

Solar buffer battery Western Sahara

Is the Sahara a potential battery for Europe?

The Sahara has long been viewed as a potential battery for Europe, using CSP. In 2013, the EUR400bn Desertec project collapsed after the two advocates, Desertec Foundation and the Desertec Industrial Initiative, fell out, each accusing the other of poor communication. TuNur believes that now is the time for solar in the Sahara to finally take off.

Is Morocco dependent on Western Sahara for its energy supply?

But these developments have made Morocco partly dependent on Western Sahara for its energy supply. Morocco already gets 18% of its installed wind capacity and 15% of its solar from the occupied territory, and by 2030 that could increase to almost half of its wind and up to a third of its solar.

Could solar power the Great Saharan desert?

The Great Saharan Desert is more than 3.6 million square miles of dry, hot land, 1.2% of which could power the whole world, theoretically, if it were to be covered in solar PV. But the Sahara's solar potential is yet to be realised, with only the Noor project in Morocco currently operating in the area.

How much does Sahara solar cost?

The first stage of Sahara solar will see a 250MW CSP tower constructed, along with a dedicated transmission line through the Mediterranean Sea to Malta. This phase is estimated to cost EUR85m, and a further EUR1.6bn for the cable link. As such, the cost of power is expected to be 8.73 cents per kilowatt hour (c/kWh).

Why is the Sahara's solar potential not realised?

But the Sahara's solar potential is yet to be realised, with only the Noor project in Morocco currently operating in the area. There are a number of reasons for this, including political instability in the MENA region putting off potential investors.

Could the Sahara be transformed into a solar farm?

In fact, around the world are all located in deserts or dry regions. It might be possible to transform the world's largest desert, the Sahara, into a giant solar farm, capable of meeting the world's current energy demand. Blueprints have been drawn up for projects in and that would supply electricity for millions of households in Europe.

At present, there are already two operational solar plants in occupied Western Sahara: The 80 MW "Noor Laayoune I" (near El Aai), and the 20 MW "Boujdour I" (near Boujdour). Both were part of the so-called Noor PV I programme, which consisted of the two photo-voltaic plants in occupied Western Sahara and another in Ouarzazate, in ...

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If given the go-ahead, Sahara solar could provide power to two million European homes. This concept is not new, but until now it has been unsuccessful. So what makes TuNurs different? Tackling a lack of clean baseload power. Adoption of renewables has ramped up and continues to grow year on year.

Large solar farms in the Sahara Desert could redistribute solar power generation potential locally as well as globally through disturbance of large-scale atmospheric teleconnections,...

The SADR-in-exile would now like to roll out small-scale wind and solar installations in the part of Western Sahara that it controls, in order to power the communal wells, pharmacies and...

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