

Feed-in tariffs not enough for Switzerland

(Montel Powernews) - Switzerland has to rely on both feed-in tariffs and the voluntary renewables market if it is to reach its national target of increasing its annual renewable electricity production by 5.4 TWh by 2030.

With most of the large scale hydropower potential exhausted and a support cap of CHF 320m a year in the new feed-in tariff system, Switzerland is unlikely to achieve more than just over 4 TWh in new renewable energy production by 2030, said Michael Kaufmann, deputy director of the Swiss federal office of energy at the Green Power Marketing conference in Lausanne. That represents only half of the potential, he added.

Therefore, in order to reach the 5.4 TWh target, the rest of the green power has to come through the voluntary market for green power, a market that is steadily growing as in particular companies want to portray themselves as climate friendly.

In Switzerland's new energy plan – which was agreed upon earlier this year - the country has gone for a hybrid model where producers can chose between feed-in support or selling green power directly in the voluntary market. The feed-in tariffs will be available for all renewables, including hydropower projects with a capacity up to 10 MW.

"First we have to focus on photovoltaics, hydro, biomass and wind. In the long run we could also look at geothermal energy," said Walter Steinmann, director of the Swiss federal office for energy.

Switzerland had a total power generation of 62 TWh in 2006, of which the share from renewables stood at roughly 16 per cent.

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