



The news is one of those that should make people happy more than a victory within the last FIFA world championship but as Latin people used to say already some centuries ago *mala tempora currunt* and not all give the right estimation to what happens around us. Few days ago a little-big miracle happened and the Solar Impulse Hb-Sia, the solar aircraft –zero impact on the environment- whose wings are covered with photovoltaic cells, flew for 26 hours continuously during the night without one drop of oil but just thanks to its four electric engines.

The wings of Solar Impulse Hb-Sia, a swiss prototype projected by Bertrand Piccard, they measure a length of circa 64 meters (210 feet such as the length of an airbus A-340 wings) and they are covered with something in the round of 12,000 (twelve thousand) photovoltaic cells recharging during the daylight and providing the energy necessary for the flight.

The prototype weight is equal to a car ones and definitely less than a SUV, 1.600 kilograms (3,527 pounds) and with this last record it moved the limit to an increasing difficult goal to be achieved: the globe crossing by air without the help of any fuel, just supported by the sun and the solar energy.

I take the chance of this good news to make a point concerning the an “hot topic” by definition, and regarding an inexhaustible source of power (at least till the human beings will populate this earth): the solar energy.

There is a Nation, with the extension and the population of a Continent called India that goes countertrend and it is investing a lot of energy and intellectual power in the Solar Energy development.

It's no secret that India's new 'solar mission' is the most ambitious solar energy development plan in the world. India is building an initial capacity of 1 GW by 2013, enough to power close to 1 million homes. It would then add 3-10 GW by 2017, before aiming to hit capacity of 20 GW by 2022.

India 's top solar players including Tata BP Solar, a joint venture of Tata Power and BP, and Moser Baer have announced expansion plans. But limited resources and a lack of know-how could slow them down as they compete with bigger foreign firms for contracts with solar developers

Going by International Energy Agency forecasts - this will make India the producer of almost three-quarters of the world's total solar energy output an impressive number that should let "western decision makers" become more thoughtful on the whole concerning.

Though India's rising power demand and high irradiation levels make it ideal for harnessing solar energy, the country is highly dependent on imports of critical raw materials including silicon wafer used for solar cells and panels.

Off the back of this, the fact is that only solar thermal companies that act fast and start winning over Indian support will be set to reap the benefits for the next ten years. This is true for both domestic and international solar companies and it's a vast opportunity. The whole business of solar is not without risk, say industry experts. "Financing would be an issue," said Andy Kerr, director at the School of Geosciences at Edinburgh University, noting that a shortage of funds could threaten continuity of the India program.

NVVN will harness an additional 2-3 GW of capacity, but has no mandate for now to issue contracts beyond that.

India hopes international funding and technological support would help build the rest of the capacity. Companies, for now, are keen to participate in various solar projects the government will develop in the next 3-5 years.

Let's ask to **Rajiv Gupta** from New Delhi, CEO at Solwin Energy Ltd. with a solid experience within the European market and a strong background dedicated to telecommunications first and then to the renewable Energy sector, what is his opinion regarding:

- **his forecast for the future of green energy in the Indian continent with a special focus on Solar Energy that we are commenting in this article**

*Answer: There will certainly be some teething troubles but the future of Solar in India –like the Telecommunication industry-- looks very bright. Emerging markets like India offer the best opportunities for economic growth ...and the time to act is now!*

**- if there is room to develop a more stable and continuous business collaboration between India and European Countries concerning the renewable energy industry sector and if so what are the practice to be followed by the innovators of the sector.**

*Answer: The serious lack of 'know-how' in India makes it an attractive destination for the European companies who have proven experience in solar segment. Success however is not guaranteed but has to be earned. Systematic approach to the challenges, understanding the laws, politics, business environment, culture can produce great rewards. Forge Multiple Partnerships with the strong local companies!*

Furthermore these are Rajiv Gupta's observations and views based on his interactions and meetings with the senior executives of Western firms like ENFINITY, SunTechnics, SolarMillenium, SunEdition, SunPower, and the leading Indian companies like Moser Baer and Tata Bp.

"Currently there is a mad rush of applications with the renewable energy ministry to set up Multi-Megawatt Solar Projects in the country. The National Solar Energy Mission --which targets an ambitious 20 GW Grid Interactive Solar Projects by the year 2022--is clearly segmented into three distinct phases. The first phase is targeting a modest target of 1 GW grid interactive Multi Megawatt projects by the year 2013. Now you may find this interesting to note that against this 1 GW target in next three years, the ministry is already flooded with the proposals of more than 10 GW! The facts like low entry barriers and lack of clear understanding about the solar business among the cash rich Indian corporations have prompted many new entrants to apply for the solar projects.

Many Indian corporations are still searching the sustainable/ proven business models. The problem is further aggravated by lack of availability of experienced Solar professionals. The Government of India is focused to develop capabilities and manufacturing base within the country during the first phase of the solar Mission. Existing manufacturers of Solar Modules like Moser Baer and Tata BP are ramping up their manufacturing capabilities to meet the new demands.

Western MNCs are finding the ongoing ' land acquisition process' tough and enigmatic. Dealing with the Indian bureaucracy too is a complex issue for them. The key --as told by the Managing

## On the sunny side of the street

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Director of a European Solar company active in India --is to forge Multiple Local Partnerships. But then identifying and finding the suitable Indian partners is not an easy job. India is a complex and heterogeneous (mixture of so many divergent) cultures. One state may have an entirely different set of customs, language, culture and corporate practice ...than the other one!

The segment --to my mind--that will explode with the growth is perhaps not these multi-megawatt projects but off-grid and rooftop kilowatt range of projects. A senior executive from a German Solar company active in India since last few years told me that they have been getting persistent good business from the burgeoning Telecom Tower companies which are facing the daunting task of power supply to their upcoming base stations in the rural areas. India currently have about 300,000 telecom towers and this figure is projected to get double in next three years.

All said and done , the tantalizing opportunities will start presenting themselves in terms of Fresh Acquisitions and Mergers once the market enters into consolidation phase”

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**Pierluigi Orati** has a Master Degree in Social Sciences and he is a doctor in Economics with a strong background on these topics, he has been several years in charge of relations with Sustainability Analysts and Social Responsible Investors answering their questions and providing them with all the necessary information about Enel's CSR.

The creation of a section of Enel's CSR home page to involve stakeholders directly through multidimensional scaling (Sustainability Meter) was one of Pierluigi' specific tasks and the broad response of stakeholders seemed to indicate the success of the initiative.

Pierluigi has been a member of the international GRI (Global Reporting Initiative) Working Group Board, involved in revising and discussing worldwide with Enel's competitors and NGOs in order to cooperate with them in writing the new CSR guidelines and detecting the key performance indicators for companies in the energy industry (EUSS).

He is also a free lance journalist and a member of the International Scientific Board Committee of "La Finanza" two-monthly magazine of Economy, Finance and Geopolitics.

Pierluigi is currently working, in the little spare time, as free lance independent sustainability consultant and daily with renewed interest and effort in the Country Risk Management unit for Enel where he manages relations with the ECAs (Export Credit Agencies) at a global level.

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