



Quarterly Newsletter

Electricity Distribution Industry (EDICON) 2026

1st Annual Conference of



Theme : Viable Future Ready Discoms

All India Discoms Association (AIDA) was set up in December 2024 as a non-profit charitable society. It has now 51 utilities as its members. AIDA is now recognised as a unique platform representing the reasoned and collective viewpoint of distribution utilities in India. Its membership and the Executive Council consist of distribution utilities alone. It is working tirelessly for effective policy and regulatory advocacy, capacity building in discoms, and collaboration for sharing best practices and standardisation of equipment specification for better quality and competitive prices. AIDA aims at world class distribution performance for larger welfare of common electricity consumers.



21st and 22nd Jan, 2026

SCOPE auditorium, New Delhi



www.aida-india.org

All India Discoms Association (AIDA)

- AIDA is India's first unified platform for DISCOMs, fostering collaboration, innovation, and best practices to advance energy distribution and service delivery.

General Body (GB)

- It is the apex body of the Society which meets at least once every year and approves work plans, budgets and other matters related to the Society's functioning. As of today, 51 discom bodies are part of GB.

Executive Committee (EC)

- The members of EC are appointed by the GB either through election or nomination. The EC meets at least once in a quarter to review the Society's activities and is responsible for overall governance and strategic direction of the society.

Resource and Knowledge Centre (RKC)

AIDA, with the approval of its Executive Council, has initiated the establishment of a Resource and Knowledge Centre (RKC) as a Centre of Excellence to support DISCOMs through knowledge sharing, capacity building, regulatory guidance, and innovative solutions for improved distribution sector performance.

AIDA Upcoming Events

AIDA is pleased to inform that it will hold its Annual Conference in January, featuring seven thematic sessions, the screening of its activity film, the presentation of the AIDA Annual Awards, and key sector deliberations with policymakers, regulators, DISCOMs, and industry stakeholders.

Highlights

MoUs Signed by AIDA and Memberships: AIDA has signed MoUs with Rocky Mountain Institute (RMI) and the Regulatory Assistance Project (RAP), organizations of national and international repute, to undertake studies, projects, and capacity-building initiatives. Additionally, AIDA has become a member of two globally recognized institutions—the Utilities for Net Zero Alliance (UNEZA) and the Electric Power Research Institute (EPRI).

Legal Briefs: AIDA continues to support member DISCOMs by providing legal briefs on key issues. This quarter, four briefs were issued, bringing the total to 17 to date.

Best Practices sharing Webinars: AIDA drives collaboration and knowledge sharing among its DISCOM members by conducting national-level webinars that focus on crucial areas being followed by Various Discom members.

Capacity Building: AIDA is undertaking multiple capacity-building initiatives, including leadership, strategic management, and academic collaborations, to strengthen DISCOM capabilities and drive sectoral improvement.

Policy Advocacy and Regulatory Initiatives: The Association regularly undertakes policy and regulatory initiatives related to the power distribution sector and engages with concerned authorities such as CEA, MoP, CERC, and others on key DISCOM-related issues.

AIDA Committee Meetings: AIDA has formed seven expert committees to advance its core objectives, focusing on policy advocacy, collaboration, standardization, and capacity building in DISCOM operations. These committees provide informed recommendations on proposals from the MoP, CERC, CEA, and other key stakeholders.

National Workshops

- 1) AIDA participated in the Bhopal workshop on "Solar Plus Storage Auction Design" held on 25th September 2025.
- 2) AIDA took part in the PM-KUSUM National Knowledge Sharing and Study Tour in Ahmedabad, on October 29–30, 2025 focusing on collaborative insights and practical solutions for advancing agricultural solarization.
- 3) It also contributed its valuable insights in Distribution Utility Meet (DUM) on November 4–5, 2025 in Mumbai, contributing to discussions on energy transition, grid modernization, digitalization, and emerging challenges for DISCOM.

Memorandum of Understanding (MoUs)

Rocky Mountain Institute, USA

All India Discoms Association (AIDA) signed a non-binding Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Rocky Mountain Institute (RMI), USA, on 27 October 2025 to collaborate on research, knowledge sharing, and joint initiatives in the areas of Grid Flexibility, Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS), and Distributed Renewable Energy (DRE). The partnership aims to support Discoms in improving reliability, affordability, and sustainability of electricity supply.

The areas of Collaboration include:

- Exchange of Information
- Conduct of joint research projects
- Organization of workshops, seminars, and other meetings on agreed topics
- Other forms of co-operation in related fields as may be mutually agreed upon

Under the MoU, both organizations will jointly explore opportunities, conduct analysis, and advance the discourse on power sector decarbonization in India by leveraging RMI's technical expertise and AIDA's network of member Discoms.



