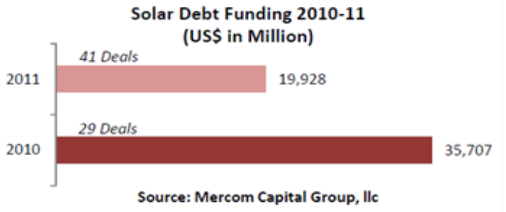



Category	Title	Link																	
Industry News	<p align="center">2011 Sees \$1.9 Billion in Solar Venture Capital, \$4 Billion in M&A <i>No Sign of 'Solyndra Effect' Yet</i></p>	<p align="center">http://budurl.com/MercomS11</p>																	
<p><i>Mercom Exclusive</i></p>	<p>Mercom Capital Group, llc, a global clean energy communications and consulting firm, released its annual and fourth quarter funding and merger and acquisition (M&A) activity report for the solar sector in 2011. “Investment activity in 2011 was robust,” said Raj Prabhu, managing partner of Mercom.</p> <p>“Whether you point to the dramatic module price declines, Europe’s diminishing incentives, or the so-called ‘Solyndra effect’, solar continued to gain attention and dollars for technology and innovation through venture capital funding.” Venture capital (VC) funding and M&A activity were strong in 2011, setting records for number of deals and M&A activity. <i>Notable findings include:</i></p> <p align="center">View Full Report: Solar Funding and M&A 2011 Fourth Quarter and Annual Report http://budurl.com/MercomCER11</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VC investment in solar totaled \$1.9B in 111 deals in 2011 the highest number of deals ever in a single year. By comparison, there were 65 VC deals in 2010, 84 in 2009, 93 in 2008, and 71 in 2007. Thin-film technology raised the most VC funding (\$595.5M in 17 deals), beating downstream companies (\$339M in 26 deals), photovoltaics (\$338M in 20 deals), concentrated solar power (\$308M in 13 deals), and concentrated PV (\$129M in 10 deals). • The solar thermal power company BrightSource Energy raised \$201M in Series E funding, making it the largest single VC investment of 2011. Stion, a manufacturer of high-efficiency thin-film solar modules, came in second when it announced a \$130M raise led by AVACO and Korean private equity funds. The third and fourth highest VC fundraising rounds were by thin-film solar panel maker MiaSolé (\$106M, Series F), and solar cell developer Suniva (\$94.4M, Series D) respectively. • The top VC investor of 2011 was Kleiner Perkins Caufield & Byers, which completed eight transactions, followed by GE and Good Energies, with six transactions each. There were 182 VC investors in solar in 2011.  <table border="1"> <caption>Solar Debt Funding 2010-11 (US\$ in Million)</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Year</th> <th>Deals</th> <th>Amount (US\$ in Million)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2011</td> <td>41 Deals</td> <td>19,928</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2010</td> <td>29 Deals</td> <td>35,707</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p align="center">Source: Mercom Capital Group, llc</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • M&A activity in 2011 was more than double that of 2010 in terms of dollars, and approximately 33 percent more in deals. There were \$4 billion in M&A activity in 65 deals of which only 26 were disclosed, compared to just over \$2 billion in 44 deals in 2010. The largest single M&A transaction was Total’s (the French oil & gas company) 60 percent stake in the solar manufacturer SunPower, accounting for \$1.4 billion of the \$4 billion. • While Solyndra dominated headlines in the US and globally, over \$700M worth of VC investment came after the solar manufacturer’s bankruptcy announcement on Aug. 31, 2011. • Fourth quarter VC funding totaled \$511M, compared to \$372M in Q3, \$354M in Q2, and \$658M in Q1. <p>“Falling panel prices and oversupply brought about a lot of consolidation activity,” added Prabhu. “With valuations of publicly-traded solar companies at record lows, M&A was the go-to exit strategy.”</p> <p>The United States led all other countries in number of deals and VC funding, with 84 deals and over \$1.5 billion of investments. The United Kingdom completed the second highest number of deals with five, and India garnered the second highest amount of VC funding with \$95 million.</p> <p>Globally, debt financing totaled \$20 billion. The top debt investor was the China Development Bank. Chinese loans, credit facilities and framework agreements came to \$15.7 billion in ten transactions. Mercom Capital Group’s report also included information on project-specific funding, U.S. Department of Energy Loan Guarantee awards, new funds, restructuring and bankruptcies. <i>Source: Mercom Capital Group, llc, Jan 2012</i></p>  <table border="1"> <caption>Loans, Credit Facilities, Strategic Financing and Framework Agreements Involving Chinese Banks to Chinese Solar Companies for 2010-11 (US\$ in Million)</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Year</th> <th>Amount (US\$ in Million)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2010</td> <td>32,616</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2011</td> <td>15,503</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>48,119</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p align="center">Source: Mercom Capital Group, llc</p>	Year	Deals	Amount (US\$ in Million)	2011	41 Deals	19,928	2010	29 Deals	35,707	Year	Amount (US\$ in Million)	2010	32,616	2011	15,503	Total	48,119	<p align="center">http://budurl.com/MercomS11</p>
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Industry News	<p align="center">Signs Emerging That Germany is Planning FIT Cap</p>	<p align="center">http://budurl.com/mercomsgfc</p>																	
	<p>Ever clearer signals are emerging that Germany’s Federal Government is planning a new type of cap for solar subsidies. According to the latest plans, only a yearly electricity yield of a maximum 900 kilowatt (kW) hours per kW peak will qualify for a tariff. Such a rule would, above all, benefit Chinese module and inverter suppliers. At the moment, negotiations about solar subsidies between the Federal Ministry of Economics are at their zenith. Meanwhile, it seems to be quite probable that cuts to photovoltaics feed-in tariffs (FITs) staggered across the year could be brought forward and after that a monthly, low, single-figure depression implemented. This is in order to avoid year-end surges as seen in, for example, December 2011.</p> <p>However, indications have been strengthening for several days that the Federal Government is also seeking to implement a cap on FITs for photovoltaic modules. According to sources close to negotiations, a subsidy limit figure of a maximum 900 kWh could be placed on the annual yield per installed kWp. In Germany, the average photovoltaic installation produces, at good locations, up to 1,150 kWh per kWp annually. The quantity of solar electricity produced beyond this limit would then, the proposal envisages, be marketed by the module operators themselves.</p> <p>Apparently the Federal Ministry for the Environment is the author of the new solar subsidy proposal. The Ministry itself did not comment to an enquiry about the state of negotiations. It only confirmed that, at the moment, at all levels, high-pressure negotiations were taking place. Next up are discussions between Minister Norbert Röttgen, Christian Democrat (CDU) and Philip Rösler of the Liberals (FDP).</p> <p>By the end of Feb., at the latest, a proposal about photovoltaic tariffs should be on the table. The legislation being discussed conceals many pitfalls and uncertainties for PV plant operators. It would likely be difficult for the operators of small and medium installations to market amounts of surplus solar electricity. In addition, with the law, income from yields would no longer be able to be planned upon. And as such, financing modules would become more difficult.</p> <p>A further factor would be that the Federal Government would, with this new rule, step into conflict with the Renewable Energy Law (EEG) as currently understood, and also no longer encourage the improvement of efficiency and quality in modules and inverters. In fact the new legislation would encourage the use of cheap modules and inverters, which would probably largely originate from Asia.</p> <p>In addition, such legislation would make, in the future, the sound planning and maintenance of photovoltaic installations unattractive. Again, it would be above all smaller and medium-sized companies in Germany which would be affected by the proposed law. For them, countless contracts would fall through. A spokesperson of the Ministry of the Environment said that Minister of Economics Phillip Rösler’s continually referenced figure of 33.3 gigawatts (GW) of installed photovoltaic capacity by 2020 was not based on the Federal Government’s Energy Concept 2010.</p> <p>In fact it apparently relates only to a potential scenario. The only binding figure for photovoltaic installation in the country is based on the National Renewable Energy Action Plan. In this, the Federal Government had stated to the European Commission in Brussels that it was expecting an installed capacity in Germany of 51.75 GW by 2020. <i>Source: PV Magazine, Feb 11</i></p>																		

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Company News	California Solar Deal Hits a Snag <i>Construction-Permit Delay Could Derail First Solar's \$1.36 Billion Power-Plant Sale to Exelon</i>	http://budurl.com/mercomcdhs																																													
	<p>A \$1.36B government-backed deal for a Southern California solar farm has hit a snag and could be days from unraveling, all due to a local construction permit. First Solar, one of the world's largest solar-panel manufacturers, warned Thursday that it might have to buy back the 230MW plant it sold to Exelon if the Department of Energy doesn't begin funding a loan made to finance the deal later this month.</p> <p>The project has yet to receive any payments from a \$646M federal-government loan finalized in September because of an issue with a construction permit that First Solar obtained from Los Angeles County. Exelon, which bought the project for about \$1.36 billion, can walk away from the deal and force First Solar to return \$75 million that Exelon had already paid should the loan payments not flow by a Feb. 24 deadline.</p> <p>"Exelon remains committed to Antelope Valley Solar Ranch One and expects to receive the initial loan advance upon resolution of the construction-permit issue," said Exelon spokesman Paul Elsberg. First Solar spokesman Alan Bernheimer said the company is proceeding with the construction of the project, which has 185 workers on site, but declined to comment further. Energy Department spokesman Damien LaVera said the agency "continues to support this project" but also that its loan guarantees "have strict conditions in place to protect taxpayers." The department can only disburse such funds "after all applicable permitting issues are resolved," Mr. LaVera said.</p> <p>Should the deal fall apart, First Solar would sustain a blow to its developing emphasis on designing, building and selling large solar projects to developers a strategy that was supposed to keep the company on an even keel amid squeezed margins affecting its solar-manufacturing business, which has seen industry-wide head winds. <i>Source: WSJ, Feb 11</i></p>																																														
