Can the regional trade of electricity advance ASEAN's net zero transition?

INTERNATIONAL RENEWABLE ENERGY SYSTEMS

Dr. Bin Lu | Dr. Thang Do | Prof Ken Baldwin | Dr Thomas Longden

Australian National University

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Super-grids are high-capacity power transmission lines using either high-voltage direct current or ultra-high-voltage direct current power lines.

Expanding regional power interconnection with super-grids will allow higher RE penetration and a more reliable power system.
An Asia Pacific super grid connecting Southeast Asian countries and further extended to Australia, China and India would significantly smooth out the power demand and variability of renewable energy.

The super grid will integrate the high wind energy potential areas (offshore Vietnam and Philippines) with the rest of ASEAN and further reach the enormous solar resource in North Australia.

Mean wind speed. Source: https://globalwindatlas.info/
It would **save 50-89%** of the storage required to support a complete renewable electricity in Southeast Asia.

The storage requirements (a) and the duration of energy storage (b) in the high electricity scenario. Note: Super grid 1: ASEAN super grid; Super grid 2: ASEAN super grid with connection to Australia, China and India. Source: Lu, B., Blakers, A., Stocks, M., Do, T.N., 2021. Low-cost, low-emission 100% renewable electricity in Southeast Asia supported by pumped hydro storage. Energy 236, 121387.
ASEAN countries have explored the potential for regional power trade since the late 1990s, but progress has been limited.

To date power trade has mainly consisted of project-level trade between generation in one country exported for consumption to a neighboring country.
The first multilateral power trading arrangement was the Lao PDR-Thailand-Malaysia-Singapore Power Integration Project (LTMS-PIP). Actual trading has started among Lao PDR, Thailand, and Malaysia since 2017 and will soon further include Singapore.

Under this project, a total of 30.2 GWh of electricity was traded as of August 2020.

WAYS FORWARDS FOR ELECTRICITY TRADING IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

Enhance political and social support.

Continue extending experience with bilateral and multilateral trade.

Increase sharing of information on hydropower dam operations.

Pair abundant solar and wind development with equally abundant off-river pumped hydro energy storage.

HVDC interconnection.

These initiatives would form the basis for a gradual transition to a regional power system.
At present hydrogen is niche fuel for industrial thermal energy demands. Almost all traded hydrogen is produced using fossil fuels. With solar and wind now the cheapest form of generation on the planet, there is a potential for hydrogen to be a zero carbon fuel for electricity generation.
Brunei for the first time exported hydrogen to Japan in December 2019. Singapore has MoUs with Chile, Australia and Japan to enhance the cooperation in hydrogen.

Low-carbon hydrogen could be produced in renewables rich countries like Australia and exported to energy intensive colder countries with limited domestic RE potential (like Japan, Korea).

Electrons or molecules – regional energy trade has the potential to connect ASEAN's diverse renewables potential and accelerate the region's net zero transition.
ETP Round Tables is a two-year capacity building and networking program of the ETP in Indonesia, the Philippines, and Vietnam. The program aims to build awareness and understanding of practical solutions and pathways that can support Indonesia, the Philippines, and Vietnam accelerate their transition to 100% zero-carbon energy.

Over a 24-week structured online training programme, the ETP Roundtables – Energy Transition Masterclass will provide a suite of tailored professional forums (training sessions) to enable the exchange of information, develop leadership among the region’s energy transition stakeholders, and endow participants with the latest understanding and tools to accelerate energy transition for both policy and market contexts.

See more: https://www.energytransitionpartnership.org/
Contact for ETP Roundtables: Tien Le (Ms). Email: tienlth@amperes.com.au