



Press release

The Salto de Chira pumped-storage hydroelectric power station receives €90 million in ERDF funding

The funding is earmarked for the development of the 'Salto de Chira' energy storage project

Salto de Chira will allow a 37% increase in renewable energy generation in the Canary Islands by 2026

Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, 20 January 2023

The European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) has granted €90 million to the System Operator to finance the Salto de Chira energy storage project in Gran Canaria.

This financial help represents the European recognition of a key and essential project to achieve the decarbonisation of the island of Gran Canaria. The specific objective of the ERDF funding is to "create energy systems, grids and smart equipment of energy storage outside the trans-European energy networks".

It is estimated that Salto de Chira will increase renewable production by 37%, reaching 51% of renewables in the average annual energy mix on Gran Canaria (a figure that at given moments of the year could be much higher) and reduce CO2 emissions by 20%. The facility has been designed with the utmost respect for the environment, as 91% of the infrastructure is underground, guaranteeing the facility has been blended into the landscape and thus minimising the visual impact.

The power station will have an energy storage capacity of 3.6 GWh which, once commissioned, will allow hydro storage using surplus renewable energy that cannot be integrated into the electricity system to pump water from the lower reservoir to the upper one, so that it can be at a later date when needed.

The project includes the construction of a pumped storage hydroelectric power station with a capacity of 200 MW in turbine mode and 220 MW in pumping mode, a seawater desalination plant and the associated marine works, as well as the necessary facilities for its connection to the transmission grid in order to evacuate the energy into Gran Canaria's electricity system.

In the Canary Islands, due to the fact that it is an isolated island electricity system, energy dependence on is much greater than on the Spanish mainland. In 2022, renewable generation in the Canary Islands accounted for 20.1% of the final energy mix, compared to 43.7% of renewable generation in the mainland system.

Therefore, it is a priority to achieve the objective established in the Canary Islands' Climate Emergency Declaration to decarbonise its economy by 2040, which necessarily involves promoting and leading a profound change in its energy model towards a new sustainable one, based on energy efficiency and renewable energy.

Among other objectives, this project seeks to decarbonise the electricity system on the island of Gran Canaria, boost the development of renewable energy in isolated systems and the development of smart energy storage technologies with a 100% renewable cycle, both for the consumption of energy from renewable facilities for storing water, and for the production of electricity through the use of falling water.