

# Welcome and Introduction to the New Energy Foundation



Since Japan depends on foreign supplies for most of its sources of energy, its energy base is considered to be very vulnerable. The past two oil crises caused great confusion for the Japanese economy through the rapidly escalating price of oil. Although more than thirty years have passed since the first oil crisis and the serious consideration given to the issue at the time is fading, the diversification of energy sources and the stabilization of supply continue to be among the most important issues of the current times.

At the same time, the significant impact of fossil fuels, such as the effect of oil consumption on the global environment, has been attracting attention in recent years. In addition to the conventional forms of air pollution due to sulfur oxides and nitrogen oxides, the large amount of carbon dioxide retained in the atmosphere is considered to cause global warming and to threaten the survival of human beings.

While the Kyoto Protocol, which had been agreed on in principle in 1997, only came into effect in February 2005, expectations are now even higher for the introduction and promotion of new sources of energy that are effective in reducing carbon dioxide emissions.

It has become clear that energy is not only the most important driving force for the development of human beings, but is also something that may threaten the future of humankind, depending on how it is used. An energy policy which ensures that energy consumption is compatible with the capacity of the global environment is required in order to achieve economic development.

In this context, what is the scope of the "new energy" sector? The term "new energy" was first used in Japan and in its broadest sense the term refers to all energy sources except fossil fuels. This includes use of natural energy, such as the light and heat generated by the sun and wind power. Conventional energy sources such as water power and geothermal energy are also included under this category. The utilization of waste and biomass is covered too. In addition, various forms of new energy usage, such as cogeneration and fuel cells, are also within the scope of this term.

Most of these forms of new energy are from domestic sources, and therefore do not depend on foreign supplies. The fact that their impact on the environment is low is also an advantage.

The principal purposes of the New Energy Foundation (NEF) include basic research and the provision of information for the development and introduction of diverse forms of new energy, various business support and public relations activities for the promotion of new energy, and the formulation of proposals to the national government with regard to policies related to new energy.

The proportion of new energy in Japan's primary energy consumption is just under 2% legally. Presently, Japan aims to raise this proportion up to around 3% by the year 2010. The NEF is developing a wide range of activities as a contribution to various policies that are designed to achieve this target. Support is also provided for the introduction of new energy in developing countries, especially Asian nations.

We appreciate your understanding and support of our work.

New Energy Foundation  
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