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Welcome to Solar Weekly Insight, presenting the most important developments in the global solar industry, ranging from significant industry trends, policies, research, and new technologies to markets and pricing.

This week's edition focuses utility-scale PV and CSP projects in the U.S. and East Africa, Q4 results, and ongoing solar trade hassle.

## U.S. trade authorities find evidence of injury from imports of Chinese, Taiwanese PV



Late last week the U.S. International Trade Commission ruled that imports of solar PV products from China and Taiwan are causing injury to the U.S. PV manufacturing industry, as another step towards the imposition of further tariffs. [More](#)

*Picture left: SolarWorld says that the case will close a loophole in the earlier trade ruling*

## First Solar gets approval for 550 MW of PV projects on U.S. public lands



On Wednesday, the U.S. Department of the Interior approved First Solar's plans for two large solar photovoltaic (PV) projects near the California and Nevada border. These are the 49th and 50th renewable energy projects approved on U.S. public lands under the Obama Administration. [More](#)

*Picture left: Both plants will be located in the Ivanpah Valley, which straddles the border of California and Nevada*

## CSP: Ivanpah goes online – or does it?



The dedication ceremony for the Ivanpah CSP plant made for big headlines late last week, however a Solar Server inquiry into California grid data finds that the plant's output is still sporadic at best, with at least one of the plant's three units fully off-line on all but one day. [More](#)

*Picture left: One or more of Ivanpah's three units have been offline for all but one day during the last week. (NRG)*

## Trina Solar expands PV cell production with Hubei Hongyuan acquisition



Trina Solar has acquired a majority stake in Hubei Hongyuan, and announced plans to expand the company's PV cell capacity to 420 MW annually, as part of its “asset-light” strategy. [More](#)

*Picture left: Trina Solar Chair and CEO Jifan Gao explains that the move is part of the company's “asset-light” strategy*

## Strong results and positive margins in Q4 results for SunPower, Enphase and Solar Frontier



Over the last week, the first solar companies began to release results for the fourth quarter of 2014, showing a turn to profitability for three PV industry players which have championed unorthodox technology approaches.

High-efficiency c-Si PV maker SunPower announced very strong results across all business segments, reporting a USD 638 million in revenues and a 5.7% operating margin, a continuation of its turnaround from losses as recent as a year ago. [More](#)

*Picture left: During the quarter SunPower achieved commercial operation at the 250 MW-AC California Valley Solar Ranch. (SunPower)*



Meanwhile, microinverter pioneer Enphase surpassed 100 MW of shipments in one quarter for the first time, reporting record revenues as well as showing its first positive operating margin. [More](#)

*Picture left: Enphase claims a leading market share in the U.S. residential market, where its sales are concentrated. (Enphase)*



Like SunPower and Enphase, CIGS market leader Solar Frontier has also recently broken into the black, with parent company Showa Shell Sekiyu reporting the company's first full year of positive results and full capacity utilization at its factories. [More](#)

*Picture left: Solar Frontier has been running its 900 MW Kunitomi plant at full capacity since the beginning of 2013. (Solar Server Staff)*

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## SunEdison files to form yieldco, reports record project activity in Q4 results



SunEdison also reported its fourth quarter 2013 results this week, but first the company announced that it has filed with regulatory authorities to form a yieldco structure to hold PV assets. [More](#)

*Picture left: SunEdison has expressed in previous calls that it can realize more money holding plants and selling the electricity than in selling the plants*



SunEdison has set aside 127 MW of completed projects in the fourth quarter alone for the yieldco, which impacted its revenues and profit, however the company notes that it expects to realize 2 ½ times the income from these projects in long-term sales.

SunEdison had a very strong quarter operationally, completing a record 333 MW of PV projects, with more than 500 MW under construction at the quarter's end.

[More](#)

*Picture left: Among SunEdison's many projects under construction is the 100 MW Amanecer project, the largest PV project in Latin America*

## JA Solar greater than 19% multi c-Si PV efficiency



The growth of the PV industry is supported by ongoing, incremental technological improvements. This week JA Solar announced that it had surpassed 19% efficiency with its multicrystalline PV cells. The company plans to begin mass production of these cells, and the first modules assembled from these cells will be available in the second half of 2014. [More](#)

*Picture left: JA Solar plans to begin mass production of the cells for assembly into commercially available modules in the second half of 2014*

## German solar thermal market falls 11% by collector area in 2013



However, while the PV industry is recovering, the German solar thermal industry is not doing so well. BSW-Solar reports that the nation's solar thermal market fell 11%, with installations at their lowest point since 2007. [More](#)

*Picture left: The German solar thermal market has fallen to its lowest level of installations since 2007*

## Scatec Solar breaks ground on East Africa's first utility-scale solar PV plant



Finally, this week Scatec Solar announced that it has broken ground on an 8 MW PV plant in Rwanda, which will be the first utility-scale PV plant in East Africa, and one of the few in the African continent outside of South Africa. [More](#)

*Picture left: The 8.5 MW PV plant is built 60 km from Rwandan capital Kigali*

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