

‘One Sun One World One Grid’: India initiates talks on West to SE Asia solar grid

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India has come up with a ‘One Sun One World One Grid’ (OSOWOG) initiative to set up a framework for facilitating global cooperation in this regard aiming at building a global ecosystem of interconnected renewable energy resources that can be seamlessly shared.

The Union Ministry of New and Renewable energy (MNRE), through this initiative, plans to build global consensus about sharing solar resources among more than 140 countries of West Asia and South East Asia.

At a later stage, the project envisages getting this grid interconnected with the African power pools.

The idea is to utilise solar power when the sun is not shining in other parts of the world by building a common transmission system. The MNRE has invited proposals from consulting firms for making a long-term OSOWOG road map, and identify two or three cross-border projects that can be initiated within one or two years, “preferably one with each of Middle East, South East and Africa regions considering India as the grid fulcrum for these identified pilots.”

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in October 2019, had floated the idea of cross-border solar connectivity. India has already initiated the International Solar Alliance (ISA) which aims to deploy over 1,000 GW of solar generation capacity globally and mobilise investment of over \$1 trillion towards by 2030. The ISA, a treaty-based inter-governmental organisation headquartered in Gurgaon, was established following the Paris Declaration as an alliance dedicated to the promotion of solar energy among its member countries.

The government is already planning to connect more neighbouring countries through a regional power grid which can be used to supply electricity to surrounding nations without adequate number of power plants. Apart from Bhutan, Nepal, Myanmar and Bangladesh, which already take power from India, there are plans to connect Sri Lanka with power transmission lines as well. Draft procedural guidelines have been framed for firms to participate in cross-border electricity trade.

In November 2014, India, along with the other countries of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, had signed an agreement to enable cross-border electricity trade among the member states on a voluntary basis. Later in August 2018, the country also signed a memorandum of understanding for establishing grid interconnection between the members of the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (Bimstec). The member states of the Bimstec are India, Bangladesh Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Bhutan, Nepal and Thailand.

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