

# Solar industry braces for new solar module standards

According to Sanjeev Aggarwal, Managing Director & CEO at Amplus while it is a good step in ensuring good quality, the notification should not become a trade barrier for modules which were already meeting the international standards.

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New Delhi: The domestic solar industry has broadly welcomed the new standards for solar Photo-Voltaic (PV) modules announced by the government calling it as a positive step to ensure upgradation of quality.

The new standards would help significantly in improving the quality of modules manufactured in the

country, according to Gagan Vermani, Founder and Managing Director & Chief Executive Officer at solar rooftop solutions provider MYSUN. "It is a positive step for ensuring any module sold in India manufactured in India or outside is of better quality as a lot of substandard modules get sold in the India especially in tier-2 cities and rural areas," he said.

Another industry leader, Sanjeev Aggarwal, Managing Director & CEO at solar rooftop company Amplus said while it is a good step for retail and rural customers who are usually unaware of the quality of the modules they are purchasing, the notification should not become a trade barrier for modules which were already meeting the international standards.

"The standardisation of quality will definitely be a good step for retail customers, people who are applying for household or rural areas. These people are unaware of the quality of the modules. But at the same time, with these specifications coming, it should not stop import of the bona fide modules such as the Chinese ones which are meeting international standards," he said.

Vermani, however, said the new standards issued by the government are at par with the global standards. "The quality standards they are asking for are equivalent of the International IEC standards and all the tier-1 companies are already following those quality standards. But the manufacturers would need to get a BIS registration as well, which might be just procedural work," Vermani said.

The order states that sub-standard or defective goods which do not conform to the specified standards will be deformed beyond use and disposed of as a scrap by the manufacturer.

According to Vinay Rustagi, Managing Director of Bridge to India, a renewable energy consultancy firm, it is imperative for the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) to have the necessary infrastructure for testing the modules.

"Poor quality equipment has long been a concern for the sector with buyers being extremely price conscious and not educated in many instances. The quality standards are therefore a positive step but MNRE should have access to necessary infrastructure and resources for testing and enforcement. Without that, the standards risk becoming a costly bureaucratic hurdle," he said.

According to Sundeep Gupta, Vice Chairman & Managing Director at Jakson Group, an energy and engineering solutions company, there could be some cost escalation initially for new solar installations but it will eventually be beneficial as Operational & Maintenance (O&M) costs of solar installations will reduce significantly due to better quality of modules.

"The move will ensure that sub-standard solar modules and components are not used in the construction of new solar installations in India. There could be some cost escalation initially for new solar installations due to this directive but it will be beneficial in the long run because Operational & Maintenance (O&M) costs of solar installations will reduce significantly due to usage of quality products," he said.

He also added that the step would be a big boost for domestic manufacturers as it will create a level playing field for them to compete with solar imports from other countries.