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Saft demonstrates energy storage as a vital factor in the future growth of photovoltaic power

Saft batteries provide efficient and reliable energy storage to support photovoltaic systems in a wide range of applications from remote signalling to on-grid installations

Munich, June 12, 2008 – Saft, the world specialist in the design and manufacture of high-tech industrial batteries, is using its presence at Intersolar 2008 to highlight efficient and reliable energy storage technology as a vital factor in the future growth of photovoltaic (PV) power. The potential applications for battery-based energy storage in the PV industry cover a wide range from remote signalling and telecommunications systems to domestic and industrial off-grid and on-grid installations, through hybrid renewable systems, up to providing spinning reserve to support a large power grid.

Off-grid energy storage

PV ensures a reliable, cost-effective and environmentally-friendly source of electric power for professional equipment operating in remote and isolated locations. This includes signalling and radio/telecommunication services in coastal areas or on mountain tops, as well as oil and gas platforms and pipelines both offshore and in desert areas. PV is also an increasingly attractive option for the electrification of the developing world, especially in areas with a low and scattered population density.

All these off-grid, stand-alone PV systems have a common requirement - to become fully established as a viable and sustainable alternative to grid-based electrification schemes they need an effective method of energy storage. This will provide them with several days of total autonomy, with electricity available continuously over night and in long periods of no or low sunshine.

On-grid energy storage

In on-grid applications, such as when a building is equipped with a PV system that supplements its main power supply, energy storage 'time-shifts' the excess power until it is needed. This both maximizes local consumption and enhances system efficiency. Energy storage also increases security of supply and relative grid autonomy, hence boosting the development of energy self-sufficient houses and buildings and easing the integration of PV systems within utility power grids. A further benefit for utilities is that local energy storage reduces the peak load on their grid while making PV predictable, dispatchable power.

Energy storage for hybrid renewable systems

Energy storage can play a vital buffer role in hybrid renewable energy systems that comprise several different methods of generation, such as PV, wind and diesel generators. This energy buffer provides backup power for a sufficient period of time to ensure complete continuity of supply in the case of heavy load variations, component failure and bridging between generation methods. It can be particularly valuable in minimising the need to use low-efficiency diesel generation when renewable power is unavailable.

Energy storage for grid stabilisation

Energy storage systems can provide an alternative form of 'spinning reserve' that can be brought on-line almost instantly to help stabilise a power grid in the case of a sudden increase in demand or loss in generation. This enhances the efficiency of existing generation resources and will become an increasingly significant factor with the growing penetration of grid-connected renewable energy sources.

World-leading portfolio of battery technologies

Saft has developed a world-leading portfolio of battery technologies that meet the specific demands of renewable energy applications for efficient, reliable and low-maintenance energy storage solutions. The advanced battery technologies on show at Intersolar 2008 include: nickel-cadmium (Sunica.plus and SRX ranges); nickel-metal-hydrate (NHE range); lithium-ion (Intensium Flex). This complete range of technologies enables Saft to offer the ideal battery system tailor-made to meet the needs of standalone, hybrid and grid-connected renewable energy installations.

About Saft

Saft (Euronext: Saft) is a world specialist in the design and manufacture of high-tech batteries for industry. Saft batteries are used in high performance applications such as industrial infrastructure and processes, transportation, space and defence. Saft is the world's leading manufacturer of nickel-cadmium batteries for industrial applications and of primary lithium batteries for a wide range of end markets. The group is also the European leader for specialised advanced technologies for the defence and space industries. With approximately 3,900 employees worldwide, Saft is present in 18 countries. Its 15 manufacturing sites and extensive sales network enable the group to serve its customers worldwide. For more information, visit Saft at www.saftbatteries.com

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