COMBATTING CLIMATE CHANGE

Vietnam Goes Green

BEFORE THE BAC LIEU WIND FARM was built a few years ago, people living in Vietnam's rural Mekong Delta would go without electricity for two or more days a week. To cope with this challenge, local farmers and fishermen ran expensive, polluting generators to keep their businesses afloat. But even with backup power, the demand for electricity far outweighed the supply.

Today, Bac Lieu residents have access to reliable electricity most days a week. As a result of investments by the Cong Ly Construction-Trade-Tourism Company, the region is now powered by Vietnam's first near-offshore wind farm. Cong Ly Company is not stopping at just 16 MW of new clean energy — they plan to expand the wind farm to nearly 400 MW.

Increasing the wind farm's capacity to that extent requires Cong Ly to team up with leading energy industry experts. That is exactly what happened after a USTDA-sponsored reverse trade mission to the United States. Cong Ly reported that participating in the program, which included meetings with wind turbine suppliers and engineering design firms, provided them the "chance to observe the great technology applied in the U.S." They also noted the flexibility of U.S. industry and its willingness to work with them to address their needs and to meet their timelines.

As a direct result of this visit, Cong Ly updated their plans for the subsequent phases of the project and purchased 52 wind turbines manufactured in Florida and financed by the Export-Import Bank of the United States and Vietnam Development Bank. According to Cong Ly, they chose to do so because U.S. firms build products to the highest international standards and have a history of manufacturing quality, durable equipment.

Today, USTDA and Cong Ly are working together to develop a third phase of the Bac Lieu wind farm. When complete, this innovative collaboration will bring up to 400 MW of wind energy to the national grid, helping Vietnam reach one-fifth of its goal of producing 2,000 MW of new renewable energy by 2020. Not only is the company proud of this work, so are the local government and residents. According to Cong Ly, "The future of the next generation is based on the results of our work today. Clean energy is the future — it is the trend in developing countries and it is the key to Vietnam's ability to stay in the game."

Cong Ly Company's growth and the Bac Lieu wind farm demonstrate how private sector-led innovation — and partnership with U.S. experts — can deploy renewable solutions and reduce emissions in fast-growing economies.

REDUCING HARMFUL CARBON EMISSIONS

President Obama's Climate Action Plan, released in 2013, details the U.S. government's intent to lead international efforts in mitigating the effects of global climate change. The Plan highlights the need for energy that supports economic growth and fuels global markets, but also acknowledges that the international community will have to meet these demands in a climate-constrained world. In line with these goals, USTDA helps its partner countries bring renewable energy online and supports their efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Global objectives for mitigating climate change cannot be accomplished without serious commitment from China. Since 2001, USTDA has partnered with China on over 75 environmental and clean energy projects. Several of these were highlighted during the 2015 meeting of the U.S.-China Climate Change Working Group. The Agency's U.S. industry partners discussed collective efforts to reduce hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) and to deploy carbon capture, utilization & storage (CCUS) technologies in China.

India also recognizes the need to balance its incredible growth and increasing power demands with an energy strategy that seeks to reduce the nation's dependence on fossil fuels. Supporting India's efforts to curb greenhouse gas emissions, the Agency is sponsoring smart grid and energy efficiency activities that feature cutting-edge U.S. technologies in four of India's seven largest cities. USTDA is also providing technical assistance for an integrated renewable energy storage project announced during President Obama's visit to India in January 2015.