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Solar Frontier to supply world's largest CIGS solar plant

Reuters Editorial

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Jan 17 - Japan's Solar Frontier has reached a deal to supply up to 150 megawatts of its solar panels to a California power plant that will one day be the world's largest solar installation made from an up-and-coming technology known as CIGS.

The company, a unit of Showa Shell Sekiyu KK, called it "a landmark moment" for CIGS technology, or solar panels that use copper indium gallium selenide as their raw material. Once completed, the project with a unit of France's EDF Energies Nouvelles will supply enough electricity to power 35,000 homes.

CIGS panels have been slow to penetrate a market dominated by silicon-based equipment, although they have long been seen as a potential challenger to traditional panels because they cost less to manufacture and have the potential to generate nearly as much electricity from the sun's light.

Solar Frontier is the world's largest CIGS manufacturer.

"We see this project as a launch pad for ever greater (CIGS)

achievement in the United States and across the world,” Gregory Ashley, chief operating officer of Solar Frontier Americas, said in a statement.

The project with EDF’s renewable energy development arm, enXco, is located in Kern County, California. The first phase of the power plant, about 60 MW, will go online by the end of 2012. The remainder of the project will be completed by June of 2013, the companies said.

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