Regulatory Assistance Project (RAP), USA

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed on 20th November 2025 between the All India Discoms Association (AIDA) and the Regulatory Assistance Project (RAP), a U.S.-based not-for-profit organization, to foster knowledge sharing, capacity building, and collaborative research in mutually identified areas. The partnership aims to promote knowledge exchange in the electricity sector particularly in modernizing distribution sector, support interdisciplinary research for sustainable development, advance efforts toward resource adequacy and energy security in the context of energy transition, and jointly undertake technical studies related to energy systems, electricity distribution, and markets.

Specific areas of cooperation covered under this MoU includes:

- ✚ Knowledge generation, exchange, and transfer of knowledge as knowledge partners, through AIDA Committees.
- ✚ Discussion of policies and regulations to support scale-up and acceleration of renewable energy in accord with Government of India targets.
- ✚ Discussion of policies and regulations to support wholesale electricity market reforms, enable discoms' participation in the wholesale market, and strengthening market performance.
- ✚ Discussion of other innovations in power sector policies, strategies, and plans at the central and state level.
- ✚ Jointly take initiatives for capacity building of discoms, regulatory, and other electricity sector officials
- ✚ Jointly carry out technical studies related to energy and electricity systems, distribution, and markets.



Partnerships/ Memberships

Utilities for Net Zero Alliance (UNEZA)

AIDA is pleased to announce that it has joined the Utilities for Net Zero Alliance (UNEZA) as a member. Through this association, AIDA looks forward to collaborating with global utilities and stakeholders to support the achievement of net-zero ambitions, including the goals of tripling renewable energy capacity and doubling energy efficiency by 2030, while contributing to knowledge sharing and collective action in the power and utilities sector.

Electric Power Research Institute (EPRI)

AIDA is pleased to inform that it has become a member of **Open Power AI**, hosted by the Electric Power Research Institute (EPRI). AIDA looks forward to contributing insights from Indian DISCOMs and collaborating with EPRI and global partners to advance research, innovation, and the responsible application of AI in the power and utilities sector.



Legal Briefs

- Tariff cannot be fixed by mutual agreement of the parties but subject to approval of the Commission – Supreme Court Judgment in KKK Hydropower Vs. HPSEB:** The Supreme Court in *KKK Hydropower vs. HPSEB* held that tariff cannot be fixed by mutual agreement between a generator and a DISCOM and must be approved by the Appropriate Commission under Sections 61, 62, 79, and 86 of the Electricity Act, 2003. In this case, a supplementary PPA fixing a revised tariff of Rs.2.95/kWh executed without the Commission's approval, and was held unenforceable. The Court clarified that tariff fixation is not a matter of private negotiation and any modification or enhancement must be approved by the Commission. It also noted that Generic Tariff Orders cannot override specific approvals. DISCOMs should therefore ensure that all PPAs and tariff changes receive prior approval from Commission and be proactive in challenging orders that contradict the Act.
- Supreme Court's Limited Jurisdiction in Electricity Matters: How DISCOMs should Strategize the Feasibility of Filing appeals before the Supreme Court:** Section 125 of the Electricity Act, 2003 permits appeal to the Supreme Court only on substantial questions of law, limiting its role to correcting serious legal or jurisdictional errors, not re-evaluating facts decided by expert bodies. While the Court has cautioned DISCOMs against routine appeals, as seen in *MSEDCL v. Adani Power* and *HPPC v. GMR Kamalanga*, it has intervened in cases like *Torrent Power v. UPERC* and *Chamundeshwari ESCOM v. Saisudhir Energy* where substantial legal issues arose. As clarified in *BSES Rajdhani v. DERC*, appeals must be carefully framed to meet the test of substantial questions of law. Though the Supreme Court is slow to disturb concurrent findings, DISCOMs may still approach it when such legal questions exist or when there are divergent views between the Commission and APTEL, or the Commission's decision is clearly erroneous or contrary to the Act. Hence, DISCOMs should file appeals selectively, based on clear legal grounds, to avoid unnecessary litigation and financial burden.
- Adoption of Tariff under Section 63 not mechanical: It must be reasonable, fair and consistent with consumer interest - APTEL Judgment in APPEAL NO. 26 oF 2025 - JSW Vs. CERC:** APTEL, in *JSW vs. CERC* (Appeal No. 26 of 2025), held that tariff adoption under Section 63 of the Electricity Act, 2003 is not a mechanical exercise. While the Commission must adopt tariffs discovered through a transparent competitive bidding process, it is also obligated to ensure that the tariff is reasonable, fair, market-aligned, and consistent with consumer interest. In this case, CERC refused to adopt the tariff for a BESS project due to significant delays in issuing the Letter of Award, signing agreements, and filing the adoption petition, finding that the tariff was no longer aligned with prevailing market prices. APTEL upheld this decision, clarifying that CERC is not a mere "post office" under Section 63 and can invoke its general regulatory powers under Section 79(1) to protect public and consumer interest, even in the absence of explicit provisions in the guidelines. The Tribunal reiterated that consumer interest is paramount and rejected the developer's claim of legitimate expectation. The appeal against this decision is pending before the Supreme Court. For DISCOMs, the judgment underscores the need to expedite post-bid contracting, issue LOAs and execute PPAs within prescribed timelines, approach the Commission promptly for tariff adoption, maintain transparency in case of delays, monitor market trends to ensure competitiveness, and recognize that tariff adoption under Section 63 entails regulatory scrutiny to safeguard consumer interest.

