

# **Solar shines brightly on Sharjah**

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As the region's dedicated forum for glass technology, manufacture and processing, Gulf Glass 2009, Expo-Centre, Sharjah, UAE - 16-18 March 2009 can be expected to address the wider role that glass will play as a

As far as solar panels and solar thermics in general are concerned, while the whole of the Middle East presents itself as a constant proving ground for what is possible, it is some European suppliers that have taken the lead in developing the systems that will deliver the results at the right cost with proven technologies and newly equipped factories.

The glass industries in the Gulf are ramping up production and clearly solar products will account for an increasing share. The opportunities for presenting the very latest to these producers - and their processing and allied products counterparts - quite evidently exist at Gulf Glass in Sharjah as the established event for the sector in this area.

This means added impetus for the show and increased scope for our current and prospective Gulf Glass exhibitors. In essence, they can help Gulf glass manufacturers to offer architects, planners and the construction industry not only the highest quality building material but something which comes to be seen as a value added component.

As we move towards the staging of the 3rd Gulf Glass Exhibition, examples of exciting developments begin to break through around the Emirates. Take Abu Dhabi's Masdar Initiative. Recognition that renewable energies will play such a vital role and the fact that harnessing heat is an obvious option in this part of the world means new investment in solar module production. The brand new production facilities will produce modules using ultra-large 5.7m<sup>2</sup> glass panels - it's said that the 2.2m<sup>2</sup> x 2.6m<sup>2</sup> panels can reduce installation costs by more than 17% compared to smaller scale thin film panels.

In other words, serious investments, serious intent and serious business opportunities for all those aspiring to be key players.

There is plenty more evidence of deep thinking and high spending in this area: the new Ritek/Scheuten alliance on solar cell modules; new generation solar concentrators whose first commercial use will most likely be on flat glass; current work on photovoltaic architectural glass; low energy LED lighting; and an array of specialised glasses.

Not forgetting the 'solar islands' concept, with the first prototype under construction in the UAE and the massive torus now visible.

Or the first thinner glass solar panels with high resolution colour images, just hitting Dubai for the crucial BIPV (building-integrated photovoltaics) market - superior quality, lower construction costs, imaginative application - just what Gulf Glass 2009 is all about.

{AME Info}