

Aiding sustainable growth

Sustainable Energy Association of Singapore (SEAS) helps member companies grow locally and overseas

by hazel tan

SINCE its launch in 2006, the Sustainable Energy Association of Singapore (SEAS) has grown from a membership of 35 to almost 200.

Representing the interests of organisations and individuals from all segments of the alternative energy sector, SEAS is fast becoming the voice of the sustainable energy industry, as it continues to help companies in this sector grow in Singapore and the region. SEAS provides a common platform for companies in clean energy, energy efficiency, carbon trading, and financial institutions to meet, discuss, collaborate and undertake viable projects together.

The alternative energy industry is a growth sector globally. Volatile and rising oil prices, increasing concerns on environmental issues, rising energy demand, greenhouse gas emissions and technological advances are providing new opportunities in various industry sectors for many countries. The United Nations estimated that 40 per cent of the world's power generating capacity has to be replaced in the next five to 10 years.

Assisting in market access

SEAS supports its members and the industry through industry studies, training in specialised areas and assisting in market access.

"We take our members on business missions, trade missions and trade shows," says Ms Kavita Gandhi, SEAS' executive director. "This allows them to meet with potential partners, customers, and scope out other business opportunities.

Such opportunities have been well received by SEAS' members, she adds.

In January, six companies met with the Asian Development Bank in Manila, the Philippines, to discuss future collaborations and projects.

In March, six other member companies went on a business mission to Thailand to meet with government officials including representatives from the Department of Alternative Energy Development and Efficiency, the Board of Investment, the Department of Alternative Energy Development, and the Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand, as well private companies interested in energy efficiency and solar rooftops, developers of bio energy projects, and local Thai energy service companies.

Leading the energy efficiency charge

Last year, SEAS was appointed by Spring Singapore to lead the SME Energy Efficiency Initiative, aimed at helping small

and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) lower operational cost and improve productivity by optimising energy consumption through energy efficiency.

G-Energy is one of the companies that SEAS is helping to reach out to more SMEs to offer energy auditing services.

"This could lead to further projects in managing energy usage, and implementing actual solutions to using energy more efficiently," says Ms Gandhi.

SEAS also supported a member company CPVT in a breakthrough new technology in the area of organic solar cells, which is being considered by JTC to be test bedded in one of its buildings, she adds.

The goal is to help 300 SMEs achieve at least 10 per cent savings in energy costs over the next three years.

In addition, the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) SEAS signed with JTC in June will help JTC buildings become more sustainable.

"Through this MOU, SEAS is giving our members more business opportunities if JTC implements the solutions in their buildings," says Ms Gandhi. "It also gives our members a chance to showcase their technologies and services, further promoting them and encouraging other building owners to take it up once JTC decides to implement them."

Enhancing SEAS' competitiveness

To support its efforts to lead industry development, SEAS is investing in itself as an organisation, with the help of Local Enterprise and Association Development (LEAD) programme jointly managed by Spring Singapore and International Enterprise (IE) Singapore.

Ms Gandhi says the LEAD grant by Spring and IE helped to bring the right talent on board while the strategic grant was instrumental in increasing the productivity and capabilities of the secretariat.

Among the new initiatives rolled out are a new customer relationship management system that will enhance member engagement, a talent management programme with tracking of key performance indicators and compensation as well as a rebranding exercise.

"It is our goal to strengthen our position as the centre for sustainable energy related information, projects, and programmes," she says. "There is a huge growth potential in this industry and increased government support of clean technology. As more companies enter this space, we hope more will make use of our services to achieve accelerated growth."

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— Ms Kavita Gandhi (right), executive director, Sustainable Energy Association of Singapore

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