

# Opportunities for clean energy in the future Philippines: op-ed by Daniel Pruce

Like the rest of the global economy, the energy sector has been tested by the COVID-19 pandemic, with its unprecedented slow-down challenging traditional growth thinking. It has had to recalibrate to become more efficient and accommodate increasingly frugal investors and consumers. This was also true in the Philippines, especially during the first three months of lockdown, when electricity demand dropped by 17% from pre-ECQ levels. During this period, electricity generation from biomass increased, while production from geothermal hydro, solar and wind slightly decreased (~2-4%). Notably, coal's share dropped by almost 19% (Wholesale Electricity Spot Market, 2020).

These changes in supply and usage further illustrate the need borne out of the science and profound opportunity thanks to advancing technology and evolving consumer choice to rethink energy generation.

In the Philippines, coal remains a significant source for energy generation – 41% of the total compared to renewables' 30% (DOE, 2019). While coal has been the conventional source for 'baseload' (providing steady supply of electricity throughout the entire day) there is growing evidence that direct renewables are a better option for power supply globally.

First, the cost of renewable energy has fallen off a cliff. Since 2010, the cost of solar power has fallen by 85%, and wind power by 49%. In fact, the construction of solar facilities is now cheaper than constructing new coal power plants in two thirds of the countries of the world, and in all ASEAN countries. Solar is also quicker than coal to get up and running.

Second, the risk of investing in dying fossil fuel technology. Carbon Tracker study suggests that by 2030, it will be cheaper to build new renewable energy sources than continuing to use existing coal in South East Asia. In China, source of much of the region's coal imports, Bloomberg modelling suggests this tipping point will arrive in 2024. When that happens, coal plant assets will become 'stranded', and their continuing operation will simply be a drain on resources. An earlier Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis (IEEFA) study projected USD9.5 billion in new stranded assets if investment in coal continues. So if you're an investor considering coal, I urge you to think again.

Third, given the Philippines has a balance of trade deficit (USD 37 billion in 2019, of which 7% from coal importation), a shift to clean power is good for energy security, and ensures businesses and consumers are not held hostage to the global price volatility that has become synonymous with fossil fuel supplies.

Fourth, renewables have the potential to create employment in the industries

of the future (50% more jobs than coal), attract international investment, and improve public health.

The good news? With the Philippines's vast renewable sources, investors have the opportunity to accelerate transition to clean energy by investing in solar, onshore/offshore wind and storage, especially that electricity demand will increase as the country's economy begins to reboot from the COVID-19 pandemic. Renewable energy technologies, with their numerous advantages, have great potential to meet the needed capacity of 43,765MW by 2040.

As the first major economy to legislate for net-zero (by 2050), the UK has seized the opportunity. We have committed to ending use of coal power by 2024. In 2012, our electricity generated from coal was also 40%. In 2019, it was down to 2.2%. Between April and June 2020, the UK went 67 days without using coal power.

We can truly say that energy transition is attainable, and can contribute to a competitive power sector that can enable socio-economic development with co-benefits of an improved environment. In the process, the UK's power generation shifted to renewables – wind (offshore and onshore) and biofuel – as well as gas. Now, our clean power industry supports over 400,000 jobs, and is growing faster than our GDP.

On 12 December, we celebrate the 5th anniversary of the Paris Agreement and also fire the starting gun on the count-down to the next UN global climate change review hosted by the City of Glasgow in November 2021. We are all in a race to seize the opportunities for energy transition, for a green recovery from the pandemic, and to net zero. It is a race none of us can truly win alone nor one that as a global community we can afford to lose. So, on behalf of the British Government, I restate our commitment to working in partnership with all Philippines' stakeholders, unwavering in our support towards a clean, resilient, sustainable, and brighter future.

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## **PM: 'Climate action cannot be another victim of coronavirus'**

The Prime Minister will call on nations to make ambitious commitments to secure the planet for the next generation today (Thursday 24 September), as he addresses a UN Climate Action Roundtable hosted by the UN Secretary-General.

Boris Johnson is attending the virtual roundtable this afternoon to push for action on climate change and to chart a path to a green and sustainable recovery from the coronavirus crisis.

