

Strengthening Afghanistan Renewable Energy Union to Build the Sector

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Dated October 17th 2019, a workshop on member's contributions to building up the Afghanistan Renewable Energy Union (AREU) took place at Kabul University. Seventy people participated, including women, and discussed efforts to make AREU more functional and sustainable through membership contribution, which in turn will help promote renewable energy in Afghanistan. The group consisted of representatives of the Ministry of Energy and Water (MEW), the Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce (ACCI), the Afghan-German Cooperation's Energy Sector Improvement Programme (ESIP), and other AREU members from the private sector. The Afghan-German Cooperation supported the workshop.



AREU's CEO, Mr. Najibullah Saboori, welcomed the participants and emphasized, 'The world is embracing clean and sustainable sources of energy. We as a union are obliged to put our endeavors into the development of AREU, seize every opportunity presented to direct the union towards sustainability, and bridge the existing gaps.'

During the workshop, the participants discussed how to increase AREU membership numbers through marketing and lobbying measures and how to build relationships through

networking. The event also served as a platform for exchange to understand members' needs and to help them establish business contacts. Keeping members satisfied as well as increasing membership numbers and contribution will generate revenue and improve AREU's internal capacity. This in turn will help AREU build a stronger and more stable renewable energy sector.

In lively group discussions, AREU members had the chance to share their thoughts and plan future activities, for example, the development of an online business directory and the development of a newsletter. Participants also learned about recent developments in the Afghan energy sector, including ways of improving management and business operations systems – such as bookkeeping, contracting and record-keeping.

The head of MEW's Renewable Energy Department, Mr Faridullah Sharafmal, stated, 'The inevitable role of the private sector in shaping an affordable and accessible source of energy is undeniable and MEW is always available to take action for promoting the efforts.'

Knowledge in the renewable energy sector is in demand. A close collaboration of the AREU members will help to improve instruction, communication and a general understanding of the industry and energy efficiency for Afghanistan. The AREU members will benefit from gained knowledge on these topics that are becoming increasingly valuable in Afghanistan's private sector.

AREU provides technical assistance to all its members to help identify, plan and implement renewable energy, and helps coordinate, assist and promote the work of its members. AREU is helping to develop the renewable energy market by creating a stable business environment, promoting renewable energy in Afghanistan through private sector investment and by providing effective services for the renewable energy community.

On behalf of the German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH implements the Afghanistan Energy Sector Improvement Programme (ESIP). ESIP aims at promoting renewable energy generation and energy efficiency in Afghanistan to boost economic growth and protect the environment. To achieve this goal, ESIP closely cooperates with key actors at national and provincial level to establish an institutional framework that enables a reliable energy supply. It also supports the private sector in adopting market-based quality standards and maintenance concepts for photovoltaics and solar thermal energy to attract investments. At the same time, ESIP implements capacity-building activities for staff in the public and private energy sectors and at universities.