4. **Payment of interest/late payment surcharge on liquidated damages or penalty levied by discoms on generators** - Liquidated Damages (LD) clauses supported by Section 74 of the Contract Act, 1872—allow DISCOMs to recover pre-determined compensation for delays such as failure to meet Conditions Precedent, delay in commissioning, or non-compliance with PPA obligations. Sample PPAs from Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Telangana, and Meghalaya show that DISCOMs can encash Performance Security and that interest or LPS on delayed LD may be provided either within general payment provisions or supplementary bill clauses, even if not stated in the LD clause itself. In existing PPAs, DISCOMs are entitled to levy interest/LPS where specified, and due dates for LD payment may be expressly mentioned or inferred from general payment terms; where absent, DISCOMs may set a reasonable due date or invoke the Interest Act, 1978 as a last resort. For future PPAs, it is advisable for DISCOMs to clearly specify the due date for LD payment and include explicit interest/LPS provisions—ideally aligned with rates applicable to delayed DISCOM payments—to avoid ambiguity and strengthen enforceability.

Webinars

Webinar on Learnings from ENLIT ASIA, 2025

AIDA Secretariat hosted a webinar on 23rd October, 2025 to share key takeaways from the International Study Tour to ENLIT ASIA 2025, held in Bangkok from September 9–12, 2025, with 12 senior DISCOM officials participating. The delegation was led by Sri Satendrya Nath Kalita, Director (Regulatory Affairs), AIDA, speakers highlighted insights on demand response, renewable integration, smart grids, AI, cybersecurity, green hydrogen, and emerging technologies such as bushing sensors, submersible switchgear, and synthetic ester oils.

Learning from the event was shared by Senior officials from TGNPDCL, DVC, BYPL, and BRPL throwing light on global best practices and potential applications in Indian DISCOMs, including advanced transformer and cable health monitoring. Shri Alok Kumar, DG, AIDA, emphasized that the Study Tour enhances sector capacity and facilitates knowledge sharing across all DISCOMs. The session reaffirmed AIDA's focus on innovation and modernizing India's power distribution sector.



Webinar on “Challenges Faced by DISCOMs in Field-Level Management”

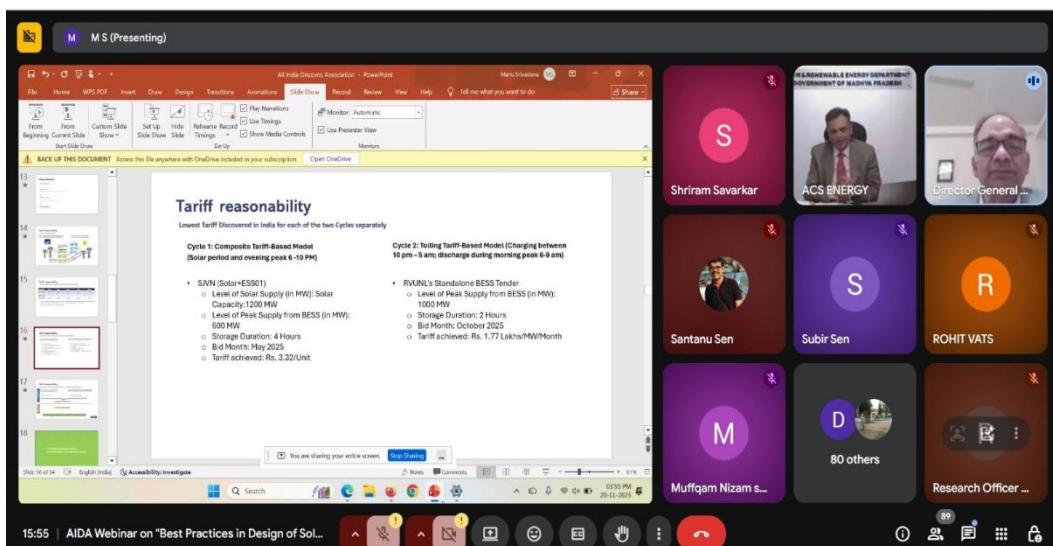
AIDA successfully organized a national-level webinar on 28th October, 2025 on “Challenges Faced by DISCOMs in Field-Level Management,” delivering the presentation, Dr. Shiva Shankara N., IAS, Managing Director, BESCOM, shared BESCOM's journey and innovative strategies in addressing ground-level challenges. With participation from 85 member DISCOMs across India, the session fostered dynamic discussions and practical insights for improving operational efficiency. Key highlights included BESCOM's consumer growth from 94 lakh to 1.5 crore, reduction in distribution losses from 13% to 9% through underground cabling, and the impactful role of Distribution Automation Systems in minimizing outages and tackling power theft. The webinar also discussed smart metering challenges in slum areas, urban infrastructure pressures, and new initiatives such as prepaid meters, smart street lighting, and subsidy reforms. BESCOM's experience showcased how innovation, automation, and financial discipline can

