

**ENERGY**

# Egat eyes power deal with Singapore to offset glut

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Thailand's energy authority plans to add Singapore to its regional energy grid by 2030, along with Cambodia and Myanmar, said Kulit Sombatsiri, permanent secretary for energy.

The move follows the success of a Laos-Thailand-Malaysia deal, in which Thailand buys electricity from hydroelectric power plants in Laos and sells it to Malaysia through transmission lines operated by the state-run Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand (Egat).

The plans will be discussed for approval by regional policymakers in Bangkok next week as part of this year's Asean Sustainable Energy Week.

At the meeting in Bangkok last year Asean energy ministers agreed that Egat could sell 300 megawatts to Malaysia. The deal with Singapore would see Thailand sell 100MW to the city-state.

However, even if the agreement is approved, Egat will still need to compete with local power-generating firms under Singapore's free trade model, said Veerapat Kiatfuengfoo, chief of

the Energy Policy and Planning Office's Power Policy Division. He said Egat can be competitive on price because Thailand's power rates are generally lower than those in Singapore.

Meanwhile, as part of Thailand's regional expansion plans, Egat will look to improve the energy grids in Myanmar and Cambodia in areas that have suffered from years of under-investment or neglect.

One area where Egat believes it can rehabilitate is in southern Myanmar, where the transmission network remains poor because of its distance from the cluster of power plants in the north. Land conflicts between ethnic minority groups there have obstructed progress.

Mr Kulit said by tapping new markets for its power Thailand can reduce the glut in its electricity reserves, selling both energy produced locally and that produced for Egat in Laos.

Demand for energy in Asean is expected to increase by more than 70% between 2020 and 2040, Tan See Leng, Singapore's second minister for trade and industry, said at a summit recently.