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SEIAPI Sustainable Energy

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Saipan hosts 30th PPA Conference 2023

Article by: Sandip Kumar

Group photo of the Participants of the 30th PPA Conference held in Saipan

The 30th Pacific Power Association (PPA) Conference was hosted by the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) in Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands from 25th to 28th September, 2023. This year's conference, similar to other years, had something for everyone from utility board directors to CEOs, development partner representatives, engineers and non-technical utility delegates. The conference provided an opportunity for utility CEOs to raise issues they are facing with donor partners and also to share experiences with each other. The donor partners comprised the World Bank, Asian Development Bank (ADB), the multi-agency Pacific Regional Infrastructure Facility (PRIF), Australian Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW), the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), the International Finance Corporation (IFC) and Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA).

In addition to the PPA Members and allied members, there were representatives, from the University of the South Pacific (USP), the University of New South Wales (UNSW), University of Hawaii, Pacific Community (SPC), Department of Energy (Vanuatu) and the United States National Renewable Energy Laboratories (NREL).

The allied members (those companies who provide products and services to the utilities) had an opportunity to network with the utility representatives and trade booths were also available for exhibition. This provided an opportunity to participants to get well versed with the products and services available in the Pacific energy market.

In parallel, utility board directors' sessions were organized to enable them to engage in a strategic high-level discussion relevant to utility governance to align with country

RE targets. While engineer's workshop sessions for utility engineers were organised to discuss their respective power sector issues, brainstorm effects of variable renewable energy integration and possible network expansion frameworks and modelling tools, discuss power development plans and so forth.

SEIAPI was represented by the Executive Officer, Mr Geoff Stapleton who presented on ''The Regional Sustainable Energy Training Centre and the SEIAPI Training Plan''. Dr Atul Raturi of USP, SEIAPI Executive Committee member moderated sessions for the utility board directors and contributed to discussions focussed on NDCs and SDGs for individual countries and the need for utilities to be consulted extensively for the possible achievement of national energy targets.

The SEIAPI Secretary, Mr Sandip Kumar, under an individual consultancy with PRIF presented to the Utility CEOs on the ''Scoping of the training needs and proposed training plan for the Pacific Electrical Utilities''. The common training and capacity need along with the proposed training plan were collectively discussed and with a few minor suggestions endorsed by the CEOs. The PRIF and its development partners will now focus on how to get the proposed 3-year training plan funded. The conference was also attended by SEIAPI Industry members CBS Power Solutions and Pacific Engineering Projects Ltd amongst others.

SEIAPI Executive Officer Mr. Geoff Stapleton on the left with Dr. Atul Raturi in the middle and Mr. Sandip Kumar SEIAPI Secretariat on the right at the PPA Conference representing SEIAPI.

Floating Solar Photovoltaic System Installation Completed in Tuvalu

Article provided by : Tuvalu Electricity Corporation

184 solar panels positioned on Tafua Pond in Funafuti will reduce the country's reliance on diesel-powered energy generation by 47,100 litres per year

Funafuti, Tuvalu: The installation of Tuvalu's inaugural Floating Solar Photovoltaic (FSPV) system has been successfully completed, with this cutting-edge system seeing 184 solar panels positioned on Tafua Pond in Funafuti.

Like many Small Island Developing States (SIDS), Tuvalu has been heavily reliant on imported fuel for its diesel-based power generation system. Through this new FSPV system 174.2 megawatts per hour of electricity will be generated each year, meeting two percent of Funafuti's annual energy demand.

This innovative clean energy source will reduce the country's reliance on diesel-powered energy generation by 47,100 litres per year – a saving of approximately US$68,000.

The Facilitation of the Achievement of the Sustainable National Energy Targets of Tuvalu Project (FASNETT)– implemented by the United Nations Development Programme Pacific Office in Fiji in partnership with the Government of Tuvalu is supported by the Global Environment Facility. The project aims to facilitate the development and utilisation of feasible renewable energy resources and applications of energy efficient technologies in Tuvalu.

The disruptive impact of global fuel prices has had significant repercussions on both local businesses and households, particularly in the Tuvalu's remote islands. The Government of Tuvalu has been passionately engaged in harnessing renewable energy solutions that align with the country's climate mitigation agenda.