Industry News	Spain Ends New Renewable-Energy Subsidies	http://budurl.com/mercomsenr																																													
	<p>Spain's Congress yesterday approved Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy's royal decree to halt subsidies for new renewable-energy projects, Cinco Dias reported. Rajoy's People's Party voted in favor, while three smaller parties abstained and the rest of the Parliamentary groups including the main opposition Socialists voted against the measure, which is already in effect, the newspaper said, citing newswire Efe.</p> <p>Energy Minister Jose Manuel Soria said the goal of ending above-market payments for solar and wind energy projects is to help eliminate Spain's so-called tariff deficit, which he called an "insurmountable" obstacle to the proper development of clean-energy technology, the report said. Soria said the suspension of premium power rates will likely last until the country has eliminated the power system deficit, which has created a 24B Euro (\$32B) debt by charging consumers less than the revenue booked by utilities, according to the report. <i>Source: Bloomberg, Feb 10</i></p>																																														
Industry News	Spot PV Module Price Trends for January in Europe	http://budurl.com/mercompvtr																																													
	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="4">Price trends January 2012</th> </tr> <tr> <th>Module type, origin</th> <th>€ / Wp</th> <th>Trend since 12/2011</th> <th>Trend since 01/2011</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Crystalline Germany</td> <td>1.07</td> <td>↓ -4.5%</td> <td>↓ -37.3%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Crystalline China</td> <td>0.79</td> <td>↓ -2.5%</td> <td>↓ -46.3%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Crystalline Japan</td> <td>1.05</td> <td>↓ -4.5%</td> <td>↓ -35.6%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Thin film CdS / CdTe</td> <td>0.68</td> <td>↓ -6.8%</td> <td>↓ -45.5%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Thin film a-Si</td> <td>0.60</td> <td>↓ -6.3%</td> <td>↓ -44.2%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Thin film a-Si/μ-Si</td> <td>0.76</td> <td>↓ -7.3%</td> <td>↓ -39.8%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p><i>Data provided by pvXchange.com, Mercom Capital Group</i></p> <p>Notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The prices for solar modules continued to fall in December Many distributors gave additional discounts to clear or reduce stocks for the year-end closing, this trend has impacted especially Tier 2 and Tier 3 manufacturers. Selected Tier 1 manufacturers sold at higher prices which resulted in a more moderate price drop in the month of December compared to previous months The reasons behind this differing price development towards the end of 2011 were a higher demand for Tier 1 manufacturers which collided with low dealer inventories on specific brands. Many dealers avoided additional stocking as a result of the high inventory levels and write-offs in the first half of 2011. As a result, some module types were in shortage or higher priced towards the end of the year with a record installation number of an estimated 3 GW achieved in Germany in Dec. alone. <p>Explanation: 1) Only prices for PV modules are shown. 2) The prices are not retail prices. For an average turn-key solar system, the value in Germany for crystalline modules are approximately 1.5 to 1.9 multiplied by 1.9 to 2.4 and for thin film. 3) The rates represent the average offer prices on the international spot market. <i>Source: Mercom Capital Group, pvXchange, Feb 2012</i></p>		Price trends January 2012				Module type, origin	€ / Wp	Trend since 12/2011	Trend since 01/2011	Crystalline Germany	1.07	↓ -4.5%	↓ -37.3%	Crystalline China	0.79	↓ -2.5%	↓ -46.3%	Crystalline Japan	1.05	↓ -4.5%	↓ -35.6%	Thin film CdS / CdTe	0.68	↓ -6.8%	↓ -45.5%	Thin film a-Si	0.60	↓ -6.3%	↓ -44.2%	Thin film a-Si/μ-Si	0.76	↓ -7.3%	↓ -39.8%													
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Industry News	India: Maharashtra Electricity Regulatory Commission Public Notice: Draft Tariff Order for The Third Year of Control Period (FY 2012-13)	http://budurl.com/mercommercprn																																													
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Funding News	Soitec Secures Financing for 50 MW Solar Power Plant in South Africa	http://budurl.com/mercomsofp																																													
	<p>Soitec (Euronext), a world leader in generating and manufacturing revolutionary semiconductor materials for the electronics and energy industries, has secured financing from Investec Bank Ltd., one of the leading investment banks in Africa, to build the company's planned 50 megawatt peak solar power plant in Touwsrivier, Western Cape, South Africa. Investec has committed to finance the project and raise the equity to construct the plant, which will be equipped with Soitec's fifth-generation Concentrix™ concentrator photovoltaic (CPV) systems.</p> <p>All financial arrangements are expected to be finalized by the end of the second quarter of 2012. In December 2011, Soitec was selected by South Africa's Department of Energy as one of the preferred bidders under the country's independent power producer (IPP) program. Soitec's initial project in this program is the solar plant in Touwsrivier, near the Aquila Private Game Reserve where Soitec has already installed a pilot facility. According to South Africa's Department of Energy, the country's goal is that 42 percent of all newly installed capacity in the next 20 years will be based on renewable-energy sources. <i>Source: Soitec, Feb 09</i></p>																																														

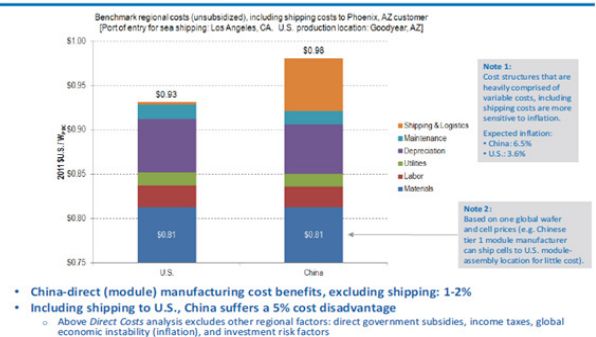
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Industry News	UK: Improvements to the Feed-in Tariffs Scheme	http://budurl.com/mercomuift																				
	<p>The Government has today announced plans to ensure the future of the Feed-in Tariffs scheme to make it more predictable. Transparency, longevity and certainty are at the heart of the new improved scheme. The reforms will provide greater confidence to consumers and industry investing in exciting renewable technologies such as solar power, anaerobic digestion, micro-CHP, wind and hydro power.</p> <p>The Feed-in Tariffs (FITs) scheme provides a subsidy, paid for by all consumers through their energy bills, enabling small scale renewable and low carbon technologies to compete against higher carbon forms of electricity generation. The surge of solar PV installations in the latter part of last year, due to a 45% reduction in estimated installation costs since 2009, has placed a huge strain on the FITs budget. <i>A better FIT scheme for consumers and communities:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A tariff of 21p (~\$33 cents)/kWh will take effect from 1st April this year for domestic-size solar panels with an eligibility date on or after 3rd March 2012. Other tariff reductions apply for larger installations. • The Department has listened carefully to feedback on the energy efficiency proposals that we put forward in the consultation of 31st October. Properties installing solar panels on or after 1st April this year will be required to produce an Energy Performance Certificate rating of 'D' or above to qualify for a full FIT. The previous proposals for a 'C' rating or a commitment for all Green Deal measures to be installed was seen as impractical at this stage. We estimate that about half of all properties are already eligible for a 'D' rating. • From 1st April 2012, new 'multi-installation' tariff rates set at 80% of the standard tariffs will be introduced for solar PV installations where a single individual or organisation is already receiving FITs for other solar PV installations. This reflects the lower costs of such installations, as they benefit from the economies of scale. Based on the feedback received, the threshold is set at more than 25 installations. Individuals or organisations with 25 or fewer installations will still be eligible for the individual rate. DECC is now consulting on a proposal that social housing, community projects and distributed energy schemes be exempt from these multi-installation tariff rates. • The tariff for micro-CHP installations will be increased to recognise the benefits this technology could bring and to encourage its development. <p>A better FIT scheme for industry: • In line with the evidence of falling costs for solar PV, DECC is proposing to peg the subsidy levels to cost reductions and industry growth to provide more certainty for future investments. This will ensure that subsidy levels keep in step with the market. It builds on the best of the existing German system and will remove the need for emergency reviews.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using budget flexibility to cover the overspend resulting from high PV uptake this year, while still allowing £460M (~\$730M) for new installations over the Spending Review period. This won't have any impact on consumer bills beyond the agreed overall cap on renewable subsidies as it will primarily be funded from an under spend on the budget allocated for large-scale renewables. <i>Source: DECC, Feb 09</i> 																					
Industry News	Chinese Tier 2 PV Module Utilization Fell To Record Low in Q4'11	http://budurl.com/mercomctmu																				
