

Press Release

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Tenesol completes first ground-mounted PV system in New Caledonia



Tenesol, the global solar power provider owned by energy giants TOTAL and EDF, has finished the first ground-mounted PV system in the Pacific island of New Caledonia. Located on the coast near Nouméa, the 2.1 MWp plant has almost 10,000 PV panels and can generate 3 million KWh of electricity per year – the equivalent of powering some 1,000 households. The plant owner, Helios Bay, commissioned Tenesol to build and manage the system on a turnkey basis. It was finally connected to the grid in May.

“Our goal was to find a partner capable of managing all phases of the project, from manufacturing right through to maintenance, to avoid any nasty surprises,” says Olivier Charles, co-manager of Helios Bay. “Tenesol has a long history in New Caledonia and is a major player in the PV sector. And it is one of the few companies we found that could handle all aspects for us, from designing the PV solution through to the production of modules. This gave us the confidence to invest.”

The Helios Bay plant

New Caledonia is currently exploring alternative energy solutions for the region’s remote locations. Because of the island’s high levels of sunshine (over 1,900 hours per year) and low levels of rainfall (less than 80 mm a year), solar power is an obvious choice for development. The Helios Bay plant is seen as a pilot project for the island.

Through its subsidiary in Nouméa, Tenesol has been operating in New Caledonia since 1990. In 2007

the company created the island's first PV installation, on a toll station in Tina. And in May 2009, the company started work on the 17,000 m² Helios Bay plant.

“This large scale development is another demonstration of the 26 years of expertise we have working in some of the world's most demanding of terrains”, says Emmanuel Vincent, general manager of Tenesol New Caledonia. “Ground-mounted systems present unique challenges for reliable and timely construction, particularly when located near to a coastline. We are delighted to have completed this project, which is the first ground-mounted system of its size in the entire region, even in Australia, there is no equivalent. We are hoping its success will act as a catalyst for further developments.”

Innovation at installation

The rough topography on which the system is located meant installation was a challenge. Traditionally, ground-mounted systems are installed using concrete blocks but doing so at Helios Bay would have required more than 30,000 m² of earth to be moved. Instead, in an effort to maintain the landscape's natural beauty, Tenesol designed an innovative anchoring system to secure the installation. This system also preserves the aesthetic appeal of the land when it comes to dismantling the structure in 25 to 30 years time, at the end of its life cycle.

The novel anchoring system has proved highly successful and Tenesol intends to deploy it at other sites in Mayotte and Martinique in the near future. Construction at Helios Bay began in May 2009 and completed in December. The plant used almost 85 km of cabling and employed 40 technicians.

Monitoring

Due to its rural location, the plant is equipped with monitoring tools, a weather station and a real-time measuring system, which reports on energy production and CO₂ prevention levels. All this data is monitored by Tenesol via a remote monitoring system, which automatically generates e-mail alerts.

Energy produced by the on-grid system will be purchased by Enercal, New Caledonia's leading electricity supplier.

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About Tenesol

A rapidly expanding global player in the field of solar energy (*with a turnover of €249 million in 2009, +29%*), Tenesol works on behalf of businesses, local authorities and private individuals. For more than 26 years, Tenesol has been engineering, designing, manufacturing, installing and managing solar energy systems including production and consumption of supplied systems (*Off-grid sites, general grid supply via direct connection, solar water heating*) for its customers around the globe. A benchmark player in its sector, Tenesol currently has a staff of over 1,100 employees across 20 subsidiaries

including 2 production facilities.

For more information, please visit: <http://www.tenesol.com/?lang=en>

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