

Social Solar Policy in Greece



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A guide as to how Greece can make full use of existing resources, in order to help 340,000 vulnerable households become small producers of solar energy for self-consumption, thus liberating themselves from energy poverty.

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Executive summary:

The government could immediately start implementing an ambitious 10-year social policy programme on solar energy, in order to help more than 300,000 vulnerable households turn into small producers of solar energy for self-consumption, thus freeing themselves from energy poverty.

The suggested program could liberate vulnerable households from a problematic and ineffective support system, like the current Social Residential Tariff, making them **energy self-sufficient**, as they will be able to **produce their own clean energy** and stand on their own feet, without any support. Equally important is the fact that the Greek economy will be moving towards clean energy with **terms of social equity** and that the principles of **energy democracy** will be promoted.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Implementation of a ten-year programme providing free 2kW photovoltaic energy to 340,000 households, with an estimated weighted cost of implementation up to €45 million annually. The suggested programme combines two options: a) free installation of individual systems per household but also b) creation of local PV parks (energy communities) with free participation for vulnerable households. The programme could take off immediately as a pilot, with a small budget of €6-13 million for the first few years; later on, it could be reinforced with funds released from different sources.

The implementation cost of the suggested programme is absolutely realistic and, furthermore, it is far lower than the annual cost of the Social Residential Tariff. Moreover, for its implementation, Greenpeace proposes capitalising on existing resources, which can be redistributed without changing the national budget or burdening the consumers.

The program can be implemented by municipalities and energy suppliers. For the Public Power Corporation (PPC) in particular, implementing the program offers many advantages. It puts PPC at the forefront of the energy democratization process, thus enhancing its environmental and social profile. It also helps PPC retrieve hundreds of millions (€) in unsettled debt from very poor households that are currently unable to pay.

Prospective benefits per household per scenario:

2kW Power	Benefits per household
Total annual energy production	2.750 - 3.100 kWh / year
Coverage of annual needs in electricity per household	70-80%
Estimated annual savings per household	280-315€





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Similar programmes of social solar policy have already been implemented elsewhere for some years now. As energy democracy is enhancing the citizens' role in energy production, more and more programmes of social solar policy are expected to be implemented worldwide in the near future.

The race to tackle climate change and the **Paris Climate Agreement** force for radical change in the way that the economies work, as well as for a quick turn towards a future of 100% clean energy. Indeed, the global economy is quickly turning towards cheaper and clean renewable energy sources; in the near future, the social solar policy will become "business as usual" for many countries.

There is absolutely no reason for Greece to wait any longer, since there is the solar potential (which is a comparative advantage of the economy) and, at the same time, a significant problem of energy poverty that makes a large percentage of the population suffer. Greece should include social solar policy in the **National Energy and Climate Plan** as one of the main policies that strengthen a socially equitable transition towards a clean future.

A fundamental condition for this to happen is political will, as well as some **necessary and urgent improvements on the legal and policy framework** that will remove serious obstacles in the installation and operation of local PV parks.

Turning to the sun, along with putting an emphasis on transforming households, small and medium-sized enterprises, municipalities and local communities into small producers of energy, could only benefit our society. In particular, a programme of social solar policy for the most vulnerable households could result in:

- **Energy poverty alleviation and creation of a steady income for households, with one single intervention**

Households will come out of the support system and regain their dignity with a single intervention. For the same reason, tax-payers' and consumers' money will be used much more efficiently.

- **A socially fair energy transition**

Securing a socially fair energy transition requires the active participation of all members of society – and particularly the economically disadvantaged citizens. The social solar programme makes sure that the forthcoming democratisation of the energy sector will be inclusive, "leaving no-one behind".



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- **A definitive solution for household debts towards PPC**

A major benefit for PPC is that households will be obliged to be placed on a debt settlement scheme. It's a "win-win" situation, in which on one hand the PPC is securing payments and on the other hand households are paying their debts in a sustainable way, because of free solar energy.

- **Boosting the local economy instead of importing fossil fuels**

The country's solar capacity is a comparative advantage for the Greek economy, while it can also support tens of thousands of jobs. Even if Greece imports all PV panels and inverters, and none of them are manufactured by Greek industries, still the domestic added value of PVs can reach up to 60% of the investment.

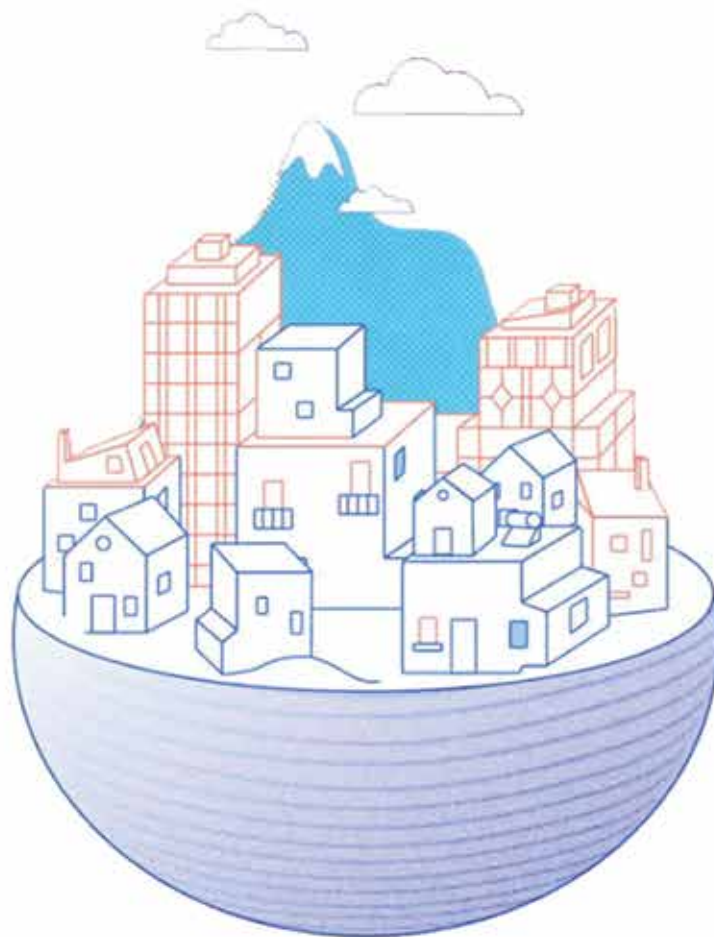
- **Effective climate policy**

By helping vulnerable households turn from passive consumers into clean energy prosumers, the program effectively places hundreds of thousands of households in the centre of the national climate policy.

- **Strengthening PPC's role in energy transition and the democratisation of the energy sector**

PPC ought to leave its fossil fuel history in the past and focus on how it can help itself and Greece by tapping on the country's vast renewable energy resources and be a leading actor in a socially fair energy transition.





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