



A Conference on Private Investments for Development of Sustainable Energy in Afghanistan

Orientation of Emerging Entrepreneurs to the Energy Sector

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Date of event:	Tuesday 10 April, 08.30 – 16.30	Reporter name and contact details:	Bibi Yalda Seddiqi President Women’s Initiatives for sustainable Energy Tel: + 93 (0)7 835 698 005 Email: byseddiqi2030@gmail.com
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Name and Type of Event	<p>Event: A Conference on Private Investments for Development of Sustainable Energy in Afghanistan, Orientation of Emerging Entrepreneurs to the Energy Sector.</p> <p>Organized by: GIZ, MEW</p> <p>Sponserd by: GIZ</p>
No’s of participants	120

Background:

AREU (Afghanistan Renewable Energy Union):

Having noticed the increasing demand of the energy consumption and the lack of the supply resources in 2003, the attention of the MEW turned to alternate Renewable Energy (RE) sources. The program strived for following 10 years but needed a legal regulatory authority to standardize the RE interventions across Afghanistan. Thus, the government of Afghanistan decided to authorize a legal entity having organizational structure, policy, plans and be registered to government of Afghanistan to lead renewable energy and energy efficiency activities and business. Since then AREU has been established legally under Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Industries (ACCI) and its purpose is to fulfill the very need of RE services standardization. Currently 48 registered solar and power companies have AREU's membership and all companies are functionally committed to practicing solar activities in Kabul and provinces.

WISE (Women's Initiatives for Sustainable Energy):

Based on the National Energy Policy and plans of Afghan Government, the role of women in the Afghan society in energy supply and consumption, in both rural and urban areas, is significantly required. Recognizing the pivotal role women play in advancing sustainable development, the German Cooperation in Afghanistan through Institutional Development for Energy in Afghanistan (IDEA) program of GIZ has established the Women's Initiatives for Sustainable Energy (WISE) program to empower and inspire Afghan women to become the catalyst of innovation and drivers of change to address the long term challenges faced by the energy sector in Afghanistan.

Currently, household electrification, utilization of RE technologies, and the increased importance of energy efficiency measures in households and buildings, has opened up new business opportunities for women in the country. In order to convert these opportunities into market-ready and sustainable business-models, creative ideas and knowledge of the business design measures are required. In the light of this, WISE program aims at providing a platform for women from both rural and urban areas of Afghanistan to emerge as entrepreneurs and community leaders, while transforming their communities, as they expand access to clean and sustainable energy.

The women participating in this program learned how to get a startup underway and use business design methods (Design Thinking, Prototyping, Pitching etc.) in developing innovative business models to put sustainable energy into practice. This program was consisting of two parts. Part one will be a 7 days of training on entrepreneurship and business development while part two will be consist of 3 days of visiting women initiatives on sustainable energy in India and showcasing business women as models or potential leaders and entrepreneurs.

The program was conducted in Delhi and Hyderabad, India and all the costs including transportation, accommodation, and training will be covered by GIZ. Moreover, bi-monthly meetings and gatherings will be arranged in Kabul for the team to meet up, exchange their success stories, thoughts and lessons learned, and accordingly get benefited from the coaches' professional experiences.

Upon completion of the program, each participant is mandated to develop a one year Action Plan for their emerging/existing businesses which will be followed by GIZ IDEA throughout the year. Also, every participant shall conduct a Passing-it-On (PiO) exercise, which implies doing a mini training to share what they have learnt to at least 5 other women within their circle of influence on their return to Afghanistan. Only those who developed the one-year Action Plan and complete the PiO, will qualify for a certificate and further support in their businesses.

Throughout the program, participants benefited from different interactive sessions, built networks with Indian entrepreneurs and experts and will get coached for a period of six months by an international consultant. The other benefits of this program will include a chance to get a one-year free membership of Afghanistan Renewable Energy Union (AREU).

YES (Youth Entrepreneurship Support):

Youth Entrepreneurship Support (YES) is planned to be a knowledge based and activity oriented leadership and entrepreneurship, youth training program on Sustainable Energy in Afghanistan. YES intends to bring together in school youth to deepen their technical, leadership and entrepreneurship skills. 2017 marks as the first year of conducting this program as a pilot project.

