

Post Conference Thoughts

RENEWABLE ENERGY TRADE MISSION IN KSA, 3-4 OCTOBER 2017

Interview with Andrew Renton, Partner, Bird & Bird LLP,
panellist at the conference session “How Will Storage Impact the Saudi Plan?”, 4 October, 4:00pm

» AGENDA

How was the mission for you?

Well I missed the first day because of other commitment and I know there were some exciting announcements on the renewables tender bids which everyone thinks will initiate a lot of activity in the renewables energy projects announced by the government.

What do you think you missed?

I would have liked to have heard the lessons learned session because so much progress has been made in the region on renewables projects and so much has changed and been learned by the industry here.

Do you have an example?

The tariff bids seem to be very low but the industry people seem confident in meeting them. I hope we don't see projects starting to struggle like we did in Jordan when bidders went to low and then found they couldn't get to a financial model that worked.

And what about today?

I thought the sessions today were excellent we have a real opportunity to get localisation and knowledge transfer to work in the solar sector here and to transfer the methodologies to other sectors.

What points stood out for you from the panel sessions?

The Private PPA session was interesting but ultimately, I think the market is not ready for private PPA's in Saudi. The use of inset private generation is different ball game from managing remote generation and use of system whilst maintaining security of availability. There needs to be a lot more thinking done around how this would work in Saudi and what needs to change to allow it to work within the regulatory structure.

I felt the session on rooftop solar was a bit negative. It is true that leased properties create an issue if the occupier want to install but where an owner or owner/occupier is willing to install and the operation and maintenance I carried out by third party using automated systems then I think there could be a really positive effect in the market by giving some kind of grant /Kw installed to increase self-generation with surplus going to storage or network or neighbours.

What about CSP?

To be honest I don't understand CSP outside the context of a required hot water or steam supply for industrial use. The inefficiencies in the system in comparison to PV with storage and other solutions makes we wonder if comparative financial models wouldn't always come out in favour of PV.

And storage?

I'm a bit of a storage geek I think it is a transformational use of technology and it will lead to use of renewables as a base load with storage also (not necessarily from the same battery system) providing a solution for network managers to resolve, frequency, voltage, outage, black start and demand side management issues using digital controls systems. Home battery systems will play a large part and my prediction is that in 10 years we will see renewable energy as a primary source of generation in mixed generation portfolios where renewables and storage has become "conventional generation"

So a success or not?

Undoubtedly a success, talking to people it was very clear that they understood the outcomes of the debates and they knew what direction things were going to go in for Saudi. Getting all the parts of government and industry to come together and participate is a major achievement and the announcements have really energised people to get on with the projects now.



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Exclusive interview for the International Battery & Energy Storage Alliance (IBESA), in cooperation with the Middle East Solar Industry Association (MESIA) and Joint Forces for Solar
Bonn/Riyadh, 4 October 2017