BUILD BACK BETTER INITIATIVE · SUDAN & EAST AFRICA

Evidence for Resilience - Policy. Communities. Change.

Saudi Arabia's Renewables Grew 88% in a Year. The Data That Made That Possible Is What Sudan Is Missing.

Research Team

Contents

Headline Fact 1
Timeline 1
What We Know / What We Don't 1
Do-No-Harm Note 2
What to Watch 2
Sourcing & Next Update 2

Saudi Arabia's renewable capacity jumped 88% in 2025, tracked to the plant and the halala. Sudan and East Africa have no comparable statistical picture — and that gap is part of why financing stays scarce.

3Bi Research Team

Headline Fact

Saudi Arabia's operating renewable-energy capacity rose 88% in a single year — from 6,551 megawatts at the end of 2024 to 12,313 megawatts at the end of 2025 — according to figures from the General Authority for Statistics (GASTAT) reported by the Attaqa Energy Platform on 6 August 2026. Total cumulative investment in the sector reached SAR36.11 billion ($9.62 billion), and GASTAT can state, to the halala, what each of the year's five newly commissioned solar plants cost to build and to run.

Timeline

- **2019–2020:** Operating renewable capacity in Saudi Arabia: 300 megawatts. Cumulative investment: SAR1.16 billion (Attaqa/GASTAT, 6 August 2026).
- **2021–2022:** Capacity rises to 700 megawatts; investment reaches SAR2.73 billion (Attaqa/GASTAT, 6 August 2026).
- **2023:** Capacity jumps to 2.8 gigawatts; investment reaches SAR7.84 billion (Attaqa/GASTAT, 6 August 2026).
- **2024:** Capacity reaches 6,551 megawatts across roughly ten operating projects; investment reaches SAR19.84 billion (Attaqa/GASTAT, 6 August 2026; General Authority for Statistics, "Renewable Energy Statistics 2025").
- **End of 2025:** Capacity reaches 12,313 megawatts across 15 operating projects, after five new solar plants — Al-Ras (2), Al-Kahfah, Al-Shuqaiq (1), Saad (2), and Wadi Al-Dawasir — added a combined 5,762 megawatts during the year. Cumulative investment reaches SAR36.11 billion ($9.62 billion); the year's new projects alone drew SAR16.27 billion ($4.33 billion), or 45% of the total (Attaqa/GASTAT, 6 August 2026).
- **End of 2025 (grid reach):** More than 2.08 million residential units are now supplied by commissioned renewable projects, up from 1.14 million a year earlier — an 82% increase (Attaqa/GASTAT, 6 August 2026).
- **Independent confirmation:** Utilities Middle East and MEES separately reported the 2025 total at 12.3 gigawatts and year-on-year growth of roughly 87%, corroborating the GASTAT figures within rounding (Utilities-ME, 2026; MEES, 28 February 2026).

What We Know / What We Don't

We know the topline capacity and investment figures above come from a named statistical authority (GASTAT) and are corroborated by two independent trade outlets. We know the average production cost across 2025's commissioned projects was 6.60 halalas per kilowatt-hour ($0.0176/kWh), with Al-Shuqaiq (1) the cheapest at 6.30 halalas and Wadi Al-Dawasir the most expensive at 7.01 halalas (Attaqa/GASTAT, 6 August 2026) — cost transparency at the level of an individual power plant.

We do not know whether Saudi Arabia's stated ambition of a 50% renewable share in its national electricity mix by 2030 is on track from these figures alone; GASTAT's release covers installed capacity and cost, not generation share or grid-mix data. We also do not have an equivalent dataset for Sudan. Sudan's Ministry of Energy and Mining does not publish project-level capacity, cost, or investment statistics comparable to GASTAT's; the most recent credible Sudan figure — 190 megawatts of installed solar capacity by 2025, against a pre-war target of 3,300 megawatts of renewables (including 2,190 megawatts of solar) by 2033 — comes from a UNDP study relayed by Radio Dabanga and the North Africa Post (19 and 25 May 2026), not from a Sudanese statistical agency. East Africa as a region fares little better: regional tracking by RES4Africa and others put installed renewable capacity across East Africa at roughly 6,300 megawatts as of 2021, with solar still under 2% of the regional energy mix and Kenya the only country close to Gulf-style project-level reporting, chiefly through its geothermal sector.

Do-No-Harm Note

This item concerns published national energy statistics and infrastructure investment, not active conflict, displacement, or any named individual or community. We checked for identifying or endangering details before publication and found none; no consent or generalization issue applies.

What to Watch

Whether GASTAT publishes a mid-year 2026 update tracking progress toward the 50%-by-2030 target; whether Saudi Arabia's National Renewable Energy Program discloses generation-share (not just capacity) figures, which would allow a like-for-like comparison with grid-mix targets elsewhere in the region; and whether any Sudanese or East African statistical body begins publishing project-level renewable capacity and cost data of comparable granularity — a prerequisite, financiers in the region say, for the kind of bankable pipeline Gulf capital has financed at home.

Sourcing & Next Update

Primary: Attaqa Energy Platform, "6 ",2025 [illegible] %88 [illegible] August 2026, citing Saudi Arabia's General Authority for Statistics (GASTAT). Corroborating: Utilities Middle East (2026) and Middle East Economic Survey, 28 February 2026. Sudan comparison figures: UNDP study via Radio Dabanga (25 May 2026) and North Africa Post (19 May 2026). East Africa regional figures: RES4Africa (2024) regional renewable-capacity tracking. 3Bi will revisit this item if GASTAT or the Saudi Ministry of Energy publishes updated 2026 figures, or if a Sudanese or East African authority releases comparable statistics.

This piece was produced through 3Bi's automated daily publications workflow monitoring regional and international climate and energy reporting.

This publication is produced with support from 3Bi's institutional donors; see the full funder list at 3bisudan.org.

Suggested citation: 3Bi Research Team, "Saudi Arabia's Renewables Grew 88% in a Year. The Data That Made That Possible Is What Sudan Is Missing.," 3Bi, 7 August 2026.
Publisher: 3Bi — Build Back Better Initiative
Location: Khartoum, Sudan