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# Solar power 'best for Cebu'

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By [Mia A. Aznar](#)

Thursday, November 24, 2011

WITH the right kind of technology, experts in the field of solar power believe this is the best way to meet the power demands of a growing city like Cebu.

Organizers of the Philippine-German Solar Energy Forum said yesterday that solar power is a more feasible alternative to traditional energy sources.

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Seven German companies in different sectors of solar power were in Cebu to meet with local energy stakeholders, hoping to introduce new ways to make solar power available at a lower cost.

Cebu Chamber of Commerce and Industry vice president for finance Prudencio Gesta, who opened the forum, said solar power is considered a viable source of energy for a sunny country like the Philippines.

### **Dependent**

Despite Cebu being an “economic powerhouse” in Central Visayas, Gesta lamented that it is too dependent on its neighbors when it comes to energy sources and that the energy mix is not diverse enough.

He admitted though that administrative and legal issues have to be threshed out before solar power can be provided.

Volker Steigerwald, German Development Cooperation (Giz) manager for private sector promotion, said climate change is not the only reason he is convinced it is “time to go green.”

“It also makes business sense and many in the Philippines are starting to realize this,” he said.

Steigerwald told those present that as a renewable energy source, solar power promotes sustainable development. While some feel developing solar energy is expensive, Steigerwald pointed out that majority of those in Germany’s solar industry are small and medium enterprises.

The forum hoped to introduce local energy stakeholders with German companies that completed the value chain in solar power.

### **Challenges**

Jan Knaack of the German Solar Industry Association (BSW-Solar), admitted that when Germany first started to develop solar power as a viable source of energy, they faced challenges such as getting the understanding and support of society, political leaders and economic decision makers.

He also assured that with the right technology and expertise, developing solar energy can be inexpensive, showing that most photovoltaic (PV) systems have been installed in rooftops.

The BSW-Solar found that 120,000 jobs were created in Germany at the end of 2010 and that most of these were not directly in the power sector but related to installation.

Suppliers of different technology needed in producing solar energy made different presentations about their products, which included PV technology to catch solar power, PV inverters to transform solar power for on-grid, off-grid and back-up applications, and batteries for storing solar power.

German companies that visited Cebu were Hoppecke, IBC Solar, Inutec Solarzenirom, Schott Solar, SMA and SonnenWerft.

They showed how residential areas, far flung orphan schools and villages and small communities can benefit from solar power.

Knaack added that German technology boasts of top quality materials and that their technology and expertise in the field will be a big help to those who may want to start distributing solar power locally. (With Ruthyl Marie Gadugdug, Naval State University intern)

*Published in the Sun.Star Cebu newspaper on November 25, 2011.*

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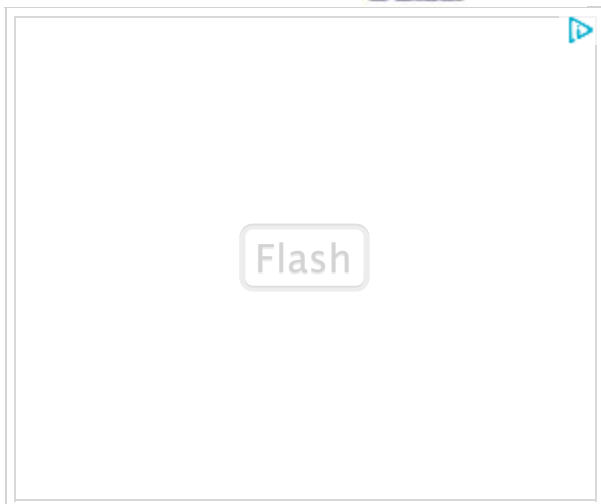
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