

Solar energy is an extremely important energy source for Albania because of its geographic position and exposure to sunlight, the Albanian Minister of Infrastructure and Energy, Damian Gjinkuri said at the opening of a workshop on solar energy in Tirana. The Minister said the Albanian government will stimulate investments in the production of energy from solar plants, the Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy said in a statement.

The workshop in the Albanian capital was organized jointly late in October 2017 by the Gjinkuri's ministry and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. The Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy and the EBRD signed a Memorandum of understanding on stimulating investments in solar energy through auctions in May 2017. That Memorandum defines the framework to develop projects and investments across the country in order to reach the level of production of 50 MW to 100 MW from solar power plants. An EBRD statement said the bank has invested more than EUR 1 billion in infrastructure and energy projects in Albania.

Gjinkuri said that the stimulating of investments in solar energy has become a necessity for Albania since the production of power in that country depends 100 percent on hydropower plants. A new law and a national plan on renewable energy sources are the first steps in establishing operational and legal frameworks for the first concrete investments, the Minister said.

He said auctions for solar power plants of 30 MW to 50 MW would be organized by his ministry in cooperation with the EBRD with favorable tariffs provided to investors.

Development of renewable sources of energy in Albania would contribute to improving the country's energy and economic situation by introducing diversified power sources and creating conditions for the use of renewable energy sources in households, production facilities and the services industry. It would also cut down pollution, Gjinkuri said.

Albanian, Greek and EBRD energy experts took part in the workshop in Tirana, exchanging experiences on the best procurement methods, good practices, opportunities for the renewable energy sector and on progress achieved in Albania in reaching the level of energy production from renewable sources by the year 2020, an EBRD statement said.

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