

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 big CSP; German and U.S. policies, solar trade war, and an exciting report on U.S. utility-scale solar costs.

### Testing: Unit 1 of the Ivanpah solar CSP plant produces electricity for California



This week the 377 MW-AC Ivanpah concentrating solar power (CSP) plant in California's Mojave Desert reached a major milestone, with unit 1 producing power on a test basis. NRG and Brightsource expect to commission the plant by the end of 2013. [More](#)

*Picture left: Unit 1 of the Ivanpah SEGS.  
Image: Business Wire*

### Politics: German elections eliminate anti-renewable FDP, as U.S. updates proposal to regulate carbon emissions



The federal election in Germany this Sunday has resulted in the removal of the only party in the German government calling for a repeal of the feed-in tariff, the FDP. However, it also removed feed-in tariff co-author Hans Josef Fell (Green). The future of the policy is far from certain under a new coalition government, which has yet to be formed. [More](#)

*Picture left: German Chancellor Angela Merkel's CDU has won the most votes, but now must form a coalition with the SPD or the Green Party.  
Image: x (Aleph), Wikipedia*



Meanwhile, the United States continues to spin its wheels. Late last week the EPA introduced minor changes to proposal to regulate carbon emissions for new power plants, 18 months after the first proposal and opening another round of public comments. [More](#)

*Picture left: Many analysts note that cheap natural gas was already preventing the construction of new coal plants. Image: Southern Company*

**Solar companies: Applied Materials, Tokyo Electron to merge; Solarwatt to accelerate restructuring, REC shareholders approve spin-off of solar division**



This week saw big news of companies merging, spinning off divisions and downsizing. Semiconductor giants Applied Materials and Tokyo Electron (TEL) announced a “merger of equals”. This also brings the crystalline silicon PV equipment capabilities of Applied and the thin-film equipment of TEL under one roof, but the future of each division is still unclear. [More](#)

*Picture left: Applied and Tokyo Electron say that the merger will speed development of innovative products, but have not said what effect, if any, this will have on their respective PV equipment divisions. Image: Applied Materials*



Also this week Solarwatt announced that it will speed its restructuring, including “downsizing” by an unspecified number of positions at an unspecified date. The company says that it is moving to more flexible business units, and shifting its orientation from mass production to intelligent system solutions. [More](#)

*Picture left: Solarwatt has not stated how many positions it will eliminate, or when*



Finally, this week REC's shareholders gave their blessing for the spin-off of the company's solar division. REC Solar will be based in Singapore, and the remaining company based in Norway will be renamed REC Silicon. [More](#)

*Picture left: REC Solar will be headquartered in Singapore, where REC's PV manufacturing is located*

## SEIA proposal on end to trade war; SolarWorld not satisfied



This week SEIA proposed a solution to serve as a centerpiece to ending the U.S.-China trade war, by having Chinese PV makers donate to a fund to assist U.S. PV makers and U.S. market growth.

[More](#)

*Picture left: SEIA President and CEO Rhone Resch says that the deal would benefit both the American and Chinese PV industries, but also American consumers*



However, SolarWorld has expressed skepticism over the deal, stating that it does not address all of China's illegal trade practices, and stating that it plans to continue pursuing expanded trade action.

[More](#)

*Picture left: SolarWorld's legal counsel says that he doesn't feel that the proposal will address all of China's unfair trade practices*

## First Solar breaks ground on 150 MW-AC PV plant in Southern California



Regardless of trade wars or their settlement, the U.S. utility-scale market continues to advance. Late last week First Solar announced that it had begun construction of a 150 MW-AC solar photovoltaic (PV) project in Southern California's Imperial Valley, which it expects to complete by July 2014. [More](#)

*Picture left: With strong natural solar potential, the Imperial Valley is a popular location for large solar PV projects*

## Lazard: U.S. utility-scale solar costs fall to USD 0.071-0.082/kWh



This week Lazard produced its annual estimates of levelized cost of electricity (LCOE) for various renewable energy technologies. The company notes that utility-scale solar is cheaper than ever, and well below the cost of peaking plants or diesel in any region of the world. [More](#)

*Picture left: Lazard finds that the LCOE for utility-scale PV installations featuring leading technologies has fallen more than 50% in the last four years. Image: NRG*

Promotion

**FREE registration to Solar Energy UK (formerly Solar Power UK)**

Solar Energy UK returns to the NEC, running from the 8th – 10th October at the NEC Birmingham, here are a few exciting things to look forward to at this year’s event:



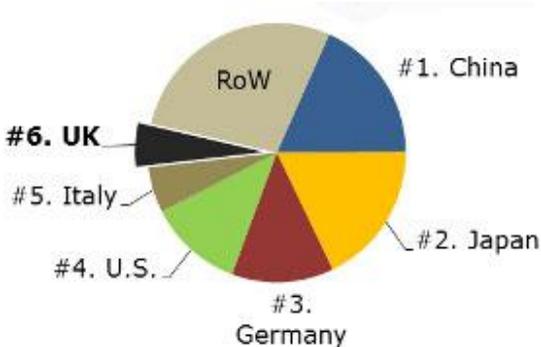
Join our newest exhibitors: Shenzhen Invt Electric Co Ltd, Freeth Cartwright, Avasco Industries BV, Tata Steel, BBA, Earthwish Products Ltd, Orkli, Elemko S.A. Cleantec Trade, VENTUS LTD and P.M. Service, SolarEdge along with 86 other companies exhibiting so far in Hall 3 at the NEC, Birmingham this October. Don’t miss the largest solar dedicated B2B event in the UK!

**Registration for the exhibition is free of charge.** To make sure you’re part of the UK’s solar future, avoid queues by fast tracking your entry. [REGISTER TODAY](#).

Don’t forget to join us for the inaugural Solar Power Portal Awards Dinner taking place on the first evening of Solar Energy UK, 8 October at the Hilton NEC. Book your tickets here: <http://sppawards.solarenergyevents.com/awards-ceremony>

- **Discover** the latest products, ground-breaking innovation and solutions at our **Technology Theatre** – NEW to 2013, while securing your supply chain at *Solar Energy UK’s free* exhibition.
- **Engage** in our all-new seminar series at **Solar Business Seminar Hall** for up-to-date policy changes, market trends, latest technologies and large-scale solar investment in 2013.
- **Develop** new skills and discover trade secrets at our specially-designed, open plan feature areas: **Large Scale PV** and **Practical PV** sponsored by DulasMHH. Take part in daily practical demonstrations and get the best advice on products from industry experts.
- **Network** with all your industry contacts under one roof and get the answers you need to kick-start your solar project.

**NPD Solarbuzz predicts UK market will stabilize in H2 2013**



Finally, this week NPD Solarbuzz offered a more detailed look at the UK PV market, noting that the Renewables Obligation has become the most important policy for adding new capacity, and predicting that the market will finally stabilize in the second half of 2013. [More](#)

*Picture left: The UK has become the world's sixth largest PV market in the first half of 2013*

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

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