

# Burkina, France launch West Africa's biggest solar plant

ZAGTOULI - Burkina Faso and France have launched West Africa's biggest solar farm, a 33MW facility designed to power tens of thousands of households and ease dependence on imported energy.



Photo: Medafricatimes

The 55-hectare (135-acre) outside the Burkinabe capital Ouagadougou, has an annual capacity equivalent to 5% of national production, according to the national power firm Sonabel.

Its 47.5-million-euro cost is being met by 25-million euros in donations from the European Union and a loan of 22.5-million euros from France's development agency.

The plant will avoid 26,000 tonnes of carbon emissions, according to its designers.

Cegelec, part of the French firm Vinci Energies, built the facility, designed to be a pilot scheme. French President Emmanuel Macron joined Burkinabe President Roch Marc Christian Kaboré for the inauguration.

Located in the heart of the Sahel region, Burkina Faso hopes to meet 30% of its electricity needs with photovoltaic solar panels by 2030.

A 17MW extension is already being planned at the site to take overall production capacity there to 50MW.

Two other plants, one further west at Koudougou (of 20MW) and a 10MW version at Kaya, northeast of the capital, are also being planned.

At present, Burkina Faso produces only about 60 percent of the electricity it consumes, with imported power from Ghana and Ivory Coast helping to make up the shortfall.

Only 20% of the population is hooked up to the electricity grid, and many people use wood or butane gas bottles for cooking and lighting.

**Source:** *AFP*

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