strengthen DISCOM operations — paving the way for a smarter, more resilient, and consumer-centric power distribution network across India.



Webinar on “Best Practices in Design of Solar and BESS Tenders”

AIDA conducted knowledge sharing webinar on 20th November 2025 on “Best Practices in Design of Solar and BESS Tenders”, Shri Manu Srivastava, IAS, Additional Chief Secretary, MPUVNL delivered an insightful presentation, which included MPUVNL’s experiences and best practices in designing and implementing Solar and Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) tenders. With participation from more than 50 member DISCOMs across India, the session offered valuable insights into structuring efficient, transparent, and cost-effective renewable energy projects. Shri Srivastava highlighted the Rewa project’s low tariff and its capability to supply evening peak power through battery storage, and discussed key aspects such as storage integration strategies, flexible tariff and commissioning provisions, maintaining 95% annual availability, and challenges related to long-term PPAs. He also examined centralized versus decentralized storage approaches. The session concluded with an offer to share presentation materials and a vote of thanks from AIDA’s Director General.



Capacity Building - Initiatives

NPTI Training

AIDA, as part of its capacity-building efforts under revamped distribution sector scheme (RDSS), facilitated a three-day residential training program at NPTI Faridabad on “Leadership and Strategic Management” from 22-24th December, 2025. Organised by NPTI at AIDA’s initiative, the program focuses on emerging issues in electricity industry, challenges in RE integration, leadership development, and smart grid technologies including smart meter data analytics. Fully sponsored by PFC/MoP, the training offers DISCOMs an opportunity to strengthen the capabilities of their middle-management officers and enhance preparedness for upcoming sectoral reforms.

IGNOU

AIDA is in active discussions with IGNOU to upgrade and redesign the ACPDM programme to meet the emerging needs of the power distribution sector. A dedicated Sub-Committee has been constituted for this purpose and has already met twice through VC to review and propose revisions. The collaboration focuses on updating modules on smart metering, digital platforms, renewable integration, data analytics, safety, and operational efficiency, while also exploring the upgradation of the programme to a PG Certificate with pathways to a PG

Diploma/MBA. The initiative aims to create a more industry-relevant, holistic techno-commercial-regulatory curriculum that enhances the capabilities of DISCOM professionals nationwide.

IIT Delhi

AIDA is currently in discussions with IIT Delhi to design a national-level training programme for DISCOM officers focused on data analytics using AI/ML. The proposed programme, targeted at senior officials, aims to strengthen analytical capabilities for improved operational decision-making. Once finalised, the collaboration will support DISCOMs in leveraging advanced technologies for sectoral reforms and data-driven governance.

IIM Lucknow

AIDA is in ongoing discussions with IIM Lucknow, in collaboration with the NTPC School of Business, to develop a national-level General Management Programme for senior officials of the distribution sector. The proposed course aims to enhance managerial, strategic, and leadership capabilities, equipping DISCOM executives to navigate emerging sectoral challenges and drive organisational transformation. Once finalised, the programme will serve as a high-quality capacity-building platform for the power distribution fraternity.

Policy Advocacy and Regulatory Engagements

Central Electricity Regulatory Commission (CERC) and Ministry of Power (MoP)

AIDA, after detailed discussions with DISCOMs and an in-depth review by its Secretariat, has conveyed its appreciation and recommended to CERC and the Ministry of Power the reduction of GST on equipment used for solar and wind power projects from 12% to 5%. This reduction is expected to lower tariffs for upcoming renewable energy projects that have yet to procure equipment, ultimately benefiting DISCOMs and electricity consumers.

