

Eritrea renewable energy growth

The macro economic data described above shows that the energy sector has a very substantial role in Eritrea's development. Energy sector investments are very important for long term economic strategy for several reasons. One reason is that the size of the energy import expenses and the drain that they provide on national balance of payments. The second reason stems from the importance that access to electricity has in economic development and improved standards of living. The effectiveness of electrification in enhancing productivity means that the pace of electricity demand growth will continue at its current rapid rate. The current electrification rate (fraction of people with access to electricity) in Eritrea is about 40%.

The third factor that makes energy sector development a crucial strategic issue is the fact that current and future biomass consumption is a potentially growing drain on Eritrea's ecosystem. There is rather limited biomass in Eritrea because biomass production is limited by scarce rainfall. Therefore energy sector investments that decrease biomass consumption or increase the biomass productivity of the ecosystem (e.g. reforestation programs) will have a large impact on Eritrea's future environmental capital.

Energy sector investments in the near-term will have a dramatic impact on future energy sector expenses and environmental sustainability. If there are no efficiency improvements in the energy sector, then the rapid growth of energy demand will degrade Eritrea's environmental capital and expand Eritrea's already large international trade deficit. On the other hand if aggressive investments are made in all subsectors of energy development, I believe that substantial environmental rehabilitation can be achieved, and Eritrea's trade deficit can be improved with enhanced national capital accumulation.

However, the long term question for Eritrean energy sector development is: How does Eritrea optimize the long term accumulation of energy capital? The answer lies in searching for the full spectrum of energy sector development activities that have both national and global environmental benefits and that result in net positive accumulation of energy resources by decreasing energy sector expenses and resource use. This article provides estimates of the extent to which efficiency and renewable energy programs and investments may contribute to the development of Eritrea's energy sector and the growth of the Eritrean economy.

First and foremost, the sufficient, reliable and sustainable production and supply of affordable energy throughout Eritrea is the main objective of the Government's policy in the energy sector.

Additionally, the development of a second power plant is currently in the research and planning stages. Eritrea continues to invest in expansions and enhancements of its solar power capabilities; a capacity of close to 10 megawatts of solar power is to be added to what has already been installed, beginning in early 2014.

In summary, for an emerging, developing country such as Eritrea, alternative, renewable sources of energy represent an extremely effective component within broader national development goals, and they directly and



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positively impact the lives of individual citizens. The international community and developmental organizations can play critically constructive roles by supporting new projects or augmenting existing ones, working cooperatively with Eritrean companies and ministries, and - quite importantly - promoting peace and stability in the region. In particular, solar energy is a game-changing prospect for Eritrea.

The nation is accelerating and encouraging the domestic development of renewable energy.

The Eritrean government is legislating favorable policies on permitting process and providing start-up capital to promote the growth of solar energy.

State and central governments are providing initiatives and other supports in order to increase solar power plant capacity. Renewable energy and especially solar energy is a win-win situation for Eritrea and the environment, and has the potential to power Eritrea's economy, create millions of new jobs and change the face of Eritrea as a green nation.

Eritrea's Renewable Energy Revolution:

Eritrea, although lagging 200 years behind the most energy-intensive and developed nations, has astutely recognized the importance of rethinking its energy strategy. In a bold move away from traditional fossil fuel-based power generation, the nation has prioritized renewable energy sources such as solar, wind, and geothermal. By doing so, Eritrea seeks to not only mitigate its contribution to climate change but also unlock immense potential for sustainable economic growth.

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Web: <https://www.kary.com.pl/contact-us/>

Email: energystorage2000@gmail.com

WhatsApp: 8613816583346

