
China to step up solar energy research, development

BEIJING, Jan. 26 (Xinhua) — The Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) has launched an initiative to boost the development of solar energy technology, in a bid to turn it into a major energy source in China by 2050.

A CAS official said that the academy had organized academicians and experts to make an action plan and will set up a platform to support scientific innovations involving solar energy.

The plan will be carried out in three phases, including "distributed utilization" by 2015, "alternative utilization" by 2025 and "large-scale utilization" by 2035, respectively.

This action plan aims to form value chain on technological innovation including basic studies, application studies and market research.

CAS experts said that China has a big potential for solar energy development. The duration of sunshine for two-thirds of its territory is more than 2,200 hours a year. It also has vast desert areas, where solar energy could be "harvested".

They said that the use of solar energy could effectively reduce the discharge of green-house gases.

The United States, Japan and European countries began to develop solar energy in the 1970s. Government investment has greatly promoted solar energy research and development, especially in Japan, Germany and Australia.

Germany had promoted the solar energy "family program", and fixed solar energy facilities on the roofs of a large number of homes. Japan launched a program to popularize the use of solar energy, and to cut the price of solar energy by half within three to five years.

CAS's advanced energy scientific and technological innovation center invited experts and scholars to carry out investigation and research on China's energy industry.

Experts said that lowering the costs for using solar energy would be the key for stepping up the use of this renewable energy in China.