Based on the National Energy Policy and 5 year energy self-sufficiency plans of Afghan Government, the YES program will provide part of the manpower required for the energy sector of the country. To complete the program, about 30 youth will attend 2 workshops which will hold for 2 months each and one month of practices. Workshop 1 will focus on “technical trainings”, Workshop 2 will focus on “leadership and entrepreneurship skills”. The workshops consist by several training and lecturing sessions along with practical case studies.

YES will use a dynamic and customizable training curriculum based on participants’ needs and market demands into two different groups –Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency in buildings. Each group will be consisting of 15 individuals who will fill an application form and pass a competitive interview session. Upon the completion of the program, each participant is mandated to conduct a passing-it-on (PiO) exercise, which implies doing a mini training to share what they have learnt with at least 15 other youth in their faculty or community, only those who complete the PiO qualify for a certificate. Through the PiO component of YES, we hope to educate at least 250 young people about leadership and entrepreneurship in Renewable Energy Technologies and Energy Efficiency in buildings.

The training Venue will be the Kabul Pole-Technique University (KPU). Throughout the program, participants shall benefit from about 25 different interactive sessions. The other benefits of this program will include Internship with German Cooperation (IDEA program) for at least 5 months, conducting practical case studies, visiting RE power plants and related institutions and a chance to get a one year free membership of Afghanistan Renewable Energy Union (AREU).

The certificate provided for the participants of YES will be qualified and approved by relevant ministries including Ministry of Energy and Water.

At the end, a startup fair program will be conducted where the YES participants will present their business plans and ideas to local startup organizations, thought leaders and financial institutions. This program will be supported by an international consultant who will support the emerging startups and projects for access to finance in the country.

The goal of the project is to empower young people with technical knowledge and entrepreneurship skills to make them collaborate to change themselves and enhance private sector involvement in Renewable Energy Sector of the country.

Objectives:

- To give necessary support & facilitation to the entrepreneur and investor to successfully implement RE project to produce more renewable energy without delay and to attract more investment in state by the private developers.
- To create direct and indirect employment opportunities especially in rural and backward areas.
- To harness the environment friendly RE sources and to enhance their contribution to the socio – economic development.
- To supplement efforts in bridging the gap between Private sector and MEW.

The purpose of this conference held on 10 th April 2018, was to strengthen AREU, YES and WISE entrepreneurs through a one-day conference in which an opportunity availed business match making event along with awareness session for better understanding of renewable energy and energy efficiency activities and business opportunities.

In the intervening time this event helped support YES&WISE entrepreneurs to learn from experience of RE business companies which had been involved in this filed for the last few years.

GIZ/IDEA facilitated the arrangements of the event with cooperation of AREU to encourage simultaneously both private investment and as well as YES&WISE entrepreneurs to be able to act as standalone body getting involved in RE activities and later on the entrepreneurs get promoted to establish RE entities.

The core essence of conducting such conferences was to pave the way for entrepreneurs and private investment to interchange prospects, experience ,lessons learned and as well as challenges of RE market in Afghanistan ,which will help YES&WISE entrepreneurs understand more about renewable energy whereabouts and at the same time stay vigilant for the next steps .On the other hand ,private investment would consider that AREU perpetually creates junctures to bring together businesses involved potentials in RE not only for better development of energy sector activities but also for ensuring economic development of the country .

Importance:

This conference was important since it acted as a catalyst for change. Studies show that we develop convictions not only from personal study, but also in environments away from our normal day-to-day life. That is what this conference provided. The essence of the issue was that YES graduates benefited through exchanging experiences with involved RE companies in energy sector and later on they would apply the lesson learned aspects in practical filed. WISE members were not excluded though, as this conference offered and opportunity to them to showcase their potentials, plans and future schemes for RE/EE activities to attract private investors to rely on their abilities as a standalone empowered women taking part in entrepreneurship.

Furthermore, this conference dealt a time of bonding. In this conference, effective business partnerships was formed which would bring businesses from the fringes into RE/EE community.

