

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 on PV prices, big thin-film PV in Germany, MWT solar cells, and ABB's announcement that it will buy Power-One.

Moreover Solar Server presents an exclusive interview with writer and renewable energy policy expert Craig Morris, on the new project Energy Democracy.

Module prices rebound... or do they?



IHS states that the withdrawal of some of Chinese PV suppliers from the EU market is driving up prices for remaining suppliers

This week IHS became the latest company to report an increase in PV module prices in March 2013, finding that Chinese-made PV module prices shot up 4% in the EU during the month, the first increase since 2009. IHS expects prices to increase an additional 4% over the next three months. [More](#)

Looking at the global picture over the course of 2013, Solarbuzz reached another conclusion. This week the company released a report which predicts that global aggregate module revenues will fall 20% in 2013 to USD 20.5 billion, but will rebound to USD 32 billion by 2017. [More](#)

JA Solar begins mass production of MWT PV cells



JA Solar became one of the world's largest PV companies on the strength of its PV cell manufacturing

This week JA Solar announced that it has begun mass production of metal wrap through (MWT) PV cells, which it says will feature conversion efficiencies of 19.6% (monocrystalline) and 19.1% (multicrystalline) respectively.

"MWT is at the core of the next generation of module technology, and represents a significant breakthrough in terms of power output and conversion efficiency," said JA Solar Chief Technology Officer Yong Liu. [More](#)

Belectric completes 128 MW PV plant in Brandenburg



Belectric CEO Bernhard Beck: "Power from plants like this is the most economical method of generating power from solar energy. At present, we have almost reached the power production cost level of onshore wind."

Finally, this week Belectric built a 128 MW PV plant in the German state of Brandenburg, as the largest thin-film PV plant in Europe. The Templin plant comprises 1.5 million First Solar CdTe PV modules, installed on a former military airfield.

The plant also features integrated dynamic reactive power control, which the companies say can improve the stability of power grids. "Decentralized solar power plants will play a decisive role in the future structure of the power market in Germany," notes Belectric CEO Bernhard Beck. [More](#)

ABB to buy Power-One



The deal will give Power-One access to ABB's research and development, global service and sales and service network, and will complement ABB's inverter and power electronics business

Power and automation giant ABB has announced that it will buy Power-One for roughly USD 1.02 billion, as a major consolidation in the PV inverter space. [More](#)

Such consolidation is in line with the predictions made by GTM Research in a report published only days before, which predicts difficulties for incumbent inverter makers. [More](#)

Hard times for PV equipment makers

This week SEMI released a report which finds that the book-to-bill ratio for PV equipment makers was only 0.45 in the fourth quarter of 2012, its seventh straight quarter below parity. [More](#)

LADWP approves 250 MW competitive solicitation

In a bizarre mash-up of policies, the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power has approved a 250 MW competitive solicitation, as the next round of its CLEAN LA "feed-in tariff" program. If this was not confusing enough, bids to build portions of the 250 MW Beacon Solar project will be coupled with non-site-specific bids in the solicitation. [More](#)

India: Details of VGF revealed for NSM, 290 MW commissioned in phase 1, batch 2

Late last week India's Ministry of New and Renewable Energy released draft guidelines for phase 2, batch 1 of the nation's National Solar Mission, including details of its Viability Gap Funding (VGF) mechanism, showing that it can compete with Los Angeles for arcane policy maneuvers. [More](#)

MNRE also reports that 290 MW of PV has been commissioned through phase 1, batch 2 of the program, with only 50 MW left to go. 89 MW has also been commissioned through the RPSSGP (say

that three times fast) and 48 MW through the Migration Scheme. [More](#)

REC: More losses in Q1 2012



This week REC published first quarter 2013 results, reporting the familiar story among manufacturers that revenues have fallen on lower selling prices. However, REC also showed slightly lower sales, in part due to significant downtime for its polysilicon operations.

REC notes that solar photovoltaic (PV) demand improved in the first quarter of 2013 versus the second half of 2012, citing growing Asian demand. [More](#)

Picture left: REC improved margins in its solar division, despite declining revenues

Energy Democracy! Solar Server interviews Craig Morris



This week Solar Server brings you an exclusive interview with writer and renewable energy policy expert Craig Morris, on a new project that he has joined to spread the word about the energy transition to a broader audience through videos and infographics.

Craig Morris: "Increasingly, renewables are competitive. But too few people are talking about the one-time opportunity that this transition offers. We are setting up a new energy infrastructure, and distributed renewables do not have to be in the hands of large corporations". [More](#)

Thanks for your interest in the Solar Weekly Insight. Stay posted for next week's industry highlights.

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