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Solarvalue AG to launch mass production in the first term of 2008 – First samples in progress

Infrastructure and production processes for high-grade solar silicon defined

In the first term of 2008, Berlin-based Solarvalue AG intends to start production of industrial quantities of high-grade silicon out of metallurgical silicon. Compared with the current standard methods, the company plans to manufacture solar silicon at a lower cost.

In 2007, Solarvalue Proizvodnja d.d. bought a calcium carbide production facility in Ruse, Slovenia for production of high grade silicon. The reason for buying the facility was the existing infrastructure which, combined with the option of taking over experts and specialist staff already in place, allowed production to start faster and more cheaply than if a greenfield site had been chosen.

Converting the former calcium carbide manufacturing plant for the manufacture of solar silicon, the company is using all opportunities to optimize production: "Production in Ruse is based on an innovative technological process, which to date has never been used for production volumes of these dimensions," explains Julio Bragagnolo, CTO Solarvalue AG. "As such, plant design is a focus of continuous improvement."

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In recent months, new opportunities for improving the infrastructure have opened up. The planning for buildings and the production plant has therefore been revised. "The result are shorter paths, more storage space and overall better production facilities for the plant", says Dr. Christian Bornhauser, Project Lead Ruse. In addition, the silicon refining process has been further optimized, resulting in cost savings at production and higher anticipated yield. Safety standards have also been enhanced.

As previously announced, Solarvalue will purchase metallurgical silicon in the first instance to accelerate production start of high-grade solar silicon. The organization is examining several options to fine tune the process on a smaller scale, and then quickly ramp up production capacity. First samples are in progress. The annual planned production capacity for 2008 amounts to several thousand metric tons.

"Our declared goal is to optimize long-term use. The revised infrastructure and the optimized production process are further pluses for the competitive advantage of the Solarvalue process," explains Claudia Boehringer, CEO of Solarvalue.

About Solarvalue:

Solarvalue AG was founded in June 2005. The main purpose of the company is the manufacture of high purity solar silicon based on an innovative production process in which metallurgical silicon is cleaned in several steps to meet the high demands of the solar industry. The company's long-term goal is to represent the entire value chain of an integrated photovoltaics group.

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