He will announce that the UK will co-host an event with the UN on December

12th to mark the five-year anniversary of the landmark Paris Agreement, which committed all countries to work to limit further rises in global temperatures.

The summit will be an opportunity for world leaders to announce new and enhanced Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and net zero targets.

As part of the Paris Agreement, all countries are due to submit ambitious new NDCs by the end of this year. NDCs set out what each country will do by 2030 to help limit global warming and achieve net zero emissions, from boosting renewable energy to investing in green transport.

The Prime Minister will call on world leaders to announce genuinely transformational net zero targets and bold climate finance pledges at the December 12th event.

Speaking at today's UN Climate Roundtable, the Prime Minister is expected to say:

As the world continues to deal with coronavirus we must look ahead to how we will rebuild, and how we can seize the opportunity to build back better.

The UK will lead by example, keeping the environment on the global agenda and serving as a launch pad for a global green industrial revolution. But no one country can turn the tide – it would be akin to bailing out a liner with a single bucket.

We cannot let climate action become another victim of coronavirus. Let us be the leaders who secure the very health of the planet for our children, grandchildren and generations to come.

The Paris Agreement anniversary event will kick off a year of action in the run up to the global climate summit COP26 in November 2021, which will be hosted by the UK in partnership with Italy in Glasgow.

COP26 President and Business Secretary Alok Sharma said:

The eyes of the world will be on COP26 when the UK hosts it in November next year. But tackling climate change cannot wait.

That's why we are setting the stage now with a call to all those who are ready to step forward this December and set out bold new Nationally Determined Contributions for a clean and prosperous future. The responsibility to act lies with each of us and together we can drive forward action.

The COP26 and COP25 High Level Champions for Global Climate Action will also be convening a series of virtual dialogues across the world in November to

bring cities and states, businesses, civil society and others together to drive forward the race to net-zero. They will discuss action on areas including transport, nature and energy to maintain momentum on tackling climate change at a global scale.

The UK has already doubled its International Climate Finance funding to £11.6 billion over the next five years and committed to achieving net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.

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## NHS COVID-19 app launches across England and Wales

- NHS COVID-19 app launches nationwide to help control COVID-19 transmission alongside national and local contact tracing
- Features of the app include contact tracing using Bluetooth, risk alerts based on postcode district, QR check-in at venues, symptom checker and test booking – with user privacy and data security at its heart
- Businesses are now required by law to display the official NHS QR code posters from today so people can check-in at different premises with the app

People across England and Wales are being urged to download the NHS COVID-19 app to help control the spread of coronavirus and protect themselves and their loved ones as case numbers rise.

The app launches today, and after positive trials and rigorous testing is an important new tool to work alongside traditional contact tracing to help reduce the spread of the virus.

It will be available to those aged 16 and over in multiple languages. It forms a central part of the NHS Test and Trace service in England and the NHS Wales Test, Trace, Protect programme – identifying contacts of those who have tested positive for coronavirus.

As part of a major campaign to encourage downloads of the app a new advertisement will launch on primetime TV tonight with the strapline 'Protect your loved ones. Get the app.'

Today the UK's major mobile network operators, including Vodafone, Three, EE and O2, Sky and Virgin, have confirmed that all in-app activity will not come out of customers' data allowance.

The contact tracing element of the app works by using low-energy Bluetooth to log the amount of time you spend near other app users, and the distance between you, so it can alert you if someone you have been close to later tests positive for COVID-19 – even if you don't know each other.

The app will advise you to self-isolate if you have been in close contact with a confirmed case. It will also enable you to check symptoms, book a free test if needed and get your test results.

The app has been designed with user privacy in mind, so it tracks the virus, not people and uses the latest in data security technology to protect privacy. The system generates a random ID for an individual's device, which can be exchanged between devices via Bluetooth (not GPS). These unique random IDs regenerate frequently to add an extra layer of security and preserve anonymity.

The app does not hold personal information such as your name, address or date of birth, and only requires the first half of your postcode to ensure local outbreaks can be managed. No personal data is shared with the government or the NHS.

UK government Health and Social Care Secretary Matt Hancock said:

We are at a tipping point in our efforts to control the spread of this virus. With infection rates rising we must use every tool at our disposal to prevent transmission, including the latest technology.

