

Gauss Energía unveils 30 MW Mexico PV plans

24. April 2013 | [Applications & Installations, Industry & Suppliers](#) | By: Vladimir Pekic

Gauss Energía, a business development firm specialized in Mexico's energy sector, has announced it will launch into operation its US\$100 million 30 MW Aura Solar I photovoltaic plant this August. It is expected to be the largest photovoltaic plant in Latin America when complete.



The plant is located on a 100-hectare site in La Paz, in Baja California Sur state.

Hector Olea, president and CEO of Gauss Energia, confirmed to **pv magazine** that Portugal-based Martifer Solar started construction of Aura Solar I back in January. The plant is located on a 100-hectare site in La Paz, in Baja California Sur state. Overall, it is expected to consist of 131 800 polycrystalline modules with single-axis trackers.

Due to the sustainable profile of the project, Mexico's development banking institution Nacional Financiera (Nafin) and the International Finance Corporation (IFC) are jointly funding 75% of the cost of the project with debt financing. The estimated cost of Aura Solar I is \$100 million.

According to Olea, a former CEO of Suez in Mexico and ex-Chairman of the Mexican Energy Regulatory Commission (CRE), the generated electricity will be sold exclusively to Mexico's federal power company CFE, in line under a 20-year PPA that is "extendable and based on the country's Small Electricity Producers' (Pequeña Producción de Energía Eléctrica) scheme."

"Under the contract, CFE is obliged to pay the energy supplied by the project based on the Total Short Term Cost (Costo Total de Corto Plazo - CTCP) at

the La Paz node," declared Olea. Baja California Peninsula is considered an "island" in terms of electricity supply as it is removed from the mainland.

Aura Solar I is expected to produce an estimated 82 GWh of electricity per year, which is sufficient to supply 164,000 inhabitants, or roughly 64% of the population of La Paz. The region's average daily global horizontal radiation tops 5.7 kWh per m², which means it is one of the most suitable for solar energy generation in the country.

"Aura Solar I is part of the wider Iniciativa Aura Solar initiative, which has as its aim the development of bankable large-scale photovoltaic projects with the aim of capitalizing Mexico's high solar potential. This plant in La Paz is an important step to unleash the creation of solar parks in Mexico, as until now we only had small pilot projects," Olea concluded.

Unlike many large photovoltaic projects around the world, the new Gauss Energía plant has not received any subsidy from public or private sources. Aura Solar I is also the first large photovoltaic project to be developed in the country under the Small Electricity Producers' scheme, which sets the ceiling for participating projects at 30 MW.

Edited by Becky Beetz.