



**MALTA ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND
RENEWABLE ENERGIES ASSOCIATION
(M.E.E.R.E.A.)**

PRESS RELEASE

29th April 2009

GOVERNMENT'S OFFSHORE WIND ENERGY PLANS

The Malta Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energies Association, MEEREA, an environmental NGO, welcomes the plans for wind energy projects announced by the Prime Minister YESTERDAY.

However, the studies to be initiated should be accompanied by other contingency plans and studies, which would save Malta precious time, should the offshore project at *Sikka l-Bajda* prove to be non-viable or problematic. A hierarchy of options should be established.

In MEEREA's view, the Government should also re-assess its on-shore wind energy plans which are too timid. MEEREA notes with regret that no plans have been announced yet relating to distributed on-shore small and medium wind-energy projects. All possible sites should be evaluated and tailor-made wind energy projects be proposed for them. This presents an ideal P-P-P opportunity (Private-Public-Partnership), which the Government is striving to promote.

On a micro-level, MEEREA notes that MEPA is still dragging its feet with respect to issuing the draft design guidelines for public consultation, relating to installation of micro-wind energy systems on rooftops. In spite of Government's incentives for micro-wind generation since 2006, no such policy guidelines have been released three years later.

Since the Marsa Power Plant must be closed down by 2015, studies should be initiated immediately to evaluate the potential of replacing it by a medium-sized

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hybrid onshore wind farm or concentrated solar power plant, coupled with combined heat and power (CHP) facility, running on pure bio-fuels such as palm oil. This would smooth out the inherent variability of the wind or solar resource and contribute towards a larger percentage of renewable energy in Malta's total energy mix. The excess heat can also be used to produce potable water from the sea, using multi-stage flash distillation processes, to meet the forecast decline in rainfall and thus water table levels due to climate change. Such technologies are already available and are extensively used in Gulf countries and many large marine vessels.

As regards the Government's overall approach, MEEREA is disappointed with the seemingly fragmented efforts on different fronts, including but not limited to energy, renewable energy, climate change, energy performance in buildings and energy end-use efficiency policies.

The present situation in MEEREA's view reflects a state of panic and does not augur well for the future. Instead, such challenges should be turned into opportunities for more jobs, greater technology transfer and better quality of life for all.

MEEREA therefore calls on the Government to establish an Energy Agency to foster and implement plans for energy efficiency and a full range of renewable energy applications in Malta. The success story of the Company Wasteserv in the field of waste management should be projected to the energy sector.

The Prime Minister has repeatedly and continuously supported all efforts to make Malta a centre of excellence in many sectors. MEEREA believes that Malta could become a leading example of sustainability for small island states. This can be achieved by working simultaneously and without prejudice on energy efficiency measures as well as all potential renewable energies, to reach Malta's targets for EU 2020 and beyond.

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