

Press release

Partial power generation begins at Switzerland's biggest solar energy park

As announced in early 2009, construction of the Romande Energie – EPFL Solar Park is taking shape as the first photovoltaic panels installed on the roofs of the EPFL's campus come on stream. The park, which incorporates major research and development applications, will ultimately supply over two million kilowatt-hours (kWh) per year. Romande Energie invites citizens, businesses and public authorities to partner this project which is unique in Switzerland. In doing this, they will become co-generators of solar energy based on an innovative concept called *moncarrésolaire*.

Morges and Lausanne, 24 August 2010 – As a concrete expression of their resolute commitment to the development of renewable energies, the EPFL and Romande Energie signed a partnership in January 2009 for the construction of a solar power plant with an output of two megawatts to be constructed on a roof area covering some 20,000 m². Today, Romande Energie is consolidating this project with an original initiative through which the general public is invited to share this commitment.

The Romande Energie – EPFL Solar Park electricity generation plant is also destined to become a major research and development site (2011). As was already announced in early 2009, this construction project is accompanied by a strategic partnership in the field of energy innovation. One tenth of the park area will be dedicated to scientific research by the many EPFL laboratories working in the field of new energies (integration of cells into the architectural structure, solar cell technologies with colorants, thin layers or nanocomposites, energy storage and distribution). It will provide an actual research laboratory and act as an impressive modern showcase for the formidable growth of these soft technologies.

With an estimated budget of just under CHF 15 million, this solar park is managed and financed entirely by Romande Energie. It reflects the company's strategies of becoming involved in ambitious research and development programs in the field of renewable energy production and stepping up its green energy production to reach 250 million kWh by 2020-2025. For its part, the EPFL will make its infrastructure available for the project and manage the research programs. It also undertakes to use 30% of the power generated by the solar plant.

Based on this project, Romande Energie is now launching an innovative concept called *moncarrésolaire*. This initiative is intended to enable any individual or organisation wishing to make a practical contribution to the promotion of solar energy without capital investment costs or technical and administrative constraints. It enables them to become solar power generators by renting one or more m² of photovoltaic panel space on the roofs of the EPFL. In addition to a power generation certificate, the lessee of a solar power space will benefit from all of the information and advantages exclusive to members of the *moncarrésolaire* community (see *attached note to the editors*).

Advance rental of solar panel space is already available on the website www.moncarresolaire.ch. The first phase of the power plant is currently being installed and its full commissioning is scheduled for October. The two additional phases of the Romande

Energie – EPFL Solar Park will be implemented in 2011 and 2012. On completion, the entire facility will generate over two million kWh per year.

As an outcome of the shared determination of Romande Energie and the EPFL to propose practical and sustainable solutions in response to the changes that face the world in which we live, the Romande Energie – EPFL Solar Park will become the biggest facility of its kind in Switzerland in 2012. Its scientific and evolutionary nature demonstrates the maturity of the solar technologies at our disposal today and the potential offered by future developments. Last but not least, the **moncarrésolaire** concept enables the entire population of French-speaking Switzerland to partake in this determination to promote and develop solar energy.

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Note to editors

Presentation of **moncarrésolaire**: see attached document.

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EPFL in brief

The EPFL is one of the two Federal Polytechnic Schools in Switzerland. Like its counterpart the ETHZ based in Zurich it has three missions: **education, research and services** meeting the highest international standards. Associated with a number of specialized research institutes, the two Schools form the **EPF domain**, which is directly dependent on the **Federal Department of Home Affairs**.

The Romande Energie Group in brief

Supplying the electricity needs of 280,000 direct clients (representing a population of 500,000 persons) living in 318 different local authorities in the cantons of Vaud, Valais, Fribourg and Geneva, the Romande Energie Group is one of the five leading electricity distributors in Switzerland. Its principal activities are the **generation, distribution and commercial sale** of electricity as well as the **management of electric power grids**. The Group's priorities are to offer its clients high quality services and guarantee them a supply of reliable, sustainable and competitive energy, to develop its own production by investing primarily in new renewable energy sources and to promote innovative solutions in the field of energy efficiency.

For further information about the Romande Energie Group, go to www.romande-energie.ch