With the successful installation of the FSPV system, the Government of Tuvalu draws closer to its national energy objective of achieving a complete reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from the electricity generation sector by 2025, in alignment with the country's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC).

General Manager of Tuvalu Energy Corporation, Mafalu Lotolua, underscored the Government of Tuvalu's pledge toward the use of innovative solutions, and stressed that without such action Tuvalu will continue to be hit hardest in the face of global climate change implications.

"This aspiration not only charts a promising path for the growth of renewable energy and energy-efficient enterprises but also serves as a testament to Tuvalu's unwavering commitment to sustainable methodologies as we strive for a greener, brighter future," he said.

UNDP Pacific Office in Fiji Resident Representative, Munkhtuya Altangerel, visited the site at Tafua Pond and said the installation signifies a determined leap forward on Tuvalu's sustainable journey.

"Energy stands as the primary driver of climate change, responsible for almost 60 percent of overall global greenhouse gas emissions. This work seamlessly links with the United Nations Sustainable Development agenda, and through its successful implementation the Government of Tuvalu is taking substantial strides towards reducing greenhouse gas emissions," Ms. Altangerel said.

In addition to the installation of the FSPV system, the FASNETT project has supported the Government of Tuvalu with the commissioning of a solar powered capacitive deionization water desalination system, installation of a demand management response system, a rooftop solar photovoltaic system in Demo Fale, and implementation of stand-alone solar home system energy storage enhancement for Funaota.

The installation of the FSPV system was completed by the JGH Group of Denmark.

Australian Aid Policy to focus on Climate – and Countering China

Extracted from: https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2023/08/08/australia-china-pacific-aid-policy/

Australia has prioritised climate action and job creation in the Pacific in its new foreign aid policy as "part of an effort to woo back island nations that have fallen under China's Deep-pocketed influence", the Washington Post reports. Prime Minister Anthony Albanese's Labor government has announced it will direct at least half of all investments valued at US$2m to climate- focused projects by June 2025, rising to 80% of investments by 2029, the newspaper continues. The Sydney Morning Herald described the move as an attempt at "an appealing alternative to Beijing's controversial Belt and Road Infrastructure initiative and so-called 'debt-trap' model of diplomacy". At the same time, the newspaper cites "senior Labor sources" who say the party's commitment to spend 0.5% of gross domestic income on foreign aid was "not achievable" in the near future and was "not a priority for the government". ABS NEWS says, "Australia's foreign aid budget in 2023-2024 amounts to ***AUD$4.7bn*** **(**US$3.1bn) and is set to grow in years ahead, but the new strategy comes with no new funding commitments". It also notes that "as much as a fifth of public debt in the Pacific was owed to China as of the middle of last year". An Article in the South China Morning Post is headlined: "Australia's bid to become a 'multilateral player' in Indo-Pacific at risk over lack of funding". Writing in the Conversation, Melissa Conley Tyler, an honorary fellow in the Asia Institute of the University of Melbourne, says the funding for the Pacific "is presented as responding to the calls of our region and evidence of accelerating climate crises by increasing our climate investment and better addressing climate risks".

UNSW Students' Fiji Visit and Workshop

Article by Sandip Kumar

The University of New South Wales (UNSW) (Australia) students undertaking the renewable energy programme visited Fiji in August for community outreach projects and to contribute and participate in a RE workshop in Fiji. The trip was for a period of 10 days during the end of August and first week of September. Around three to four days were spent on the islands. The community outreach included troubleshooting and repair of a renewable energy system on Yanuca Island as well as technical assessments of existing refrigeration, desalination and school energy systems on the case study - island communities; installation of monitoring equipment and collection of information for this year's project. Before the trip, there was a one-day off-grid PV training session organized at the University of the South Pacific (USP) for the students and a 3-day international workshop in Fiji on RE applications and modelling tools and frameworks developed for the Pacific Island Countries by UNSW Bachelors, Masters and PhD students. The 3-day international workshop was organized from 5th to 7th September at Southern Cross Hotel in Suva, Fiji. The first day presentations/panel discussions were based on Planning frameworks and tools for RE Transition for PICT Utility Grids. Day 2 discussions included presentations on off grid developments in the PICs and day 3 was on the renewable hydrogen technology and the market assessment, readiness aspects and so forth.

