

Khok Samrong Technical College greenlights solar rooftop to cut electricity bills

Lopburi, 29 March 2022 - Students and educational officers from Khok Samrong Technical College in Lopburi province launched the "Solar Generation Solar College (SOLAR GENERATION)" project today, which promotes the potentials and economic benefits of renewable energy while also boosting job opportunities. The Thailand Solar Fund initiative [1,2], now in its second year, is crowdfunded through public donations with the goal of installing solar rooftop panels with a capacity of 10 kilowatts in 7 vocational institutions across the country [3,4].

The Thailand Solar Fund continues raising funds for solar rooftop panels for colleges this year. Currently, the initiative can enable solar rooftop panel installation at at least 5 of the 7 pilot colleges across the country.

Boonyuen Siritham, member of the Thailand Solar Fund Committee said:

"Solar energy emphasises equity and fairness. Every human being has the right to get sunlight. The Thailand Solar Fund was established by a group of persons who shared this vision. However, the relevant authorities rarely accept this approach, instead encouraging people to become merely energy consumers for firms monopolised by the fossil fuel sector, which continues to have a negative influence on Thailand's environment, precious ecosystems, and people's way of life. People become enraged as a result of their neglect, and many protest against coal plants in various places. To help fund our solar rooftop project, the Solar Fund Committee performed "Solar Hospitals" study, which solicited funds from the public to install solar rooftop panels at all seven of our local public hospitals. The findings show that solar energy can be used effectively in any region, is beneficial for the environment, and can help hospitals save money on electricity expenditures. With these promising results, the project expanded its scope to include the education sector, which includes both vocational and technical colleges. The solar rooftop panel project not only promotes knowledge of solar energy to persons who are either interested in the technology, looking for work in the industry, or interested in becoming solar energy entrepreneurs, but it also encourages the learning of installation procedures and maintenance."

Khok Samrong Technical College is located in Lopburi Province's Khok Samrong District. There are 998 students enrolled in courses ranging from vocational certificate to high vocational certificate at this educational institution. The goal is to focus on building professional excellence using new technologies in response to the labor market and societal needs. One of the college's primary goals is the solar energy program.

Mr.Rerngsak Khemtong, Director of Khok Samrong Technical College said:

"Khok Samrong Technical College is the Solar Fund project's fourth solar college. The

college's average annual electricity expense is between 1 and 1.2 million Baht. As a result, it is projected that the installation of 10 kilowatt solar rooftop panels will save the college at least 60,000 Baht per year in electricity costs. Alternatively, the college will be able to save roughly 1,500,000 Baht in electricity costs during the lifetime of the solar panel, which is more than 25 years. We, the college, would want to express our gratitude to everyone who contributed funds to enable us to install solar rooftop panels. This not only helps us save money, but it also turns this solar rooftop into a hands-on learning experience for students who want to pursue this career route after graduation, such as becoming solar panel entrepreneurs. The solar panel industry has been steadily expanding in both the Lopburi area and across the country."

Lopburi is one of the provinces in Thailand with the most solar energy potential and concentration areas. According to the Energy Regulatory Commission's (ERC) electricity purchase records, Lopburi Province has a total of 24 solar power plants with a combined capacity of over 205 megawatts [5]. There are, however, more unoccupied roofs of residences, educational institution buildings, organisations, and companies that could benefit from solar rooftop panels to lessen their reliance on fossil fuels. It also helps to develop the economy by creating equitable and long-term job opportunities. [6,7,8]

Teerapong Saenglapcharoenkit, urban revolution coordinator, Greenpeace Thailand said:

"Energy reform should be embraced by the entire world, including Thailand." We demand that the government and the Ministry of Education act now to accelerate the energy transition by boosting investments and installing solar panels on the roofs of more than 30,000 schools and colleges around the country. All of this will result in a 700 megawatt increase in the country's renewable energy power generation capacity. The total amount invested exceeds 22 billion Baht. Meanwhile, this type of investment will assist educational institutions in saving money and generating an additional 5,000 million Baht in revenue each year. The idea has been demonstrated to be viable—you will return your investment in 4.48 years and save money throughout the course of the solar panels' 20-year lifespan. Furthermore, it encourages students to learn about clean technology and to assist vocational students in preparing for a more sustainable future through renewables."

