Sustainability Action · Project Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency

Aura Solar I, Mexico

Aura Solar I is part of the Aura Solar initiative, which aims to develop large-scale photovoltaic projects by capitalizing on Mexico's high solar potential.

Project

Aura Solar I is one of the largest PV solar plant in Latin America and the first private utility-scale project to be developed under the "Iniciativa Aura Solar". Aura Solar I is also the first Latin American renewable energy plant to be registered under the I-REC Code. The solar power plant meets the energy needs of 164,000 people (64% of the population of La Paz) and replaces fossil fuels for electricity production, which for years was the cause of food poisoning and air pollution.

Covering 100 acres of land with 132,000 polycrystalline photovoltaic modules, Aura Solar I produces 38.9 MWdc (30MWac) of energy. The generated electricity is sold exclusively to Mexico's Federal Power Company (CFE), through a 20-year Power Purchase Agreement that is based on the country's Small Electricity Producers' scheme.

Aura Solar I significantly reduces the use of fossil fuels and help mitigate risks related to the logistical transport of hydrocarbons in the delicate ecosystem of the Sea of Cortez, which has been declared a biodiversity heritage site by UNESCO. This solar power plant is an important trigger in the clean energy revolution in Mexico and will contribute to Mexico's target of 35% of energy being provided by renewables by 2026.

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Location

Baja California Sur offers perfect conditions for solar energy and the area around La Pax has extremely high levels of solar radiation. La Paz is the capital city of the Mexican state of Baja California Sur, an important regional commercial centre. It has a desert climate; typically dry, warm and sunny with a year around average temperature between 24 and 33 °C (75 and 91 °F).

Project achievements

Socio-economic impact

- Aura Solar I generates 82'000 MWh of clean electricity per year to 164,000 Mexican residents (64% of the population of La Paz).
- 250 job opportunities have been created, with the majority of workers being sourced from local communities (manufacturing, installation, operation and maintenance of equipment).
- The project has led to regional infrastructure improvements in direct alignment with the national goals and objectives for agriculture, livestock, rural development, fishing and nutrition.
- The project is an important catalyst for sustainable development in Baja California Sur, which is the one of the poorest states in Mexico (contributing to less than 1% of Mexican GDP in 2012).
- Aura Solar I has positioned Mexico a global leader in green energy by creating a market for solar investors and promoting the steady growth of the Mexican renewable energy market.

Environmental impact

- The project significantly reduces the emission of greenhouse gases to the atmosphere (36,680 tCO_2 per year) and protects the Sea of Cortez, which is recognized by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site, from pollution.
- The site has had a Certificate of Agricultural Non-Affectability since 1980, ensuring that there are no negative impacts on the environment resulting from the construction of this project.

Checklist Project 301428

Commercial Operation Date
September 2013

Total capacity
39 MWp

Annual Electricity Generation
82'000 MWh

Quality Assurance and Verification
In accordance with the I-REC Code

I-REC Registration
Registered on 1 July 2015, with retroactive effective date of 1 January 2014

Transparency
The project is listed in the I-REC Registry (https://registry.irecservices.com/Public/Home/)

Marketing material
High-resolution pictures are available

Reportability
Meets GHG Protocol Scope 2 Guidance criteria

I-REC Standard

I-REC STANDARD

RECs reportable under

WWF CDP WINDMADE RE 100

http://thesouthpolegroup.com/sustainability-solutions/renewable-energy

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