	<p>The average production capacity utilization rate of Chinese Tier 2 crystalline PV module manufacturers fell to just 35% in Q4'11 according to the latest quarterly report from IMS Research and is forecast to fall even lower in Q1'12. As a result of high inventory levels and a weak outlook for demand in 2012, many suppliers closed down production lines, or suspended production entirely, resulting in utilization falling to the lowest level IMS Research has recorded. This is a sharp contrast to a year ago, when utilization rates of these suppliers hit 80% in Q4'10.</p> <p>In 2010, most Chinese Tier 2 suppliers rapidly expanded their capacity as demand boomed, and these capacity expansions continued in 2011 with the expectation of another strong year. With global installations growing by 'just' 25% in 2011, compared to 160% in 2010, these rapid capacity expansions led to a severe over capacity. As a result, total PV module production capacity in 2012 will be nearly double the true market demand.</p> <div data-bbox="228 1171 716 1472"> <p>PV Module Utilization of Chinese Tier 2 Suppliers Quarterly Utilization (%)</p>  <table border="1"> <caption>PV Module Utilization of Chinese Tier 2 Suppliers Quarterly Utilization (%)</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Quarter</th> <th>Utilization (%)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>Q1'10</td><td>65</td></tr> <tr><td>Q2'10</td><td>70</td></tr> <tr><td>Q3'10</td><td>75</td></tr> <tr><td>Q4'10</td><td>80</td></tr> <tr><td>Q1'11</td><td>50</td></tr> <tr><td>Q2'11</td><td>45</td></tr> <tr><td>Q3'11</td><td>35</td></tr> <tr><td>Q4'11</td><td>30</td></tr> <tr><td>Q1'12</td><td>35</td></tr> </tbody> </table> <p><small>Source: IMS Research</small></p> </div> <p>“During 2010 and early 2011, demand for Chinese Tier 2 modules had benefited from OEM supply agreements for Chinese Tier 1 and other suppliers,” commented Jessica Jin, PV Market Analyst at IMS Research. “As Chinese Tier 1 and other suppliers are now more able to meet demand for their products with their own production capacities, demand for OEM products has declined. Combined with high inventory levels, this has resulted in the shipments of Chinese Tier 2 suppliers declining each quarter in 2011, forcing suppliers to reduce production and resulting in record low utilization levels,” continued Jin.</p> <p>Low utilization has also impacted on PV module prices. In an attempt to clear high inventory levels, Chinese Tier 2 suppliers have aggressively decreased their prices and the average price from Chinese Tier 2 suppliers in Q4'11 was 37% lower than in Q4'10. Despite the rapid decline of Chinese Tier 2 pricing, according to IMS Research's Monthly PV Module Price Tracker, distributor pricing for these modules was 16% higher than supplier pricing in December, as local distributors capitalized on end-of-year rushes in major European markets.</p> <p>IMS Research predicts that utilization of Chinese Tier 2 suppliers will begin to rise again in Q2'12, due to reduced inventory levels, most suppliers halting capacity expansions, and some suppliers exiting the market. <i>Source: IMS Research, Feb 09</i></p>	Quarter	Utilization (%)	Q1'10	65	Q2'10	70	Q3'10	75	Q4'10	80	Q1'11	50	Q2'11	45	Q3'11	35	Q4'11	30	Q1'12	35	
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M&A News	Aztec Solar Acquires Stockton Solar Company	http://budurl.com/mercomassk																				
	<p>A large Sacramento solar company has acquired a top Stockton solar company and plans to expand services in Northern California and product distribution nationally. Aztec Solar, Inc. recently acquired Solahart Services of Stockton California. Aztec Solar, a Sacramento based residential and commercial solar company, is excited about acquiring Solahart's regional and national solar customers. Solahart provides solar installation and repair as well as solar water heating products. <i>Source: Aztec Solar, Feb 09</i></p>																					
Company News	Solon S.p.A. Closes Module Production Plant Down	http://budurl.com/mercoscmp																				
	<p>The Italian arm of Solon has announced a new strategy, aimed at repositioning itself as a systems integrator. As such, will close its 95 megawatt photovoltaic module production plant on February 20. Seventy employees will be affected by the changes. The subsidiary has been part of the now insolvent Solon Group since December 2006. Until recently, it has specialized in the production and sale of modules, and in system integration. The new decision has been made as part of a restructuring of the whole Solon Group. The company cites strong competitive pressure from Asian manufacturers as a key reason.</p> <p>In a statement released, the Italian subsidiary says it will now focus more on its experience and engineering know-how, in order to position itself as a system integrator, focusing on the design, development, realization and maintenance of turnkey photovoltaic systems. A spokesperson for the company tells pv magazine that it will also distribute modules in Italy, which have been produced at its two production sites in Germany. They add that all module contracts with customers will be fulfilled via its Griefswald and Berlin sites. Furthermore, it says that in the future, within in the Solon Group, the production of particular special applications, which are in demand will be concentrated in one location. <i>Source: PV Magazine, Feb 09</i></p>																					

Category	Title	Link
Quarterly Report	Amtech Reports First Quarter Fiscal 2012 Results	http://budurl.com/mercomatfq
	<p>Amtech Systems, a global supplier of production and automation systems and related supplies for the manufacture of solar cells, semiconductors, and sapphire and silicon wafers, today reported results for its first fiscal quarter ending December 31, 2011. <i>First Quarter Fiscal 2012 Financial Summary:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Net revenue of \$24.7 million • Solar revenue of \$15.6 million • Semi revenue of \$9.1 million • Quarterly bookings of \$11.1 million • Gross margin of 29% • Operating loss of \$1.8 million • Net loss \$876,000, or \$(0.09) per diluted share • Quarter-end backlog of \$69.2 million; solar backlog \$55.8 million <p>Net revenue for the first quarter of fiscal 2012 was \$24.7 million, down 59% sequentially from \$59.9 million for the preceding quarter, and down 54% from \$53.7 million for the first quarter of fiscal 2011. The decrease was driven by lower system shipments to customers in the solar industry. Semiconductor revenue totaled \$9.1 million a 16% increase from semiconductor revenue in the first quarter of fiscal 2011 and 19% higher than the fourth quarter of fiscal 2011. Total orders in the first quarter of fiscal 2012 were \$11.1 million (\$3.1 million solar), down 34% compared to total orders of \$16.8 million (\$4.7 million solar) in the preceding quarter due primarily to overcapacity in the solar market.</p> <p>At December 31, 2011, the Company's total order backlog was \$69.2 million, compared to total backlog of \$85.9 million at September 30, 2011. Total backlog at December 31, 2011 includes \$55.8 million in solar orders and deferred revenue, compared to solar backlog of \$71.2 million at September 30, 2011. The effect of foreign exchange on backlog was a negative \$3.1 million in the December quarter.</p> <p>Selling, general and administrative (SG&A) expenses in the first quarter of fiscal 2012 were \$6.3 million, or 25% of revenue, compared to \$10.1 million, or 17% of revenue, in the preceding quarter and \$10.4 million, or 19% of revenue, in the first quarter of fiscal 2011. The decrease in SG&A expenses, as compared to the first quarter of fiscal 2011, was primarily due to lower commissions and shipping costs associated with lower volumes and lower legal and consulting fees associated with our acquisition activities.</p> <p>Research and Development expense was \$2.8 million in the first quarter of fiscal 2012 compared to \$2.1 million in the preceding quarter and \$0.8 million in the first quarter of fiscal 2011. The year-over-year quarterly change is primarily due to investment in the Company's solar ion-implant project and development costs associated with other product and technology development programs.</p> <p>Depreciation and amortization in the first quarter of fiscal 2012 was \$769,000, compared to \$818,000 in the fourth quarter of fiscal 2011. Included in the first quarter of fiscal 2012 results is \$465,000 of stock option expense, compared to \$374,000 in the fiscal first quarter a year ago and \$371,000 in the fourth quarter of 2011. The income tax benefit in the first quarter of fiscal 2012 is \$320,000, resulting in an effective tax rate of approximately 18%, which reflects non-deductible losses related to our research and development investments in China.</p> <p>The net loss for the first quarter of fiscal 2012 was \$876,000, or loss of \$0.09 diluted per share, compared to net income of \$5.0 million, or \$0.52 per diluted share, for the first quarter of fiscal 2011, and net income of \$3.1 million, or \$0.31 per diluted share, in the preceding quarter. The decrease was primarily due to lower sales volumes and increased investment in research and development.</p> <p>Total cash and cash equivalents at December 31, 2011 were \$54.9 million, compared to \$67.4 million at September 30, 2011. The decrease in cash is primarily due to payments to vendors in excess of receipts from customers and payments made in October to shareholders of Kingstone Technology Hong Kong Limited (Kingstone) in connection with the amendment to the Kingstone stock purchase agreement. <i>Source: Amtech Systems, Feb 09</i></p>	
Funding News	IQE Raises £10.5M (~\$16.7M) and Invests in CPV Cell Developer Solar Junction	http://budurl.com/mercomiqesj
	<p>Epiwafer foundry and substrate maker IQE plc of Cardiff, Wales, UK has signed a strategic investment agreement and an exclusive epiwafer supply agreement with Solar Junction Corp of San Jose, CA, USA, which manufactures III-V multi-junction solar cells for concentrated photovoltaic (CPV) modules. IQE has placed 43,750,000 new ordinary shares with institutional investors - via bookrunners Espirito Santo Investment Bank and Canaccord Genuity Ltd - at a price of 24 pence (~\$38 cents) per ordinary share to raise £10.5M (\$16.7M). Net proceeds will be used to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fund an equity investment to take a 9% stake in SJC (about \$5M); • purchase high-volume molecular beam epitaxy (MBE) production tools dedicated to manufacturing epiwafers for SJC's cells (\$8M); and • fund the cost of ancillary quality control equipment, process transfer and to establish initial wafer manufacturing at IQE (\$2M). <p><i>Source: Semiconductor Today, Feb 09</i></p>	
Quarterly Report	REC's Fourth Quarter and Full Year 2011 Results	http://budurl.com/mercomrfqy
