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# Oman

## Environment

# Oman environment: Encourage individuals to shift to renewable energy

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Oman environment: Encourage individuals to shift to renewable energy

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Muscat: Best way to increase renewable energy's footprint in Oman is by encouraging individuals to install gadgets to harness these energy resources, according to an official at The Research Council (TRC).

Commenting on the future of renewable energy in Oman, Dr. Ahmed Al Busaidi, programme manager of renewable energy research at TRC, said the implementation must start at a low scale, in small residential buildings and then turn to large scale use. "Residents in Oman must look at solar based home solutions, which include using devices such as solar panels to power household electric equipment. This is certainly the best way forward towards a future with less dependence on fossil fuels,"

he said.

"Currently, solar energy can be exploited in certain areas, such as farm irrigation, where solar panels can be installed. The cost of these panels is not too high, as was the case a few years ago. The period of return has come down, too, and it is now a viable solution," he added. One of the proposed energy policies at the Tanfeedh labs – the national programme for enhancing economic diversification – is to invest in renewable resources so that 10 per cent of total energy generated by 2025 comes from renewable resources. According to the proposal, three quarters of this energy will be harnessed from the sun. Al Busaidi argued that there is a huge potential and making a shift towards non-conventional energy resources is necessary.

"Although profitable solar energy use requires long term investment and returns are expected after a decade of implementation, there is a need for clean energy resources so that we don't burn all the available natural resources. Also, we must not forget the health and environment aspects, which are affected adversely if we continue to burn fossil fuels," he explained. Citing the example of Morocco where returns from investment in solar energy were expected in 14 years but came much ahead of time, Al Busaidi noted that prices of solar energy solutions are falling in Oman and efficient solutions are widely available for personal use, therefore the period of return has been slashed considerably.

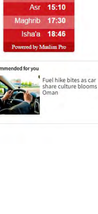
According to L.K. Verma, Managing Director of Dubai-based solar energy company, Power n Sun, countries in the Gulf will eventually adopt solar energy harnessing echnologies. "It is only a matter of time when GCC countries start using solar solutions for electricity generation. The potential is too huge to ignore," he said.

He added that the extent to which individuals will adopt solar energy usage will depend on government policies, such as allowing individuals to minimize costs by supplying electricity to the grid through their personal sources.

From 2006 to 2014, cost of production of electricity from solar energy dropped by 78 per cent from $3.25 to $.72 per unit worldwide. A solar energy system producing 100kW of electricity can cost around OMR50-60.

In Oman, price per unit for generating electricity from solar energy sources is around 25 bz per unit while a conventional fossil fuelled power costs around 20-80bz per unit depending on the source. However, no subsidies are provided to the private sector using solar energy while consumption of electricity derived from conventional resources is heavily subsidized. An official from Nafath Renewable Energy said there were no regulations to govern home use of solar technology and policies are still being worked on, so companies are not allowed to sell home solar systems to individuals yet.







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