in the southern group, which includes the main island of Rarotonga. Economic development is hindered by the country's limited size, isolation and distance from markets, lack of natural resources, periodic devastation from natural disasters, and inadequate infrastructure.

Delivery of energy services is undertaken by a state-owned utility on Rarotonga, and by island administration committees on the other outer islands in the northern and southern groups. They are vertically integrated electricity authorities in charge of generation, transmission, distribution, and retail sales of electricity. Assets for energy services are administered and managed by the Cook Islands Investment Corporation, the government's holding company that groups the state-owned enterprises.

Volatile diesel fuel prices and heavy reliance on imported diesel fuel for power generation significantly affects the economy and living standards in the Cook Islands. Changing diesel-based power generation to renewable energy sources is expected to reduce the cost of generation by up to 40% and diesel consumption for power generation by up to 95%, and will contribute to sustainable social and economic development. Average annual solar irradiation of around 1,900 kWh per square meter constitutes a major renewable source for power generation.

In 2011, the government issued the Cook Islands Renewable Energy Chart, which sets a target of supplying 50% of inhabited islands with power from renewable sources by 2015, and 100% of the inhabited islands by 2020. It also launched the CIRECIP in 2012, which incorporates a development schedule for electricity generation from renewable sources.

1. Solar PV power system development for four Phase 1 and for one Phase 2; BESS subprojects developed; and additional installation of 3 units of BESSs with a preliminary capacity of 3.0 MW and 12.0 MWh

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) is committed to achieving a prosperous, inclusive, resilient, and sustainable Asia and the Pacific, while sustaining its efforts to eradicate extreme poverty. It assists its members and partners by providing loans, technical assistance, grants, and equity investments to promote social and economic development.

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