

Renewable Energy in Tunisia: Perspective and Strategy

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Abstract

In addition to environmental considerations, renewable energy become one of the most prominent source of energy, under the rise of the global oil prices and the increase of the global *energy demand*. The adopted policies led to a significant growth in global investments in renewable energy, which causes a major technological breakthrough, and has contributed to improve the economic efficiency of these alternative sources of energy and made them more competitive. The use of renewable energy has started in Tunisia since the eighties, and it included solar water heaters, rural enlightenment, water pumping and biogas. The most important achievements in this field are the equipping of more than 13000 units (schools, agricultural estates, houses...) under the National Program for Rural Enlightenment. In 2000, the production of electricity from wind energy started by concentrating the first power project in Sidi Daoud site in the northeast of Tunisia with an initial capacity of 10 MW and later expanding to 55 MW in 2008. In 2005, the PROSOL program, based on an innovative financing and incentive mechanism, was launched to boost the solar water heaters market. Under this program the installed area had exceed the one million m². Subsequently, since 2009, the private sector has been allowed to produce electricity from renewable energy for self-consumption (Energy Control Law). Under the decline in national fuel resources and the growing on the primary energy balance deficit, a new energy transition strategy has been developed. The main focus of this strategy is to rely on renewable energy as an alternative source of energy. In addition, the Tunisian Solar Scheme has been updated; it includes the objectives and mechanisms for implementing the National Energy Transition Strategy by 2030. This Scheme, aims especially to produce 30% of electricity from renewable energy and to establish the legal framework for this purpose. Also the projects (wind energy, solar energy and biomass) are distributed between the private sector in a large part, and the Tunisian Electricity and Gas Company for self-production, within the scope of the licenses and obligations stipulated in the legal framework for the production of electricity from renewable energies (Law No. 12 of 2015).