

Headline	MESTECC to submit Cabinet paper on RE		
MediaTitle	The Malaysian Reserve		
Date	11 Jul 2019	Language	English
Circulation	12,000	Readership	36,000
Section	Corporate Malaysia	Page No	4
ArticleSize	492 cm ²	Journalist	MARK RAO
PR Value	RM 13,923		



MESTECC to submit Cabinet paper on RE

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by MARK RAO

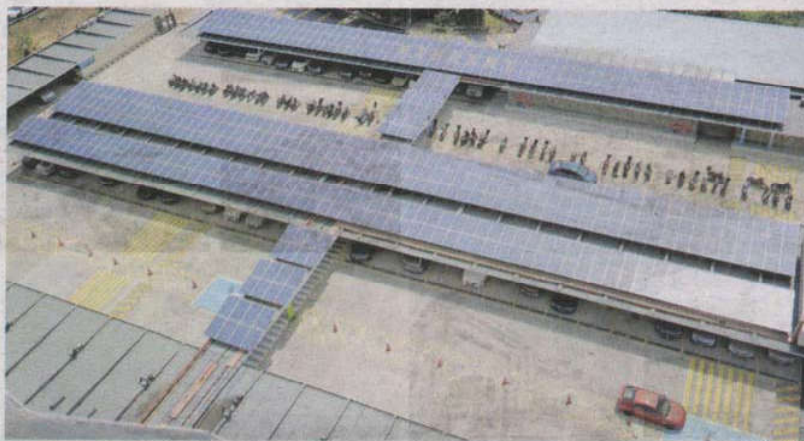
THE Ministry of Energy, Science, Technology, Environment and Climate Change (MESTECC) is expected to table a Cabinet paper today to provide more renewable energy (RE) opportunities for consumers.

Minister Yeo Bee Yin said the proposal is also aimed at reforming the electricity industry towards green energy trading.

"We are going to table a Cabinet paper tomorrow where we will have more options for those who would like to purchase RE in Malaysia.

"I am not at liberty to share a lot more, but hopefully, we will get it passed and then we will share a lot more on the green agenda and how it can be achieved through the reform of the electricity industry in green energy trading," she said at the World Economic Forum in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

Currently, the existing initiatives include the net energy metering scheme which allows excess energy produced from installed solar panels to be sold to Tenaga Nasional Bhd (TNB)



TNB's solar panels at its HQ rooftop parking lot

Pic by Muzni Amin Noharuz

on a "one-on-one" offset basis.

Previously, the energy bought from TNB was higher than what was sold to the national utility firm.

The efforts are geared towards helping Malaysia achieve a 20% RE mix of total generation capacity by 2025 from the present 2%.

At the same time, Malaysia is among the nations tied to the Paris Agreement — a multinational pledge to combat climate change by keeping the rise in

global temperature substantially below 2°C.

Malaysia, on its part, pledged to reduce its carbon emissions per GDP by 45% in 2030, relative to what it produced in 2005. It was reported that the country has produced approximately 370 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent today.

"At the moment, we are at 33%. Actually, we are in a very comfortable position to meet our Paris Agreement," Yeo said. While several economies

have adopted carbon pricing, whereby a price is applied to carbon pollution to discourage greenhouse emissions due to the associated costs, Yeo said her ministry has no immediate plan on this front.

"At this moment, the ministry has no near-term plan on carbon pricing, but I do not know if other ministries will advocate for this.

"There is still so much of (an energy) gap that we can actually fill in terms of effi-

ciency. It is not because of political populism but...at the practical level," she said.

Yeo also said decarbonising through energy efficiency is among the measures being looked at as it is not only bringing down costs, but carbon emissions as well.

"That is the lowest hanging fruit to go for before you go for different parts (like carbon pricing).

"(Let's) focus on this low-hanging fruits, decarbonise

through that, then, it will be much easier. Don't go straight to carbon pricing without looking at what you can do at this moment," she said.

The minister also highlighted a recent report which showed that Malaysia could save up to RM46.92 billion in energy spending from 2016 to 2030 on energy efficiency alone, but noted that the country is still lagging on this front.

The Energy Efficiency and Conservation Act, which is targeted to be tabled at the Parliament by January next year, is among the actions being taken to address this issue.

Meanwhile, Yeo said an agreement is being sought between the relevant ministries to build an Asean grid to ensure greater energy security via regional cooperation.

"We have some development and I hope to sign a memorandum of understanding with the ministers in September on the grid and a firm supply," she added.

Among the initiatives being undertaken are connecting the grid from Laos to Malaysia and building an undersea cable to Singapore.

Yeo said collaboration with other Asean countries is being sought as the region is working towards having a secure, reliable and sustainable energy grid.

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