	<p>Renewable Energy Corporation ASA (REC) reported fourth quarter 2011 revenues of NOK 2,865M (~\$493M) and EBITDA of NOK 178M (~\$31M). EBITDA was negatively affected by a weak solar market, aggressive polysilicon pricing and close down of production capacity in Norway. Affecting EBIT, REC recognized a further NOK 2.5B (~\$431M) impairment on fixed assets of the Singapore operations in the quarter.</p> <p>REC reduced net debt by NOK 0.6B (~\$0.1B) in the fourth quarter to NOK 4.7B (~\$809M). After a steep price decline on solar modules, investments in PV systems are currently yielding favorable end-user returns in a number of markets. However overcapacity and inventory reductions led to steep market price declines throughout the fourth quarter. After a slow start, demand for solar modules improved at the very end of the fourth quarter.</p> <p>REC's fourth quarter revenues were down five percent from the previous quarter, while EBITDA was NOK 178M (~\$31M) in the fourth quarter, down from NOK 370M (~\$64M) in the previous quarter. The decrease in revenues and EBITDA is mainly explained by reduced selling prices partly offset by higher sales volumes.</p> <p>Compared to the previous quarter, REC's average selling prices for polysilicon were down 42 percent, wafer prices were down 31 percent and module prices were down 15 percent. In the fourth quarter REC recognized income of NOK 690M (~\$119M) from terminations of wafer sales contracts partly offset by costs of NOK 335M (~\$58M) related to permanent shutdown of the cell production and approximately 50 percent of the wafer production capacity in Norway. For the year 2011 revenues amounted to NOK 13,366M (~\$2,302M), down three percent from 2010.</p> <p>EBITDA in 2011 amounted to NOK 2,867M (~\$494M), down from NOK 3,532M (~\$608M) in 2010. EBIT before impairment charges was negative NOK 288M (~\$50M) in the fourth quarter, compared to negative NOK 98M (~\$17M) in the previous quarter. A weaker market outlook led to impairment charges of NOK 2.5B (~\$431M) on fixed assets in Singapore in the fourth quarter.</p> <p>After total impairments of NOK 10.1B (~\$1.7B) in 2011, EBIT for the full year 2011 was negative NOK 9,508M (~\$1,638M) down from positive NOK 1,018M (~\$175M) in 2010. Loss from total operations was NOK 2,482M (~\$427M) in the fourth quarter, compared loss of NOK 759M (~\$131M) in the previous quarter. For the year 2011, REC had a loss from total operations of NOK 10,030M (~\$1,727M), compared to a profit before tax of NOK 989M (~\$170M) in 2010. <i>Source: REC, Feb 08</i></p>	

Category	Title	Link
Industry News	Breaking Down the Barriers to Solar Photovoltaic Development: More Work Needs To Be Done	http://budurl.com/mercombdbd
	<p>PV LEGAL project finds that despite some progress, many EU Member States still must remove obstacles to the deployment of renewable energy systems, especially solar PV. One year after the deadline for transposing the RES Directive, with which the EU aims to reach 20% of renewable energy sources (RES) by 2020, how well have Member States done in reducing bureaucratic barriers to the development of solar photovoltaic (PV) power? PV LEGAL, a two-and-a-half-year European initiative, answers this question in a new report looking at 12 key countries.</p> <p>The results are decidedly mixed. In some countries, improvements have been observed. For example, developing a residential system is much quicker in France, Greece, Germany, the Netherlands and Portugal. Online registration systems, less stringent permitting requirements, and one-stop shop systems have helped reduce the time required to process requests.</p> <p>But elsewhere in Europe the picture is not as bright. In Spain, overly burdensome bureaucracy is the reason for needing an incredible 89 weeks to develop a commercial rooftop system. Complying with these regulations and grid connection processes represents almost half the development cost of a project. The same is true in Bulgaria and in the UK. "Europe's policymakers must continue to stress the importance of removing these barriers if the EU's RES goals are to be achieved," said Reinhold Buttgereit, Secretary General of the European Photovoltaic Industry Association (EPIA), one of the PV LEGAL partners.</p> <p>Since PV will play an important role in the EU renewable energy share in 2020, it is important to make sure that the development of this technology is not hindered by administrative barriers. Lowering administrative costs will improve the cost-effectiveness of investments in photovoltaic systems, thus stimulate higher investment volumes and give leverage to the national authorities to reduce financial support.</p> <p>Grid connection difficulties remain the greatest bottleneck to deploy easily photovoltaic systems. Lengthy procedures, unclear interpretation of rules or excessive costs are some of the main barriers encountered in most of the markets studied in the project. "European countries must set clear deadlines, and institute proportionate and transparent grid connection costs to avoid discriminatory situations," said Jorg Mayer of BSW-Solar, German Solar Industry Association, the project's coordinator. <i>Source: EPIA, Feb 08</i></p>	
Industry News	PV Inverter Market Achieves Record Shipments in 2011	http://budurl.com/mercompirs
	<p>The PV inverter market achieved a new record in 2011 with shipments exceeding 26 GW for the first time according to preliminary results from IMS Research. The research firm found that inverter shipments grew by more than 10% in 2011, despite the huge inventory overhang from the year before. IMS Research's preliminary Q4'11 report, which was released on Monday found that inverter shipments grew by up to 15% in 2011, with more than 8 GW shipped in the last quarter of the year. The report, which is widely considered the most accurate indicator for the PV inverter industry, as it collects sales and shipment data from more than 40 of the largest manufacturers, accounting for more than 85% of the industry, found major regional variations.</p> <p>"Germany remained the largest market, but saw shipments fall by more than a quarter in 2011. This was because of the very high inventory levels in the country at the start of the year as customers sat on high stocks of string inverters. Although many of these inverters were subsequently re-exported to other markets or returned to manufacturers, underlying demand was still not high enough and saw shipment sink considerably", commented Senior Research Director Ash Sharma. Whilst the German market performed poorly in 2011, this was more than offset by other markets.</p> <p>China performed extremely well following the country's introduction of its FIT and saw shipments of nearly 3 GW, whilst the Americas market achieved shipments of close to 4 GW. The report also found that whilst both Italy and the UK drove high inverter shipment growth, this was not enough to prevent the European market from falling in 2011.</p> <p>In total IMS Research estimates shipments grew by up to 15% globally in 2011 but revenues were flat in US Dollar terms and slightly down in Euros. The research firm estimates that inventory levels have returned to more "normal" levels, though again significant regional variations are occurring.</p> <p>"Inventory levels have greatly reduced in Europe, with inverters being re-exported from Germany, especially those not compliant with the new low-voltage directive requirements.</p> <p>However, inventory levels are understood to have increased considerably in the USA and Asia. In the USA this was caused by customers stock-piling large volumes of inverters ahead of the expiration of the 1603 program. These inverters will of course now be installed in 2012," explained Sharma. <i>Source: IMS Research, Feb 08</i></p>	
Technology News	Here Comes the Sun	http://budurl.com/mercomshyc
	<p>Scientists have developed a new kind of solar cell which could capture significantly more of the energy from the sun than current cells. New solar cells could increase the maximum efficiency of solar panels by over 25%, according to scientists from the University of Cambridge. Scientists from the Cavendish Laboratory, the University's Department of Physics, have developed a novel type of solar cell which could harvest energy from the sun much more efficiently than traditional designs. The research, published today in the journal NanoLetters, could dramatically improve the amount of useful energy created by solar panels.</p> <p>The Cambridge team, led by Professor Neil Greenham and Professor Sir Richard Friend, has developed a hybrid cell which absorbs red light and harnesses the extra energy of blue light to boost the electrical current. Typically, a solar cell generates a single electron for each photon captured. However, by adding pentacene, an organic semiconductor, the solar cells can generate two electrons for every photon from the blue light spectrum. This could enable the cells to capture 44% of the incoming solar energy. <i>Source: University of Cambridge, Feb 08</i></p>	
Technology News	Stanford Engineers' Nanoshell Whispering Galleries Improve Thin Solar Panels	http://budurl.com/mercomsfn
	<p>Engineers at Stanford have created photovoltaic nanoshells that harness a peculiar physical phenomenon to better trap light. The results could dramatically improve the efficiency of thin-film solar cells while reducing their weight and cost. Visitors to Statuary Hall in the U.S. Capitol Building may have experienced a curious acoustic feature that allows a person to whisper softly at one side of the cavernous, half-domed room and for another on the other side to hear every syllable. Sound is whisked around the semi-circular perimeter of the room almost without flaw.</p> <p>The phenomenon is known as a whispering gallery. In a paper published in Nature Communications, a team of engineers at Stanford describes how it has created tiny hollow spheres of photovoltaic nanocrystalline-silicon and harnessed physics to do for light what whispering galleries do for sound. The results, say the engineers, could dramatically reduce materials usage and processing cost. "Nanocrystalline-silicon is a great photovoltaic material. It has a high electrical efficiency and is durable in the harsh sun," said Shanhui Fan, an associate professor of electrical engineering at Stanford and co-author of the paper. "Both have been challenges for other types of thin solar films." The downfall of nanocrystalline-silicon, however, has been its relatively poor absorption of light, which requires thick layering that takes a long time to manufacture. <i>Source: Stanford University, Feb 08</i></p>	

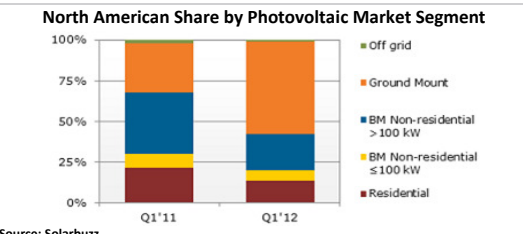
Category	Title	Link
Industry News	China Polysilicon Firms Reportedly File for Bankruptcy	http://budurl.com/mercomcpyf
	<p>The rapid price drop of polysilicon has caused close to 80% of polysilicon firms in China to halt production. As the rebound of polysilicon pricing has been weak, a China-based polysilicon firm is rumored to have filed for bankruptcy. According to local media reports, there are currently 43 polysilicon firms in China but only eight are still operating. The cost of one ton of polysilicon is around CNY300,000 (US\$47,544), but the sales price is only CNY200,000 (~\$31,737). Due to low demand, many China-based polysilicon firms have stopped expanding capacity.</p> <p>In 2011, the spot price of polysilicon exceeded US\$100/kg. By fourth-quarter 2011, the price had dropped to US\$20-25/kg, causing many firms to suspend production. The elimination of polysilicon firms in China has begun. The China government hoped to use mergers and acquisitions to enable small- and medium-size polysilicon firms to continue to exist. However, many large-size peers refused to comply. Polysilicon firms have been having trouble accumulating capital, commented industry sources. <i>Source: Digitimes, Feb 08</i></p>	
ARRA Funding	Energy Department Announces Over \$12 Million to Spur Solar Energy Innovation	http://budurl.com/mercomedei