NOTES:

[1] Each installation will cost 400,000 Baht. The current donation amount is 706,688.19 Baht (as of March 10, 2022), with a total donation goal of 1,600,000 Baht. Donations to the 'Thailand Solar Fund' are made through Siam Commercial Bank (SCB), Centre One Shopping Plaza branch, Account Name: "Thailand Solar Fund by Foundation for Consumers," Account Number: 429-017697-4.

More information about online donation and how to send bank transfer documents are available at www.thailelandsolarfund.org. Donations are tax-deductible, and the

Foundation for Consumers is a public-interest organisation with the Ministry of Finance's Notification number 576.

[2] Thailand Solar Fund is a coalition of civil society organisations working on consumer protection, children development, environmental protection, and sustainable development. Its goal is to mobilise resources to install rooftop solar systems and to launch a campaign to expand residential solar rooftop systems for government, private, and business agencies and institutions; based on people's participation in energy reform; with hands-on implementation in targeted areas; and toward changes in renewable energy policy. Thailand Solar Fund network includes: (1) Subcommittee on Public Services, (2) the Independent Committee for Consumer Protection (ICCP), (3) Sirindhorn International Institute of Technology, Thammasat University, (4) Foundation for Consumers, (5) Network of Consumers Organizations, (6) Chumporn Civil Society Association, (7) Forest and Sea for Life Foundation (8) Engineer Incubator Center (9) Solarder (10) Sisaengtham School, (11) Foundation for Child Development (FCD), (12) Four Regions Slum Network, (13) Green Southern Region Foundation, (14) Lanta Goes Green, (15) Thai Holistic Health Foundation and (16) Greenpeace Thailand. (17) Thailand Consumer Council

[3] The Thailand Solar Fund successfully raised funds from 2019 to 2020 to install solar rooftop panels with a total capacity of 240.63 kilowatts in seven public hospitals that took part in the project's initial phase. Tha Song Yang Hospital is located in Tak Province; Phu Sing Hospital is located in Sri Saket Province; Thung Sri Udom Hospital is located in Ubon Ratchathani Province; Chum Phae Hospital is located in Khon Kaen Province; Kaeng Khoi Hospital is located in Saraburi Province; Langsuan Hospital is located in Chumphon Province; and Prapokkiao Hospital is located in Chanthaburi Province. The idea helps all seven hospitals save 1.4 million baht in annual electricity costs.

[4] The Thailand Solar Fund planned a crowdfunding campaign from 2020 to 2021 to install solar panels at 7 vocational colleges across the country. Solar panels with a capacity of 10 kilowatts will be placed at each campus. Kanchanaburi Vocational College is located in Kanchanaburi; Chae Hom Vocational College is located in Lampang; Sakon Nakhon Technical College is located in Sakon Nakhon; Kraburi Vocational College is located in Ranong; Hat Yai Technical College is located in Song Khla; Ampwa Vocational College is located in Samut Songkhram; and Khok Samrong Technical College is located in Lopburi.

[5] Status of the purchase of SPP, VSPP, Energy Regulatory Commission (ERC) <http://www.erc.or.th/ERCSP/Default.aspx?x=0&muid=23&pid=41>

[6] Report on renewable energy job creation in Thailand <https://www.greenpeace.or.th/report/renewable-energy-job-creation-in-thailand.pdf>

[7] The study "Thailand Solar Rooftop Revolution for Green and Just Economic Recovery (2021-2023)" advocated using a solar rooftop system in Thailand to rebuild a sustainable and equitable economy from the ground up. <https://bit.ly/2WoQMkA>

[8] Demand the Thai Parliament to declare a climate emergency by signing the petition. https://www.greenpeace.org/thailand/act/calling-thai-parliament-climate-emergency/?fbclid=IwAR2GmnOA0LTqpCZ7Cl5msQ_fzMs68doMFIOsPa0vDJl6kkCuOXJmwDZ_lno

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