



Concept Note for the Conference on
THE FUTURE OF SOLAR ENERGY IN INDIA



Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) in collaboration with the Gujarat Energy Research and Management Institute (GERMI) is organising a meeting for a day to discuss '**The Future of Solar Energy in India**'. The meeting will take place on September 23, 2013 at Pandit Deendayal Petroleum University at Gandhinagar, Gujarat.

Background

After more than three years of the launch of the Jawaharlal Nehru National Solar Mission (JNNSM) and despite more than 1.75 GW (as on June 30, 2013) of installed capacity, solar power development is still facing certain fundamental challenges in mainstream implementation. The Phase-II of JNNSM has yet to be finalized. Stagnation has started even at the state levels. The state governments complain of lack of funds to support the high costs of solar power. Indian solar PV manufacturing sector is also facing bankruptcy. There is no direction to develop decentralised solar in the country either. As of today, we lack a clear plan of action for the future of solar energy.

Objective

We intend to bring together key stakeholders of solar industry, viz. government officials, developers, equipment manufacturers, social entrepreneurs, NGO's, academia and R& D professionals to:

- Discuss and deliberate on the critical issues,
- Develop a comprehensive and effective strategy for developing the Indian solar sector, and
- Arrive at policy recommendations to give a new direction to solar industry.

Structure of the conference

Four sessions are planned for the one and a half day conference:

1. Re-energizing the Grid-Connected Solar Programme

The draft policy document of JNNSM Phase-II launched in December 2012 is yet to take final shape. Gujarat, after an aggressive phase on initial installations is holding back on the next phase of signing power purchase agreements. Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu have not received a good response in spite of having ambitious policies. Hence, it is evident that all these initiatives are facing certain challenges that are hindering them on way or the other.

Speakers from various government ministries/ departments and industries will be invited to deliberate on their respective challenges resulting in the slowdown, and share thoughts on how to overcome them.

2. Funding Solar

The most important issue concerning the deployment of solar in India as claimed by developers is the availability of finance. Despite favourable policies and support provided by the Central and State Governments, solar power remains a risky and expensive option for funding agencies. Many financial institutions consider the Renewable Energy Certificate (REC) mechanism to be non-bankable. We have witnessed too many instances of recourse financing, which may not be effective in the long run.

Speakers will provide their insight into the current financing trends with their details and reasons, better alternatives suited for a healthy long-term growth, and a larger picture to adopt in order to provide practical solutions to financing solar sector project.

3. Development of Domestic Manufacturing

The Indian solar manufacturing sector is facing many challenges, whether it competing with the unviable low prices of Chinese modules, or it is packaging the sale of their products with attractive low-interest rate loans like that offered by the US Exim Bank. The situation is drastically changing the market dynamics, wherein many companies are divesting their solar division, declaring bankruptcy and even underutilizing their existing capacity to survive in today's market. Steps such as Domestic Content Requirement (DCR) and anti-dumping are being considered to boost the domestic manufacturing sector, but are these the healthiest methods in the long run? Are there other ways to support and stabilize local manufacturing?

Speakers in this session will critique on how the domestic manufacturing sector in India has faced challenges and what can be done to overcome them and stabilize the industries.

4. Innovation & Global Deal

'Innovation' is believed to be the buzz-word for solving many technology-related challenges, whether it is cost, performance or the overall experience. While there have been many R&D funding programmes and a new trend to develop global partnerships, these initiatives still seem scattered and there is an uncertainty regarding the totality of our approach. On the other front, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) is trying to bring the world together to cooperate and drive innovation along with large-scale deployment to develop a global deal. India should have a clear position on such issues at a global level.

The speakers will discuss on the approach to ensure an all-round as well as practically achievable technology approach towards innovation for India. India's stance on the global deal to ensure India's comprehensive development in solar energy will also be deliberated upon.