- For solar power plants, based on a benchmark tariff of Rs. 2.5 per unit, the reduction in GST is estimated to lower tariffs by about 9–10 paise per unit, applicable to projects commissioned after 1st April 2026.
- For wind power plants, based on a benchmark tariff of Rs. 3.6 per unit, the reduction is expected to be around 13–14 paise per unit, applicable to projects commissioned after 1st June 2026.
- AIDA has urged the Ministry of Power to coordinate with CERC for issuing a general order ensuring automatic application of tariff reduction under existing PPAs, avoiding individual petitions and delays.
- It has also recommended extending the applicability of the Electricity (Timely Recovery of Costs due to Change in Law) Rules, 2021—currently applicable to generation and transmission companies—to distribution companies, enabling them to avail similar benefits when tariff reductions occur due to policy changes.

CERC Public Hearing

At the CERC public hearing on the draft proposal for determination of the value of 'X' under the DSM Regulations 2024 for Wind and Solar Sellers, held on 3rd December 2025, Shri Satyendra Nath Kalita, Director (Regulatory Affairs), AIDA, recommended a 3-year trajectory (2026–2029) for DSM implementation and

tightening the frequency band to 50.02 Hz to enhance grid security. Karnataka data showed high deviations by WS sellers without financial impact, leading to increased TRAS requirements. AIDA also highlighted the mismatch between stringent forecasting expectations for DISCOMs and minimal accountability for WS sellers. With rising RE penetration, AIDA stressed the need for stronger forecasting discipline to ensure a secure and cost-effective grid.

Forum of Regulators (FoR)

AIDA, after discussions with DISCOMs, has requested the Forum of Regulators (FoR) to frame Model Regulations allowing the funding cost of Delayed Payment Surcharge (DPS) to be included in the Discoms ARR, in line with the APTEL Judgment dated 12.07.2011 (BSES vs. DERC). While APTEL had held that financing costs on outstanding dues should be allowed at prevailing market rates, some SERCs including JSERC continue to treat DPS as Non-Tariff Income and exclude related financing expenses, as seen in the Tata Steel UISL True-Up Order (FY 2023–24). Conversely, commissions like BERC and DERC have allowed such costs. AIDA has therefore urged FoR to develop a uniform framework that appropriately recognizes legitimate financing costs due to delayed consumer payments while preserving incentives for timely collections.

Central Electricity Authority (CEA)

AIDA conducted a study on cost reduction opportunities across the power sector and, after discussions with DISCOMs and inputs from member DISCOMs, submitted key recommendations to the CEA on the identified subjects.

- i) Cost of Generation: To curb rising electricity costs and improve sector efficiency, there is a need to strengthen DISCOM capabilities in load research and demand forecasting, limit long-term PPAs to 15 years, and rationalize cost-plus

tariffs by reducing ROE, normative expenses, and cross-subsidy burdens on consumers.

ii) Transmission Costs: There is a need to review GNA charges and their allocation to new generating stations, as they significantly impact overall system costs. The high evacuation costs of remotely located RE projects increase procurement costs; to mitigate this burden, the capital cost of evacuation infrastructure should be supported through government subsidies.

iii) Cost Effective Dispatch: With the rising share of RE in overall generation, deviation settlement charges should be aligned with conventional generators to minimize the cost impact of ancillary services on DISCOMs. State-level adoption of SCED is needed to ensure least-cost dispatch. The CEA should proactively facilitate bilateral and trilateral exchange of tied-up PPA capacity on long-term tenures to optimize fixed charges. Additionally, there is a need for greater transparency and disclosure in URS bidding by generators to DISCOMs.

iv) Renewable Energy Integration Costs: Consider a state-specific RCO trajectory based on cost-effectiveness. There is a need for clear visibility of Viability Gap Funding (VGF) for grid-level storage projects for at least the next three years, and to extend VGF support to PPPs and private-sector DISCOMs to help increase consumer uptake and traffic.

v) Distribution Costs: There is a need for a national policy to mandate tariff redesign within a set timeframe. This policy should ensure the fixed cost of supply is appropriately allocated to different consumer categories using fixed/demand charges, rather than being disproportionately embedded in the energy charge (as analysed in case of Assam).

