



Press Release

ABB brings solar energy to rural Myanmar communities for the first time

Access to Electricity project employs private-nonprofit collaboration to help boost education, increase economic opportunities and improve quality of life in remote areas of Myanmar using clean technologies.

Mandalay, March 20, 2015 – ABB, the leading power and automation technology group, will partner with Pact Myanmar to bring electricity in the form of solar power to approximately 3,500 individuals from villages in rural areas of Mandalay, Central Myanmar.

With an estimated population of 51 million, Myanmar is a newly emerging country that has a per capita GDP of only around US\$1,105, one of the lowest in East Asia and the Pacific¹. At present, over 75% of inhabitants have no access to electricity of any form and rural communities account for two thirds of the total population.

The project is announced as the first round-the-world solar flight, Solar Impulse 2 (Si2), makes its landing in Mandalay, Myanmar. ABB is the technology partner of this pioneering airplane, which flies day and night on solar power without a drop of fuel.

The project involves establishing solar battery charging stations to be run by women's groups in remote villages in the Tada Oo township. Power from the stations will be sold back to communities, thus bringing economic self-sufficiency, greater entrepreneurship and equality to the townships. Financial support will also be provided for villages to purchase photovoltaic equipment at the community level.

For most villagers in these communities this will be the first time they will have reliable access to electricity. Through renewable energy, they will now be able to power lighting and small electrical applicances, which will have a positive impact on quality of life, health and education.

"Building up the energy infrastructure is essential to Myanmar's future economic and social progress, and off-grid electrification is one way to accelerate access to electricity. By supporting this grass-roots project, ABB will ensure that the communities around Mandalay will continue to benefit long after the Solar Impulse airplane has departed," said Johan de Villiers, Managing Director of Singapore and South-East Asia, ABB. / Chaiyot Piyawannarat, ABB's country Managing Director of Thailand and Myanmar.

"Whether it is on a small rural community level, nationally, or internationally, we have shown that the possibilities for decoupling economic growth from energy consumption and environmental pollution are very real."

Richard Harrison, Country Director of Pact Myanmar explained, "Pact is committed to partnering with communities and institutions to address the critical need for electricity in rural areas in Myanmar. Through ABB's support, this project builds on our existing livelihoods and development work in 35 townships and over a million households in Myanmar, extending access to solar energy sources by supporting community financing for sustainable village electrification. Our project will help reduce routine community expenditures on more expensive traditional energy sources by up to 20%."

"Once communities have access to reliable light and energy sources throughout the day and evening hours, they are more able to increase their standard of living, and will be able to allocate more time and resources to education, income generation, health and community development activities."

A number of villagers have already shared what this will mean for their daily lives.





For U Thein Hla from Wun Pa Tae Village this presents a monumental change. "I have never experienced having electricity from solar power during my 70 years of life. I am excited. Now we don't need to worry about fire hazard associated with the use of candle light."

Ma Lwin Mar Myint of Wun Pa Te Village thinks about her increased income opportunities. "In my dreams, I am thinking of working under the light very soon because of this solar project".

Daw Kyi of Kyaung Kone Village is excited about what this change means for their children. "Students will be able to study at night. This project promises a brighter future for our children".

This is the latest project in ABB's Access to Electricity rural electrification program, with similar rural electrification projects in India and Tanzania. The program was developed as a response to the United Nations Global Compact which urged companies and organizations to provide greater assistance to least developed countries. ABB was one of the first international companies to sign on to the Global Compact after it was launched by previous UN secretary general Kofi Annan in 2000.

About ABB

ABB (www.abb.com) is a leader in power and automation technologies that enable utility, industry, and transport and infrastructure customers to improve their performance while lowering environmental impact. The ABB Group of companies operates in roughly 100 countries and employs about 140,000 people.

ABB inaugurated its first new office in Yangon, Myanmar in September 2014 after an absence of 20 years. ABB now offers its full portfolio of power and automation solutions to customers in Myanmar.

About Pact

Pact (www.pactworld.org) works in over 25 countries globally across Asia, Africa and Eastern Europe. Working in partnership to develop local solutions that enable people to own their own future, Pact helps people and communities build their own capacity to generate income, improve access to quality health services, and gain lasting benefit from the sustainable use of the natural resources around them.

In Myanmar, Pact is currently active in 2,636 villages across 30 townships, including Kayah State and Magway, Mandalay, Sagaing, and Yangon Regions. With financial support from USAID, Chevron, Coca-Cola, Ooredoo and ABB, Pact is actively improving the health and livelihoods of 1.5 million individuals nationwide through integrated programming that strengthens community governance, increases access to health services, supports economic empowerment, promotes improved water, sanitation, and hygiene conditions, and facilitates community-led natural resource management.

For more information please contact:

ABB Singapore Media Relations: Timothy Fernandez; Lucian Lee Tel. +65 6776 5711 timothy.fernandez@sg.abb.com

Pact Myanmar:

Kathryn Weber, Communications Specialist Tel: +95 (0) 9-4200 74221,4200 74223 (ext: 43) kweber@pactworld.org

¹The World Bank (2014), Myanmar: http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/myanmar/overview#1

For help with any technical terms in this release, please go to: www.abb.com/glossary