

Renewable energy incentives a must

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Dubai is trailing the developed world on the take-up of renewable energy technologies because there are no financial incentives, according to green energy suppliers.

"Most companies say they want to be Leed certified and have a green image but when they find out the cost they quickly back away," said Nada El Zein, the technology director of Green Light Energy.

El Zien said for this to change the utilities company must allow buildings with renewable energies to tie into the grid and the government must provide financial incentives for every kilowatt hour put back into the grid.

She said the Dubai Municipality (DM) is currently lagging behind other governments who are actively encouraging the use of green energy through incentives.

"It's not rocket science - look at the models of more than 10 other governments," she said.

"Italy, France, Japan, the US, Australia, Korea, even India, have all got green incentive schemes which have created jobs, an industry and utilities.

"France pays something like US \$0.64 (AED2.50) for every kilowatt fed back into the grid - this is what must happen here."

El Zien's comments were echoed by Michael Walker, the general manager of Schuco's architectural division. Walker said their photovoltaic solar energy windows would never achieve mainstream usage without government incentives.

"With energy being so cheap, nobody wants to spend the money, and until we get feedback into the grid nothing is going to change," he said.

"It's very frustrating because it's not the school of thought you encounter in the rest of the world.

"What gets me is the fact that in the UK you get 700 hours maximum of sunlight a year, here they've got something like 2500 - they make it work in Scotland, they make it work in Europe and it doesn't work here."

Walker said he believes the DM might not be committing to an incentive scheme due to fears that the Dubai Electricity and Water Authority would lose money.

But El Zein said she is hopeful that the DM will introduce an incentive scheme by the end of next year.

"The government cannot be so disconnected from reality to say you must use

renewables and you must be green, but make it so difficult for people to do it," she said.

"We've seen in other countries that these things take time. The Green Vision was the first step, second is to establish some regulatory body, and third is to introduce incentives.

"If they want to get the rules and regulations right it normally takes a couple of years."

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