AIDA Consultative Policy and Regulatory Advocacy – Impact/Outcome

Reduction of GST rates on solar and wind power equipment:

AIDA expresses its sincere *appreciation to the Ministry of Finance, Government of India, for reducing GST rates on solar and wind power equipment from 12% to 5% with effect from 22 September 2025*. This move is expected to reduce renewable power tariffs, with estimated reductions of 9–10 paise/unit for solar projects commissioned after 1 April 2026 and 13–14 paise/unit for wind projects after 1 June 2026, benefiting DISCOMs and consumers while avoiding regulatory delays.

AIDA Consultative advocacy outcome on the ‘difficulties being faced by Discoms in complying the Renewable Consumption Obligations’.

An internal study by the AIDA Secretariat, based on inputs from 11 Discoms and deliberated in the 6th Executive Council Meeting (July 2025), culminated in a detailed representation (through letter) to the Ministry of Power. *‘This advocacy has led to several constructive changes in the RCO Notification, including greater flexibility through fungibility of RE sources, rationalization of DRE obligations for urban Discoms, enhanced RTS recognition with an increased generation multiplier from 3.5 to 4.0 kWh/kW/day, exclusion of OA and captive consumption from total demand, and removal of restrictive hydro cut-off dates. Collectively, these measures simplify compliance, reduce regulatory complexity, and support a pragmatic and sustainable energy transition for Discoms’.*

Resource Knowledge Centre (RKC)

AIDA has decided to establish a **Resource and Knowledge Centre (RKC)**, as approved by the Executive Council, as a Centre of Excellence for knowledge sharing, capacity building, innovation, and collaborative problem-solving in India's power distribution sector. The RKC is intended to support DISCOMs in addressing financial, technical, and operational challenges, including the development of appropriate business and operational models, provision of regulatory guidance, creation of an updated e-resource portal, and institutional strengthening, with the objective of improving operational efficiency and service delivery.

Pursuant to the approval of the Executive Council, the AIDA Secretariat has initiated a project titled **“Preparation of an Implementation Roadmap for a Resource and Knowledge Centre for the Distribution Sector under AIDA.”** The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) has been engaged to prepare a detailed implementation roadmap for establishing the RKC. As part of this assignment, the TERI team will undertake consultations with selected DISCOMs to understand key operational issues, financial planning requirements, and implementation challenges going forward.



Committee Meetings

Committee Meeting on Policy Related Matters

AIDA organised a Committee Meeting on Policy Related Matters held virtually on 2nd September, 2025. In this meeting the Draft Energy Conservation Compliance Rules, 2025, CERC Vision 2032, issues raised by Tata Steel UISL, Jamshedpur on Delayed Payment Surcharge (DPS) and Fuel and Power Purchase Adjustment Surcharge (FPPAS) were discussed. Members highlighted concerns on dual penalties under new RCO rules, supported

uniform DPS treatment across states, and endorsed recognizing delayed funding costs in ARR. A Sub Committee was formed to review FPPAS implementation and suggest measures for addressing financial gaps.

Committee Meeting on Regulatory Matters

AIDA organised its virtual committee meeting on Regulatory Matters on 23rd September, 2025. During the meeting, deliberations were held on CERC proposal on determination of the “X” value for calculating deviation percentages

for Wind and Solar (WS) Sellers effective from 1st April 2026 under the CERC (Deviation Settlement Mechanism and Related Matters) Regulations, 2024 (Draft).

Key points included the proposed tightening of the frequency band (50.05–50.02 Hz), a shorter three-year transition with ~30% annual tightening for RE generators, state-level solar pooling, separate deviation factors for wind and solar, correction of the deviation formula, and stricter norms for hybrid projects.

Committee Meeting on Capacity Building

AIDA organized its Committee Meeting on Capacity Building held virtually on 24th September, 2025 focused on strengthening Discoms capacity through training, leadership development, and knowledge exchange. The committee reviewed ongoing RDSS training initiatives, plans for Centres of Excellence in data analytics and SCADA, and the launch of a Leadership and Strategic Management Program. A Sub-Committee was formed to update the IGNOU ACPDM course to reflect advancements in smart metering, digital platforms, and operational efficiency and a study visit to GETRI to learn from best practices in workforce and leadership development.

The Sub-Committee met on 28th October 2025 to discuss upgrading the ACPDM program, including elevating it to a PG Certificate with pathways to a PG Diploma/MBA and revising the eligibility criteria. Members recommended updating modules on renewable integration, smart and net metering, data analytics, digital mapping, safety, and practical training, while emphasizing a holistic techno-commercial-regulatory approach to enhance industry relevance.

Committee Meeting on Specifications and Procurement Practices

At its 2nd meeting on 4th September 2025, the AIDA Committee on Specifications and Procurement Practices discussed ToD billing issues for smart prepaid meters, reviewed CEA's draft guidelines on type testing and MQAP, and supported national Item Rate Contracts. Members agreed on key elements for standardizing Distribution Transformer specifications, including common ratings, EE levels, 75 kV BIL, OFTC for 100 kVA+, and a 60-month warranty.