Participants:

- 1- Ministry of Energy and Water /Deputy Minister for Energy
- 2- Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development
- 3- AREU Team
- 4- Top 20 successful AREU member companies
- 5- Policy Department and Renewable Energy Department Directors of MEW
- 6- All WISE Program Entrepreneurs
- 7- All YES Internship Entrepreneurs
- 8- Ministry of Commerce and Industries
- 9- Ministry of Finance /PPP Department

Conference Details:

The Sustainable Energy Development conference sponsored by GIZ/IDEA program for new entrepreneurs' introduction in Afghanistan energy sector on Tuesday, April 10, 2018 at the WAPICA Hall, Ministry of Energy and water. The conference began with a speech by Mohammad Gul Kulmi, Deputy Minister of Energy, Ministry of Energy and Water.

Mr. Khulmi spoke about the importance of the private sector along with the government in development of energy sector and also spoke about the activities done by government for facilitating of partnership in energy section for the private sector , he counted the investment on energy as one of the vital and valuable investments.

He explained the status of the projects which Ministry of Energy and Water has planned to accomplish in partnership with private sector especially renewable projects.

Mr.Khulmi has stated that the ministry of energy and water is committed to cooperating as a strategic and key supporter of private-sector partnership in sustainable energy projects. Besides,he considered the energy market in Afghanistan as an untouched and reliable source of investment in energy sector.

Mr. Amanullah Ghalib CEO of Breshna Company was the second speaker of the event .He delivered his speech about the projects and achievements as well as the future plans of the Breshna Company and talked about providing opportunities for women's participations in future plans of Breshna. In the event, Deputy Director of IDEA project Mr. Zabihullah Taherzadeh also highlighted the importance of renewable energy in addition to the GIZ activities in promotion and building up the renewable energy, including the establishment of two active groups in renewable energy sector named WISE (Women's Initiatives for Sustainable Energy) and YES (Youth Entrepreneurs support). These two groups are composed of young engineers who are being trained in fields of renewable energy and entrepreneurship, with the support of GIZ.. Mr. Zabihullah Tahirzada also noted the importance of strengthening the private sector and replacing the external private sector with it, and the grants cut off till 2020 would be an opportunity to highlight the presence and activities of the domestic private sector in the field of energy.

In the event, Kabul Khan Tadbir, head of the Afghanistan Renewable Energy Unit, and then MujibulRahman Saboori, the AREU's deputy and professor at the University of Kabul, talked about the history and necessity of the formation of the AREU and the future achievements and plans of the AREU. Mr. MujebulRahman Saboori, also said about the importance of quality

assurance of the member companies of the AREU and the necessity of granting ISO and Energy Management Certificates.

Subsequently, representatives of the member firms of the AREU introduced their companies and their activities and achievements. The challenges faced by the private sector were also presented. They also offered their suggestions to young and new entrepreneurs, and raised their expectations from the government.

Representatives of WISE and YES spoke about the nature and purpose of forming these groups and their Objectives, future plans, achievements and activities.

Representative RICGISO also introduced a variety of certificates and impact standards such as ISO on corporate accreditation. Describing each of the certificates, described the need for quality competitive with global standards as one of the most important issues in entrepreneurship, and provided comprehensive information on this topic for the guide of young entrepreneurs.

In the end, Engineer Faridullah Sharfmal, head of the renewable energy department of ministry of Energy and Water, outlined the Ministry of Energy and Water's policies regarding the use of private sector capacities in the energy sector,

Specifically, renewable energy, and the new laws which created by the efforts of the Ministry of Energy and Water to facilitate private sector participation in renewable energy projects. Engineer Faridullah Sharfmal introduced government suggested projects to the private sector, outlined various types of government cooperation in facilitating private sector participation in government projects, as well as answering the questions posed by companies and outlining the challenges and solutions available to the Private investors in the energy sector.

Engineer Sharfalm added that opportunities for private investors in the field of energy are very favorable now, and government cooperation and incentives given to the private sector in this field have made the sector more attractive than ever before. Please re-phrase your sentences to convey your intention.

Mr. Mohammad Gol Khalmi concluded the meeting by answering questions and summarizing the issues.