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## Audit needed on rural utilities

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PETALING JAYA: The Auditor-General should conduct an overall audit of rural water and electrification programmes to measure their achievement and progress over the past few years.

Association of Water and Energy Research Malaysia (Awer) [president S. Piarapakaran](#) said there had been complaints of lack of maintenance.

“There are solar panels covered with moss due to lack of maintenance after contractors installed them,” he said in a statement yesterday, referring to Budget 2012’s higher allocation for water and electricity in rural communities.

“The Government should also educate the rural community in basic upkeep as this can create semi-skilled workers,” he added.

The Government allocated a total of RM3.2bil for rural programmes in which RM2.1bil would supply 200,000 households with water and RM1.1bil to provide electricity for 39,000 households.

Kapit MP [Datuk Alexander Nanta Linggi](#) said continuous attention from the Government to rural folk during Budget 2012 was welcomed.

He said it was important to hire the right contractors with a high level of integrity.

“We need to make sure that the contractors in rural areas in Sarawak fully complete their projects to ensure they function properly,” he said.

“I also welcome an audit so the Government will know if the projects have benefited the rakyat in the best possible manner.”

Putatan MP [Datuk Marcus Mojigoh](#) said the allocation fulfilled the rural elected representatives’ requests.

He said having locals maintain completed projects could also reduce costs.

“The disappointment of rural folk over incomplete and mismanaged projects can be minimised,” said the Sabah MP.

He also hoped the Government would fulfil the promise by former [prime minister Tun Abdullah Ahmad Badawi](#) to make Sarawak and Sabah food producing states.