In the follow-up meeting on 9th October 2025, the Committee reviewed the draft DT specification with focus on alignment to IS/BIS standards, sealed-type designs, state-specific needs, and energy efficiency levels. Inputs on materials, protection, and seismic requirements were considered, reaffirming the need for uniform, high-quality, and cost-effective specifications across DISCOMs.

Committee Meeting on Smart Grid Technologies

AIDA organized its Committee Meeting on Smart Grid Technologies held virtually on 23rd October, 2025. The committee emphasized practical, flexible cyber security norms for utilities, recommending relaxation of CISO requirements for smaller entities, alignment of IT-OT provisions, clearer definitions of cyber incidents, and broader data retention policies. It also proposed reducing CISO experience requirements, specifying vendor accountability for distributed systems, and tightening timelines for resolving high- and medium-risk issues to strengthen sector-wide cyber resilience.

Combined Committee Meeting on Regulatory Matters and Policy Related Matters

AIDA organised a virtual Combined Meeting of the Committees on Regulatory and Policy Matters on 24th October 2025 to discuss key provisions of the draft Electricity (Amendment) Bill, 2025, including cross-subsidy reduction, suo motu tariff determination, and fair cost-sharing among parallel licensees. The Committee stressed

uniform regulatory frameworks, State consultation on national targets, and practical provisions for large consumers.

Deliberations also reviewed the draft REC Amendment Regulations and Captive Rules, recommending use of “dispatchability” for REC multipliers, a three-year review cycle, clearer captive status provisions, state-level verification, and a payment security mechanism. Members were additionally briefed on ongoing legal notes and new Task Forces on India Energy Stack, peer-to-peer energy transactions, smart meter data analytics, and implementation of distribution regulations.

AIDA convened its Committee Meeting on Commercial Aspects of Discoms Functioning on 19th November 2025, to deliberate on key initiatives for enhancing operational efficiency and consumer engagement. The meeting featured a presentation by UPPCL on the Reorganisation of O&M and Commercial Activities in Discoms and a presentation by BSES on the Consumer Credit Rating Mechanism. The session was held virtually with active participation from committee members.

Committee Meeting on Commercial Aspects of Discoms Functioning

National Study Tours

Solar Plus Storage Auction Design Workshop organized on 25th September, 2025 in Bhopal

The workshop on “Solar Plus Storage Auction Design” held on 25th September, 2025 in Bhopal aimed to deliberate on the emerging need for integrating storage with solar procurement to ensure firm, reliable, and dispatchable renewable power. With increasing RE penetration across states, the role of energy storage in managing intermittency, supporting peak demand, and enhancing grid stability had become critical. The discussions focused on key elements of auction design—such as bid structure, storage sizing, performance requirements, contracting frameworks and financial risk allocation—to help develop a robust and transparent procurement model. The workshop brought together regulators, utilities, developers, and technical experts, who collectively formulated practical recommendations for state and central agencies for upcoming solar-storage tenders.

AIDA attended the workshop along with delegates from various power utilities. The participants included Shri Dharmendra Sharma, Sr. GM (E), DVC; Shri Ranajit Bhattacharya, DGM (Power Marketing), CESC Ltd. ; Shri K.P. Lavekar, Executive Engineer, MSEDC Ltd. ; Shri Rohit Vats, Addl. Manager, CESC Ltd. ; and Shri Jai Krishna Singh, Chief Operating Officer, Sai Computers.

National Knowledge Sharing on Scaling Agricultural Solarisation: Insights, Innovations and Pathways under PM-KUSUM, Ahmedabad

The National Knowledge Sharing on Scaling Agricultural Solarisation under PM-KUSUM, held in Ahmedabad on October 29–30, 2025, saw AIDA’s participation along with eight delegates from across India under the guidance of DG Alok Kumar. As part of the program, a two-day National Study Tour on Agricultural Solarisation was conducted by the PM-KUSUM

Consortium (CSTEP, CEEW, IISD) in collaboration with AIDA and GETRI. The initiative brought together MNRE officials, state DISCOMs, and key sector stakeholders to exchange experiences on PM-KUSUM 2.0 implementation. Through field visits and interactive sessions, participants explored innovative feeder-level solarisation models, farmer-focused strategies, and DISCOM-led solutions, strengthening collaboration and identifying practical approaches to scale agricultural solar adoption for a sustainable energy transition.



