

AFRICA RISK CONSULTING

Côte d'Ivoire Monthly Briefing February 2023

Côte d'Ivoire Summary 16 February 2023

Côte d'Ivoire signs an agreement with United Arab Emirates-based AMEA Power on 16 January to implement the country's first solar-independent power project: a 50 MW PV solar plant, that will provide 350,000 people in the north-eastern region of Gontougo with green energy. It will also boost the energy mix of Côte d'Ivoire, which currently relies on hydropower, oil, natural gas and biomass and takes a step towards fulfilling the Agenda 2030 and Sustainable Development Goals. The World Bank and Côte d'Ivoire present the new Country Partnership Framework (CPF) 2023-2027 on 2 February. The CPF is equally aimed at making the economy more sustainable but also more inclusive, by closing the human capital gap, providing more jobs, empowering women and girls to offer them equal chances in the labour market and reducing the number of poor and vulnerable people. The debate about the 2019 marriage law and whether it is really an advantage for women prevails – as does the controversy about a proposed bill to legalise polygamy.

First Ivorian solar independent power project (IPP) for 50MW PV Solar Plant

Côte d'Ivoire's government signed a concession agreement and a 25-year Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) with **United Arab Emirates-based AMEA Power** on 16 January for a 50-megawatt (MW) photovoltaic power plant. The 50MW project will support the clean energy ambitions of the country by generating more than 85 gigawatts per hour (GWh) of clean energy per year – enough power for approximately 350,000 people. At a total investment of around \$60m, the project is being fully developed by AMEA Power under a Built-Own-Operate and Transfer (BOOT) model.¹ BOOT is a public-private partnership (PPP) project model in which a private organisation conducts a large development project under contract to a public-sector partner, such as a government agency.

The project will be the first solar-independent power project (IPP) in Cote d'Ivoire and will be in the city of **Bondoukou** in the north-eastern region of **Gontougo**, located 420km northeast of **Abidjan**. **Hussain INoweis**, chairman of AMEA Power, noted that the company has a solid track record of delivering projects in **West Africa**:

*"The region has a great amount of untapped potential for renewable energy and green hydrogen. As AMEA power expands its investments across Africa, we will work in partnership with governments, businesses and local communities to develop projects."*²

AMEA Power invests in wind, solar, energy storage and green hydrogen projects, with a primary focus on the **Middle East** and Africa and has built up a "clean energy pipeline of over 6 Gigawatt (GW) across 20 countries".³ The company also partners with **International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA)** – an intergovernmental organisation based in **Abu Dhabi** (UAE) that supports countries in their transition to a sustainable energy future, serving as a platform for international cooperation.⁴

¹ www.esi-africa.com, 17 Jan 2023

² www.esi-africa.com, 17 Jan 2023

³ www.ameapower.com

⁴ www.irena.org

The company is also very much involved with building up the largest solar plant in West Africa – by extending the **Mohammed Bin Zayed Solar Power Plant** in **Togo** from 50MW to 70MW. Furthermore, last November, AMEA power closed financing on 1GW of renewable energy projects to be deployed in **Egypt**, constituting a 500MW solar PV plant and a 500MW wind farm, thereby doubling its renewable energy capacity in Egypt to 2GW. The company is also finalising the construction of a solar project in **Burkina Faso** and developing a solar project in **Mali**.⁵

For Côte d'Ivoire, the new agreements with AMEA Power underline the country's efforts to fulfil the **United Nations (UN) Agenda 2030** and the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**, in particular, SDG 7 – 'Affordable and Clean Energy for All'. The Ivorian government has targeted raising the share of renewable energy in the country's electricity generation mix to 42% by 2030. IRENA data indicates that in 2020 the share was 32%, made up exclusively of hydropower sources. Côte d'Ivoire's energy mix is based on four primary energy sources: hydropower, oil, natural gas and biomass and 70% of energy consumption come from biomass. The access to electricity differs very much between the urban population (92% in 2016) and people living in rural areas (38% in the same year).⁶

