

Electricity guyana

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The electricity sector in Guyana is dominated by Guyana Power and Light (GPL), the state-owned vertically integrated utility. Although the country has a large potential for hydroelectric and bagasse-fueled power generation, most of its 226 MW of installed capacity correspond to thermoelectric diesel-engine driven generators.

Reliability or electricity supply is very low, linked both to technical and institutional deficiencies in the sector, with total losses close to 40% and commercial losses of about 30%. This low reliability has led most firms to install their own diesel generators, which in turn leads to higher than average electricity costs.

Installed power generation capacity in Guyana in 2007 was 226 MW or 0.4 kW per capita, which is lower than in other countries in the region and is hardly sufficient to cover the current demand for electricity in the country. Most electricity generation uses Diesel engines to drive generators. There are plans for introduction of power generation facilities based on renewable resources, but these would still account for only a small share (10 percent) of the generation capacity in the country.

Self-generation is widely spread in Guyana, where 100%, 82% and 37% of large, medium and small firms respectively own generators which supply them with 64%, 54% and 31% respectively of the total electricity consumed. A side effect of self-supply of energy is that the corporate demand for electricity in some regions of the country has decreased significantly. While private generation temporarily eases the pressures on the overall capacity for the sector, it also prevents the realization of economies of scale at a system level. Self-provision of energy appears more costly to companies (up to US\$0.38 per KWh) than regional and even local tariffs (around US\$0.22 and US\$0.25 respectively on average).

In 2007, electricity supplied to the grid was 833 GWh, shared among generators as follows:

Source: Guyana Energy Agency, Statistics

While the consumption of electricity has increased substantially in the past few years, the installed generation and distribution capacity has increased at a lower pace. Obviously, self-generation has played an important

role to fill the gap between consumption and generation of electricity. The low income in the country, high cost per kilowatt hour and low level of Guyana's rural electrification leads to use of kerosene, wood and charcoal still playing an important factor.

Access to electricity is usually constrained by a country's level of income; however, in the case of Guyana, it is estimated that the electricity system in Guyana services only about 60 percent of the population, well below the level achieved by many regional peers. Similarly, while electrification is higher in coastal towns with a high industry concentration, there are vast areas of the country that appear underserved on this account. Even companies within regional access to the grid have to wait up to 99 days for connection.

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