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B Grimm plans solar expansion

B Grimm Power yesterday announced an investment of Bt1.2 billion in its solar-farm business this year, including a 50/50 joint venture with listed property company Sena Development.

The move is part of the company's strategic expansion from conventional energies, such as gas, hydro-power and coal, into renewable energies, including solar and wind power.

Under the joint venture, both partners will invest in setting up the solar-farm business.

B Grimm Power has the expertise in power business and will be responsible for the construction of solar-farm facilities, as well as day-to-day operations.

Preeyanart Soontornwata, CEO of B Grimm Power, said that expanding its power business into renewable energies was a strategic move aimed at producing about 114 megawatts of power from solar energy this year, half of which would belong to the joint venture.

"We plan to increase solar farms' capacity to 300MW within the next two to three years," she said.

B Grimm Power will set up solar-farm facilities in a number of provinces this year - Nakhon Pathom, Saraburi and Sa Kaeo - including those to be run by the joint venture.

"We plan to raise our combined capacity of 2,600MW produced by existing conventional power plants, mainly gas and hydro-power, to about 5,000MW within the next five years, and between 10 per cent and 15 per cent will be from renewable energies," said the chief executive.

Associate Professor Kesara Thanyalakpak, executive director of Sena Development, said her company had been in the property sector for more than 30 years and its core business value was to focus on being customer-centric, with the idea of providing 360-degree after-sales service, especially in adding value to customers' houses.

"That is why we have seen the importance of entering into renewable-energy business in the form of solar energy. The move will allow us to add value on top of our core property business by applying solar energy to our projects. House owners will be able to apply the solar power to their houses, or sell it to the government sector to generate sustainable income," she said.

The joint venture with B Grimm Power will be a new investment dimension for the residential developer, she said.

Sena Development's new partner is a global expert in both conventional and renewable energies such as solar, and the joint venture will create win-win benefits for both sides, she added.

As a leading Thai property company, Sena Development is ready in terms of land plots to serve the construction and expansion of solar-farm facilities, said the executive.

"Such a partnership will help strengthen our capability to grow sustainably in the future," said Kesara.

The move will also lead to value-added business, including the installation of solar roof-tops at the developer's housing projects, while the running of solar-farm facilities will help the company to purchase solar panels at cheaper prices, she explained.

It will also generate recurring income to the company and allow it to enjoy stable returns in the future.

