

News Release

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Axpo Wins French Government Contract for Solar Power Plant on former Military Base

Axpo subsidiary Urbasolar has won the tender for the French Ministry of Defense's first long-term power purchase agreement (PPA). A 42-megawatt-peak (MWp) solar power plant will be built on a former military site in Salbris, and its operation will be guaranteed for a period of thirty years.

In brief:

- Axpo subsidiary Urbasolar has won a tender from the French Ministry of Defense. The contract includes the construction of a 42-MW solar power plant in Salbris, as well as a 30-year power purchase agreement for the plant.
- The plant will be designed, built, and operated by Urbasolar, with a strong focus on environmental sustainability.
- Construction of the solar plant is scheduled to begin in 2028, with commissioning planned for 2030.

The Axpo subsidiary is converting a former military site in Salbris into a 42 MWp solar power plant. The plant not only revitalizes the site, which has been unused since 2018, but also covers part of the French government's energy needs through a power purchase agreement (PPA).

"This project demonstrates that it is possible to combine three objectives: the use of Ministry of Defense land, electricity supply at attractive prices, and the generation of renewable energy," explains Mathieu Morlay, project manager at the French Ministry of Defense.

A First Governmental Power Purchase Agreement

This is the first PPA under which the French government will use the renewable electricity generated to meet its own energy needs. The 30-year agreement secures Urbasolar's investment while guaranteeing the government a supply of renewable energy at a competitive price. The exceptional and innovative nature of this agreement is the result of close and constructive collaboration between the Ministry of Defense and Urbasolar. The project can serve as a model for future energy procurement by the French government.

"Thanks to this unprecedented agreement, the Ministry of Defense ensures the supply of a specific amount of energy to its armed forces at a stable price and over a long period of time. We are very satisfied," adds Mathieu Morlay.

Major energy production in the service of the state

The photovoltaic plant in Salbris will generate more than 50,000 MWh per year, which is equivalent to the annual electricity consumption of 10,724 households. This renewable electricity production will directly contribute to the government's CO₂ neutrality goals and demonstrates that former military sites can become pillars of the national energy supply.

"The project in Salbris proves that exemplary repurposing can transform a military site into a valuable resource for the region and for the country's energy self-sufficiency," summarizes Antoine Millioud, CEO of Urbasolar. "This synergy between our teams and those of the Ministry of Defense opens up new prospects for the large-scale and responsible deployment of solar energy at military sites."

Construction of the power plant is scheduled to begin before the end of 2028, with commissioning planned for 2030.

Environmental excellence as the foundation of the project

Axpo subsidiary Urbasolar is an internationally recognized expert in the construction of solar power plants at sensitive sites. It follows an exemplary environmental approach that avoids, minimizes, and offsets the project's impacts wherever possible. Urbasolar will closely monitor the project and ensure that there are no lasting impacts on the local environment.

The construction of the solar plant will occupy 30 hectares of land, thereby preserving a protective forest and its ecosystem on the remaining available land. Strict consideration of the protected species identified at the site was a fundamental aspect of the project planning. The environmental measures implemented will serve as a model for future solar projects at sensitive locations.

About Axpo

Axpo is driven by a single purpose – to enable a sustainable future through innovative energy solutions. Axpo is Switzerland's largest energy producer and an international leader in energy trading and the marketing of solar and wind power. Axpo combines the experience and expertise of about 7,500 employees who are driven by a passion for innovation, collaboration and impactful change. Using cutting-edge technologies, Axpo innovates to meet the evolving needs of its customers in more than 30 countries across Europe, North America and Asia.

Additional information

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