Group photo of UNSW/ USP Students who attended one -day off-grid Solar PV training conducted by GSES Staff Mr. Sandip Kumar

Why Rooftop Solar is so much Cheaper in Australia than America?

Extracted from: https://www.distilled.earth/p/why-rooftop-solar-is-so-much-cheaper

In Australia, more than a third of all homes have solar panels installed on their roof. Sometime in the next year, rooftop solar is expected to beat out coal to become the country's largest source of electricity.

No country has been more successful at encouraging rooftop solar adoption than Australia. To put the country's success in perspective, consider that in the USA, just 2.5% of homes have rooftop solar. Australia's rooftop solar success puts even California's renewable energy progress to shame. The country has three times more rooftop solar installations per capita than the Golden State.

There are many differences between American and Australia's energy policies and markets. But if you want to understand why Australia has installed so much more rooftop solar than America, there's only one difference that truly matters. That difference is cost.

In Australia rooftop solar costs less than US$1 per watt to install. In America, installation costs range from US$2.20 to $3.50 per watt depending on which state you live in, with a median cost of US$2.80 per watt.

"Australian rooftop solar is the cheapest retail energy ever provided to consumers in human history. It is extraordinary," said Saul Griffith, an energy entrepreneur and co-founder of Rewiring America.

Griffith, who won the MacArthur "genius" award in 2007, has spent the last few decades living between his home country of Australia and America. He's installed solar panels on homes in both countries and studied each country's respective solar markets and policy landscapes. That experience opened his eyes to what he's come to see as one of the biggest barriers to decarbonization in America.

Of course, consumers are interested in cost per kWh, not just initial capital costs. And the costs wouldn't include battery storage.

The much higher US cost is due mainly to permits, inspection, marketing & connecting to the grid.

Pacific Countries on the Frontline of Climate Change get Support to Unlock Climate Financing

Extracted from: https://cleantechnica.com/2023/09/21/pacific-countries-on-the-frontline-of-climate-change-get-support-to-unlock-climate-financing/

Vulnerable island nations in the Pacific are in urgent need of resources to respond to the worsening climate crisis. Building on the success of mobilizing US $67 million in climate finance in its first year of operation, the Climate Finance Access Network (CFAN) is partnering with the Pacific Community (SPC) and the Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI) to expand capabilities in financing where they are most needed.

CFAN provides localized technical support to developing nations to respond to a clear gap in meeting country-identified needs around climate finance access. The result is a network that provides technical support to unlock and accelerate climate finance at scale by deploying embedded climate finance advisors at national and regional levels.

Launched in 2021 with the support of the Canadian Government, CFAN placed advisors in **Fiji, Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu**. In their first year, these advisors unlocked US $67 million in climate financing to support resilience, with an additional US $348 million investment pipeline.

“What CFAN’s Pacific advisors have achieved demonstrates that this model of highly trained, long-term, embedded support works to secure finance where it’s needed most,” said Laetitia De Marez, Senior Director of CFAN and RMI’s Islands Energy Program. “The results are clear: a robust and diverse pipeline of high-impact projects. We are excited to build on that success and support countries’ ambitions as the network expands in the region and globally.”

A generous philanthropic donor has joined CFAN and allowed the network to further extend its reach in the Pacific by deploying three additional advisors in French Polynesia, the Cook Islands, and the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), along with embedding an advisor in the Pacific Community (SPC).

“The Government of FSM is grateful to CFAN for expanding their network in the Pacific, which currently enables FSM to access much-needed skillsets through technical assistance support,” said Belinda Hadley, Team Leader, FSM National Designated Authority to the Green Climate Fund. “With CFAN’s support, FSM will be able to raise its climate ambitions, plan and prepare for climate investment opportunities, and mainstream climate considerations into investment approaches. As a result of CFAN’s expansion, the FSM NDA office, in partnership with SPC, will now be able to better manage and enhance climate finance and realize FSM’s climate ambitions, especially through its upcoming national adaption planning process.”

Advisors will begin their training in November, immediately following their placement in-country. SPC, the region’s largest scientific and technical organization delivering development solutions in the region, owned and governed by 27 country and territory members, is well-positioned to serve its members through the dedicated support of CFAN’s services.

