

Solar boom in Asia

China is already the biggest manufacturer in the world of solar modules. In the most populated country on earth, this boom continues unabated. Chinese manufacturers can expect an annual growth rate of 60% by 2010. The industrial business of HUBER+SUHNER is in a strong position and has the best growth opportunities in this future market.

Suntech Power has been the biggest manufacturer of solar modules in the world since 2007. An annual growth rate far in excess of 110% has catapulted this Chinese company to the top. Suntech Power and other Asia-based manufacturers are benefiting from a strong increase in domestic demand. Moreover, they export to leading solar energy markets such as Germany and Spain. In 2007, cells with an output of 1200 megawatts (in Germany, 875 megawatts) were being produced in China.

The fierce debate about climate change is one of the driving forces behind the solar market growth. In recent years, global initiatives for using renewable energies have evolved. Not only in China, soon to be the biggest economy in the world, but also in other emerging countries increasing wealth is leading to a rise in the demand for energy so that Asian solar module manufacturers will also have a booming home market. In China alone the module area should rise from 100 m² in 2007 to 150 m² in 2010.

Growth throughout Asia

The fact that the Norwegian manufacturer, REC, has invested about 4 billion US dollars in Singapore in the biggest module production plant in the world shows the market potential of the Asian continent. Every year, wafers and cells providing up to 1.5 gigawatts of power production should be available in Singapore – an impressive achievement given worldwide solar power production of about 2.8 gigawatts in 2007. Singapore will therefore soon appear at the top of the solar market chart.

The Asiatic solar boom is down to one simple reason: energy resources must keep pace with the hunger for energy in a markedly growing economy. Because of its CO₂-emissions, China, is also under global political pressure. A massive expansion of renewable energies is inevitable. The government in Peking is aware of this and, according to official figures, it is investing several billion dollars in renewable energies over the next few years.

All over the globe the solar market is enjoying an enormous boom. Growth in 2007 was around 62% and, for the first time, the total market exceeded the 10 billion mark. In this unique environment, the close relationship long enjoyed by HUBER+SUHNER with important module manufacturers, to whom they are now supplying system solutions, is now bearing fruit. Connection boxes developed for specific customer needs are particularly popular (see box). In 2008, management is counting on doubling turnover in this field. A sunny prospect ■

YOUR CONNECTION max.goeldi@hubersuhner.com

75 million Order from Suntech Power

The Chinese world market leader has chosen HUBER+SUHNER as its partner for solar module connection systems. These comprise specially designed connection boxes attached to the rear of the module as well as cables and connectors. Until the end of 2009 HUBER+SUHNER will be manufacturing connections for Suntech valued at 75 million Swiss francs (about 10 000 articles per day). First production lines are already up and running in Switzerland and China. After that, most production will take place local to the customer as HUBER+SUHNER is building five further production lines in Shanghai ■

