

Closer Links With China And India Vital To IEA Relevance

The executive director-elect of the International Energy Agency says the Paris based organisation must forge closer ties with Asia's fastest-growing energy giants – India and China – if it is to remain relevant. “The relevance of the IEA could be undermined,” says Nobuo Tanaka, if non-member consuming countries are not engaged in discussion. Tanaka will take over as head of the IEA in September from incumbent Claude Mandil. According to the IEA, about half the world's energy consumption takes place outside the agency's 26 member countries, which are limited to Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development nations. “The hurdle is very high for official membership,” says Tanaka, referring to the difficulty of accepting China or India into the agency. “But our organisation should be very pragmatic in engaging these countries.” Tanaka says China could be given observer status, while the agency could extend technical cooperation and information-sharing initiatives with non-members. China is already one of the heaviest users of IEA research, according to the agency.

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