“Our Pacific Island countries and territories have consistently raised the issue of capacity constraints in being able to access the complex climate finance landscape effectively. In response, our region has received decades of fly-in, fly-out models of advisory support whose efficacy has been limited, insufficient, and often unsustainable,” said Coral Pasisi, SPC’s Director of Climate Change and Sustainability. “Together with our ongoing efforts of building shared capability in unlocking climate finance flows for our members, we are delighted to be able to work with CFAN and other partners to provide a growing complement of more sustainable and networked capacity in the Pacific, enabling island nations to continue to lead on climate action and ambition.”

Existing CFAN advisors will also be extended in their respective countries for an additional three years due to funding support by the Australian Government. GGGI, CFAN’s regional implementing partner for Fiji, Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu, will continue to host and support these advisors.

Mr. Prashant Chandra, Acting Head of Climate Change within the Prime Minister’s Office in Fiji said, “CFAN’s work in Fiji has been effective in engaging with multiple stakeholders across the development landscape, from line ministries and private sector to indigenous landowners and regional organizations. So far, CFAN in Fiji has developed a project pipeline of over US $100 million in focused sectors like renewable energy, climate smart agriculture, water, eco-tourism, resilient housing, and coastal adaptation, some of which have already secured funding for implementation. For Phase 2, we are expecting CFAN to assist in increasing access to climate finance for Pacific Island countries for vulnerable and target areas and also ensuring long term sustainability of its program in the Pacific region.”

Ensuring Excellence: Quality Assurance and Periodic Review in Regional Waste to Energy Qualifications

Article by: SPC (The Pacific Community)

The Pacific region faces critical challenges related to substandard solid waste management (SWM) and energy poverty. The Pacific Community's Pacific Adoption of Waste-to-Energy Solutions (PAWES) supports its member countries in Samoa, Papua New Guinea, Nauru, Tuvalu and the Solomon Islands to explore Renewable Energy Technologies (RET) and SWM solutions.

The PAWES project in collaboration with SPC's Educational Quality Assessment Programme (EQAP) recently held a training for regional WtE experts from across the Pacific under the projects Industry Advisory Committee (IAC) to draw on their diverse expertise to review and to update the existing sustainable energy qualifications, first developed in 2018.

The week-long training included experts from regional educational institutions, research entities, the private sector, Government Ministries, and other implementing bodies will ensure that regional and national educational providers are well-equipped to offer up-to-date curricula and training programs on Waste-to-Energy (WtE).

Lindsay Teobasi, Founder of the Design and Technology Centre in the Solomon Islands said the IAC meeting is important to develop industry standards and competencies across the Pacific. "This program is timely so that we can have qualified people that meet the standard work practices, ensuring quality work output." These sentiments echo the sentiment of a united Pacific striving for excellence in sustainable waste management and energy generation".

The significance of regional qualifications for Waste-to-Energy cannot be understated. Lindsay emphasized the compatibility these qualifications bring across Pacific nations and even internationally adding, with standardized qualifications, Pacific professionals can confidently contribute to global sustainability efforts.

The IAC with the assistance of EQAP Facilitators are using the Pacific Quality Assurance Framework (PQAF) and relevant national quality assurance standards to ensure that learners and the broader Pacific community receive qualifications not only of the highest standard but are relevant to its needs.

Samoa's Setoa Apo of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment stressed the importance of diverse collaboration. "Having diverse members from academia, energy, and waste sectors involved in developing waste-to-energy qualifications is amazing. This learning tool will elevate waste management and energy concepts in our national institutes."

Ashmita Devi, Resilience Programs Coordinator, Pacific TAFE, University of the South Pacific (USP), highlighted the far-reaching impact of PAWES. "This qualification provides a pathway for learners already in the workforce to gain formal education. It meets regional needs, supports the Sustainable Development Goals, and enables innovative energy solutions."

The IAC is supported by the PAWES project and funded by the European Union through the OACPS R&I Programme and ACP Innovation Fund.

More updates from the PPA Conference held in Saipan.

For more updates, please visit http://www.seiapi.com or email on info@seiapi.com/secretariat@seiapi.com for any queries and comments.

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