Distribution Utility Meet (DUMs, 2025)

The 9th Edition of the Distribution Utility Meet (DUM 2025) was held on November 4–5, 2025, in Mumbai, organised by the India Smart Grid Forum (ISGF) in partnership with MSEDC and Tata Power, and supported by AIDA. The event brought together DISCOMs, policymakers, and global experts to share insights on energy transition, grid modernization, and digitalization. Key sessions included discussions on Innovative Policies and Regulatory Interventions for Sustainability of DISCOMs (presented and partnered jointly by PFI and AIDA), Smart Meters as the Foundation for Digitalization of DISCOMs (session partnered by AIDA), AI-ML-VR/AR and Robotics Applications for Utilities, Emerging Challenges for DISCOMs such as AI Data Centres, EV Charging Infrastructure, and Grid Power Quality, Grid Integration of Distributed Renewable Energy, Electric Vehicles, and Digital Energy Grids and the Emerging Era of the Energy Internet.



Policy & Initiatives Update

Central Advisory Committee Constituted by CERC to Guide Regulatory Policy

The Central Electricity Regulatory Commission (CERC), a statutory body established under the Electricity Regulatory Commissions Act, 1998 and continued under the Electricity Act, 2003, has constituted the Central Advisory Committee (CAC) in accordance with Section 80 of the Act to provide guidance on key regulatory and policy matters. The CAC, notified on 15th September 2025, comprises representatives from commerce, industry, transport, agriculture, labour, consumer groups, NGOs, and academic and research institutions, ensuring broad stakeholder representation. Shri Alok Kumar, Director General of AIDA, has been appointed as a Member of the Committee. The CAC will advise the Commission on major policy questions, consumer interest protection, service quality, and overall performance standards to strengthen regulatory governance in the electricity sector.

Advisory Group Constituted for Accelerating Sustainable State Energy Transition

NITI Aayog, in collaboration with the Ministry of Power (MoP) and the Ministry of New & Renewable Energy (MNRE), launched the *Accelerating Sustainable State*

Energy Transition (ASSET) platform in November 2024 to support states in advancing clean, reliable, and affordable energy transitions. To guide this initiative, an Advisory Group on Accelerating Sustainable State Energy Transition has been constituted and notified on 19th November 2025, with Shri Alok Kumar, Director General of AIDA, appointed as its Chair. The Group will provide strategic direction, strengthen inter-agency coordination, and facilitate the adoption of best practices across states to accelerate India's energy transition efforts.

Working Group Constituted on Smart Metering Works

The Ministry of Power (MoP) has constituted a Working Group on Smart Metering Works to support DISCOMs in standardising implementation practices, resolving operational challenges, and accelerating the nationwide rollout of smart meters. As per the notified order on 1st December 2025, Shri Alok Kumar, Director General of AIDA, has been appointed as the Chairman of the Working Group. Further, Shri Satyendra Nath Kalita, Director Regulatory Affairs AIDA, has been appointed as the Member-Convenor. Under their leadership, the Working Group will provide strategic guidance, strengthen coordination among stakeholders, and develop uniform protocols and best practices to advance smart metering initiatives across the country.

Upcoming Events

Annual Conference

AIDA is pleased to announce that, as it marks its first successful year, it will host a two-day Annual Conference in 21-22, January 2026, bringing together policymakers, regulators, DISCOMs, and industry stakeholders for focused deliberations across seven key sessions, including DISCOM viability, smart meter data utilisation, renewable energy integration, RCO,

reliability enhancement, demand response, and capacity building. The conference will also feature the screening of AIDA's activity film, presentation of the AIDA Annual Awards across six categories, release of its publication '*India Discoms 2025*', and seven thematic sessions led by knowledge partners and DISCOMs to foster collaboration and strengthen future-ready distribution utilities.

The conference aims to showcase AIDA's work in 2025, engage stakeholders to identify priority areas for improving DISCOM performance, and recognise innovative initiatives that promote peer learning and excellence. It is expected to strengthen appreciation of AIDA's role in policy and regulatory advocacy, deepen understanding of key issues, identify new action areas and collaboration opportunities, and encourage sector-wide improvement through the AIDA Awards 2025. The AIDA Awards, 2025 will be presented across six categories: revenue recovery improvement in rural areas, effective use of smart meter data beyond billing, enhancement in digital payment-based consumer satisfaction, innovation in energy transition and RE integration, agriculture feeder solarization and effective change management for better consumer services.

Miscellaneous

AIDA website

The All India Discoms Association (AIDA) website is now fully functional, offering comprehensive information about the Association, its ongoing activities, and its organizational structure. It also enables member DISCOMs and committee members to access presentations, reports, and minutes of committee meetings. For further information, please visit: <https://aida-india.org/>.

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