

Wind Energy Potential at 15,000 MW

Arid areas of Iran have the potential to generate over 15,000 megawatts of wind energy according to feasibility studies conducted recently, disclosed a senior Energy Ministry official.

Hamid Chitchian noted that if wind turbines with a total power generating capacity of 500 megawatts are installed annually nationwide, Iran's wind energy industry can compete at the international level and even enter target markets, IRNA reported.

Based on plans drawn up by the Energy Ministry, wind turbines with a capacity to generate 1,650 megawatts of energy should be installed and become operational by March 2014, he said.

According to Article 135 of Fifth Five-Year Economic Development Plan (2010-2015), the industry is obliged to increase power generation from wind and solar plants to 5,000 megawatts by the end of 2015, the official stated.

"Solar power plants would account for 10 percent of this figure, despite the high costs involved."

Therefore, wind power plants with production capacity of 900 megawatts should be installed annually, he said.

The official continued that it would be easier to establish wind farms than set up thermal power plants.

Technical, economical, ecological and social studies indicate that power industry should expedite the establishment of wind power plants, he pointed out.

Foreign Investment

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed with a Danish company to build the country's first private wind and solar power plant in Damghan, Semnan province, last January.

Managing director of the power plant, called 'Ghadir', said the plant will be built in an area of 1,200 hectares and \$4.5 billion have been allocated for the purpose, Moj News Agency reported.

Iman Isari noted that design, plans, consultation, supervision, construction, installation and commissioning of the power plant will be undertaken in 10 phases.

"In each stage, some 100 megawatts of electricity will be produced... and 3,000 direct and indirect job opportunities will be generated," Isari said.

Iran is the vanguard of wind turbines and power plants technology in the Middle East.

Currently, 660-kilowatt wind turbines are constructed by domestic engineers. Only some raw materials and electronic parts are imported, Persian monthly Payam-e Nirou wrote.

The country's wind industry involves companies engaged in conducting research on pilot projects, feasible studies on launching wind power plant, designing wind farms, manufacturing and assembling wind turbine's parts, installing and maintaining wind power plants, and monitoring production of wind turbine's parts.

The country is a member of the Global Wind Energy Council. Studies show that the country has the capacity to generate over 40,000 megawatts of electricity by launching more wind power plants.

With the contribution of private investors and state support, the country can make better use of wind energy.

Private investors have submitted applications to set up wind power plants with a total capacity of 800 megawatts.

Once some of the required funds are made available by credit funds or banks, the private sector can play a significant role in setting up wind farms.