	<p>As part of the Obama Administration's blueprint for an American economy built to last, today U.S. Energy Secretary Steven Chu announced over \$12 million to speed solar energy innovation from the lab to the marketplace through the Energy Department's SunShot Incubator program. The funding will accelerate American innovation in solar energy and manufacturing by supporting advancements in hardware, reductions in soft costs, and the development of pilot manufacturing and production projects.</p> <p>The funding opportunity announced today builds on the SunShot Incubator program's history of successful partnerships. Nearly forty companies have participated in the Incubator, including Colorado-based PrimeStar. In 2007, DOE's National Renewable Energy Laboratory and PrimeStar Solar announced a cooperative R&D agreement to transition NREL's cadmium telluride solar technology to commercial production.</p> <p>PrimeStar also received a \$3 million Incubator award that year to commercialize its highly-efficient, low-cost photovoltaic solar panels based on the technology pioneered by NREL. Today, PrimeStar is owned by GE, which has announced a \$600 million investment in the company and the construction of a large-scale manufacturing plant in Colorado. Through the Department's SunShot Incubator program, these types of investments help early-stage companies overcome barriers to bring innovative solar technologies to market faster. <i>Source: DOE, Feb 08</i></p>	
Company News	Germany: First Solar Scales Production Back	http://budurl.com/mercomfsfo
	<p>First Solar is to reduce production at its Frankfurt/Oder manufacturing facility in Germany by 50 percent. As a result, 1,200 employees will be moved onto six months of shorter working hours. A spokesperson for the thin film photovoltaic module manufacturer has told news agency DAPD that as of March 1, 2012, it will shut down 50 percent of its manufacturing production. It has already informed its workforce of the decision at a recent meeting held.</p> <p>First Solar only officially opened its second German plant at the start of November. The move saw the company doubling its production capacity in Frankfurt (Oder) from 250 megawatts (MW) to 500 MW. The goal of First Solar's latest move is to "bring European production capacity in line with Continental demand," according to the spokesperson. The company can also then react to the reduced support for photovoltaic installations in the various European countries, like Italy, Spain, Greece, Switzerland, France, Germany and the U.K. <i>Source: PV Magazine, Feb 08</i></p>	
Industry News	Federal Research Lab Concludes China's Costs To Produce and Deliver Solar to U.S. Market Exceed Those of U.S. Producers	http://budurl.com/mercomflc
	<p>Analysis dispels faulty assumption that Chinese manufacturers enjoy cost advantage. The Coalition for American Solar Manufacturing (CASM), a group of seven U.S. solar manufacturers representing more than 150 employers of more than 14,650 workers, is heralding a revised research presentation from the National Renewable Energy Laboratory, posted on the NREL website today. The presentation concludes Chinese production of crystalline silicon solar technology for the U.S. market costs more than U.S. production for the domestic market, when the costs of shipping are included.</p> <p>CASM contends the findings validate its position that the Chinese solar-manufacturing industry enjoys no cost advantage in solar production costs but, rather, benefits from a government-underwritten export campaign to injure competition from U.S. manufacturers. At least 12 U.S. manufacturers have suffered layoffs, plant shutdowns or bankruptcies over the past two years. The coalition supports petitions that SolarWorld filed Oct. 19 to seek anti-subsidy and anti-dumping duties on Chinese imports.</p> <p>The NREL presentation (http://budurl.com/mercompmca), "Solar PV Manufacturing Cost Analysis: U.S. Competitiveness in a Global Industry," concludes that Chinese producers have an inherent cost advantage of no greater than 1 percent, compared with U.S. producers. However, when trans-ocean shipping costs are counted, Chinese producers face a 5 percent cost disadvantage, according to the analysis. "Massive government subsidies," the government says, sponsor the Chinese industrial drive to export about 95 percent of domestic production, a campaign that has already seized 55 percent of global market share, according to NREL.</p> <p>"This analysis from the renewable-energy research arm of the U.S. government corroborates our view that an export drive sponsored by the Chinese government is improperly intervening in the U.S. market," said Gordon Brinser, president of SolarWorld Industries America Inc., based in Oregon. "Highly efficient U.S. producers like SolarWorld can vie with any company in the world in legal competition. But the government of China's illegal trade practices are neither economically nor environmentally sustainable for anyone. Free trade is trade free of illegal foreign government intervention."</p> <p>"We are countering the illegal trade practices of China and its state-sponsored industry only as a first step to reviving renewable-energy competition, manufacturing and jobs and augmenting national energy security and world environmental stewardship," Brinser said. "All of the advantages of solar should be available to the United States and to the competitive U.S. industry that pioneered this technology." <i>Source: CASM, Feb 07</i></p>	
M&A News	Soleras Ltd and Bekaert Advanced Coatings Combine to Create Global Leader in Thin Film Coating Materials and Technology	http://budurl.com/mercomsobse
	<p>Element Partners announced today that agreements have been signed for the acquisition of the Industrial Coatings Division of Bekaert, including its facilities in Deinze, Belgium, Jiangyin, China and Spring Green, Wisconsin, USA and the acquisition of privately held Soleras Ltd, located in Biddeford, Maine, USA. The two Companies will be combined to form a new business, named Soleras Advanced Coatings LLC. The agreements are subject to regulatory approvals, which are expected by April 2012. <i>Source: Soleras, Feb 07</i></p>	

Direct Si PV Module Core Costs



Category	Title	Link
Industry News	EU on Track With 2020 Renewable Energy Targets	http://budurl.com/mercomeuot
	<p>A report published by the JRC shows that Member States intend to achieve the EU 2020 target of 20% energy coming from renewable sources. The report shows that, according to the National Renewable Energy Action Plans (NREAPs), Member States plan to reach an overall share of 20.7% of energy from renewable sources by 2020. The JRC report is a technical assessment of the plans which Member States have submitted to the European Commission to provide detail on their national targets in renewable energy production and how they intend to reach them.</p> <p>The JRC's assessment shows that almost half of the Member States are planning to exceed their own targets and will therefore be able to provide surpluses for other Member States. Overall, the share of electricity from renewable energy sources in the EU is planned to reach 34% (up from 15%) for electricity generation, 21.4% (up from 10%) for the provision of heating and cooling, and 1.7% (up from 1.4%) for transport. The renewable energy sources mix is composed of biomass and biofuel (almost 60%), hydro energy (12%), onshore wind (12%), offshore wind (12%), photovoltaic (2.3%) and solar thermal (2.4%).</p> <p>View Full Report: Technical Assessment of the Renewable Energy Action Plans - http://budurl.com/mercomeuota</p> <p>Excerpts from the report: <i>Solar Energy</i> - The solar resource (thermal and electricity together) quadruples from 2010 to 2020 (132.9 PJ to 639.22 PJ). The share increases from 2 to 6 %. The leading countries with the highest solar energy generation by 2020 are Germany (201.8 PJ), Spain (134.2) and Italy (107.6). By 2020, these three countries represent 70 % of the total solar energy of EU27. France and Greece have 63.8 and 27.9 PJ. Germany maintains its leading role from 2005 on. Greece grows with the least intensity among those countries.</p> <p>Cyprus has the highest solar share within renewables in 2020 with 51.9 %, Spain 14.5 %, Greece 13.7 %, Italy 12.1 % and Malta 11.8 %. The biggest relative change, compared to 2010, in solar energy is expected in Poland, where the solar energy generation will be more than twenty-fold in 2020. Sweden has almost no growth in solar energy, Denmark grows by one and a half, and Austria, Cyprus and Malta double the solar energy generation from 2010 to 2020. <i>Source: JRC European Commission, Feb 07</i></p>	
Industry News	Solar Inverter Market Hits Speed Bump in 2011	http://budurl.com/mercomimbs
	<p>Despite strong long-term growth prospects, the worldwide solar photovoltaic (PV) inverter space dipped slightly in 2011 as two big solar markets stalled or cut tariffs, even though overall losses in the industry were mitigated somewhat by growth in other parts of the world.</p> <p>Shipments of PV inverters last year fell to the equivalent of 23.4GW, down 1 percent from 23.6 GW in 2010, according to an IHS iSuppli PV Inverter Market Tracker report from information and analysis provider IHS. The decline in shipments last year was accompanied by a large 15 percent drop in revenue, down to €4.4B (\$6.1B) because of a sharp decline in average selling prices. Prices plunged a steep 14 percent during the year much worse than earlier forecasts predicting only a 10 percent contraction.</p> <p>Nonetheless, inverter shipments are expected to return to positive territory this year with a projected 5 percent increase to 24.5 GW, to be followed by three more years of successive expansion, as shown in the figure. And while revenue will still decline in 2012, the retreat will ease to just 3 percent, after which growth is expected to return and then climb to the 20 percent range by 2014 as demand from new markets begins to make an impact.</p> <p>Inverters are devices that convert the energy of the sun captured by solar panels into a usable form of electricity eventually fed back into the electrical grid. "The slump in 2011 inverter shipments is mainly attributed to challenging conditions in the photovoltaics markets in the key countries of Germany and the Czech Republic," said Greg Sheppard, senior director for PV research at IHS.</p> <p>"Shipments in Germany declined after the industry there stalled, while shipments in the Czech Republic fell off a cliff—after the government in Prague cut tariffs to deliberately slow down an otherwise superheated expansion. Luckily, much of the loss was made up by growth in other markets."