

Media Release

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Axpo delivers 82 solar projects through participatory funding

France has experienced a major expansion of renewable energies in recent years. One secret of its success is the opportunity for citizens to participate in new plants. A leading player in this area is the Axpo subsidiary Urbasolar, which has generated nearly 19 million Euros through participatory funding.

Urbasolar puts participatory funding at the core of its strategy for the construction of solar power plants. Offering citizens the opportunity to invest in local projects, since the beginning of 2018 the Axpo subsidiary has raised 18.6 million Euros from 4,250 investors for 82 photovoltaic plants.

Despite the coronavirus pandemic, interest in participatory funding remained high during 2020 with 7.5 million Euros raised for 25 projects. These included initiatives in logistics and industrial buildings, photovoltaic greenhouses, car parking canopies, former industrial sites and former coal mining areas.

Two successful examples illustrate the diversity of these projects. Urbasolar has built an 18 MWp plant on the site of a former military depot in Vaas. The area of 24 hectares supplies electricity for over 9,000 people in the region. In another example, a roof was built over a hospital car park in Carcassonne with around 14,000 solar panels and an output of 4 MWp. In both cases, citizens were able to participate; in the case of the car park canopy, part of the participation was explicitly reserved for hospital employees.

Participatory funding promotes acceptance

Citizens can play an active role in the energy transition through participatory funding while receiving a return on their investment in the form of interest. Participants often include residents near photovoltaic plants and employees at the respective installations.

Christoph Sutter, Head of Renewable at the Axpo Group, is convinced of the benefits brought by this approach: "Systematic participatory funding is one of the secrets of success behind the renewable energy boom in France. It significantly increases local acceptance and contributes to the profitability of the plants – a real win-win situation and a model with a future."

About Axpo: Axpo is Switzerland's largest producer of renewable energy and an international leader in energy trading and the marketing of solar and wind power. 5000 employees combine experience and expertise with a passion for innovation. Axpo develops innovative energy solutions for its customers based on state-of-the-art technologies in 30 countries in Europe, USA and Asia. We open up perspectives and generate new impulses for a life full of energy.

About Urbasolar: Urbasolar has been an independent subsidiary of Axpo since 2019 and counts among the most important companies in the solar energy industry in France. The company with headquarters in Montpellier currently operates more than hundred solar plants. A construction volume of 250 MW is planned for the current financial year. The total project pipeline comprises more than 1,000 MW.

Additional information

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