

# Basking in the sunshine

Oman is one of the few countries in the region with a clear road map on adopting renewable resources for power generation

By Deepak Sharma



Oman has decided to focus more on producing energy from renewable resources as it plans to reduce dependence on oil and gas and cut its subsidy burden.

Oman is a signatory to the Kyoto Protocol agreement that aims at the reduction of harmful gases in a phased manner. It had formed a designated national authority in 2009 to encourage the utilisation of renewable ener-

gy. It is also the only country in the GCC to have a dedicated Ministry for Environment and Climate Affairs.

The thrust on renewable energy is primarily driven by the projected surge in electricity demand in the near future which, in turn, is the result of rising population and expanding economic activity.

These could strain the country's depleting hydrocarbon

resources amid fears of a widening subsidy burden.

The country's annual demand for power is expected to rise by as much as 11.4 per cent to over 9,000MW by 2019, according to a seven-year demand projection of the Oman Power and Water Procurement Co (OPWP).

"Higher demand for electricity may put an additional subsidy burden on the government. And

**25%**  
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OMAN RECEIVES SUNLIGHT ENOUGH TO PRODUCE 7,950GW OF POWER EVERY YEAR, SAYS **ENG HAMED AL MAGHDERI**

as most power projects in the country run on diesel, it will also have an adverse impact on the environment," says Eng Hamed bin Salem al Maghderi, chief executive officer of Rural Areas Electricity Co (Raeco).

"We have decided that going forward, renewable energy will account for 25 per cent of all future power projects. So if we are setting up a 12MW project

then a minimum of 3MW will have to be generated using renewable resources."

The government has entrusted the Public Authority for Electricity and Water (PAEW) to study the use of renewable resources for producing electricity in the country.

Eng Maghderi said that the Authority for Electricity Regulation had initiated a study (on the direc-

tions of the PAEW), in collaboration with international consultants, to explore the possibility of generating electricity using renewable resources. The study indicated that Oman has good potential in solar and wind energy.

The strategic location of Oman, that enables the country to receive around 340 days of clear skies in a year and the government's willingness to harness

the potential of solar energy, particularly for power generation, is likely to give a boost to solar-power generation in the country in the near future, according to industry experts.

The study also identified and shortlisted four places - Adam, Manah, Ibri and Khabourah - as possible locations for setting up solar-power plants with a combined capacity of up to 200MW.