

Utility-scale energy storage vienna

Munich, Nov 14, 2023 -- Stationary battery manufacturer Hithium and solar project EPC provider Solarpro have announced a strategic partnership, with their first project to come in Bulgaria. Hithium has agreed to supply the battery products to a 55 MWh energy storage project, for which Solarpro is providing turnkey EPC services. The new plant will support a photovoltaic installation in the southwest Bulgarian town of Razlog. With construction of the new facility planned for the start of 2024, it is the largest battery energy storage project already in implementation in southeast Europe.

"As the region's utility-scale solar production ramps up, energy storage is gaining importance since it enables us to deliver solar-generated energy more reliably," explained Solarpro CEO, Krasen Mateev. "We are very pleased to take this step with Hithium to accelerate the growth of energy storage in eastern Europe. We have been working on preparation, engineering and development on the joint solution over the past months for this landmark project. We are dedicated to lead the energy transition adding new technologies in our product portfolio."

Ning (Kelson) Li, Hithium Director Large-Scale BESS Project for Central, Northern, and Eastern Europe, added: "We're proud to collaborate with Solarpro, such an experienced European partner in the sector of renewable energy and battery energy storage system, to start with the ground-breaking for Razlog BESS plant. This project represents our entry into eastern Europe and perfectly reflects the contribution we want to make to the region, scaling up energy storage to stabilise the supply of clean energy."

Hithium will supply 16 energy storage containers with a 3,44 MWh capacity, based on the company's 280 Ah cells, which have an extra-long expected lifespan. They also feature a wide operating temperature range, thus the new energy storage project anticipates being able to run uninterrupted even in extreme weather. Along with their multi-stage, active fire protection system, Hithium's containers achieve high thermal stability with liquid instead of air cooling, which also enables them to save space and increases the product's energy density.

The BESS owner will be a subsidiary of the Vienna-based Renalfa IPP. The investor decided to co-locate the big battery within the existing 33 MWp capacity PV plant. The solar farm is equipped by a photovoltaic tracker mounting system, enhancing the installation's efficiency and output, along with its own substation. The area where the plant is situated has some of Bulgaria's highest levels of irradiation to provide an exceptional degree of electricity generation.

Solarpro is one of the leading providers of a range of solutions for generation, systems integration, and storage of energy. The company is an experienced technological leader in the renewable energy industry with a proven track record of more than 15 years as one of the largest EPC and O& M players in the photovoltaic sector in Europe. The group started its PV business in 2007 and with projects in over 18 countries and more than 6 GWp of installed capacity to date, Solarpro provides added value by delivering innovative PV solutions based on the



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extensive expertise of its multinational teams.

Renalfa IPP is a Vienna-based clean energy and e-mobility investment group. It is a joint venture of the Vienna-based Renalfa Solarpro Group GmbH and the French infrastructure fund manager RGreen Invest. The group is also one of the main investors in the leading European EV car-sharing platform Spark.

Renalfa IPP owns renewable energy generating facilities with an overall capacity of over 450 MW in Bulgaria, Hungary, the Republic of North Macedonia and Romania. An additional more than 1 GW are in an advanced stage of development and construction.

Renalfa IPP started commercial operation of its first utility scale 25MW/55 MWh Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) at the beginning of June. The BESS is in Bulgaria's southwestern city of Razlog. It is connected to the TSO grid and co-located with a 33 MWp PV plant. The BESS enables the time shift of the solar peak production and arbitration on the electricity market.

The project is the first sizeable storage investment in the country, the largest operating BESS system in Bulgaria and one of the first BESS of such scale in Eastern Europe.

Commercial management and optimization of the BESS is done by the leading electricity trader in the region KER Toki Power. Via the trader's aggregator platform, the system participates in capacity and balancing market, providing aFFR and mFFR services to the grid. The storage system was designed, installed and integrated into the grid by Solarpro Technology, while the main BESS components were supplied by Hithium and Kehua.

"This co-located utility scale battery marks the start of hybridisation of our over 1 GW portfolio of renewable assets in operation and in construction," Nick Antonov, spokesperson for Renalfa IPP, said. "We are about to introduce similar solutions in the other wind and PV assets in the region, including Hungary and Romania".

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