New partnership with the World Bank for a more inclusive economy

The **World Bank** and Côte d'Ivoire presented its new **Country Partnership Framework (CPF) 2023-2027** on 2 February listing improving human capital, reducing disparities, building resilience and creating private sector jobs as the main goals of the partnership. The engagement involved prior consultations with the private sector, the authorities, civil society, and other development partners and aims to support a more inclusive and sustainable economic and social transformation, as articulated in **Vision 2030** and the **2021-2025 National Development Plan**. World Bank country director for Côte d'Ivoire, **Benin, Guinea, and Togo, Coralie Gevers**, said:

*"Over the past decade, significant investments and reforms have enabled Côte d'Ivoire to make major strides in improving infrastructure—particularly with respect to access to energy, driving strong growth, and combating poverty."*⁷

Gevers stressed, that the World Bank group wants to support the continuation of reforms and programmes in the country that will bridge the human capital gap and strengthen natural resource management and the country's capacity to cope with the effects of climate change. The competitive development of employment which generates agricultural and manufacturing sectors is also encouraged. Thus, the objective of the new strategy is in line with the 2021-2025 National Development Plan and Vision 2030, aiming to reduce the number of poor and vulnerable persons, build the capacity of communities to respond to risks and strengthen the social contract between the state and the population.

The new CPF is also consistent with the World Bank Group's regional strategy for Western and **Central Africa**. At the core of this strategy is the rebuilding of trust between citizens and the state to create a new social contract, removing bottlenecks that prevent businesses from creating more and better jobs and strengthening human capital. Empowering women also plays a crucial role, as does building climate resilience to help countries adapt to and mitigate climate shocks by strengthening the resilience of cities and rural areas.⁸

The World Bank's total current portfolio in Côte d'Ivoire amounts to \$5.48 billion distributed among 33 projects and programmes under implementation. With the new CPF, the World

⁵ Multiple sources : www.esi-africa.com, www.powerengineeringint.com, www.pv-tech.org

⁶ www.se4all-africa.org

⁷ www.worldbank.org, 2 Feb 2023

⁸ www.worldbank.org, 2 Feb 2023

Bank's support aims to help the government provide access to electricity for 80% of households by 2026 and increase tenfold the number of persons who have a land title or secure property ownership rights. World Bank support for basic education also aims to increase the proportion of third-year students who pass the reading proficiency test from 18.9% in 2020 to 43% in 2025.⁹

The **International Finance Corporation (IFC)**, the largest global development institution focused on the private sector in developing countries and a member of the World Bank has committed nearly \$950m (including \$521m mobilised from other financial partners) over the past five years to support private sector development in Côte d'Ivoire and the country's economic diversification strategy. In 2023, IFC plans to invest \$660m in key sectors of the Ivorian economy.¹⁰ **Olivier Buyoya**, IFC regional director for West Africa, says:

*"IFC is committed to supporting the development of the Ivorian private sector, particularly SMEs, women-owned businesses and national champions, and to promoting a better business climate to foster a more inclusive, diversified, and resilient economy."*¹¹

The enhanced support for Côte d'Ivoire by the World Bank and IFC comes at a time when the country's economy is already advancing. Finance and economy minister **Adama Coulibaly** noted during a conference in Abidjan-Cocody, as part of the training of the 22nd promotion of auditors of the **Professional Master in Economic Policy Management (GPE)**, that the implementation of **Economic and Financial Programs (PEF)** 2012-2015 and 2016-2020, supported by the **International Monetary Fund (IMF)**, has helped Côte d'Ivoire's economic growth average 8.1% over the period 2012-2019, after sliding to -4.9% in 2011 due to the political crisis and 2% in 2020 in light of the **Covid-19** pandemic. Growth increased to 7.4% in 2021, while the budget deficit has remained on average at 2.6% over 2012-2019, below the 3% of the community norm. The investment rate increased from 8.9% in 2011 to 23.4% in 2021. From 2011 to 2019, more than 2,800,000 jobs were created, Coulibaly added:

"Today, Côte d'Ivoire is cited among the countries with the highest growth rates in the world. We have a thriving economy that works".¹²

However, global crises, like the **Ukrainian** war, have significantly affected the country's economy and above all, its poorest population. Of the country's 27 million population, more than 10 million (39.5%) live below the national poverty line, and around 4.3% are severely food insecure. This is mostly due to price increases - high food prices on the international market and high domestic transport costs have negative effects on household food baskets. These impacts should be relatively low on domestically produced starch like yams and cassava but higher on imported commodities like rice and wheat, a key ingredient for bread, a staple food for urbanites. Increased transport costs, energy (electricity) prices, and inflation - more than 5% in 2022 and 2.3% in 2023 based on government estimates - will further strain households' already stretched budgets.¹³