</p> <p>Inverter shipments in Germany tumbled to 6.1 GW in 2011, down from 9.9 GW in 2010, while shipments in the Czech Republic dropped precipitously to just 55MW, down from 1.5 GW. China had the largest increase in inverter shipments for the year, reaching 1.6 GW in 2011 from just 691 MW in 2010. U.S. was second, climbing to 2.8 GW, up from 1.5 GW. Both countries, along with Japan, will represent the largest absolute growth in inverter opportunities this year.</p> <p>France and Italy also did well in 2011, but both markets are expected to run into stiffer headwinds in 2012 as government authorities recalibrate tariffs and cap installations for the time being to decelerate growth. Other territories expected to post significant increases in 2012 are India, as well as emerging markets in Asia, Latin America and the collective region of Europe, Middle East and Africa known as EMEA.</p> <p>Inverter Winners: Germany's SMA Solar Technology remained the PV inverter market's dominant supplier in 2011, with 31 percent of the worldwide space in terms of megawatts. California-based Power-One was the second-largest brand with 12 percent market share, and it also was the top competitor in Italy.</p> <p>The rest of the Top 10 included three other companies from Germany Kaco New Energy, Refusol GmbH and Siemens Industry Automation; as well as U.S. firm Satcon Technology; Fronius International GmbH from Austria; Ingeteam Energy from Spain; Elettronica Santerno from Italy; and Danfoss Solar from Denmark. Together the Top 10 accounted for 75 percent of the inverter market. A variety of products continued to be introduced to the market last year, with many companies supplementing their ground segment offerings with new models featuring grid-friendly features and water-cooled power stations.</p> <p>Other notable product developments saw support for German low-voltage requirements, more lower-wattage three-phase products, improved monitoring with wireless communications and better interoperability with other systems. To maintain success moving ahead, inverter companies must either stay geographically focused or be prepared to invest where demand materializes around the globe. Europe is going to slow as the major solar countries there adjust to new policy growth corridors, while new geographic markets in the Americas, Asia, and Eastern Europe/EMEA will contribute most of the available opportunities for near-term expansion. <i>Source: IHS iSuppli, Feb 07</i></p>	
Industry News	Australian Government Reopens \$306.5 Million Solar Tender	http://budurl.com/mercomgrst
	<p>Australia has set a target of generating 20 percent of its power from renewable energy sources by the end of the decade, the federal government has reopened a multimillion-dollar solar energy grant process amid concern about an investment shortfall at its preferred first-round choice. At stake is a \$306.5M grant on offer from the government's Solar Flagships program.</p> <p>Energy Minister Martin Ferguson said the government would seek updated applications from four shortlisted round-one groups under the Solar Flagship photovoltaic (PV) program. The consortium behind the Moree Solar Farm had proposed major changes to its project and failed to meet a December deadline to secure financial backing. BP Solar, Pacific Hydro and Fotowatio Renewable Ventures were behind the Moree project, proposed to design, develop, construct and operate a 150MW solar PV power plant in the NSW tablelands. Moree Solar Farm and three other shortlisted projects from AGL, Infigen-Suntech and TRUenergy have been asked to submit revised applications to the Solar Flagships Council.</p> <p>The Moree consortium had not met its obligations under the funding arrangement, the minister said. Mr Ferguson cited a period of change and consolidation in the solar industry, linked in part to the significant reduction in the prices of photovoltaic panels. Some analysts report the price of panels has dropped by as much as 70 per cent. The energy minister said it would extend a deadline for the Solar Dawn consortium in Queensland to secure finance for its \$1.2B 250MW solar thermal project. It was the only solar thermal project assessed to be viable by the Solar Flagships Council.</p> <p>Mr Ferguson said it remained the best-value solar thermal project. The consortium partners Areva and Wind Prospect now have until June 30 to secure the needed investment, after missing the deadline of December 15. <i>Source: The Sydney Morning Herald, Feb 07</i></p>	

Category	Title	Link
Energy Data	U.S. Short-Term Energy Outlook	http://budurl.com/mercomusteo
	<p>Electricity: U.S. Electricity Consumption: EIA expects that total U.S. consumption of electricity will rise slightly during 2012 and then grow by 1.8 percent during 2013 (U.S. Total Electricity Consumption Chart). Much of the growth in consumption during 2012 will come from the commercial and industrial sectors. In contrast, moderate weather this year leads to reduced consumption in the residential sector.</p> <p>Temperatures during January were much warmer than normal, particularly in the Southeast, where a large proportion of homes heat with electricity. This lower winter consumption of electricity combined with projected lower summer temperatures is expected to push electricity sales to the residential sector down 1.2 percent in 2012. The total number of U.S. households is expected to grow 1.3 percent during 2013, which would be the highest growth rate since 1998. The increased number of households is projected to lead to a relatively strong 2.1 percent increase in residential electricity consumption in 2013. <i>U.S. Total Electricity Consumption Chart</i> (http://budurl.com/mercomustec).</p> <p>U.S. Electricity Generation: EIA projects that total U.S. generation by all sectors will average 11.3 terawatt-hours per day during 2012. Coal is expected to fuel about 41.7 percent of this generation, down 0.8 percentage point from last year. During 2013, EIA expects coal's share of generation to fall to 41.2 percent. In contrast, the share of generation fueled by natural gas is forecast to rise quite rapidly this year, growing from 24.6 percent in 2011 to 26.1 percent in 2012, primarily as a result of lower hydroelectric generation in the West and low natural gas fuel costs. The natural gas share of generation rises slightly in 2013 to 26.2 percent. <i>U.S. Electricity Generation by Fuel, all Sectors Chart</i> (http://budurl.com/mercomuepsg).</p> <p>U.S. Electricity Retail Prices: Average U.S. residential electricity prices are forecast rise by 0.5 percent in 2012 before falling by a similar amount in 2013 (U.S. Residential Electricity Prices Chart). Regional price changes during 2012 vary from a decline of 2.5 percent in the Mountain region to an increase of 2.2 percent in New England. <i>U.S. Residential Electricity Prices Chart</i> (http://budurl.com/mercomusrep). <i>Source: EIA, Feb 07</i></p>	
M&A News	AU Optronics Acquires 9 MW Pennsylvania Solar Project	http://budurl.com/mercomapap
	<p>AU Optronics (AUO) has completed its acquisition of a 9 MW solar power project in an unspecified Pennsylvania school district. According to AUO, this installation will be the largest solar power plant in Pennsylvania when completed. The installation will use 37,500 of AUO's modules and is expected to be completed in September. It will generate 10,880,000 MWh of electricity annually for the daily use of approximately 5,000 students in five nearby schools. <i>Source: Solar Industry Mag, Feb 07</i></p>	
Funding News	Off-Grid Solutions Raises €75K (~\$98K) on Symbid	http://budurl.com/mercomogsf
	<p>Off-Grid Solutions, a Haarlem, the Netherlands-based developer of solar energy products, has raised €75K (~\$98K) through the equity crowdfunding platform Symbid. The funding was provided by 320 investors from all over the world. The company intends to use the funds to develop its WakaWaka highly efficient solar LED-light and market it in over 40 developing countries focusing on the 1.5 billion people living without electricity. According to Off-Grid Solutions, WakaWaka light is environmental friendly and provides 8 hours of bright light, 16 hours of reading light or 80 hours safety light and its battery is up to three years operational. <i>Source: FinSMEs, Feb 07</i></p>	
Company News	U.S. Patent Office Issues New Zep Solar Patent	http://budurl.com/mercomzspa
	<p>Solidifies Zep Solar's position of innovation leadership. Zep Solar, developer of the first comprehensive platform for PV system installation, today announced the United States Patent Office's issuance of Zep Solar patent number 8,109,048 (the '048 patent). This new patent adds numerous new claims to Zep Solar's patent portfolio and further covers key aspects of the Zep Compatible™ platform. Jack West, Zep Solar's Founder and CTO, noted, "Today's announcement further solidifies Zep Solar's position of innovation leadership and marks an important point of validation in the ongoing development of our intellectual property portfolio." <i>Source: Zep Solar, Feb 07</i></p>	
Industry News	Silicon Wafer Revenues Up in 2011	http://budurl.com/mercomswru
	<p>Worldwide silicon wafer revenues improved by two percent in 2011 compared to 2010 according to the SEMI Silicon Manufacturers Group (SMG) in its year-end analysis of the silicon wafer industry. Worldwide silicon wafer area shipments decreased by three percent in 2011 when compared to 2010 area shipments. Silicon wafer area shipments in 2011 totaled 9,043 million square inches (MSI), down from the 9,370 million square inches shipped during 2010. Revenues reached \$9.9 billion up from \$9.7 billion posted in 2010.</p> <p>"While the recovery from the 2009 downturn continued into early 2011," said Kazuyo Heinink, chairwoman of SEMI SMG and VP, MEMC. "Silicon shipments lost momentum as global economic uncertainty increased during the second half of the year." Silicon wafers are the fundamental building material for semiconductors, which in turn, are vital components of virtually all electronics goods, including computers, telecommunications products, and consumer electronics. The highly engineered thin round disks are produced in various diameters (from one inch to 12 inches) and serve as the substrate material on which most semiconductor devices or "chips" are fabricated. All data cited in this release is inclusive of polished silicon wafers, including virgin test wafers, epitaxial silicon wafers, and non-polished silicon wafers shipped by the wafer manufacturers to the end-users.</p> <p>The Silicon Manufacturers Group acts as an independent special interest group within the SEMI structure and is open to SEMI members involved in manufacturing polycrystalline silicon, monocrystalline silicon or silicon wafers (e.g., as cut, polished, epi, etc.). The purpose of the group is to facilitate collective efforts on issues related to the silicon industry including the development of market information and statistics about the silicon industry and the semiconductor market. <i>Source: SEMI, Feb 06</i></p>	
