

Press release

The other side of the Volkswagen scandal: THEnergy sees increasing pressure on remote hotels and resorts to replace diesel with solar and wind energy

Solar and wind can considerably lower health risks for tourists and employees at luxury resorts. At the same time, substantial electricity-cost savings are possible through solar and wind power.

The International Agency on Research on Cancer, which belongs to the World Health Organization, “classified diesel-engine exhaust as carcinogenic to humans in 2012 based on sufficient evidence that exposure is associated with an increased risk for lung cancer”.

Some of the nicest holiday resorts and hotels are situated in remote locations and are not connected to the grid. These hotels typically use dirty diesel generators for power generation. Due to the fact that it is difficult to access these remote locations, the diesel gensets are often not well maintained and are particularly hazardous. In many popular holiday destinations, there are no limits for genset diesel emissions. Exposure to exhaust can be a severe health risk for employees and tourists.

However, with solar and wind solutions having become very economical in recent years, there is an attractive alternative to using solely diesel gensets. In solar- or wind-diesel hybrid solutions, diesel consumption is considerably reduced by solar and wind power. Ideally, during the daytime, diesel generators are just used as back-ups. In many remote locations, costs for diesel electricity are particularly high due to transport. In today’s solar-diesel hybrid applications, solar and wind are often up to 75% less expensive than diesel electricity. Using storage is the next step. As battery prices continue to fall, it can make sense to completely switch off the diesel generators—even at nighttime.

The key barrier is that the electricity for solar and wind plants traditionally has to be paid beforehand. Investment expenditures are the main cost factor; during the lifetime of the solar or wind power plant, which averages 20–30 years, the fuel is free.

Innovative business models are evolving and changing these paradigms. “We work with external investors who are willing to make these investments and sell the solar or wind energy to larger hotels and resorts,” explained Dr. Thomas Hillig, founder of THEnergy. There are quite a view additional advantages of solar and wind at holiday destinations. Wind and especially solar power considerably eliminate or reduce the noise level in comparison to diesel gensets. Diesel transportation to islands is often an imminent danger for the environment. “We have seen diesel tankers sinking at landmark ecosystems such as the Galapagos Islands contaminating unique nature,” added Hillig.

In June 2015, THEnergy launched a platform for “Renewables on Islands” (th-energy.net/islands). It contains a database with renewable-energy applications on islands. Hotels and resorts are one of the most important segments. However, many hotels and resorts have not even considered solar and wind power yet. The Volkswagen scandal makes it clear that diesel is normally very dirty and can cause cancer. The awareness of tourists will increase. “We have seen some signals lately that more and more hotels and resorts are having a look at solar and wind solutions. The Volkswagen scandal increases the awareness of tourists toward the risks of diesel. We will see many progressive hotels and resorts that will invest right now in renewable energy,” pointed out Hillig.



The database “Renewables on Islands” is available at <http://www.th-energy.net/english/platform-renewable-energy-on-islands/database-solar-wind-power-plants/>

About Dr. Thomas Hillig Energy Consulting (“THEnergy”)

THEnergy assists companies in dealing with energy-related challenges. Renewable-energy companies are offered strategy, marketing and sales-consulting services. For industrial companies, such as mining companies and hotel groups, THEnergy develops energy concepts and shows how they can become more sustainable. THEnergy combines experience from conventional and renewable energy with industry knowledge in consulting. In addition to business consulting, THEnergy is active in marketing intelligence and as an information provider in select fields such as renewables and mining through the platform th-energy.net/mining or renewables on islands through the new platform th-energy.net/islands. For more information visit www.th-energy.net.

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