Andhra Pradesh Approves DISCOM-Driven Rooftop Solar Program

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The program is now all set to run on a pilot basis

The Andhra Pradesh Electricity Regulatory Commission (APERC) has approved a DISCOM-driven solar rooftop program proposed by the Eastern Power Distribution Company of Andhra Pradesh Limited (APEPDCL).

The APEPDCL had petitioned the APERC to approve the DISCOM-driven solar rooftop PV program devised under the technical assistance program. APEPDCL had proposed two models for the implementation of this program.

Model 1: Customer-owned solar rooftop program with net-metering. The equated monthly installment (EMI) will be partly shared by the DISCOM on a net present value (NPV) neutral basis. This model is for Domestic Category B consumers with monthly consumption between 140 to 200 units. Rooftop solar PV systems will be of capacity 1 kW to 1.5 kW.

Model 2: Grid-connected rooftop solar PV program on developer mode under gross metering. Under this model, a developer will be selected through competitive bidding for the supply of power to APEPDCL for 25 years. The developer will utilize the rooftop spaces of willing consumers.

After examining the suggestions made by the stakeholders and the replies by DISCOM, the APERC noted that the program is only a pilot project and the first of its kind in the country to encourage solar rooftop installations by domestic consumers.

The commission also observed that the targeted consumers are low income, subsidized consumers whose consumption is in between 100 to 200 units of electricity per month. Such consumers cannot afford the required investment for rooftop solar PV installations, though they have sufficient rooftop space. Financial institutions also may not come forward to provide loans to such section of consumers. Hence, the initiative taken by the DISCOM to provide a helping hand to such consumers by playing the role of a facilitator needs to be encouraged as the program will benefit both consumers and the DISCOM.

The APERC added that as there is no net financial burden on the DISCOM, it will accord the approval for the pilot project. The state commission has directed APEPDCL to submit the copy of the tripartite agreement and consumer consent form for approval.

APEPDCL has also been ordered to submit the full status report with results after the completion of the pilot project. APERC, in its order, has also stated that when the DISCOM undertakes the full-scale implementation of the project, depending on the success or failure of the pilot project, the feasibility of adopting any of the suggestions with or without modifications will be appropriately considered to be incorporated.

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