



The rise and rise of solar in Togo

Feb 5, 2020 – John van Zuylen

Togo is a small country in West Africa that seldom makes the headlines of international news. But when it comes to solar, this country really stands out as an amazing example for the promotion of solar as a solution to develop the country and bring cheap and reliable electricity to its population.

What is truly peculiar about Togo is not so much the absolute size of the different solar initiatives that are under way (the population amounts to only 8 million residents, not to be compared with the almost 200 million neighboring Nigerians). The most noteworthy aspect of solar in Togo is the wide diversity of solar initiatives currently being deployed across the country. The Government of Togo (GoT) has engaged into an aggressive program to provide solar through a multitude of solutions, adapted to the specific needs across the country.

Here is a list of the current projects:

Large scale solar

- UAE-based AMEA Power was the first company to [sign a solar PPA](#) with the national utility CEET in November 2019. This project comprises of an initial 30MWp, that will be extended to 50MWp in phase 2.
- Togo is the latest beneficiary of IFC's Scaling Solar initiative and [AT2ER](#) has recently launched the tender for the development of [2 projects of 30-40MW_{ac} each](#).
- UK's Globeleq has entered into an agreement with GoT to develop a [renewable energy plant of 24MW to 30MW](#). The final technology choice is not sanctioned yet, but options include a solar-hydro hybrid and a solar+storage plant.
- India's NTPC has been appointed as Project Management Consultant for the development of [300MW across the country](#)

Mini-Grids (MGs)

- The country already counts several mini-grids, among others in the village of [Sikpé Afidégnon developed by BBOX](#).
- These initial projects are soon to be supplemented with a whopping [317 additional mini-grids](#). These mini-grids are being developed through an international tender financed by the AfDB. They will be built in 3 phases over the next few years and pre-qualified developers are soon to be announced.

Solar Home Systems (SHS)

- Togo has put in place a truly unique subsidy program to make SHS more affordable to its population, called the *CIZO Cheque*. Through an innovative partnership between the 2

ministries and the rural electrification agency, the [CIZO program](#) allows SHS companies to directly receive a fixed monthly amount for every SHS installed and registered. The villager, in turns, only needs to pay the unsubsidized portion of the monthly payment out of pocket, thereby making SHS significantly more affordable in this country where nearly 80% still lives under the poverty line.

- Currently, 2 SHS companies are active in Togo: [BBOXX](#) and [SOLEVA](#). But the market will soon get a significant boost as Engie/Fenix International, Moon and Solergie have recently been licenced to operate in the country.
- The CIZO program also includes a training aspect, with the launch of [5 solar academies](#) run by Togolese Kya Energy and aiming to train 3,000 technicians over six months to solar kit maintenance and installation techniques.

C&I

- Lome, the capital city, already counts a handful of C&I projects (a.o 20kWp and 50kWp built by [CH2000](#) and 30kWp by [Kya Energy](#)), but this market segment is yet to really kick-start. But a notable 500kWp to be installed at the presidential palace is said to be under development. No doubt that this project, once commissioned, will shed the spotlight on the benefits of solar to local entrepreneurs and international investors looking to develop a financed C&I activity.

These projects illustrate very well that Togo is on an exponential solar trajectory and the country promises to be a vibrant market for solar in the coming years. It will be interesting to keep a close eye on the evolution of these projects and measure the tangible impact on improving the population's life in the coming years.

Togo is the demonstration that with committed political vision and decision-making, solar can be a solution for affordable and fast access to energy for large fractions of the population. We can only support this kind of commitment and wish the country all the best with these ambitious solar programs to achieve universal electrification by 2030.