

ENERGY

BCP puts focus on solar rooftops for green power

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The state majority-owned refiner Bangchak Petroleum Plc (BCP) will add solar rooftops to its alternative energy sources so that it can generate more green power to be sold to utilities.

It may lease space from private buildings to install rooftop panels and buy the energy from owners.

BCP has operated solar power plants since 2008 when prices of fuel soared during the global energy crisis.

Its first solar farm with a capacity of 68 MW was built for 6 billion baht. It plans to add another 50 MW under a 4-billion-baht budget. The extension will be operational by the end of next year.

BCP president Vichien Usanachote said the total capacity of 118 MW will be sold to electricity suppliers.

The company aims to increase solar power capacity to 500 MW by 2020 but no more licences will be issued by the

Energy Ministry. BCP is therefore considering a new model of generating solar power from rooftop panels.

Several applicants are seeking licences to develop solar power plants with a combined capacity of 3,000 MW, while the ministry has set a target of 2,000 MW to balance all energy sources.

"We cannot get more solar farm licences. The 118 MW are the most we can get. Therefore, we plan to set up a new business to get more green energy," Mr Vichien said.

The Energy Ministry yesterday launched a solar rooftop programme and set the rate of electricity to be sold back to utilities such as the Provincial Electricity Authority in a range of 6.16 to 6.96 baht per kilowatt hour.

It expects owners of houses and buildings will install solar rooftop panels to generate 200 MW by the year-end.

Mr Vichien said BCP estimates it will earn an annual income of about 2.8

billion baht before interest, tax, depreciation and amortisation from selling 118 MW to utilities such as the Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand.

The company yesterday also relaunched the programme to buy used cooking oil from the public through its 44 oil stations in Bangkok and at its headquarters. The used oil can be recycled into biodiesel.

Mr Vichien said Thais consume about 800 million litres of cooking oil every year, of which 150 million are discharged. It pays 13 baht a litre for used oil.

BCP launched the purchase of used cooking oil in 2007 and has bought 330,000 litres.

The programme also receives cooperation from agencies such as the Treasury Department, Ramathibodi Hospital and Central Department Store to ask vendors at their food courts to sell used oil to Bangchak. It also sends a team to collect oil from fresh markets.



Mr Vichien (left) with Treasury Department director-general Naris Chaayasutr at the launch of a scheme to buy used cooking oil from food vendors in the department. TAWATCHAI KEMGUMNERD