New marriage law evaluated, sparking controversy again

Trabi Bott Jérôme, the deputy director of legislation at the directorate of legislative studies and documentation (DELD) within the justice ministry noted on 14 February that its first evaluation of the new law on marriage in Côte d'Ivoire that came into effect in June 2019 has had positive effects, namely reducing inequalities between men and women in marriage and

⁹ www.worldbank.org, 2 Feb 2023

¹⁰ www.worldbank.org, 2 Feb 2023

¹¹ www.worldbank.org, 2 Feb 2023

¹² www.gouv.ci

¹³ blogs.worldbank.org, 6 Feb 2023

ensuring the full protection of the family. Jérôme affirmed that this law enshrines major innovations, including the conditions required to contract marriage:

*"In Côte d'Ivoire marriage is the union of a man and a woman celebrated before the civil registrar" and that this new law clearly establishes a mixed and monogamous marriage, unlike the old law which could give rise to multiple interpretations."*¹⁴

The marriageable age of men and women has now been harmonised at 18 years - the old law allowed men to marry at 20 years of age and women at 18 years of age - and early marriage is prohibited. There were some reforms related to the conditions under which a marriage is vacated and a new marriage is possible. A woman whose marriage is dissolved may remarry only if she observes a waiting period of 300 days after the dissolution of the marriage. However, she may have this period shortened by proving that she has not cohabited with her previous husband for 300 days. Jérôme concluded:

*"From now on, a woman who wants to remarry before the end of these 300 days has a second possibility, which consists in having a doctor establish that she is not pregnant."*¹⁵

After the declaration of the new law in 2019, women's associations and activists had put high hopes into the reform, which they hoped to be *"a step toward women having the same rights as their husbands over marital property"*¹⁶ and was expected to represent a standard for other African countries to meet. New measures should ensure that widows don't lose their inheritance rights in favour of their husband's male relatives, provide additional protections against domestic violence and set the minimum age for marriage at 18 as the new standard. Nevertheless, some short-comes were already identified at the time. The law would not extend to customary and religious marriages that are not registered, the critics said, and it would not provide legal rights to long-time cohabiters. Women in these relationships could still lose their property when their union ends, or their husband dies.¹⁷

Apart from the issue of property, the debate whether Côte d'Ivoire should stick to its monogamous system or allow polygamy has raised a lot of controversies. **Yacouba Sangaré**, a member of parliament (MP), introduced a bill to legalise polygamy on 30 June 2022, claiming that the practice remains widespread across regions in the country and ought to be legally permitted. Sangaré described the current matrimonial legislation in Côte d'Ivoire as *"a generalised hypocrisy"*. The elected member of the ruling **Rassemblement des houphouëtistes pour la démocratie et la paix (RHDP)** party filed the bill to amend the June 2019 law that stipulates that *"no one may contract a new marriage before the first one is dissolved"* and that sole state officials have the authority to legalise a union. But the proposal has since sparked outrage among women's rights organisations and feminist groups who have dubbed it a step back in the fight against gender inequality.

Former women's affairs minister **Constance Yaï** described the bill as a provocation. Yaï, who is also head of the **Association for the Defence of Women's Rights (AIDF)** advocacy group sees the bill as a new effort to alienate women as *"polygamy is not an appropriate response to male infidelity or an absence of communication in couples"*. Following the bill's introduction, the conversation around discrimination against women in polygamous marriages resurfaced

¹⁴ www.gouv.ci, 15 Feb 2023

¹⁵ www.gouv.ci, 15 Feb 2023

¹⁶ www.hrw.org.24 July 2019

¹⁷ www.hrw.org, 24 July 2019

especially online where many are seemingly against it.¹⁸ Whether the recent announcements of Jérôme could clarify things or further incited the debate, is still to be seen.

