

Inauguration of the world's largest building integrated solar power plant

On October 13, 2011 in Perpignan (Pyrénées-Orientales), the largest building integrated solar power plant in the world was opened by Nathalie Kosciusko-Morizet, Minister for the Ecology, Sustainable Development, Transportation and Housing, the Saint Charles International site, the number one European platform of fruit and vegetable distribution. A large-scale and ambitious photovoltaic plant with innovative technology!

After nearly two years of construction, the roof of Saint Charles International has acquired a brand new look : the 68 000 square meters of corrugated iron roofing of the warehouses have given way to 97,000 photovoltaic roof tiles, making this project an adventure both ecological and innovative.

With an installed capacity of 8.8 MW, the plant will be able to produce 9,800 MWh of solar electricity, the equivalent of 10% of the electricity consumption of the city of Perpignan. The electricity produced by the plant will be injected into the public grid and sold to EDF on the basis of a 20-year purchase contract, as part of the measure for "building integration of photovoltaics".

The plant is constructed with the Sunstyle ® integrated photovoltaic (PV) tile roofing system, an innovative technology designed and developed by Solaire France. The Photovoltaic tiles are manufactured in partnership with Saint Gobain Solar. The Sunstyle ® roofing tiles have proven highly efficient, durable and esthetic substituting the conventional tiles. Hence, the entire roof of the Saint Charles International platform has been renewed and replaced.

Saint Charles Solaire, a unifying project

The Saint Charles Solaire company, in partnership with its associates AKUO SAINT CHARLES, majority shareholder, the Caisse des Dépôts, SOLAIRE FRANCE INTERNATIONAL, the Pool Centrale Solaire and SOLAIRE FRANCE, has financed the plant, with bank facilities from Natixis and Banque Populaire du Sud for a total investment of € 54 million. The company has obtained from the 72 warehouse owners the rights to renew the old roofs (asbestos removal) and the operation of the plant.

This was achieved by the Saint Charles Solaire company, as client in collaboration with a consortium of local businesses: Tecsol (contractor), Vilmore EnR (Removal and laying of roofs), Cegelec (Supply and installation of conversion systems and solar power injection), Sotranasa (Installation of the electrical system), Solaire France (supplier of the Sunstyle ® photovoltaic roofing tiles) Akuo Energy (client representative) and Saint Charles International (coordination of activities on site). Akuo Solar shall ensure the operation of the site.

Large-scale solar energy production and exploitation

This unique plant is on the forefront of determination in the context of sustainable development. This project is resolutely committed to the possibility of large-scale production of electricity from buildings integrating photovoltaic roofing tiles.

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