

Suntech breaks ground on new solar-cell production fab

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Suntech has broken ground on a new solar photovoltaics cell production facility in Yangzhou, Jiangsu province, China. The company says it plans to finish the factory and bring its 300-MW cell production capacity online by the end of 2009, boosting its total manufacturing capacity to 1.4 GW.

The new PV cell fab is close to one of Suntech's strategic silicon-wafer supply partners, Shunda Holdings, which the company says will enable it to realize production and operational synergies that are expected to accelerate Suntech's cost-reduction initiatives and path to grid parity.

"With Suntech's rapidly growing international reputation for quality and excellence in solar manufacturing, we are in a prime position to grow our customer base and market share," said Zhengrong Shi, Suntech's chairman/CEO (shown at left). "The Yangzhou facility will provide Suntech with room to meet our capacity expansion target of 2 GW by year end 2010 and enable us to meet the world's burgeoning demand for solar energy."

In May, Suntech announced a 13-year wafer supply agreement with a subsidiary of Shunda, in which the silicon unit will provide Suntech with specified annual volumes of wafers totaling approximately 7 GW over the course of the deal (2008-2020).

"The colocation with Shunda's polysilicon plant and wafering facilities will enable a virtual integration of the solar value chain, from polysilicon to solar panel, supporting our move to providing cost-effective solar solutions," noted Shi.

Over the past few months, Suntech has inked several multiyear supply deals with various polysilicon and wafer producers, including DC Chemical, GCL Silicon, and PV Crystalox, and has also purchased a minority stake in poly manufacturer Nitel.

-- Tom Cheyney

Story from PV Tech:

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