

WWF, PCRET install solar power panels in Sindh

By Amar Guriro

KARACHI: The World Wildlife Fund-Pakistan (WWF), in collaboration with the Pakistan Council of Renewable Energy Technologies (PCRET), has installed solar panels on an experimental basis, to produce affordable and eco-friendly electricity in three sites of Sindh, including the coastal belt.

“Solar cells or solar energy units are long lasting sources of energy that can be used almost anywhere and can be a cost effective solution to the increasing energy demands,” said WWF Indus For All Programme, Keti Bunder Site Manager Zahid Hussain Jalbani, adding that the experimental introduction will soon be expanded to more sites. He said that with the power crisis of Pakistan deepening by the day, these solar energy panels could be an effective replacement for furnace oil based or hydroelectricity.

“In the first phase of the programme, we have introduced the solar panels at three out of a total of four sites, including Chotiari Reservoir in Sanghar, Keti Bunder and Keenjhar Lake in district Thatta. On top of the fact that these areas have a lot of potential, especially in the fishery sector, the people of these areas have been deprived of electricity for the past 60 years,” said Indus for All Programme Coordinator Nasir Panhwar. He said that, although these solar panels have been installed on an experimental basis, in future, they could serve as models for the implementation of alternative energy sources in other parts of the province.

Each of these solar panels comprise of two solar plates, two power saving batteries and a charge controller. The single unit costs Rs 450,000 and can power three 20 Volt energy saver bulbs and two small wall mount fans. The solar plates, which are installed in an open space, absorb sunlight and transmit it to the controller, which after converting the solar energy into electricity transmits it to the power saving batteries. The panels can power these five electricity gadgets continuously throughout the day and the power stored in the batteries can last for up to eight to 10 hours at night. “The introduction of these solar panels is no less than a miracle for the people of these areas who never even dreamt of having electricity in their homes,” said Mr Jalbani.

Highlighting the advantages of these solar panels, he said that apart from being completely eco-friendly, the panels require little or no maintenance and have a very long lifespan. Disclosing details of the instalment, he said that, so far, a total of five panels have been installed at Keti Bunder, which is an island locality. “Out of the total of five panels, three were installed in a mosque in the Bhoori village located in Khobar Creek, one in a mosque of Tippun village located in Hajamro Creek and one has been installed at a community school of the same village,” said Mr Jalbani. He further revealed that there were two categories of panels. Panel A, which has an output of 200 Watt, comes with two batteries and can power two energy savers and two wall mount fans, has been installed at the mosque, while Panel B, which has an output of 500 Watt, comes with four batteries and can power four energy savers and two wall mount fans, has been installed at the school.

WWF-Pakistan is currently implementing the five-year Indus for All Programme, which is the first phase of a 50-year-long Indus Eco-Region Conservation Programme, developed in collaboration with the Sindh government and other stakeholders for long-term biodiversity conservation and poverty alleviation in the Indus region. The programme, keeping in view the potential habitat types, has identified four priority areas including the Chotiari Reservoir in Sanghar, Keti Bunder in district Thatta, Pai Forest in district Shaheed Benazir Bhutto (Nawabshah) and Keenjhar Lake in district Thatta.