Planner

2023 (Côte d'Ivoire) Local elections

14 – 16 June 2023 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire) International Corruption Hunters Alliance (ICHA) 1st meeting in Africa**

2024 (Côte d'Ivoire) Africa Cup of Nations

2025 (Côte d'Ivoire) Presidential elections

Chronology

13 Feb 2023 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire) APA**. Côte d'Ivoire prepares a decree to create regulations for the introduction of electric charging stations across the country as the government prepares to introduce electric vehicles into transport fleets;

13 Feb 2023 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire) Multiple sources: Abidjan Net/ VOA Afrique/RFI**. The appeal court of Abidjan confirms the charges against 10 out of 12 culprits associated with **Guillaume Soro**, former president of the national assembly and prime minister, who was sentenced to 20 years in prison in November 2019 on corruption charges. The associates were condemned to 20 years of prison;

8 Feb 2023 **Yamoussoukro (Côte d'Ivoire) Deutsche Welle**. Former **German** chancellor **Angela Merkel** receives the **Felix Houphouët-Boigny UNESCO Peace Prize** (named after the former president of Côte d'Ivoire) for her decision to welcome more than 1.2 million migrants to Germany in 2015;

6 Feb 2023 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire) APA News**. Thirty representatives from the **United Kingdom** arrive in Abidjan for an economic and commercial forum as well as an investor prospecting trip;

5 Feb 2023 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire) ABYZ News**. Agriculture and rural development minister **Kobenan Kouassi Adjouman** says the government is implementing 40 projects in the agricultural sector to enhance food security;

5 Feb 2023 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire) Sika Finance**. Government announces a 34.5 billion FCFA (\$56.4m) fund to help compensate cotton farmers, who have lost up to 50% of their annual production due to a parasite that plagued **West Africa** during the growing season;

1 Feb 2023 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire) ABYZ News**. Government spokesperson **Amadou Coulibaly** states that the increase in gasoline prices across the country is a result of the ongoing **Ukrainian** crisis but says public transport prices are not at risk of increasing;

25 Jan 2023 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire) ABYZ News**. President **Alassane Ouattara** meets with his **French** counterpart, **Emmanuel Macron**, to discuss bilateral and regional issues;

22 Jan 2023 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire) Sika Finance**. Inflation falls to 5.1% year-on-year in December from 5.7% in November 2022;

¹⁸ www.hrw.org, 24 July 2019

19 Jan 2023 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *ABYZ News*. President **Alassane Ouattara** meets with **Turkish** ambassador **Yonca Gündüz Özçeri**, praising the “*excellent cooperation*” and increased investment and trade between the two countries;

16 Jan 2023 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *ABYZ News*. **Jean-Louis Billon**, former commerce minister and vice president for **West Africa** of the permanent conference of African and Francophone consular chambers says he is considering running for president in 2025.

About Africa Risk Consulting:

Africa Risk Consulting (ARC) is a pan-African consulting company that provides timely, relevant information and advice that enables its clients to take informed investment decisions and to safeguard their reputations.

ARC's core consulting services include integrity due diligence and corporate investigations, political advisory and country assessments, opportunity monitoring and reputation risk management. Most relevant to private equity firms is ARC's integrity due diligence and corporate investigations capability. Specifically, ARC offers pre-deal integrity checks to highlight red flags before negotiations start; full detailed multi-jurisdictional reputation due diligence; and supplier and senior hire vetting and repeat due diligence for compliance programmes. ARC is unique in that it offers a 10-day delivery for a routine integrity due diligence. ARC also offers a suite of corporate investigations services from immediate investigation, evidence gathering, e-discovery, forensic accounting and whistleblower support on one end to crisis media management and regular monitoring on the other.

www.africariskconsulting.com

About ARC Briefing:

ARC Briefing is ARC's essential business information service.

Companies at any stage in their Africa expansion, whether building or communicating an Africa strategy, investing directly, expanding current operations, financing other investors, doing the legal leg-work or researching the Africa growth trend, need ARC Briefing.

ARC Briefing is an information service keeping you:

- Up to date with Country Chronologies of business-critical events
- In the know via Country Briefings on political, economic, business and operating trends. Written in-country, ARC experts analyse and comment
- Ahead with Country Planner which details future elections, budgets, regulatory changes etc.

www.africariskconsulting.com



Getting in touch

Please contact us by email info@africariskconsulting.com or call + 44 (0) 20 7078 4080

Follow us on Twitter: [@ARCBriefing](https://twitter.com/ARCBriefing)