



INSIDE THE OUR

Office of Utilities Regulation
Regulating Utilities For The Benefit Of All



Working towards Alternative Energy Solutions for Jamaica

(Top left) Ansord Hewitt, Director, Regulation, Policy, Monitoring and Enforcement, speaks at the Jamaica Alternative Energy Expo in June. Other photos show OUR staff interacting with consumers at the OUR booth.

The OUR has been working tirelessly to help Jamaica realise its alternative energy goals and encourage the development and use of Alternative/Renewable Energy in Jamaica including the production of electricity via wind, hydro, solar, bio-mass, and waste-to-energy.

This is consistent with the OUR's functions in the OUR Act, which states that it should: "undertake such measures as it considers necessary or desirable to (c) encourage the development and use of indigenous resources; and (d) promote and encourage the development of modern and efficient utility services."

The use of indigenous resources includes alternate and renewable energy resources.

Net-Billing:
The OUR has also spearheaded the pilot Net Billing project offered by Jamaica Public Service Company Limited (JPS) to its customers who install relatively small renewable energy systems such as wind turbines, solar photovoltaic (Solar PV) facilities, mini hydros and other renewable energy systems to generate their own electricity and to sell any available excess energy to the electricity grid. The maximum capacity allowed under the programme is 100 kW and the limits are: 10 kW for residential and 100 kW for commercial and industrial customers. The electrical energy supplied to the grid is governed by a Standard Offer Contract (SOC) between the customer and JPS.

What is the SOC?
The SOC was developed by the OUR in consultation with the JPS, the Bureau of Standards Jamaica, the Government Electrical Inspectorate and members of the public. The SOC outlines the terms, conditions and pricing regime for small providers such as those with solar photovoltaic systems and wind turbines, to gain access to the grid operated by the JPS.

As at April 2014, 206 Net Billing Applications were received for a total 3,566 kW capacity. To date, 91 licences have been issued, and 52 applicants have been connected to the grid.

Renewable Energy Projects
The OUR has in recent years issued several Requests for Proposals (RFPs) for renewable energy (RE) projects, and invited unsolicited proposals from entities interested in setting up alternative energy projects. These processes resulted in the award and recommendation for licences for several projects. In November 2012, the OUR issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) for 115 MW of electricity generation capacity from renewable energy facilities of which 78 MW was required from energy only projects and the remaining 37 from firm capacity projects. The RFP reflected the projected net generation for the electricity system, and the energy supply mix for 2015 is aligned with the objectives of Jamaica's National Energy Policy (NEP) 2009.

The OUR subsequently approved three projects totalling 78 MW:

- Blue Mountain Renewables LLC, to supply 34 MW of capacity from wind power at Munro, St. Elizabeth;
- Wigton Windfarm Limited, to supply 24 MW of capacity from wind power at Rose Hill, Manchester;
- WRB Enterprises Inc., to supply 20 MW of capacity from Solar PV from facilities in Content Village, Clarendon.

Based on the procurement schedule, the expected commissioning date for the projects is mid-2016. In 2008, the OUR also issued an RFP and received proposals from which it selected and approved the construction of a 6.37 MW hydro plant in Maggoty, St. Elizabeth, and a 3 MW wind farm in Munro, St. Elizabeth both by the JPS. Both projects have since been commissioned and together are delivering 10.2 MW to the grid. To date, the amount of installed utility scale renewable energy based generation is approximately 29 MW in Hydro and 42 MW in Wind for a total of 71 MW.

*The Office of Utilities Regulation....
Working towards alternative energy solutions for Jamaica.*



