

312 million euro subsidy for SolarNL, the new Dutch solar energy manufacturing industry

The Dutch government is investing 312 million euros in a national program for large-scale production of solar cells and solar panels in the Netherlands. Of this 312 million, 135 million has been awarded immediately and 177 million conditionally; in addition, a loan of 100 million will be made available. This was announced on Friday 30 June 2023 by Rianne Letschert, chair of the Advisory Committee of the National Growth Fund. The SolarNL program is an ambitious collaboration between industry and research institutes for the development and large-scale production of circular integrated solar cells and panels on Dutch soil.

Sunlight plays a key role in the energy transition

Electricity from sunlight plays a key role in the energy transition. The SolarNL program capitalizes on the extensive knowledge that the Netherlands has to develop a new generation of solar cells and panels that will accelerate the energy transition. The new solar products will be designed on the basis of fully circular production processes that produce less CO₂. The new solar energy systems can in part be invisibly integrated into the environment due to aesthetic designs and have a higher conversion efficiency than existing technologies. This greatly reduces the space needed to implement solar energy on a large scale in our society.

Stimulus for energy independence in the Netherlands and Europe

The SolarNL program connects the entire chain of suppliers of materials and machines, production factories, and companies that will use integrated solar panels on a large scale. The Growth Fund grant is a strong impulse for a new manufacturing industry for solar panels for use in the Netherlands and in Europe. The SolarNL program thus contributes to the energy transition and to the energy independence of the Netherlands and the European Union.

SolarNL program

The aim of the program is not just the development but also the industrialization of three innovative solar technologies, each of which will be competitive in different markets: 1) high-efficiency silicon "heterojunction" solar cells, 2) flexible solar foils based on the novel material perovskite, and 3) tailor-made solar products for integration in buildings and automotive applications, and "tandem" solar cells with even higher efficiency.

Great added value through public and private investments

SolarNL's total budget amounts to 898 million euros, of which 586 million euros is covered by private financing. The Growth Fund allocation is 312 million euros. Invest-NL will also receive 100 million euros from the Growth Fund application, which in the form of a loan can give an impulse to the development of the market in the Netherlands.

The SolarNL program is expected to lead to an added value for the Dutch economy of 500-700 million euros/year in 2031 and cumulatively 20-25 billion euros in 2050. In addition, the local production of solar products will yield major social benefits, such as achieving the national climate targets in 2030 and 2050 and strengthening the strategic autonomy for our energy supply.

Broad consortium of companies and knowledge institutions

SolarNL is carried out by a consortium of nine Dutch solar technology companies, Solarge, MCPV, HyET Solar, Compoform, Exasun, Energyra, Lightyear Layer, IM Efficiency, Taylor, NWO Institute AMOLF, six universities (Amsterdam, Delft, Eindhoven, Groningen, Twente, Utrecht), TNO, and four universities of applied sciences (Amsterdam, Hanze, Saxion, Zuyd). In addition, a large number of companies and institutions will benefit from the new ecosystem that will be built with SolarNL; more than 50 companies and institutions supported the program proposal when it was submitted. The program will employ open calls from the Netherlands Enterprise Agency (RVO) and the Dutch Research Council (NWO), which will enable parties to join the program at a later date. Program management will be based at NWO Institute AMOLF in Amsterdam.

The Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate Policy supports SolarNL in view of the anticipated positive contribution to the energy transition, achieving the climate objectives, and the development of sustainable Dutch earning capacity.

Website SolarNL: www.solarnl.eu

Press release National Growth Fund: www.nationaalgroeifonds.nl/english/government-allocates/government-invests-4-billion-euros-in-18-projects-for-sustainable-economic-growth-and-future-prosperity

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