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Thin-film PV modules have better long-term business potential than crystalline silicon type, says Auria Solar

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While the global market of crystalline silicon solar cells is developing toward saturation with product prices unlikely to significantly rebound from the current low levels, production of amorphous silicon (a-Si) thin-film photovoltaic (PV) modules will witness better business prospect on a long-term basis, according to chairman and CEO CY Tsai of Taiwan-based Auria Solar.

Due to largely increased global supply of solar-grade polycrystalline silicon, the participation of many new makers and shrinking global demand, inventories of crystalline silicon solar cells around the world have risen to high levels and product prices have dropped to new lows, Tsai indicated. It is difficult for prices of crystalline silicon solar cells to return to levels seen in the third quarter of 2008 even if governments' subsidies manage to push up demand, Tsai pointed out.

In addition, a-Si thin-film PV modules have significantly larger room for reducing production costs than crystalline silicon solar cells, making the former more profitable, Tsai indicated.

Having started volume production of micromorphous silicon tandem-junction thin-film PV modules, Auria Solar plans to raise additional capital of NT\$5 billion (US\$150 million), as well as applying for a syndicated bank loan of NT\$5 billion, to expand its annual production capacity from 60MWp currently to 200MWp in 2009, Tsai noted.

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