JULY 2014 WHAT'S NEW

Findings of OUR's National Consumer Survey 2014

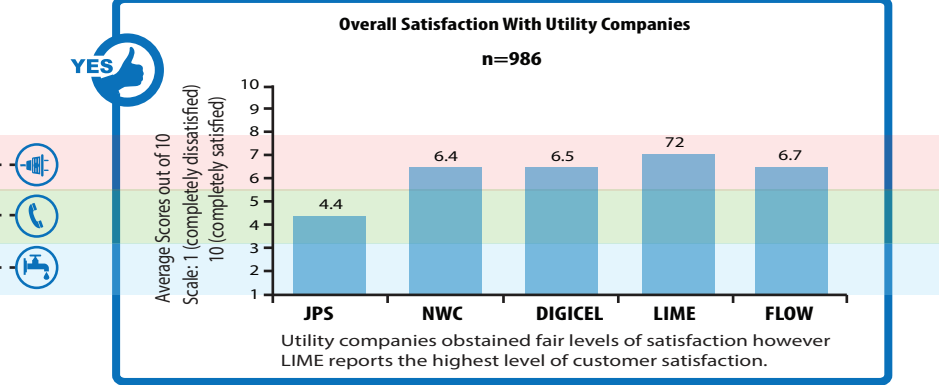
As part of the fulfilment of some of the main parts of its own service delivery, the OUR commissioned a national survey to:
Measure the service delivery levels of the various utilities under its watch; and its own relevance within the society by establishing the level of awareness for what it does, but more importantly to see to what extent the general public feels it is performing to a satisfactory level and executing its mandate efficiently.

Market Research Services Ltd. conducted the survey during February and March 2014 in which fourteen service providers and 986 members of the general public participated. The study was both qualitative and quantitative and the latter involved a market survey of heads of households.

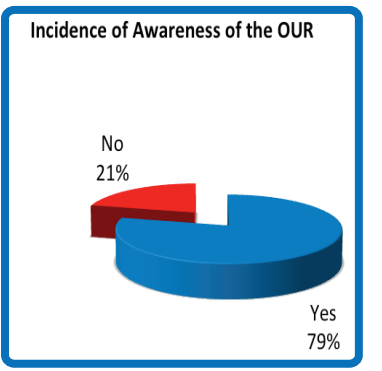
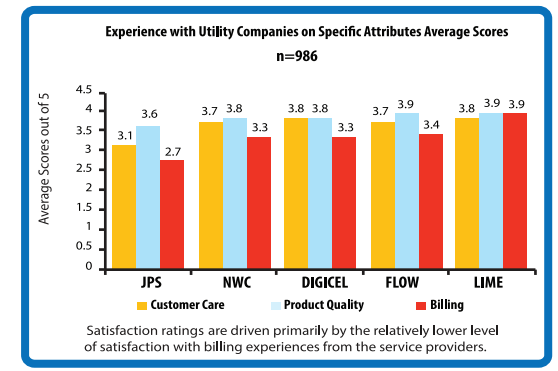


KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- Consumers report high levels of awareness of the different service providers but JPS is the one that is paramount in their minds. This is typically because of the perceived high cost of the JPS' service as well as the high level of importance assigned to this service.
- Satisfaction with the various service providers ranges between low to moderate with the lowest satisfaction being reported for JPS (44%) and the highest for LIME (72%). Concerns around JPS' bills drive the level of satisfaction achieved by this company.



- Greatest satisfaction was noted among customers of LIME. These persons reported an average satisfaction score of 7.2 points out of a maximum of 10 or approximately 72%. This is to be compared with FLOW (6.7 points), Digicel (6.5 points), NWC (6.4 points) and JPS (4.4 points).
- Dissatisfaction with JPS' billing is the main barrier to higher satisfaction scores among its customers. This trend is also noted among all the other service providers though to a significantly lesser extent. Customers of LIME report an almost equal level of satisfaction with this service provider in all areas including customer care, product quality and billing, influencing their relatively higher satisfaction.



The OUR is widely known among Jamaican households. Such knowledge was gained mainly through television.

Other Findings
While greatest dissatisfaction is expressed about billing, customers of both JPS and NWC are more likely to be convinced that their bills are based on meter readings always or most times. That is, 39% of JPS are of the view that their bills are most times or always based on meter readings while 53% of NWC customers shared this view.

More than half of the customers report satisfaction with the frequency with which the meters are read. However, their response to the question about the factors that influence the amount of the JPS bill does shed some light on what appears to be a contradictory finding. That is, the vast majority, 75%, are convinced that changes in the JPS rates are controlled by JPS.