

More support for energy-efficient tech; S\$220m for R&D in water, sustainability

By Megan Cheah

megancheah@sph.com.sg

Singapore

FROM Apr 1, firms can get support for up to 70 per cent of qualifying costs of energy-efficient technologies such as lighting, air-conditioning, boilers and air compressors, up from the current cap of 50 per cent, under the National Environment Agency's (NEA) Energy Efficiency Fund (E2F).

This will "help the manufacturing sector mitigate the impact of higher carbon tax", said Grace Fu, Minister for Sustainability and the Environment, in Parliament on Tuesday (Mar 8), in a joint segment on the Singapore Green Plan 2030.

The E2F helps small and medium-sized enterprises with industrial facilities defray the cost of improving energy efficiency. Projects which achieve greater carbon abatement will receive more support.

From Apr 1, the grant application and disbursement process will also be made easier to help applicants save both time and costs.

Companies are encouraged to tap low-cost energy assessments offered by the Energy Efficiency Technology Centre (EETC), a collaboration between the NEA and Singapore Institute of Technology (SIT).

Both organisations are now working on the next phase of the EETC: developing manpower capabilities in energy efficiency. This includes a new training-and-simulation centre where skills can be learnt and practised in a controlled and safe environment, while replicating real-world conditions.

Separately, S\$220 million has been allocated to drive new initiatives in water technologies and resource circularity – that is, reusing and recycling resources – under the urban solutions and sustainability

domain of the national Research, Innovation and Enterprise 2025 plan (RIE2025).

Of this, S\$80 million will go towards a new Closing the Resource Loop funding initiative. This will fund research and development (R&D) on sustainable resource recovery solutions for key waste streams including e-waste, plastics and food, as well as finding useful and safe applications for treated waste residues.

Another S\$87 million was allocated for 3 water technology areas: desalination and water reuse; used water treatment; and waste reduction and resource recovery. This is for R&D at the Nanyang Environment and Water Research Institute (NEWRI) and the Separation Technologies Applied Research and Translation (Start).

The remaining amount of the S\$220 million figure was allocated

to the Competitive Funding for Water Research programme last year.

Beyond meeting national needs, "research and innovation will also be an engine for green growth, spurring private sector R&D spending, job creation and technology spin-offs in the water industry and adjacent sectors", said Fu.

Under RIE2025, Start will also commission a new desalination integrated validation plant in 2023. This will "trial promising technologies to reduce the energy consumption of desalination to less than 2 kWh per cubic metre of water" and pave the way for these to be implemented in full-scale plants, she said.

Meanwhile, 26 more projects were awarded S\$2.6 million in the SG Eco Fund's second grant call, for a total of S\$2.9 million for 68 projects. The fund supports ground-up sustainability initiatives.

Source: The Business Times © SPH Media Limited. Reproduced with permission.