

Seychelles: the first photovoltaic project in Africa, and one of the first salt-water floating solar PV plants in the world

Mahé, Seychelles, 23rd November 2019: With the support and technical guidance of the ALSF, and in the context of the Africa Energy Forum held in Mauritius in 2018, Seychelles launched the tender of the right to develop, finance, own and operate a 4MW floating grid-connected solar PV plant in the Lagoon le Rocher, Mahé. According to Mr. Wills, Agricole, Principal Secretary of the Minister of Environment, Energy and Climate Change, by using Floating Photovoltaic (FPV), Seychelles wants to maximize their solar PV potential and therefore rely on clean, renewable energy sources rather than imported fossil fuels.

ALSF: How did you first learn about the African Legal Support Facility?

Mr. Wills Agricole: We learnt about African Legal Support Facility during the implementation of the Public Private Partnership (PPP) program by the ministry of Finance with the support of AFDB but we did not explore further. During the initial tender of the Floating PV, our partner, the Clinton Climate Initiative (CCI) introduce us to ALSF, indicating that the ALSF can provide legal, technical and tender support to the floating PV project.

Why did you choose the Facility to assist on the Seychelles Power project?

The project lacks the legal, technical and procurement support especially being the first Independent Power Producer (IPP) utility scale Photovoltaic (PV) project even first for one installed in marine environment. The in-country capacity is limited and the Seychelles Energy Commission (SEC) needed to have the appropriate support to ensure successful implementation of the project.

Could you elaborate on the current Power situation in Seychelles?

Seychelles as a Small Island States - rely heavily on fossil fuel for our electricity generation. Generation, transmission, distribution and supply of electricity are carried out by Public Utilities Corporation (PUC). Our energy policy emphasizes on the need to reduce this dependency through the development of Renewable Energy (RE) and Energy Efficiency (EE).

The Policy sets a target 5 % by 2020 and 15 % by 2030 of RE in the electricity mix. Current peak demand close to 60 MW, installed capacity is 90 MW generation is predominantly heavy fuel oil (HFO), electricity provision to three main islands.

Why did Seychelles choose the lagoon at Providence?

The lagoon at Providence was chosen as the site due to its accessibility, protection from open water and injection into the grid. The tender was launched in 2018 and we are currently in the Request for Proposal phase and expect to select successful towards the end of 2019. The project is basically the installation of a 4 MW Floating grid connected solar PV plant located at the Lagoon at Providence. This project is an IPP project and will be Africa's first utility-scale FPV plant in a marine environment.

Why is it important for Seychelles to implement this kind of project?

By using FPV, Seychelles can maximize their solar PV potential and therefore rely on clean, renewable energy sources rather than imported fossil fuels. As mentioned before, FPV solves the twin challenges of land constraints and clean energy generation. Being a clean energy project, the project provides significant economic and fuel savings to the country. Other expected benefits of FPV include higher yield from the PV plant because of the cooling effect on panels over water, as with any RE projects, job opportunities/creation for locals, being the first, exposure of the Seychelles to the world in regards to marine FPV and thus offer research and teaching opportunities.

Once this project is completed, how do you see the life of people of Seychelles?

This project would be a milestone achievement in the history of Seychelles and we expect that the people will have one more feather on the cap of their country to feel proud of. This project with such a small capacity might not have a big impact on the electricity generation directly but will definite open doors for more IPPs, more private sector participation for the generation of electricity from renewable resources.

Interview by Eve Ehoura

About the ALSF

Created by the African Development Bank in 2010, the ALSF supports governments in negotiating complex commercial transactions, providing legal and technical assistance in public-private partnership projects across the oil and gas, mining and energy sectors, and covering sovereign debt issues and creditor litigation.

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