We have worked extensively with tech companies, international partners, and privacy and medical experts – and learned from the trials – to develop an app that is secure, simple to use and will help keep our country safe.

Today's launch marks an important step forward in our fight against this invisible killer and I urge everyone who can to download and use the app to protect themselves and their loved ones.

From today certain businesses in England are required by law to display NHS Test and Trace QR codes so customers with the NHS COVID-19 app can use them to check-in. QR codes will help businesses meet their legal requirement to log contact details and allow public health leads to send alerts based on whether people have checked in at venues. So far, more than 160,000 businesses have already downloaded QR codes. Venues in Wales that are legally required to collect and keep a record of visitors will still need to do so.

The NHS Test and Trace team behind the app has worked closely with major tech companies, including Google and Apple, scientists within the Alan Turing Institute and Oxford University, Zuhlke Engineering, medical experts, privacy groups, at-risk communities and teams in countries across the world using similar apps – such as Germany, to develop an app that is safe, simple and secure.

The app has been through successful trials in the Isle of Wight, Newham and among NHS Volunteer Responders. Lessons learned have informed the final version that is launching today.

Dido Harding, Executive Chair of England's NHS Test and Trace Programme, said:

We want to make it as easy as possible for everyone to engage with England's NHS Test and Trace service. The NHS COVID-19 app enables the majority of people with a smartphone to find out if they are at risk of having caught the virus and need to self isolate, order a test if they have symptoms, and access the right guidance and advice.

The features of this app, including QR code check-in at venues, work alongside our traditional contact tracing service and will help us to reach more people quickly in their communities to prevent further spread of the virus.

This is a welcome step in protecting those around us.

Simon Thompson, Managing Director of the NHS COVID-19 App, said:

We have worked tirelessly to develop the new NHS COVID-19 app and we are incredibly grateful to all residents of the Isle of Wight, London Borough of Newham, and NHS Volunteer Responders, the learnings and insight have made the app what it is today. We are now ready to roll-out the app across England and Wales.

This new version is so much more than just a contact tracing app – it has a range of features which will quickly alert you if you're at risk of coronavirus. The more people who use it, the better it works.

We are confident that every person who downloads the app will be helping to protect themselves and their loved ones.

Wales' Health and Social Services Minister, Vaughan Gething, said:

The launch of the NHS COVID-19 app is an important part of Wales' coronavirus response, bolstering our Test, Trace, Protect programme. The more people who download and use this app, the more

it will help us to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

We have worked closely with the app development team to ensure it works seamlessly across England and Wales, providing people with the right advice based on where they live. In Wales, the app will complement our existing contact tracing and testing services and will further support our co-ordinated response to COVID-19 at both a local and national level.

I strongly encourage everyone in Wales to download and use the app to keep Wales safe.

In a joint statement Apple and Google said:

We built the exposure notifications system to enable public health authorities in their efforts to develop apps to help reduce the spread of the virus while ensuring people can trust in the privacy-preserving design. We are committed to supporting the government's effort to launch an app based on this technology.

Hamish MacLeod, Director at Mobile UK, said:

The mobile industry welcomes the opportunity to support the government's efforts to combat the global COVID-19 pandemic by zero-rating access to the new NHS COVID-19 app. Customers can be reassured that all in-app activity will not come out of their data allowance.

Helen Dickinson, Chief Executive of the British Retail Consortium, said:

The NHS COVID-19 app is a great addition to the safety measures already being put in by retailers. We hope it provides extra reassurance for customers and their families all across the country.

As well as contact tracing, the app has a range of additional, enhanced features that will help to reduce personal and public risk from COVID-19 as part of the wider testing and contact tracing service:

- alert: letting users know the level of coronavirus risk in their postcode district
- QR check-in: enabling users to check-in at a venue and alerting them if they have recently visited somewhere they may have come into contact

with someone who later tests positive for COVID-19

- symptoms: allowing users to check if they have coronavirus symptoms and see if they need to order a free test
- test: helping users book a free test through the app and get results to know whether they have COVID-19
- isolate: if a user is told to self-isolate, a timer feature will help count down that period and access will be provided to relevant advice

More [information on the NHS COVID-19 app](#) [App explainer video](#) [App privacy video]([https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lCH\\_\\_yEH4s&](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lCH__yEH4s&))

When someone reports symptoms through the app, it will detect any other app users that the person has been in close contact with over the past few days, including unknown contacts such as someone they may have sat next to on public transport. The app will be able to anonymously alert these contacts and provide advice, including how to get a test if they have symptoms.

