

# SUCCESS STORY

## Unleashing the Power of Women in Energy: A B.Grimm Power Success



Photo Credit: USAID Regional Development Mission for Asia

*B.Grimm Power is a key partner helping to achieve USAID's mission in Asia. At USAID, we recognize that development outcomes are strengthened when women bring their unique knowledge and capacity to the table. Inclusion across the entire power sector—from producing and distributing household energy to leading the clean energy transformation—is key to a sustainable and innovative industry.*

Mrs. Preeyanart Soontornwata is the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of B.Grimm Power, one of the leading independent power producers in Thailand. She took the job just before the Asian financial crisis of 1997 when the company focused mainly on manufacturing and construction, and was not yet a big player in power generation. In the midst of crisis, she helped navigate the firm toward new opportunities with the construction of their first power plant in 1998. Since then, and under her leadership, B.Grimm Power has grown significantly.

Mrs. Preeyanart is an example of how savvy CEOs guide companies to succeed and grow in Asia's competitive energy sector. Currently, her company manages 45 power plants generating nearly 3,000 megawatts (MW) of power, and expects these numbers to grow to at least 56 plants generating 3,245 MW by 2025. "We welcome everyone," she explained. "Women are now more interested in doing the kind of business that requires fieldwork and going onsite. We have several female engineers and they can do anything."

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That is why USAID works to empower women like Mrs. Preeyanart and the companies they lead. Earlier this year, with support from the USAID Clean Power Asia program, B.Grimm Power launched a 257 MW solar project in Vietnam. Because the renewable energy market in Vietnam is relatively new, local developers often lack the financial experience and knowledge to implement large-scale projects. To address that hurdle, USAID explored a number of financing options and identified a financing structure to support project development between B.Grimm Power and their local partner TTVN Group in Phu Yen Province. The project closed in June 2019, earning B.Grimm Power the year's *Best Solar Power Plant Project Developer* award.

B.Grimm Power's renewable energy work isn't limited to solar power or utility-scale projects. In Lao PDR, they are working on



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two small environmentally-friendly hydro-electric plants, both less than 25 MW, and in Thailand, they are deploying smaller rooftop solar systems, including at the new ICONSIAM shopping center along Bangkok's Chao Praya River.

When Mrs. Preeyanart talks about her accomplishments and what gives her satisfaction, she says her success as a woman in the upper echelons of power in the energy industry is her life's greatest achievement. One of the best parts of her job, she says, is being a role model for the women with whom she works.

And while she doesn't have a background in science or engineering, her degrees in business and finance have propelled her to a position of power in a traditionally male-dominated field. She says this diversity of background has helped her advocate for other women in the energy sector. "I can be a role model, because I'm not an engineer," she said. "I have a finance background, but it's not only [my] educational background that matters." To grow in your career, she explained, "You must continuously seek new knowledge, listen, learn, build coalitions and trust, and always maintain a positive attitude. I never seek credit for myself and always recognize all credit belongs to our talented team."

Thanks to Mrs. Preeyanart and other women leaders in the energy sector, B.Grimm Power continues to set the standard for independent power production in Southeast Asia, and will remain a corporate leader for women's empowerment across the region and sector. "Asia is a region that continues to grow," she said. "I know that there are many more opportunities to invest in clean energy generation using natural gas and advanced renewable energy technologies"

USAID's energy sector work in Southeast Asia is part of the U.S. Government's Asia Enhancing Development and Growth through Energy (Asia EDGE) initiative, a whole-of-government effort to support sustainable and secure energy markets across the region and level the playing field for private sector firms. Asia EDGE furthers the U.S. vision for a free and open Indo-Pacific to ensure peace, stability, and growing prosperity. Under Asia EDGE, USAID plays a leading role helping its Indo-Pacific partners expand energy access, promote energy diversification and trade, and strengthen energy security. Learn more at [www.usaid.gov/energy/asia-edge](http://www.usaid.gov/energy/asia-edge).