

Many smaller solar energy investors who took part in the recent RES auctions have lodged a wave of protests to RAE, the Regulatory Authority for Energy, and DEDDIE/HEDNO, the Hellenic Electricity Distribution Network Operator, claiming large-scale PV projects were deliberately broken down into fractions of their total and entered into the auction's sub-category for small-scale photovoltaic installations of less than one MW, offering investors behind these moves a series of advantages.

In doing so, investors behind larger PV projects with capacities exceeding one MW were able to participate in the auction's sub-category for solar energy projects of less than one MW, which offered a higher remuneration tariff starting price and less competition.

Three auctions were staged for three sub-categories - small-scale photovoltaic installations of less than one MW; larger-scale PV installations measuring between one and 20 MW; and wind energy installations of between 3 and 50 MW.

Disgruntled smaller-scale investors argue bigger PV projects were broken down and presented as ventures with capacities of no more than 500 KW.

Subsequently, one major corporate group may have dominated the PV auction for small-scale photovoltaic installations, securing deals for 46 of the sub-category's 83 projects listed, or 34 MW of the 53 MW offered in this sub-category.

Besides securing higher tariffs for output, investors who broke down larger PV projects into smaller fragments, also stand to gain a series of other benefits. These include a RAE production license exemption - a procedure requiring three years - and avoidance of target-model obligations, limited to bigger PV projects and entailing considerably greater operational costs.

Responding to the protests, RAE contends it is not authorized to examine the validity of the claims. DEDDIE/HEDNO admitted that certain PV projects may have been segmented for the RES auction but added this remains unsubstantiated and cannot be proven. As a result, successful bidders cannot be deprived of terms secured at the auction, the operator noted.

Data provided by one protesting investor to energypress indicates that the owner of one project who had applied for a production license in the past segmented this project into smaller ones for the recent RES auction, staged on July 2.

Source: energypress.eu