Press Release

Solar world record

Climbing new peaks: World's highest solar plant equipped with modules from Kyocera

Kyoto/Neuss, XX February 2008 – The Japanese technology company Kyocera has started off 2008 with a world record! In January, the BKW subsidiary sol-E Suisse AG put into operation the first development phase of the world's highest photovoltaic plant on the Jungfraujoch – equipped with solar modules from Kyocera. At a record altitude of 3,500 metres, the Kyocera modules produce a specific energy yield roughly 70 per cent higher than comparable plants in the Mittelland region.

Situated in the Swiss Alps, the Jungfraujoch rises almost 3,500 metres above sea level. The mountain is home to the highest solar electricity plant in the world, the first development stage of which has been in operation since January 2008. Designed by the Swiss BKW subsidiary sol-E Suisse AG, the plant is equipped with 58 KC200GHT-2 solar modules from Kyocera. The primary function of the plant is to conduct experiments to determine the energy yield of a plant in high alpine terrain. During a three-week test run, the plan achieved a specific energy yield some 70 per cent above results of comparable plants from the Mittelland region.

The high energy yield can be attributed to a number of factors. Firstly, radiation is considerably more intense at this altitude than in lower locations.Reflection by snow surfaces additionally raises the radiation intensity. Furthermore, the low temperatures that prevail in these conditions lead to enhanced efficiency of the silicon solar cells.

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Nevertheless, conditions are still not ideal: storms with wind speeds reaching more than 200 km/h, severe thunderstorms and high mechanical stress due to great temperature differences, such as when the solar cells cool down at sunset, place additional strain on the plant. A temperature difference of up to 70°C between day and night presents a tough challenge for the material.

“Operating a solar plant in the high mountains is an endurance test for all the components. We are therefore especially proud that BKW has also chosen Kyocera solar modules on this occasion too, just as they did previously for the Stade de Suisse Wankdorf, Berne,“ says Mitsuru Imanaka, the European head of Kyocera. “Our solar modules can stand up to the extreme weather conditions and function perfectly. This project represents another pioneering achievement for us on the way to environment-friendly energy production.”

Overview:

Solar modules:	58 pieces KC200GHT-2
Inverters:	4 pieces SolarMax 3000S by Sputnik
Installed output:	11,600 Wp

Picture caption: Since January 58 KC200GHT-2 Kyocera solar modules have been adorning the façade on top of the Jungfraujoch at an altitude of 3,500 metres.

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About Kyocera:

Headquartered in Kyoto, Japan, the Kyocera Corporation is one of the world's leading manufacturers of fine-ceramic components for the technology industry. The strategically important divisions in the Kyocera Group, which comprises 180 subsidiaries, are Information and communications technologies, products to increase the quality of life, and environmentally friendly products. The technology group is also one of the largest producers of solar energy systems worldwide.

With a workforce of 63,000 employees, Kyocera posted net sales of approximately €8.1 billion in fiscal year 2007. The products marketed by the company in Europe include laser printers, digital copying systems, microelectronic components, fine-ceramic products and complete solar systems. The corporation has two independent companies in the Federal Republic of Germany: the Kyocera Mita Deutschland GmbH in Meerbusch and the Kyocera Fineceramics GmbH in Neuss and Esslingen.

The company also takes a lively interest in cultural affairs. Through a Foundation, the Group sponsors the prestigious annual Kyoto Prize, which honors the lifetime achievements of prominent scientists and artists. The prize money – €300,000 (50 million yen) for the recipient – is among the highest of any private award of its kind.

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