

Giant floating solar under development in Laos

EDF is planning to build a 240 MW floating PV project at Laos' largest hydropower dam. French engineering company Innosea has joined the ambitious project as a provider of support for wave and anchoring studies.

NOVEMBER 16, 2021 **EMILIANO BELLINI**

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The Nam Theun hydropower station in Laos.

Image: EDF

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French energy giant [EDF](#) is planning the construction of a 240 MW floating solar power plant at the Nam Theun 2 Hydropower plant on the Nam Theun River, in Laos.

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The ambitious scheme, which would be the country's largest solar project, has now acquired a new partner with Innosea, a French independent technical engineering firm specializing in the field of marine renewable energies, which will act as a provider of support for wave and anchoring studies.

“The Nam Theun 2 solar project is exciting as it can demonstrate cost and energy potential from integrating FPV with existing power plants and technologies. Energy clustering of solar with hydropower is believed to potentially boost electrical output of existing plants by 10%, without occupying land space,” said Benoit Briere, senior project manager at Innosea. “It’s also a privilege to support Laos in the development of what is projected to be one of the world’s largest floating PV plants.”

The solar plant will cover an area of 3.2km², which corresponds to less than 1% of the reservoir’s area at full supply level. It will be operated in conjunction with the 1,080 MW hydropower plant in order to enable optimized water utilization and, according to the project developers, will result in a 6% increase in the total generation of the Nam Theun 2 facility.

EDF had signed a project development agreement (PDA) with the government of Laos in mid-July.

According to [recent analysis](#) from U.S.-based NGO Viet Ecology Foundation, 11,400 MW of floating solar-with-storage (FSS) is technically feasible in Laos and would generate an equal amount of power (15,000 GWh/year) – and could likely be implemented at a lower dollar-per-kilowatt-hour cost – than the three hydropower projects currently under development in the country – Pak Lay, Pak Beng and Luang Prabang. Overall, Laos plans to build nine hydroelectric projects on the main part of the Mekong River.

According to the International Renewable Energy Agency, Laos had an installed PV capacity of around 22 MW at the end of 2020.

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