

ENERGY

ERC finalising steps for entry into WTE scheme

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The Energy Regulatory Commission (ERC) is preparing to invite investors early next year to join the waste-to-energy (WTE) scheme in 21 areas nationwide as it continues to increase power generation by renewable fuels.

ERC secretary-general Khomgrich Tantravanich said his office is speeding up work on the details of business conditions, including an appropriate feed-in tariff for new investors.

The feed-in tariff, in use since 2013, is the state guarantee to buy electricity from renewable power plants at fixed prices for 25 years.

Energy Minister Supattanapong Punmeechaow said the appropriate feed-in tariff should be 5.6 baht per kilowatt-hour (unit) for operators under the very small power producer scheme, with capacity less than 10 megawatts.

The rate should fall to 3.6 baht per unit for those under the small power producer scheme, with capacity of 10-90MW.

The minister expects the ERC will grant licences to investors who win the 2021 auction for the scheme in the third quarter next year.

The Interior Ministry, which oversees local administrative bodies across the country, has finished screening power plants and types of waste, proposed by investors to obtain licences.

Newly selected power plants will have combined capacity of 168MW.

Under the revised 2018 national power development plan, officials set a target to produce an additional 400MW under WTE for sale to the state grid.

Power plants, which were already granted licences in previous auctions, operate in 36 areas, with combined capacity of 328MW.



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SUPATTANAPONG PUNMEECHAOW
Energy minister

Others, with capacity of 121.6MW, are under construction.

TPI Polene Power (TPIPP), Thailand's largest waste-to-energy operator in terms of capacity, expects to win licences in next year's auction.

Vice-president Worawit Lerdbussarakam said the company plans to adopt the latest technology to better operate new WTE plants.

In previous auctions, TPIPP submitted two bids to the Interior Ministry for power plants in Nakhon Ratchasima, with capacity of 9.9MW, and Songkhla at 8MW.

The results have yet to be announced.

The company expects to allocate 2 billion in capital expenditure for each plant if it wins the auction.

TPIPP has a high likelihood of obtaining the WTE licences because it runs a large-scale refuse-derived fuel processing facility for five power plants, making its power generation more cost-competitive than rivals, he said.