



Press Release

EPFL and Romande Energie to build Switzerland's largest photovoltaic centre

Pursuing their firm commitment to the development of renewable energies, the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Lausanne (EPFL) and Romande Energie have joined forces to build a photovoltaic centre covering an area of around 20,000 m² on the EPFL campus. Equipped with state-of-the-art R&D facilities, the new centre will be commissioned in stages from 2009 onwards and will ultimately produce over 2 million kWh a year of electricity. The project will cost an estimated CHF 20 million and will be financed by Romande Energie through its subsidiary, Romande Energie Renouvelable.

Morges and Lausanne, 15 January 2009 – In a move that further underscores their commitment to sustainable development and their common desire to meet the challenges of today's fast-changing world, the EPFL and Romande Energie are entering into a partnership to create a unique solar power station in Switzerland. Under the partnership Romande Energie will make available its experience and know-how in the design, use and marketing of energy, thereby fulfilling its intention to become involved in ambitious R&D programmes relating to renewable energy production.

The building project is coupled with a strategic partnership in the field of energy innovation. Part of the solar power station will be used for research and development by the numerous EPFL laboratories active in this field (architectural integration of collectors, technologies for thin film or nanocomposite coated solar cells, and energy storage and distribution). This part of the photovoltaic centre will operate as a research and demonstration laboratory, reflecting the formidable growth of these soft technologies.

This new photovoltaic installation, which is now the largest of its type in Switzerland, will serve as a window for today's cutting-edge technologies and the potential of future developments. It will be located on the roofs of EPFL buildings and cover around 20,000 m². The centre will come on stream over a period of three years (2009, 2010 and 2011) with around 6,000 m² becoming operational each year. The construction of the research and demonstration site (2,000 m²) will mark the completion of the first stage of the project in 2009. This power station, with a capacity in excess of 2 MW, will be commissioned in the course of 2009. Ultimately, it will generate over 2 million kWh a year.

In addition to making its facilities available for this project, the EPFL has undertaken to use a quarter of the electricity produced; this would represent sufficient energy for outside lighting in the public areas of the campus for a whole year. The remainder of this green energy (which bears the *naturemade star* label and meets the strictest European quality standards in the field), will be supplied by Romande Energie as part of its *Eco-énergie* product line.

The total cost, estimated at CHF 20 million, will be paid by Romande Energie. This investment is consistent with the Company's objective to step up its production of green energy to 250 million kWh by 2020-2025.

More generally, the photovoltaic project is in keeping with the missions defined by Romande Energie for the Environment business unit it established on 1 February 2008. These include cooperating with the universities on R&D programmes, investing in decentralized production units that exploit renewable energy sources (mini hydraulics, wind, solar and biomass), promoting energy efficiency and managing Romande Energie's hydraulic production.

This partnership relating to the promotion and development of solar energy is likely to be expanded further at a later stage and may be supplemented by other cooperation agreements, in particular with Lausanne University.

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Note to editorial desks

This press release is being issued outside the trading hours of the SIX Swiss Exchange as required by the SIX Listing Rules on ad hoc publicity.

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About Romande Energie

Romande Energie is Switzerland's fifth largest electricity distributor, with a grid serving 260,000 direct clients. It strives to enhance the well-being of households, the performance of business firms and the quality of life in towns and villages. Inspired by a strong sense of social responsibility, it endeavours to reconcile economic development with respect for the environment and human values. Its core activities are the production and marketing of electricity and the management of power grids, with a geographical focus on the Canton of Vaud and the Lower Valais. Romande Energie produces around 20% of the energy distributed to its clients in direct contact with Romande Energie Commerce, the subsidiary that runs the marketing side of its business. Own-power generation at Romande Energie, which is provided by a dozen plants, is 100% hydroelectric, apart from the output of its new power generation facilities based on renewable energy sources operated by Romande Energie Renouvelable, another subsidiary. Romande Energie obtains the rest of its supplies mainly from Alpiq, the largest energy group in Switzerland.

www.romande-energie.ch

About EPFL (Ecole Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne)

EPFL is one of Switzerland's two Federal Institutes of Technology. Located on the shores of Lake Geneva, EPFL brings together a campus of 10,000 people and 110 nationalities. It offers complete study courses in Engineering, Basic Sciences, Architecture, Life science and Management. In addition to excellence in education and research, EPFL has a strong commitment to technology transfer. A start-up incubator, coaching services, study programs in entrepreneurship, and innovation programs all serve to stimulate the links between lab and business. The Science Park on campus is home to more than 100 enterprises and numerous investors.

With its three missions – education, research and technology transfer at the highest international level – EPFL stimulates collaboration between students, professors, researchers and entrepreneurs. For more information, please see **www.epfl.ch**.