Botswana has around 212 billion tonnes of coal reserves and relies on coal for much of its electricity generation. This accounts for a low score due to the lack of diversity of electricity generation fuel sources. Installed capacity stands at 929MW but demand exceeds supply, requiring imports from South Africa. The government has established a National Electricity Standard Connection Cost (NECC) programme to assist citizens by easing upfront electricity connection costs. This programme accelerated the national connection rate. An estimated 77% of the urban population has access to electricity but a much lower percentage of rural communities enjoy access. The government, through the state-owned power utility company, continues to revise electricity tariffs to make them cost-reflective, leading to a 22% increase in tariffs in April 2020.

The Integrated Resource Plan (IRP) for electricity (2020) will boost the electricity sector’s resilience. It is more focused on diversifying the energy mix and the sustainable use of available resources to generate electricity. IPP has recommended solar, wind, and coal-bed methane as alternatives. The switch to less carbon intensive fuel and renewables is expected to reduce carbon emissions from the power sector. The IRP project has been aligned with the Renewable Energy Strategy and the Energy Efficiency strategy of 2017.

Botswana receives over 3,200 hours of sunshine per year and irradiation levels are amongst the highest in the world, making solar energy a promising renewable energy resource. The solar potential has not been highly utilised though there are plans to increase the share of solar. In 2019, Botswana Power Corp. re-issued a tender inviting independent power producers to build two 500MW solar parks. This should help to improve energy security given the difficulties faced by South Africa’s Eskom, which has been facing the gap between electricity supply and demand in Botswana.

Botswana also imports 100% of its refined oil products needs, mostly from South Africa, since it does not have an oil refinery. The government is in the process of boosting its strategic fuel reserves from 18 days of national consumption to 90 days as an additional energy security measure.

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected the economy and disrupted the supply of refined oil products given the limited access points. Observing COVID-19 protocols significantly caused delays in fuel deliveries, resulting in shortages, highlighting the need to improve energy security to ensure resilience in the event of future disruptions.