

The sun – an engine for growth: Sharp expands its solar business

Sharp is starting off business year 2010 with rising turnover in the solar industry: production expansion, strategic alliances and continued technological developments secure the company a leading role on the worldwide photovoltaic market. Sharp will be presenting microamorphous triple-junction thin-film technology, see-through modules and more at this year's EU PVSEC in Valencia.

Hamburg, August 2010. Sharp can tie in with the success of business year 2009 in the first quarter of 2010 as well: with over € 533 million (1), the technology company has increased its turnover in the solar segment by 65.7 percent in comparison with the same period last year. The share of the solar business within the overall corporation thus amounted to 7.8 percent – a value which should continue to increase on the long term: “Photovoltaics is one of our core business fields”, says Peter Thiele, Executive Vice President of Sharp Energy Solution Europe (SESE). “We are investing heavily in this future technology and continue to see great potential worldwide as well as for Europe in particular. Sharp is currently expanding its production in Europe to be able to serve this important market as best as possible also in the future”, Peter Thiele continues.

Production: massive investments in capacity expansion

As early as February 2011, the solar pioneer intends to double its production capacity for crystalline solar modules in Wrexham, Wales (UK), from 250 megawatts at present to 500 megawatts. Sharp will additionally be launching thin-film production in Italy with an initial capacity of 160 megawatts in a joint venture with Enel and STMicroelectronics. Sharp has already been producing thin-film modules at the world's first gigawatt thin-film factory in Sakai since March 2010. Production capacity amounts to 160 megawatts and can be expanded to 1,000 megawatts per year.

In spite of changes to feed-in tariff conditions in important European markets, Sharp anticipates an increase in sales for the coming years as well. “It's only a question of time as to when photovoltaics will win out and play a dominant role in power generation”, says Peter Thiele. “Demand for solar solutions will also continue to increase. But it does depend on the outstanding quality and highest standards in production and products more than ever. Through massive investments, we are capable of making advances not only in efficient production, but the development of state-of-the-art technology as well, in contrast to many competitors. This secures us important competitive advantages on the long term as well.”

Further developments in technology

Sharp will be presenting the future generation of thin-film technology with a triple-junction thin-film module in hall L3 booth A22 at the 25th EU PVSEV in Valencia from 6 to 9 September: two amorphous and one microcrystalline layer achieve a degree of efficiency of ten percent. In addition, the solar pioneer is exhibiting semi-transparent see-through modules with a light transmittance of 10, 20 and 30 percent. “In 2005, Sharp became the first manufacturer to put the two-layer microamorphous cell structure onto the market. In

2008, we succeeded in increasing the size of the modules while maintaining equal efficiency”, says Peter Thiele. “With the semi-transparent and triple-layer modules, we are presenting thin-film innovations with which we will keep making advances in solar technology and continue to hold a leading position on the worldwide market”, Thiele continues.

(1) ¥ 57,692 million according to the exchange rate of 30.6.2010 € 533.065 million in the period from 1 March 2010 through 30 June 2010.

About the company

For 50 years, Sharp has been a driving force behind the use of photovoltaics and has made key contributions to the development of the European solar market. The solar pioneer produces solar cells at the Japanese Katsuragi works in Nara prefecture, and since 2010 in Sakai, Osaka prefecture. Solar modules are manufactured from these cells in five factories worldwide. In addition to three production facilities in Japan and one in Tennessee/USA, solar power modules for the European market have been produced in Wrexham/Wales, UK since 2004. Sharp also purchases glass and silicon in Europe for cell and module production and works together with local partners on the installation of solar power systems. With a production volume of 595 Megawatt in 2009 Sharp is one of the leading pv manufacturers worldwide.

Sharp's super-green strategy

The production of solar solutions is an integral part of Sharp's environmental strategy: on the way to becoming an "Environmentally Advanced Company", Sharp has ensured that environmental protection and sustainability are firmly anchored within the company's objectives. The super-green strategy comprises the manufacture of energy-saving and energy-generating products in ecologically advanced factories, as well as responsible recycling. The goal is to reduce the CO₂ emissions from products and operational procedures significantly. To this end, Sharp has defined environmental standards for all factories and products worldwide and revises these standards continually. In an annual environmental and social report, Sharp publishes the results and objectives of its activities in the context of its environmental strategy (report 2008: <http://www.sharp-world.com/corporate/eco/index.html>).

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