

IJGlobal Renewable Energy ESG Award – Americas – CEOG

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Any project that retires diesel-generated electricity is starting off in the right direction for the IJGlobal ESG Awards given the environmental benefits coupled with improved security of supply, usually in remote areas. The innovative use of hydrogen also merits special mention.

This was precisely the case for the CEOG Solar PV & Energy Storage project that secured debt financing from the European Investment Bank to support a 54.5MW solar asset with an associated energy storage in French Guiana and caught the attention of the judges for IJGlobal ESG Awards 2022.

The EIB provided a \$29 million (€25 million) loan to a special purpose vehicle Central Eléctrica del Oeste Guyanés (CEOG), which holds the solar-plus-storage project of the same name.

Asset manager Meridiam owns a 60% stake in the venture, while fuel distribution company Société Anonyme de Raffinerie des Antilles holds a 30% interest, and hydrogen player Hydrogène de France owns the remaining 10%.

The proceeds are being used to build and operate the \$200 million CEOG project in the municipality of Mana. The project comes with an up to 88MWh hydrogen storage facility, a 38MWh battery energy storage system and a 3MW fuel cell. It sells its output to EDF under a 25-year PPA.

Meridiam will manage the project, with Siemens Energy as the EPC contractor. Hydrogène, which developed the hybrid battery-hydrogen storage system, will also provide engineering services.

It is set to provide year-round supply for the equivalent of 10,000 homes in Guiana 24 hours a day and prefigures the future of renewable energy by eliminating their intermittency through energy storage. CEOG will supply half of the energy currently consumed by the people of Saint-Laurent-du-Maroni and Mana.

The innovative power plant will produce 100% renewable, stable and cheaper electricity by preventing the combustion of around 12 million litres of diesel and offsetting some 39,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions a year.

This is the first large-scale attempt to build a “dispatchable” renewables project – storing excess renewable electricity to avoid the problems of intermittent renewables, which is a vital role of hydrogen.

On the S and G fronts of ESG, the population of French Guiana is increasing rapidly. It is facing a considerable energy



deficit – especially in the west where the demographic growth is booming. By providing several MW of reliable and clean energy, CEOG fits with French Guiana’s energy strategy. Connected to the grid through EDF’s power station of Saint-Laurent-du-Maroni, CEOG will meet the current and future needs of the population in the area.

One of the judges said of CEOG: “This is a highly unusual and innovative project combining solar, hydrogen-based energy storage and a battery storage system addressing intermittency issues. Beyond that, it will replace diesel generated baseload power, so there will be a marked impact on CO2 reductions which is important for the wider community.”

Another judge added: “It’s good to see a green hydrogen project being developed alongside solar in a developing economy. I think there was potential for this to have a higher score if wider ESG credentials were presented.”

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