



Saint Lucia energy storage for microgrids

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Arlington, VA - Today, the U.S. Trade and Development Agency awarded a technical assistance grant to Saint Lucia's National Utilities Regulatory Commission (NURC) that will advance the country's renewable power generation infrastructure and energy sector resilience. USTDA's assistance will help develop an enabling regulatory environment for renewables and assess the feasibility of implementing six solar-plus-storage microgrids at critical facilities in Saint Lucia. The NURC selected the Colorado-based RMI to carry out the assistance.

"USTDA's portfolio across the Caribbean has a strong focus on helping island economies such as Saint Lucia to develop resilient and sustainable energy infrastructure," said Ambassador Vinai Thummalapally (ret.), USTDA's Acting Director. "USTDA is linking its partners to U.S. solutions that will help mitigate the impact of climate change, which has a disproportionate impact on the people of the Caribbean."

NURC Chairman, Lawrence Nervais, said "A microgrid generally operates while connected to the grid, but importantly, it can break off and operate on its own using local energy generation in times of crisis like storms or power outages, or for other reasons. This is particularly important for us in Saint Lucia as it will strengthen our resilience to the vagaries of climate change which affects us through adverse weather systems. Therefore, utilizing our natural resource of solar power backed by storage, we can benefit tremendously from a microgrid that powers our health facilities, airports or communities so that we can have business continuity immediately following a disaster."

USTDA's technical assistance will advance Saint Lucia's efforts to build resilient microgrid infrastructure that can withstand severe weather events and provide continued power supply to hospitals, schools, communications towers, and water treatment plants. The assistance will enable NURC to prepare, develop and de-risk Saint Lucia's first aggregated critical facilities microgrid project, with the goal of providing an enabling regulatory environment that could allow future replication.

Justin Locke, Managing Director of RMI's Global South Program said: "Nowhere is the business case clearer or the need to transition to resilient distributed energy resources more urgent than in places like Saint Lucia. As we have seen over the last five years with the likes of Hurricane Maria, Irma and Dorian, these events expose how vulnerable Caribbean electricity grids are. If a storm shuts down an island's power plant, the entire island goes dark. Rather than waiting to rebuild smarter after a disaster event, Saint Lucia is demonstrating proactive leadership - thanks to USTDA."

This activity supports USTDA's Global Partnership for Climate-Smart Infrastructure, which connects U.S. industry to major clean energy and transportation infrastructure projects in emerging markets. It also supports the Biden Administration's Small and Less Populous Island Economies (SALPIE) Initiative.



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The U.S. Trade and Development Agency helps companies create U.S. jobs through the export of U.S. goods and services for priority infrastructure projects in emerging economies. USTDA links U.S. businesses to export opportunities by funding project preparation and partnership building activities that develop sustainable infrastructure and foster economic growth in partner countries.

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In the interest of keeping stakeholders apprised, this session created an opportunity to provide stakeholders with the ability to better understand and participate in this initiative from the onset and to gain buy-in for this project.

Stakeholder engagement is one of the important elements of the Commission's obligations and in discharging its duty effectively and in a manner that is transparent and accountable, the NURC must understand the interests of all stakeholders. This can be best achieved by engaging stakeholders in the Commission's decision-making process and regulatory initiatives.

The NURC believes that engagement and education critically hinge on the ability to recognise and consider the viewpoint of its stakeholders, using information accumulated from these sources to design policies and resolve regulatory challenges.

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