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South Africa's first Independent Dairy solar plant a good initiative

Aluwani Khumela November 9, 2015, 7:45 am



A Cape Town Public Benefit Organisation, Camphill Village, officially inaugurated phase II of its 60kW solar photovoltaic

(PV) plant, making the plant South Africa's first grid-independent dairy.

The Camphill Village, which provides care and employment to local intellectually disabled adults, produces organic cheese, yoghurt and fresh milk that is sold to the mainstream market, which generates an estimated monthly income of ZAR200,000.

The solar PV project has been developed and funded by a group of industry sponsors from Germany, Switzerland and South Africa who have been gathered together by the Germany-based Rays of Hope Foundation. Among the project contributors was South African solar inverter manufacturer First Solar who installed the 732 PV modules.

Vice President of Business Development for First Solar in Africa, Nasim Khan said:

“Camphill Village is an outstanding example of enabling people to gain

independence by employing them in a social enterprise”.

“Helping Camphill Village to establish its power supply in support of its principles of enhancing the lives of people in need of services and support for daily living is a wonderful outcome for us.” Nasim said.

The Rays of Hope Foundation Co-founder and Chairperson, Dr. Katrin Emmrich, added that the initial intention of this project has had a knock-on effect into benefiting the Village residents’ livelihoods.

“The ripple effect of this project is profound. It was initially conceived with the objective of reducing the Village’s carbon footprint, as well as its dependency on an erratic grid electricity supply that caused significant loss of production and interruption of the cold chain”. Dr Emmrich said.

Camphill Village managing director, James Sleight emphasized that: “It’s important to point out that the benefits go so much further than electricity cost savings.

“We have also dramatically reduced our carbon footprint, and we have bolstered our reputation as a truly sustainable, eco-conscious and organic dairy, making our products that much more appealing to consumers. It’s a significant competitive advantage for us as it means that our products are that much more marketable.”

The solar generated power will be used to process over 28,000 litres of organic milk into the various products.

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