New Fund News	Ecofin Limited Expands Global Investment Capability and Expertise with the Launch of Ecofin Australia	http://budurl.com/mercomelea
	<p>Ecofin Limited (Ecofin), a London-based investment management firm specialising in the global utility, infrastructure, energy and alternative energy sectors, announces today that it has expanded its global investment capability and regional expertise with the launch of Ecofin Australia Pty Ltd. (Ecofin Australia). Based in Sydney, Ecofin Australia is a specialist fund manager that seeks to capitalise on the diverse global investment opportunities brought about by the long term mega-trends of energy security, climate change, population growth, urbanisation and food and water scarcity.</p> <p>Led by Managing Directors Lisa Wade and Nicki Ashton, Ecofin Australia plans to provide institutional investors in the region with a specialist long-only equity thematic approach to investing that is dedicated to the sustainable opportunities presented by these long-term mega-trends. The launch of Ecofin Australia comes after Ecofin completed the purchase of a 51% stake in Change Investment Management Pty Ltd (Change Investment Management), a Sydney-based climate change and environmental sector investment specialist founded by Wade and Ashton in 2009. As a result of the transaction, Change Investment Management has since been rebranded and now re-launched as Ecofin Australia. <i>Source: Ecofin, Feb 06</i></p>	

Category	Title	Link
Industry News	North American Utility-Scale Photovoltaic Installations Surge in Q4'11	http://budurl.com/mercomnaup
	<p>Region set for more than 60% growth in 2012; Downstream companies will need to adapt to changes in end-market. Sharp reductions in market prices combined with the impact of regional and national policies pushed the North American photovoltaic (PV) market to a new quarterly peak with 0.93 GW installed in Q4'11, according to the latest North American PV Markets Quarterly report issued by NPD Solarbuzz. The solar incentive policy mix in both the United States and Canadian markets drove up demand in large-scale ground-mount systems, which was 59% of this total. Regionally, the New Jersey, California, Arizona, and Ontario accounted for two-thirds of Q4'11 demand.</p> <p>In the US, the expiration of the Federal Cash Grant caused an acceleration of project activity to qualify for the end-year deadline. The Cash Grant was instrumental, supporting 1 GW of PV capacity by the end of 2011. At the state level, the California Solar Initiative (CSI), the nation's largest ratepayer funded program, received additional funding of \$200 million during Q4'11, enabling it to address a long waiting list for customer-side distributed generation. Following the raising of its Renewable Portfolio Standard target, California has started implementing several programs that will stimulate wholesale distributed generation projects between 1 and 20 MW.</p> <p>On the other hand, continuation of New Jersey's strong Q4'11 growth is under threat due to over-supply of Solar Renewable Energy Credits (SREC). Both New Jersey and Pennsylvania failed to enact legislation to fix the SREC over-supply by revising their RPS solar obligations. In 2012, US demand growth will be supported by a 25 GW non-residential and utility project pipeline. This includes projects that qualified for the Cash Grant, which will only ship and be installed this year. Residential demand is forecast to grow modestly in 2012, stimulated by lower system prices and lease financing programs, but held back by declining market prices in the five key states that have met their RPS requirements.</p> <div data-bbox="227 661 747 892"> <p>North American Share by Photovoltaic Market Segment</p>  <p>Source: Solarbuzz</p> </div> <p>In the US, the expiration of the Federal Cash Grant caused an acceleration of project activity to qualify for the end-year deadline. The Cash Grant was instrumental, supporting 1 GW of PV capacity by the end of 2011. 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Residential demand is forecast to grow modestly in 2012, stimulated by lower system prices and lease financing programs, but held back by declining market prices in the five key states that have met their RPS requirements.</p> <p>There will be more restructuring in downstream channels due to changes in end market segment mix. Residential demand, fragmented into small state markets, will cause larger downstream companies to exit this market segment while new entrants in the project developer role seek to bring the huge non-residential and utility project pipeline to market. "The key uncertainties on the rate of US demand growth in 2012 relate to the impact of the end of the Federal Cash Grant and approval timetables for large utility scale projects together with the market impact of states that have met their RPS," said Junko Movellan, NPD Solarbuzz Senior Analyst. "In 2011, the pace of market price reductions was accelerated by the growth in Chinese module supply.</p> <p>The uncertainty caused by the Chinese anti-dumping case started to reshape supply and pricing in Q4'11; the ruling will shape the 2H'12 supply mix." In Canada, large-scale projects completed during Q4'11 had been approved under Ontario's previous incentive program, RESOP. In contrast, the newer FIT program has been most successful in spurring approximately 100 MW of smaller scale residential and non-residential projects during 2011. Large-scale systems under the FIT have been slow to start, due mainly to delays in regulatory and program-related approvals.</p> <p>However, advancement in other areas—project financing and execution of product supply agreements—is evidence that these projects are well advanced, and most are positioned for installation during 2012. "The biggest uncertainty in the Canadian market continues to revolve around the outcomes of the Ontario FIT program review that started in October 2011," said Michael Barker, NPD Solarbuzz Analyst. "2012 demand projections are dependent on the retention of the key elements of the existing program structure, but anticipate rates falling between 10% and 30% in concert with greater specificity on technology or customer-type goals." <i>Source: Solarbuzz, Feb 06</i></p>	
Industry News	Germany Maps Out Financing Plan for Renewable Energies	http://budurl.com/mercomgmfp
	<p>Germany recently passed the 20 percent mark for renewable energy in the electricity mix. And the federal KfW bank group has introduced a new plan to further accelerate this shift to renewables, with increases in multimillion euro business loans now available. As more renewable energy is generated, energy management and storage are also receiving increased focus.</p> <p>The new KfW plan outlines efforts to ease the financial burden of a wide-ranging shift to renewable energy. Previously, loans were available to small businesses for their efforts to move to renewables, and these have been expanded to cover companies with annual revenue of up to 3B euro (~\$4B). At the same time, loans are available to support research and development of energy storage, transmission, production, and efficiency techniques with grants up to EUR 25M (~\$33M), marking an increase. <i>Source: Germany Trade & Invest, Feb 06</i></p>	
M&A News	SolarWorld AG Passes the 95 Percent Threshold of Shares in Solarparc AG	http://budurl.com/mercomsmjp
	<p>SolarWorld AG has exceed a 95 percent threshold of shares in Solarparc AG and will now realize the full integration of Solarparc AG into the SolarWorld Group. Pursuant to Section 327a et seq. of the German Stock Corporation Act, the Management Board of SolarWorld AG will propose the acquisition of all remaining minority shares at the next Annual General Meeting.</p> <p>The goal is to delist Solarparc AG from the stock exchange and convert it into a limited company (GmbH) as a 100 percent subsidiary of SolarWorld AG. December 31, 2010, SolarWorld AG had offered a voluntary public take-over of all shares of Solarparc AG. The average stock price for the take-over offer was € 7.36 (~\$9.67). The full acquisition of Solarparc AG gives SolarWorld AG the opportunity to expand its project business on an international scale. <i>Source: SolarWorld, Feb 06</i></p>	
Funding News	Element Power Raises \$183M in Equity Capital	http://budurl.com/mercomepec
	<p>Element Power, a global developer, owner and manager of wind and solar power projects, has raised additional \$183M of committed equity capital. The investment includes commitments from institutional investors, sovereign wealth funds and Spanish investors. Advisors were Credit Suisse and Eaton Partners in the United States and Deutsche Bank in Spain. The company intends to use the funding to grow wind and PV solar pipelines in the United States, South America and Europe. <i>Source: FinSMEs, Feb 06</i></p>	

Category	Title	Link																
Industry News	Photovoltaic Market Continued Hot Growth Streak in 2011 with 40 Percent Expansion	http://budurl.com/mercomphgs																
	<p>Germany and Italy tussle for top spot; US, China and France are in Top 5 among regions with most new installations. The photovoltaic (PV) market enjoyed another year of sunny growth as solar installations climbed 40 percent in 2011, although dark clouds loom on the horizon over the industry's reduced prospects this year, according to an IHS iSuppli PV market tracker report from information and analysis provider IHS.</p> <p>New PV installations in 2011 reached an estimated 25.0 gigawatts (GW), up from 17.9 GW in 2010, based on the latest confirmed data. The actual year-end figure is projected to be even higher, given last minute data made available by the German Federal Grid Agency showing an unprecedented boost in solar installations during the fourth quarter in Germany, among the two largest PV markets in the world.</p> <div data-bbox="220 457 755 724">  <p>Worldwide Forecast of New Photovoltaic Installations in 2011 (Gigawatts)</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Year</th> <th>Installations (GW)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>2010</td><td>17.9</td></tr> <tr><td>2011</td><td>25.0</td></tr> <tr><td>2012</td><td>23.3</td></tr> <tr><td>2013</td><td>28.0</td></tr> <tr><td>2014</td><td>36.0</td></tr> <tr><td>2015</td><td>48.0</td></tr> <tr><td>2016</td><td>61.3</td></tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Source: IHS iSuppli</p> </div> <p>If included, Germany's new annual total of 7.5 GW, compared to the published figure of 6.9 GW, would boost the 2011 worldwide total to 26.5 GW. At that level, the annual expansion rate in 2011 would equate to 48 percent, up 8 percentage points from the current forecast. An official confirmation of the higher overall tally for 2011 is expected soon.