

## **Mideast's solar power technology to slow down - analyst**

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**Advancements in solar power technology in the Middle East in the next three to four years are expected to be limited because of a lack of government involvement in the field, according to a senior research analyst in renewable energy.**

It could be more than five years before solar power begins to be harnessed more widely in the Middle East North Africa (MENA) region, aside from at Masdar City, the zero-carbon project to be powered by solar energy under development in Abu Dhabi, said Hemanth Nayak, senior research analyst, energy and power systems practice, South Asia and Middle East, at Frost & Sullivan.

At the moment there was less than 20 megawatts of solar power connected to the grid in the MENA region. Most of the current developments were mainly in domestic solar water heaters or decentralised electrification, he said.

Investment in renewable energy is seen as a key way oil-rich countries in the region can diversify their economies away from a reliance on conventional oil and gas power.

“As far as solar is concerned the technology is still at an early stage and yet to be proven for the MENA region ground conditions and this will take something like more than four to five years to develop this technology,” he said in an interview.

“The main reason is that solar power is the most expensive form of power and we don't see many policies coming up to promote private investment into these projects to make the sector more attractive.

“Once new policies do come up in the future there's likely to be a lot of developments in this sector.”

He said at the moment across the region there was 600 megawatts of installed wind energy capacity focused in Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia and Iran, with the market in these four countries expected to grow at around 30 to 40 percent over the next four years.

Renewable energy accounts for as much as 20 percent of the energy mix in European countries like Denmark and Germany, compared to the MENA region where it is less than one percent, Nayak said.

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