





Trends and Outlook

Home of the world's fourth-largest proved crude oil reserves and second-largest natural gas reserves, Iran's energy sector has not managed to develop, due to international sanctions. After sanctions were lifted in early 2016, Iran's oil exports rose quickly, exceeding 2 million barrels per day in 2018. Reimposed sanctions by the United States in November 2018 led Iranian crude oil exports to fall under 500,000 barrels per day in May 2019.

Iran meets most of its energy consumption through the wealth of its domestic hydrocarbon resources. The country wishes to develop its electric capacities, focusing on natural gas but also renewable energies and nuclear power. Iran currently has a nuclear reactor (Bushehr), in operation since the end of 2013, and plans to build two additional units. Further, Iran has managed to attract significant foreign investment and more efficient technologies for energy generation, and transformation is now being employed. This includes a contract with Turkey to build 5,000 MW of advanced combined-cycle power plants with about 60% efficiency, to be completed within the next three years.

The country is also taking steps to address the trilemma's environmental sustainability dimension, with plans to install 5 GW of both solar panels and wind turbines by 2021. These could help to render Iran's renewable energy infrastructure more resilient to extreme weather events: recurring droughts have significant negative effects on the country's hydroelectric power plants. The development of renewable energies is one of the priorities of the Vision 2025 strategic roadmap, which sets the political, economic and social goals for Iran.

