

First wind farm to be built in Sukabumi

The Jakarta Post (Rangga D. Fadillah) Local energy firm Viron Energy plans to build Indonesia's first large-scale wind power plant in Sukabumi, West Java, this year, with a total capacity of 30 megawatts, an energy official said.

PLN renewable energy division head Muhammad Sofyan said last week that the Energy and Mineral Resources Ministry had approved the project and the company was waiting for the ministry to issue an official permit to begin construction.

"Next month we'll sign the contract with the developer. The construction will take at least a year," he said after a discussion on alternative energy for industries in Jakarta. He said PLN would buy the electricity produced by the firm at Rp 820 (9.2 US cents) per kilowatt-hour.

"The price is very good. The cost of producing electricity from oil-based fuels can reach Rp 2,400 per kilowatt-hour," Sofyan said.

The location of the site is suitable for wind power generation as wind speed in the area is more than 6 meters per second, he said.

"The Sukabumi wind power plant will have a total generation capacity of 30 megawatts. But the first stage of the plant to be built will generate 10 megawatts," Sofyan said.

The director general for new and renewable energy and energy conservation at the ministry, Luluk Sumiarso, who also attended the discussion, said that this year would herald rapid development of Indonesia's renewable energy resources.

"Next month, in addition to the wind farm project, the government will also issue three letters ordering PLN to buy power from geothermal producers," he said, adding that he was happy with PLN's commitment to boost the use of alternative and renewable energy.

Many foreign and local investors expressed their interest in developing renewable energy in Indonesia, but the government would begin investing in projects in rural areas to lure in private investors, Luluk said.

"We plan to build several solar power plants in rural areas, not only at the household scale, but also at the community scale. We hope the construction of the wind farm can stimulate further investment," he said.

Luluk said the Sukabumi project would be Indonesia's first large-scale wind-generated power plant.

PLN has expressed its commitment to developing the use of renewable energy for electricity, particularly in the eastern part of the country where generating power from oil-based fuels cost

Rp 3,000 per kilowatt-hour, Sofyan said.

In that part of the country, the prices of renewable energy are much more competitive,” he emphasized.