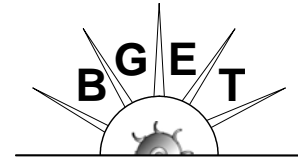


## **BGET 2 – Week Report**

31<sup>st</sup> October to 11<sup>th</sup> November, 2005

Salinee Tavaranan

BGET Project Coordinator



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### The Planned Schedule for the Weeks

- 31<sup>st</sup> Oct – 4<sup>th</sup> Nov Follow up with other 3 Or-bor-tor in Tha Song Yang to Set Up the Tech Training
- 4<sup>th</sup> Nov Solartron meeting in Bangkok
- 7<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> Nov Visit Mae Ra Mat Or-bor-tor to propose for Tech Training
- 8<sup>th</sup> Nov Visit MH site: Huay Kra Ting

### **Thai Village SHS Project**

#### ***Solartron Meeting in Bangkok on 4<sup>th</sup> Nov***

The summary from Salinee and Chris is below:

#### **Salinee:**

Chris and Salinee met with Khun Wandee the CEO of Solartron and other high level managers there because it was during their meeting that we went there.

But we were told that she was late for the meeting because she had a meeting with the Prime Minister at the Parliament and we wanted to wait for an hour for her then not so long, the guy came back and informed that she's back but they were having meeting.

The presentation went fine. They seemed to be surprised of what we asked for especially the fixing cost / system. We explained that the first time we were there we didn't take the overhead cost into account (we mentioned something like 100 baht / broken system) and we needed to keep the team running. It seemed that their concern is the 1 and a half year survey that they have to do in December. Our goal is only 9,000 systems in 2 districts in a year which we won't be able to cover the whole Tak province (15,000 systems) on time for their schedule

They didn't seem to be interested in the training because there was no question on the budget that we asked for.

Wandee said in the possible way that we could be a distributor for them through the local technicians selling Solartron's products, light bulbs, or anything after the warranty expires.

At the end, Wandee said she will be in Mae Hong Son in December and would like to go in the villages with us and check on the areas that we already had the training and the tech are doing the survey. From my

opinion, she would like to know if it's worth it to support our work or not compare to doing the survey themselves. They won't probably make the decision before that.

Chris mentioned that Wandee seemed to be annoy by us during the meeting. I agree with him. At the end, if they might help support us partially or not at all then we might be able to mention about the system or panel donation or even a discount for the refugee camp which Hans mentioned.

It's obvious that they concern is not the sustainability of the systems but their business only.

**Chris:**

We think the meeting with Solartron went well. It started out kinda funny. We were in the cab on the expressway headed to Solartron and got a call from the fellow (Palapol?) who was arranging the meeting for us with Solartron's CEO Wandee. Our meeting appointment time was 2pm, and at that moment it was already 1:45pm. He said, "Salinee, Wandee is meeting right now with the Prime Minister and she would like to postpone her meeting with you."

Salinee said, "well, we're already in a cab on the expressway. How about if we come anyway and we're happy to wait if necessary."

"...OK"

So we show up and Palapol ushers us into a small room downstairs and we bring out the 9 failed inverters, and discuss how one of the new ones had been blown up by a bad ballast (we brought the ballast too). He was surprised by that a bit. We also talk about the need to adapt the form to have the serial numbers of new (replacement) equipment be recorded as well. Fortunately, we can get this info from the inverter boxes this time around as we put the failed inverter in each house into the box that the new inverter came in. He also asks us if we have a proposal or anything. We do -- but we would like to meet with Wandee and give a little presentation, so if we have to wait that's OK. He goes away. And 20 minutes later, we're told to come upstairs. There we meet Wandee who is apparently back from her meeting with the PM.

We meet for a few minutes with her. She tells us her company has been in the business 20 years, and that the first system they ever built is still running, and that they're very proud of that. She tells us that their Solartron repair team is planning to sweep through and repair all broken systems in Tak this year (or that's what I thought she said... Salinee?). She says that it's important to have local people with

knowledge about how to maintain and operate and repair the systems, otherwise they fail -- and that what BGET is doing is important. We gave her copies of the training manuals, and of the recent home power magazine that includes a letter I wrote that has photos of their module's blown bypass diodes (Solartron's name wasn't mentioned in the letter).

At one point we say we have a powerpoint presentation -- and could we show it? About a minute later, they've brought in an LCD projector and the room is filled with another ten people or so including Dr. Dusit (Sirikul's contact), Ajarn Twatchai (long-time renewables professor at KMUTT), the head of the installation team for Tak province, and a number of others. They encouraged us to do the presentation quickly as they had other important business to attend to. The presentation (Salinee, email me a copy and I'll post it on our server) emphasized the trainings we've done and the types of problems we've encountered. Wandee spent most of the presentation signing forms in a pile of paperwork she had brought in. She left in the middle for a few minutes, and came back when we were talking about budgets. When we talked about budgets, we gave the overview that Walt had suggested in his email that had a figure for training, another for replacing systems, and a total. The total was around 10 million baht (\$250,000) for 3 years. We gave 4 copies of the "solartron proposal" with details.

The main questions we got after the presentation were, "why the cost increase? We thought you said 100 baht per broken system. Now 2000?" We said, "well, we didn't figure our costs then. These costs include overhead to keep the whole operation running."

Wandee mentioned that inverters have been failing quite a bit and "account for 60% of all system failures" (Salinee, tell me if I misunderstood this). They still blame many failures on "too many appliances". But they said that "sometimes too the inverters fail by themselves".

We ended by Wandee & team wanting to come and visit "where we work" when she was in the area with her team distributing soccer sports equipment to villagers as some kind of donation thing they do (I don't recall the dates, I think they're in Salinee's email).

The meeting seemed friendly enough. We don't have promises of new inverters, but we did state in our presentation and in the proposal our desire to have 675 (or whatever the number was). I think it will be reasonable to contact them in a week or so and at least ask what they think of the proposal.

### ***Set up another Tech Training on Dec 21 – 23***

This training will combine 2 or-bor-tors together in Mae Ra Mat District: Mae Ja Rao (only 50 SHS) and Phra Thart where we've met them with Nukul from PEA went there (200s SHS). The meeting will be on Dec. 21-23 for at most 20 people.

Or-bor-tor Mae Ja Rao have set up the SHS committee with the 5,000 baht/month contribution to this group. They have been collected 20 baht/month for SHS maintaining for a while now. They are ahead of the game and the first one that we found doing this. We will just complete the loop for them. It's too bad that they have only 50 systems in this Tambon.

### **Refugee Camp Training**

- BGET is going to survey SHS with 6 students from ESP, Mae La Refugee Camp (Nov. 14 to 18) with the support from ZOA.
- Andrew modified the tech manual for the camp student survey.
- BGET is scheduling with ZOA for the next camp training (Nu Po camp) and micro-hydro workshop for 6 students from Mae La camp in February.

### **Burmese Medics**

- We are waiting for information from Eh ka lu about how many systems he needs. He is not in Mae Sot at the moment.
- We schedule with Walt for the medics training on February 20 – 24 , 2005.

### **UNDP Micro-Hydro Project**

- Rob, Andrew, Watit, and Salinee surveyed the first MH site at Huay Kra Ting Water Fall on November 8.
- Chris scheduled for MH visit on November 28 to December 2.
- Spring Street and Evergreen High School Students will come and help with hands-on projects February 3 – 17, 2006.