

MINISTRY OF POWER & RENEWABLE ENERGY
CABINET MEMORANDUM

Cabinet Memo No. 40/2017/PE

Ministry Ref. No. PE/DEV/02/13/2007 VI

Acquisition of Abandoned Paddy Fields not use for cultivation for Solar Power Generation Projects.**1.0 Background**

A programme has been launched with the target of increasing the contribution of renewable energy sources for the electricity generation of Sri Lanka. As per the said programme a top priority and attention have been given for the development of solar power under the development of renewable energy power generation. Accordingly, any customer has been given the opportunity to generate solar power under Sooryabala Sangramaya programme and measures are being taken to develop solar power plants of 100MW or higher capacities as solar power parks. Further to connect to the small scale power plants to the system by establishing small scale solar power plants which connect to identified grid substations. While private sector investments are encouraged for solar power electricity generation and measures were taken to introduce method of competitive bidding process to private sector investors for solar electricity generation from this year. Further reduction of unit cost of purchasing of electricity generated by solar power, considerably has already been achieved.

2.0 Description

It is required a 3 - 5 acres of land for the 1MW of ground mounted solar project. Although there is a very good potential in solar power electricity generation in the provinces of Western and Sabaragamuwa where there is the high electricity demand in Sri Lanka, it is difficult to put up solar power plant due to practical difficulties in finding lands in the said provinces. However if the lands are available in those areas as required, there is a high possibility of implementing small and medium scale solar power generation projects.

During the last competitive bidding exercise, there were considerably less response from developers of solar power projects in Western and Sabaragamuwa Provinces. When this was taken into consideration, it was recognized that the main reason for the above issue was the difficulty of finding lands to implement these types of projects.

However, when the relevant area was considered, it was noted that large number of abandoned paddy fields are available in this areas. This valuable land resource remains without gaining any economic profit. But there is a possibility of establishment of solar panels required for solar power generation with lowest damage to the physical conditions of these lands and it is economically and technically effective due to below mentioned matters.

- I. With the circumstances of non- utilizations of the relevant paddy lands for any economic activity, possibility of receiving a considerable income to the owners of the lands by utilization of the said lands to generate solar power and lands which is a limited resource in our country could be used for effective investments by enabling for the utilization of abandoned paddy fields for a productive work such as solar power generation.
- II. Since these abandoned paddy fields are available in the provinces like Western Province where the highest demand prevails in the system and it would be easy to meet the electricity demand of the system throughout solar generation in these areas.
- III. Since there is a high demand for electricity in the Western and Sabaragamuwa Provinces, establishment of generation capacities within those areas is more technically effective. At the same time, establishing electricity generation capacities within the relevant area would also be economically effective.

3.0 Proposal

In principally, to accept the concept of utilization of abandoned paddy fields in Western and Sabaragamuwa provinces for the solar electricity generation projects as it is more productive subject to get the concurrence of the Land Commissioner General.

4.0 Approval

I seek the approval of the Cabinet of Ministers for the proposal mentioned in the para 3.0.

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