Sustainable energy training

Subsequent to the International Energy Agency (IEA)'s support for the APO's energy management training course in 2011, in mid-2012 the IEA Training and Capacity Building Programme (IEA TCB) and APO started a discussion on the possibility of organizing a joint energy training event for Asian countries in collaboration with the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and then agreed to go ahead with that initiative. With support from the Ministry of Energy (MOE), Government of Thailand, and Thailand Productivity Institute, a five-day course was organized in Bangkok, 25–29 November 2013. This was one of the APO's biggest collaborative efforts for a capacity-building program. Twenty-nine officials from ministries and power utility companies from 13 APO members learned the latest developments in the electricity, transmission and distribution, and renewable energy sectors. With support from the ADB, eight participants from the non-APO member countries Afghanistan, PR China, and Tajikistan also joined. "We had a very successful regional event in Bangkok on the very important topic of electricity. It is a complex and challenging subject and I thank all for valuable contributions, presentations, and insights into the sector, which were highly appreciated by the audience," wrote IEA Head of TCB Assen Gasharov.

Soaring sky-high: participants at Bangchak Solar PV Farm.

Asia's electricity demand will increase by another 150% by 2035, making it essential to manage it sustainably from generation to use and capitalize on potential renewable energy resources to minimize the use of fossil fuels that cause adverse climate change. There is also a need to liberalize the electricity sector to make it competitive and incorporate technological changes for greater efficiency. These will require a conducive policy environment and private-sector support. Governments in Asia need to develop national and regional road maps and policy frameworks promoting investment in advanced technologies for electricity generation, transmission, and distribution; and commercialize renewable energy sources such as wind, solar, hydro, biomass, and geothermal. Therefore, energy/power ministries should work with electrical utility companies/agencies in exploring opportunities for sustainable electricity generation and supply.

The objective of the course was to provide inputs on the latest advances in the electricity sector and electricity generation, transmission, and distribution technologies, including renewable energy and smart grids, focusing on market reform in the sector, interregional energy market coordination, and renewable energy market issues and grid integration. A site visit to Bangchak Solar PV farm (36 MW) was made to provide participants first-hand information on solar energy.