

Thin-film technology - new solar PV trend in Taiwan

Rotterdam, January 31, 2008 – Taiwan has always been a major place for thin-film technology and the semiconductor industry. Big players in the Taiwanese industry are now using this experience to explore and start new thin-film silicon solar production initiatives. The share of thin-film in the global supply of solar cells and modules is likely to grow from around 8% in 2007 towards 20% or more in 2010. After the year 2010, the production capacity in Taiwan could exceed 1 GW per year. This will make Taiwan one of the leading suppliers of thin-film silicon cells and modules in the multi- billion euro global market. To explore the business opportunities in this rapidly growing thin-film industry, SolarPlaza is organizing a dedicated international PV trade mission to Taiwan from 17 to 21 February.

Together with the Taiwanese Photovoltaic Industry Association, a program has been set up including a symposium with several thin-film company presentations and company visits to E-Ton, NexPower Technology, Sinonar and Green Energy Technology. All of these companies are starting, or have started, major thin-film production activities.

Company	Planned capacity in 2008 [MWp]
Sunner Solar	25
Sun Well Solar	40
Auria	60
NexPower Technology	25
Sinonar	50
Nanowin Technology	35
Green Energy Technology	30
Formosun Technology	15
Mosel Vitelic	20
Kenmos Technology	10
Total:	310

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Sources: company websites and Digitimes, Oerlikon.com, Amat.com and CENS

A list of the currently-known major new thin-film initiatives in Taiwan shows that for 2008 a total initial production capacity of at least 310 MWp is scheduled, ramping up to more than 800 MWp in two years time. Sun Well, one of the presenting companies in the program, is even aiming to boost its capacity to more than 1 GW by the year 2012. Some of the abovementioned companies are involved in crystalline silicon technology as well, such as the major wafer manufacturer Green Energy Technology and cell manufacturer E-ton, both of which companies will be visited. The thin-film manufacturers will use a variety of technologies as supplied by Applied Materials, Oerlikon Solar, Ulvac as well as the technology of EPV from the USA. Undoubtedly, with these equipment manufacturers predicting production cost levels of less than \$ 1/Wp within 5 years time, these products will easily find their way in the growing global market. This cost level however will open up opportunities for 'grid parity' in many new markets as well, creating an infinite market potential. That is why several of these manufacturers are already sold out for the coming years, even before their first thin-film modules are produced.

After the success of the second PV trade mission to California in January 2008, which also demonstrated a trend towards cheaper thin-film technologies, it is now time to discover the business opportunities in one of the world's fastest growing PV industry regions: Taiwan. The Taiwan government is supporting the growth of its solar energy industry and has designated solar energy as a strategic industry for Taiwan. It forecasts that the total value will hit \$12.5 billion in 2015, compared to \$652 million in 2006, according to a Taipei Times report. This report states that Taiwan's External Trade Development Council (TAITRA) expects the nation to account for 7 percent of global solar-power generation equipment by 2015.

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