The mobile industry has committed to supporting the new app with the major operators Vodafone, Three, EE and O2 (including giffgaff and Tesco Mobile), Sky and Virgin, 'zero-rating' data charges for all in-app activity. This means customers will not be charged for data when using the in-app functions, or if they are directed out of the app to information on nhs.uk websites. If a customer is directed to other web pages outside of the app, this may use data from their allowance.

1. Customers will need data in order to download the Test and Trace app initially, this cannot be zero-rated.
2. In-app activity has been zero-rated by mobile operators. From the app, customers may be directed to nhs.uk websites, which have also been zero rated. However, if a user is passed from the app to websites on gov.uk, data charges will apply.
3. O2, Three UK and Virgin Media have zero-rated the subdomain .gov.uk for [registering a COVID-19 test](#)
4. A full [list of compatible devices](#) is available.

Those who may not have access to the app, or the ability to use a smartphone should continue to use traditional contact tracing services provided by NHS Test and Trace or, NHS Wales Test, Trace, Protect.

Find out more information about [how businesses can prepare for the NHS COVID-19 app](#).

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## [Alister Jack responds to Scottish GDP figures for July 2020](#)

News story





Commenting on the [publication](#) of Scottish July GDP figures, Scottish Secretary Alister Jack said:

As the Prime Minister said last night, the struggle against covid is the single biggest crisis the world has faced in our lifetimes.

The UK Government is focussed on stopping the spread of coronavirus and keeping people safe, while doing everything we can to protect the economy.

Through the furlough and self-employed schemes, we directly supported more than 930,000 jobs in Scotland, a third of the workforce. Now, the Chancellor's comprehensive Plan for Jobs is bringing in the Job Retention Bonus, creating new jobs for young people through the kick start scheme, doubling the number of work coaches, and are supporting jobs in the tourism and hospitality sectors through a VAT cut

#### Background points:

- The UK Government has directly supported more than 930,000 jobs in Scotland, a third of the workforce through the furlough and self-employed schemes.
- Over 1.8 million jobs in the hospitality sector have been supported through the Eat Out to Help Out scheme with more than 6.3 million meals eaten in Scotland.
- The UK Government has loaned more than £2.3 billion to 65,000 Scottish businesses.
- An additional £6.5 billion in Barnett Consequentials has been provided by the UK Government to the Scottish Government since March 2020.

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# LLWR's outstanding health and safety record recognised at RoSPA awards

## News story

Order of Distinction awarded at virtual ceremony for performance over the past 15 years.



Elaine Burrage, LLWR's Health & Safety Manager, at the One NDA Safety and Wellbeing Awards 2019, in Manchester, with colleague, Darren Simpson, who collected a Role Model award at the ceremony.

The outstanding health and safety performance of LLW Repository Ltd (LLWR) over the past 15 years has been recognised with a prestigious award from RoSPA.

LLWR has been awarded an Order of Distinction at the UK's longest running health and safety awards, where almost 2,000 organisations were vying for recognition.

Elaine Burrage, LLWR's Health & Safety Manager, said: "It's a major honour to have our safety record recognised in this way by RoSPA. Praise must go to our workforce who meet the organisation's stringent health and safety standards year after year.

"We cannot afford to let our standards slip for a moment, which is why safety remains our number one priority. That policy has served us well over the years and continues to do so."

LLWR personnel attend the awards ceremony every year, though this year it was held virtually due to COVID-16 restrictions.

RoSPA's Julia Small, said: "RoSPA wants every employee, wherever they are, to work safe in the knowledge that they will be going home unharmed and healthy at the end of every day.

"The RoSPA Award winners are vital to help achieve this goal, as by entering

they are driving up standards and setting new benchmarks for organisations everywhere.”

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