</p> <p>The two year run of notable growth including the blistering 146 percent expansion of 2010 will end this year when solar installations dip 6 percent to 23.3 GW. Given budget difficulties and political blowback, governments in many countries are expected to slash tariffs and reduce support, which would have the effect of discouraging builders and investors. But PV potential remains outstanding after 2012 as growth continues in emerging territories, with new installations forecast to reach 61.3 GW by 2016.</p> <p>Many Winners Emerge and One Market Crashes: Among the approximately 20 relevant regional solar markets that exist today, Italy and Germany continue to battle for the top spot as the country with the largest amount of new installations. Without the extraordinary year-end rally in Germany, Italy would have been deemed the solar champion in 2011, with new installations in the country amounting to 6.9 GW. In view of the fourth-quarter catch-up race in Germany that brings the country's total to 7.5 GW, the rankings in 2010 show Italy in runner-up position once again.</p> <p>The third largest PV market in the world last year for new installations was the United States, with 2.6 GW, up 179 percent from 0.9 GW in 2010. China and France rounded out the Top 5, with 1.9 GW and 1.5 GW, respectively. France saw growth of approximately 104 percent, and China had even more outstanding expansion at 246 percent. The sixth-largest market, Japan, will assume greater strategic importance moving forward, especially as European territories are projected to decline in 2012.</p> <p>The highest growth rate for new installations, however, belonged to the United Kingdom, skyrocketing 1,367 percent in 2011 to 0.7 GW thanks to a flurry of activity in November, timed to beat announced plans by the government to drastically cut solar tariffs. India and Bulgaria also had explosive growth last year at 400 percent and 376 percent, respectively, although each had new installations topping out at just 0.5 GW and 0.1 GW.</p> <p>The worst performance last year was posted by the Czech Republic, alone in its dramatic 96 percent plunge to a mere 0.06 GW or 60 megawatts of new installations in 2011, compared to 1.5 GW in 2010. Installations in the country have stopped almost completely, the result of drastic measures taken by the Prague government to end subsidies, at the same time that it launched a retroactive tax for existing plants and imposed a moratorium on grid connection.</p> <p>Challenges Lie Ahead, Softened by Hoped-for Stability: In spite of the overall robust growth for PV end markets, suppliers in 2011 on all modes of the solar value chain continued to suffer from eroding prices, disappearing margins and declining revenues, IHS discovered. During the fourth quarter the situation worsened in particular for polysilicon, a key component of solar panel construction, with spot prices falling 40 percent to \$30 per kilogram.</p> <p>The ongoing correction in the market is expected to continue in 2012, but there could be an upside to the projected slowdown this year. The PV module space could achieve stability in the second quarter, especially if utilization and inventory levels remain low, which then would bring the current overcapacity situation into balance. And even though cell and module pricing will continue to be under pressure, their rate of erosion will decelerate this year compared to 2011, offering a spot of hope to companies girding for the near term difficulties ahead. <i>Source: iSuppli, Feb 06</i></p>	Year	Installations (GW)	2010	17.9	2011	25.0	2012	23.3	2013	28.0	2014	36.0	2015	48.0	2016	61.3	
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Company News	Formation of a Joint Venture with NRG Solar	http://budurl.com/mercomjv																
	<p>GCL-Poly Energy Holdings Limited, and NRG Solar, a leading photovoltaic (PV) utility project developer in the United States, through their respective wholly-owned subsidiary, formed a joint venture named Sunora Energy Solutions 1 LLC. Each of the shareholders owns 50% interest in Sunora accordingly. Sunora will seek to build selected projects developed by NRG Solar using GCL-Poly's performance-optimized PV system equipment and NRG's proprietary advanced racking technologies to substantially enhance the financial returns of the projects. In addition, GCL-Poly has provided a total of 70MW of PV equipment to NRG Solar since the beginning in the fourth quarter of 2011 and early 2012. GCL-Poly may have an opportunity to provide NRG Solar 200MW of PV equipment for each year until end of 2014. <i>Source: GCL-Poly, Feb 06</i></p>																	
Company News	Alta Devices Solar Panel Receives NREL Verification of 23.5% Efficiency	http://budurl.com/mercomadnv																
	<p>Technology Moves Closer to Solar Power without Subsidies. Alta Devices' most recent solar panel has been verified by the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) at 23.5% efficiency. This is the highest solar panel efficiency yet achieved and demonstrates Alta's progress toward its objective of developing solar photovoltaic (PV) solutions that are competitive, without subsidies, with fossil fuels.</p> <p>Today's announcement is Alta's next step toward commercializing its technology. This new panel uses the same technology as the company announced last summer, which achieved record solar cell conversion efficiencies resulting from key technical breakthroughs in harnessing the high efficiency of gallium arsenide (GaAs) in cost-effective ways. Alta chose to focus on GaAs because of its intrinsic efficiency advantages as well as its ability to generate electricity at high temperatures and in low light. This means that Alta's panels have substantially higher energy density than other technologies, generating more kilowatt-hours of energy over the course of a year in real life conditions. <i>Source: Alta Devices, Feb 06</i></p>																	
Company News	Abound Solar Produces 82.8W Module	http://budurl.com/mercomastf																
	<p>Abound Solar, a leading manufacturer of next-generation thin-film cadmium telluride photovoltaic modules, today announced the production of 82.8W modules at their Longmont, Colorado, U.S.A. factory. The 82.8W module represents a 12.2 percent aperture efficiency and is being verified by the U.S. Department of Energy's National Renewable Energy Lab (NREL). The first 82W module was produced in early January 2012 on existing production equipment, and several hundred modules reaching that wattage have been manufactured thus far. Abound Solar expects to begin mass production of 82W modules in the second half of 2012 and 85W modules in the first half of 2013. <i>Source: Abound Solar, Feb 06</i></p>																	

Category	Title	Link		
Company News	Sanyo Will Dismiss 140 Workers in California as Solar-Wafer Factory Close	http://budurl.com/mercomsdwc		
	<p>Sanyo Electric Co. will cut about 140 jobs and close an aging solar wafer factory in Carson, California, as it prepares to start up operations at a plant in Malaysia. The plant, which makes the equivalent of 30 megawatts of silicon ingots and wafers for solar cells a year, will stop production next month and close in October, Masatsugu Uemura, a spokesman for Panasonic Energy Co., said by phone from Osaka. Sanyo is a unit of Panasonic Corp.</p> <p>Equipment at the plant, opened in 2003, was getting old and the company found it difficult to expand the business there because of the small size of the site, Uemura said. "Price competition is also getting tough," he said. Prices for solar panels and their raw materials fell last year as Chinese manufacturers increased production, leading to excess capacity after European governments cut back on subsidies.</p> <p>Sanyo has a 70MW plant in Salem, Oregon, that also makes ingots and wafers. Panasonic said in November it will invest 45B yen (\$587M) to build a 300MW plant for wafers, solar cells and modules in the Kulim Hi-Tech Park in Kedah, northern Malaysia. Production will start in December, Panasonic said. <i>Source: Bloomberg, Feb 06</i></p>			
Company News	De Lage Landen Signs Agreement with Bosch Solar Energy	http://budurl.com/mercomdlbs		
	<p>De Lage Landen, a global provider of high-quality asset-based financing products to manufacturers and distributors of capital goods, announced today that its Clean Technology group has signed a U.S. Master Lease Agreement with Bosch Solar Energy (Bosch) to fund solar projects developed by Bosch. "We are proud to be entering into an agreement with Bosch Solar Energy, as their focus on quality products in an international marketplace is consistent with the strategies of De Lage Landen and the Rabobank Group," says Mark McGovern, General Manager, Clean Technology for De Lage Landen. "Although our newly closed agreement is U.S.-focused, we will work together with Bosch to structure domestic and international funding products for Bosch and its strategic customers." <i>Source: De Lage Landen, Feb 2012</i></p>			
Company News	Sumco to Cut 1,300 Jobs in Withdrawal From Solar Wafer Business	http://budurl.com/mercomswwb		
	<p>Sumco Corp., a Japanese silicon wafer maker, said it will cut about 1,300 jobs amounting to 15 percent of its workforce as it withdraws from supplying solar panel makers following a plunge in prices for the raw materials. The solar wafer business is expected to incur a "significant loss due to the sharp decline in demand and continued price collapse since last spring," Sumco said in a business plan released today. Sumco forecast a full-year loss of 85B yen (\$1.1B) and asked Sumitomo Metal Industries Ltd., which owns a 28 percent stake, to buy preferred shares.</p> <p>The company took a charge of 58.2B yen (~\$764M) for the restructuring. "This is the first Japanese casualty manufacturer from plummeting global solar costs," said Jenny Chase, chief solar analyst for Bloomberg New Energy Finance. "Other diversified players in the country are feeling the pinch too." The Tokyo-based company will dissolve and liquidate its subsidiaries, Sumco Solar Corp. and Minamata Denshi Co., according to a separate statement. Sumco Solar makes solar wafer, and Minamata Denshi processes raw materials for the solar business. Sumco said the job cuts would be made by the end of January 2014. Under Sumco's business plan, the company will close the Imari solar plant in Saga prefecture and the Ikuno plant in Hyogo prefecture. <i>Source: Bloomberg, Feb 2012</i></p>			
DSIRE	U.S. New Regulations, Policies & Incentives for Renewable Energy	Week Ending Feb 10, 2012	State	Policies/Incentives
	Duke Energy - Solar Renewable Energy Credits Program - Performance-Based Incentive		Ohio	http://budurl.com/MercomOHpb
	NH PUC - Commercial & Industrial Renewable Energy Grants - State Grant Program		New Hampshire	http://budurl.com/MercomNHsgp
	Sales and Use Tax Exemption for Electrical Generating Equipment - Sales Tax Incentive		Indiana	http://budurl.com/MercomINst
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