

In this article we will try to offer an overview of the work to be done to obtain a winning outcome in the auction for the first large solar park by 50 MW in Albania. Even the issues are complex and requires in-depth considerations, the keep of these steps as concise as possible, not only will assure the possibility of a winning bid but above all ensure that the project will be financed with low interest rate and implemented successfully.

The new political and legal framework

The new energy sector strategy up to 2030 is based on two main pillars: the development of reforms to promote market liberalization in the context of regional integration and sustainable development driven by participation in the Energy Community. Thus the renewed action plan up to 2020 has tripled the target for photovoltaics from 40 MW to 120 MW, and doubled that of wind power up to 70 MW. As according to the new law on renewable energy sources approved in 2017, the overall framework of renewable projects is determined to be based on the auction mechanism .

In this regard, considering that from 2007 until 2017, Albania saw a substantial increase in the implementation of power plants exclusively in hydroelectric sources, it was thought that there was a time for a change of the entire paradigm of renewables. Given Albania's complete dependence on energy production from hydrology, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development has been mobilized to help the diversify of generation sources with solar and wind, considered as priorities to be developed in the short term. Thus, at the beginning of May 2017, the EBRD and the Ministry of Infrastructures and Energy of Albania signed a Memorandum of Understanding, followed by a further between the EBRD and the Energy Secretariat in Vienna, on cooperation for the regulatory framework and subsequent development of solar energy projects, through the implementation of competitive processes, to support alternative renewable energy.

In this regard, a first step saw the opened possibility of Net-Metering up to 500kV and the approval of feed-in tariffs 100 Eur/MWh for PV up to 2MW. Lately, while the implementations of the first floor of 20 MW photovoltaics have been started, MIE has opened the tender procedure for the selection of the bidder for the construction of the 50 MW photovoltaic plant. The news of PvPP in the salt lands of Akerni (Vlora) was welcomed by international investors. It represents a large-scale innovation for the benefits and opportunities offered, making that nothing will be the same as before for the entire energy sector in Albania. The positive result of which is designed to be used as a new basic action to replace even the rest of the planned 600 MW in hydropower within 2020.

The main features of the proposed call for PV capacity

For the above, the new approach to a tender for capacity, unlike those for power plants PV

by 2 MW, will solve from the root of the many complex problems, such as network connection, granting of permits and especially soil properties. However, the fact that the whole is to be considered in the package, necessitating the possession of a complex know-how, with a complete overview on regulatory, legal and technical aspects on the development of a successful proposal compared to competitors, which is also consistent to achieve the application of the project, obtaining financing, procurement and commissioning, construction and testing, such as successful management for at least 30 years.

The advantage of this first large-scale project is linked to the selected site with one of the highest solar radiations in Europe, for a potential over 1600 kWh/m². According to a UNDP Report 2013, if the photovoltaic potential is fully utilized, there is the possibility of ensuring up to 10 times the energy needed of the country. However, not all of the country can be filled with panels and this is technically the sunniest place. Furthermore, considering the need for energy in the area, and the major part of production is concentrate in the north, it avoids the high level of network losses. All this has been done to be considered, as the best technology to diversify future production, by many institutions that support the sector such as EBRD, Energy Secretariat, IRENA, etc.

Then fundamental is the understanding of the object under discussion and its novelties respect the unsolicited proposals. The selection of the project for the construction of the photovoltaic system will take place through an open international competition. Among these for the generation of electricity there will be support by Feed in Premium for an installed capacity of 50 MW. In addition, the object of the offer in the Akerni area sees the construction of an additional capacity which will not be part of the support measures among 20 MW to 50 MW. This means that the developer has to consider the entrance to the national and international market - an aspect that requires a well-participated evaluation and additional preparatory skills with respect to projects up to now.

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