

WORLD BANK TO HELP FUND SOLAR PANELS PROJECT IN GAZA



In an effort to ameliorate the ongoing Gazan energy crisis, the World Bank on Tuesday announced a partnership with the Gaza Electricity Distribution Company and the Palestinian Authority to launch a \$2.5-million solar roof pilot program in the Strip.

The initiative, funded by the World Bank and a multi-donor trust fund called Development Partners, is part of an \$11m.

project designed to expeditiously expand and engender the mobilization of the private sector to install 1,000 rooftop panels.

According to a new study by the World Bank, entitled “Securing Energy for Development in the West Bank and Gaza,” more than 150 megawatts of solar power can be produced in the Gaza Strip.

However, due to a reliance on expensive diesel fuel, the region rarely produces more than 60 megawatts.

The recent reduction of imports from Israel has resulted in a full-blown crisis, endangering patients at area hospitals, and forcing Gazans to search for viable, affordable alternative energy solutions.

Gaza residents currently subsist on two hours of electricity daily.

Rooftop solar technology, first introduced to the impoverished coastal enclave in 2012, is increasingly proving to be the best solution, according to the World Bank.

“As of May 2017, approximately 310 kilowatts of rooftop solar systems have been installed on rooftops of health facilities in Gaza,” said Sara Badiei, an energy specialist at the World Bank. “For an embattled company such as GEDCO, this is an opportunity to improve their services and customer relations by providing additional power independent of political uncertainties.”

According to the Gaza Ministry of Health and the World Health Organization, 1,000 kilowatts of additional rooftop solar generation could be installed at 34 critical units within 10 hospitals in the region at a cost of \$4m.

“In addition, the program helps strengthen utility performance by encouraging good payment behavior through the monthly installments,” said Badiei.

“Following the same business model – with additional modifications and streamlining – the World Bank is teaming up with GEDCO and the Palestinian Energy Authority to install 1 megawatt of rooftop solar systems (for example: [RENOGY SOLAR SUITCASE](#)) for up to 1,000 consumers.” The pilot project, she said, is designed to be rapidly scalable, with an emphasis on galvanizing the private sector for further growth.

While not a panacea, Badiei said the initiative will offer the most sustainable means of increasing the region’s daily power needs, which by 2030 is forecast to reach 900 megawatts.

“At the same time, it will help ensure lifesaving health treatments, link telecommunication systems, improve water supply, bring adequate sewage treatment, enable business development – and most importantly, ensure consumers remain connected to electricity, even if a subsection of the grid is damaged during armed conflict,” she said.

“Overall, adoption of solar energy should be maximized; not only to improve quality of life, but to put power back into the hands of ordinary Gazans,” she added.

