



Public Notice: 18th of February 2022

Utilities Regulatory Authority to issue an Interim Commission Order on new requirements for installed Solar PV systems on Electricity Concession Areas in Vanuatu

The Utilities Regulatory Authority (the Authority) wishes to advise all electricity customers, especially those within Port Vila and Luganville electricity concessions that it will be issuing an Interim Commission Order by 31st of March 2022 to set the new requirements for installation of solar PV systems on grid connected customers' premises for generation of electricity for self-consumption or injection into the utility grid.

Prior to issuing this Interim Order, the Authority will be consulting with applicable stakeholders to ensure the Commission Order aligns with the changes in the electricity market in Vanuatu, and customers are fully informed and understand this new requirement.

As a matter of context, each stakeholder has an important role to play in our local electricity market.

- (a) The overarching Government objective is to promote the utilization of renewable energy technologies such as solar PV within the generation mix with the long-term goal of reducing the electricity costs while sustaining the growth of the electricity market. This is a very challenging ambition that can only be achieved through collaborative efforts by all players in the market.
- (b) The respective electricity concessionaires (electricity companies) retain the exclusive right to sell electricity within their respective concession areas and in accordance with the concession contract and applicable legislations and regulations in Vanuatu. While the legal framework enables customers with grid tied rooftop solar PV to generate and use energy within the jurisdictions of the concessionaires, there are technical implications that need to be managed and controlled to ensure electric companies are able to provide reliable and quality supply to all customers.
- (c) Customers interests are important, and their expectations needs to be managed carefully to ensure sustainability of the Vanuatu electricity market. Since the advent of affordable PV solar technologies, a subset of electricity customers has become interested in generating energy, either for their own use or with the purpose of selling it to the utility. This growing interest in

solar PV installations has created opportunities and a unique set of challenges, some shared with other energy markets and some specific to the Vanuatu context.

The Authority's role is to align the high-level policy objectives with technical imperatives to ensure reliability and continuity of grid-supply, safety and security of utility and public, fairness in the bearing of the costs of the electric systems amongst customers with and without PV solar.

It is for these reasons that the Authority is issuing this public notice soliciting all customers with roof top solar PV installation to come forth and provide information of their solar PV systems to their respective electricity utilities namely, UNELCO in Port Vila, Efate and VUI in Luganville, Santo.

The information that is to be provided by a customer with grid tied solar PV system should include the customer contact details, electrical specifications of the system including the solar PV arrays, battery system, inverter, direct current (DC) bus system, alternating current (AC) bus system and interface mechanism (export or zero export) between utility grid and the solar PV system.

The utility should be provided with the opportunity to undertake on site verification checks to validate the information provided by customers in regard to their grid-tied solar PV systems.

It is important that information on all solar PV installations within the respective electricity utility jurisdictions are known to the Authority and the utilities. The acquired information will assist ongoing discussions between the Government, the Authority, and respective utilities on the required changes within the electricity sector to accommodate for the impacts of grid tied solar PV systems on the electricity market in Vanuatu.

Do not hesitate to contact the Authority should you have any questions regarding this notice.

Customer may use the template as provided on the Authority website (www.ura.gov.vu) to provide information concerning their installed solar PV system and provide to their respective electricity service provider.

About the Utilities Regulatory Authority

The URA was set up under the Utilities Regulatory Authority Act No. 11 of 2007. The URA is an independent body, and its primary purpose is to maximize access to safe, reliable, and affordable electricity and water services to homes and businesses, and to protect the long-term interests of consumers throughout Vanuatu.

Contact Information

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