NEA to install solar hydropanels in Cobrador Island

NEA, in collaboration with the Asian Development Bank (ADB), will install solar-powered hydropanels in Cobrador Island, Romblon whose community has been deprived of access to safe drinking water for years.

The agency is deploying four SOURCE Hydropanel units in April, which is part of its ongoing project with ADB to help families experiencing potable water supply problems in off-grid rural areas, especially in small islands.

"*This new technology can help address the inadequate infrastructure to deliver safe and clean drinking water in remote areas like Cobrador Island,*" Engr. Ernesto Silvano, Jr., TEREDD acting department manager said.

The SOURCE Hydropanel, developed by US-based Zero Mass Water, Inc. (ZMW), extracts water vapor from the air into a proprietary absorbent material. The collected water from the hydropanels flows into a reservoir where it is mineralized with calcium and magnesium "for health and taste benefits."

On average, each hydropanel unit can produce five liters of water per day.

This means four SOURCE Hydropanel units can yield about 20 liters of water a day.

Cobrador is under the franchise area of the Romblon Electric Cooperative, Inc. (ROMELCO). Also known as "Naguso Island," it currently does not have a desalination plant that can turn saltwater into drinking water for the daily consumption of its community.

Barangay captain Juan Dela Cruz said they only use well water or rainwater collected from their rooftop gutters for bathing and laundry, but clean drinking water is transported from the mainland, a 45-minute boat ride.

"Noon, ang source namin ng inuming-tubig 'yung ulan. Buti na lang ngayon nauso na 'yung mineral water pero noon talaga kahit maalat-alat 'yung tubig, iniinom na, kasi no choice," the 65-year-old village chief said.

Islanders pay P45 per four-gallon container of water used for drinking and cooking. The amount is twice the price in the Romblon mainland.

Those who cannot afford a container of potable water are left with no choice but to use rainwater for drinking and cooking. Water from deep wells is unfit for consumption due to high salinity from saltwater.

Engr. Rene Fajilagutan, General Manager of ROMELCO, believes that the island's water woes can be addressed. "It can be solved, especially that there are technologies readily available," he said, adding that solar energy can also help solve the problem.

At present, Cobrador has 30-kilowatt solar hybrid power generation system that supplies cleaner and affordable round-the-clock electricity to the community of 257 households. ROMELCO is already planning to augment its capacity.#

NEA to FICELCO: Adopt measures ... *from page 2*

Engr. Reynaldo Cuevas, Jr., Acting Department Manager of the NEA Management and Consultancy Service Office (MCSO), said while no significant interruptions were reported so far, FICELCO should still "adopt strategies and measures to avert occurrence of interruptions."

Based on FICELCO's data, NEA has come up with two possible scenarios on the power situation of Catanduanes next month, considering the different operating scenarios of the installed power plants and loading based on monthly demand specifically during dry season.

In the first scenario, projection in power-supply demand outlook shows there will be a thin reserve for April and sufficient power supply for the rest of the year, provided that the six units of 1.545MW (Dependable Capacity at 1.1MW) are fully operational by May 2019.

Under scenario two, there will be a deficit in capacity for the month of April given that six units of 1.545MW capacity are delivered and operational by May 2019 and the 1×3.6MW Marinawa Diesel Power Plant with dependable capacity of 2.2MW is deactivated for rehabilitation and maintenance and the 1.5MW NPC biggest genset is also deactivated in case of engine breakdown.

On March 22, 2019, two units of 1.545MW previously delivered by SUWECO in the third quarter of 2018 as part of the 6.6MW contracted capacity under the 2nd Amendment of ESA were initially put in operation and dispatch at a capacity of 1MW to avert the possible occurrence of power interruptions. #

enerNEA is a quarterly publication of the NEA
Tel: 929-2237 / 929-1909 loc. 153
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