

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 PV efficiency world records, global PV installations in 2011, and progress in the MENA region.

First Solar, Q-Cells break PV efficiency records

In top news from this week, on January 16th, 2012 First Solar announced that it has reached a world record 14.4% total module area efficiency with its cadmium telluride (CdTe) technology.



The U.S. Department of Energy's National Renewable Energy Lab (NREL) confirmed the record, which eclipsed the prior record of 13.4 percent, which also was set by First Solar. [More](#)

Picture left: First Solar associates hold the company's record breaking 14.4 percent efficient module, manufactured in Perrysburg, Ohio



A day later, on January 17th, 2012, Q-Cells announced that it has set a new world record with an 18.5% efficient multicrystalline PV module.

The company has also set another record with an output of 283 watts from a module comprising 60 of its quasi-monocrystalline PV cells. The Fraunhofer Institute for Solar Energy Systems ISE (Freiburg, Germany) has confirmed both records. [More](#)

Picture left: Q-Cells module testing. The company states that both efficiency records are based on its Q.ANTUM technology

26.5 GW of PV or even more installed in 2011



This week, two research organizations and a market leading company offered preliminary estimates of global PV installations in 2011. IMS Research states that while it is still calculating final numbers, it believes that 26.5 GW was installed in 2011, led by record installations in Germany, China and the United States. [More](#)

IMS Research Senior Research Director Ash Sharma (picture left): "Although we had been predicting 2011 installations of 6-8 GW for Germany throughout the year, the result of 7.5 GW was even higher than our most-likely scenario forecast, and much higher than every other analyst predicted."

Meanwhile, Bloomberg New Energy Finance has put this figure higher, at 28 GW. [More](#)

SMA estimates USD 2.1 billion in 2011 sales



However, in its preliminary estimate of 2011 sales, SMA Solar Technology AG placed the size of the global PV market in 2011 at only 23 GW. The company also estimated that it achieved 2.1 billion in 2011 revenues, while maintaining a 35% global market share. [More](#)

Picture left: SMA PV inverter production. SMA maintained its global market share of 35% during the year

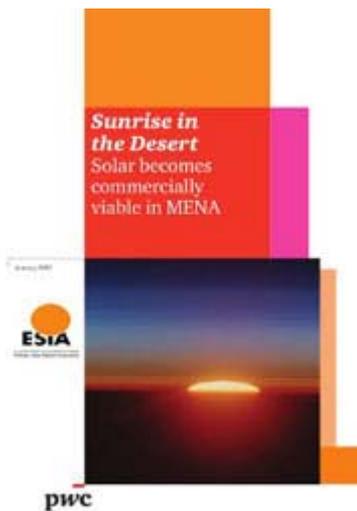
Solar coming to MENA: World Future Energy Summit opens in Abu Dhabi, Terra Nex to build 400 MW of PV in Oman



On January 16th, 2012 the fifth World Future Energy Summit commenced in Abu Dhabi, featuring a keynote speech by Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao. At the commencement, U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon announced the Year of Sustainable Energy for All, to promote U.N. energy access and renewable energy goals. [More](#)

Picture left: U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon's Year of Sustainable Energy for All aims to promote action on issues of energy, energy efficiency and renewable energy

A day prior, on January 15th, 2012 Terra Nex announced plans for a USD 2 billion solar investment in the Sultanate of Oman, including 400 MW of PV plants and local manufacturing. [More](#)



The news came shortly before a report by the Emirati Solar Industry Association and PriceWaterhouseCoopers which states that solar production is cost competitive with petroleum and LNG production in many nations in the Middle East and North Africa. [More](#)

Picture left: The news report notes that decreasing domestic use of petroleum and LNG for electricity generation in MENA nations frees up more of these resources for export

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