

# Sterling and Wilson secure contract to construct 170 MW solar plant in Morocco

A consortium led by ACWA Power has contracted Sterling and Wilson, the largest EPC company in the world, to build the 170 MW NOOR PV I Program in Morocco, which, upon completion, will be one of the largest solar PV complexes in North Africa.

**NOVEMBER 24, 2016** SAM POTHECARY

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For a country that imports over 90% of its energy, it makes sense that Morocco is turning to renewables to start generating its own power. Large investments are being made in solar, previously these had been centered on Concentrated Solar Power (CSP), but the 170 MW NOOR PV I Program will be the largest PV site in the country.

A consortium led by ACWA Power won the rights to develop the NOOR plant, and has contracted the world's largest EPC company, Sterling and Wilson, to construct it. The NOOR PV I Program will actually be made up of three different projects, including the 80 MW NOOR Laayoune, the 70 MW NOOR Ouarzazate IV, and the 20 MW NOOR Boujdour. Once completed, it will be one of the largest PV constructions in North Africa.

"These projects have been won after an intense competitive bidding process," commented Renewable and Electric President Bikesh Ogra. "Morocco has been one of our most important target markets and these projects would hopefully enable us to consolidate our positioning for all forthcoming opportunities in the country and the region as a whole."

The Moroccan Agency for Solar Energy (Masen) has issued green bonds in the amount of 1.15 billion dirhams (USD 118 million) for the project, and will also fund the plants. The green bonds mature on 15 December 2019 and have a semi-annual fixed rate.

The agreement between Sterling and Wilson and ACWA Power was signed at COP22, which was hosted in Morocco's capital city, Marrakech, earlier in the month. Sterling and Wilson is planning to begin construction on the project soon, which is expected to take a total of 12 months, while the company is also planning on training local workers on the specialized nature of solar plant developed.

"We will work earnestly towards embracing socially and economically inclusive equitable work methods, skills development and employment for the local community in order to achieve best standards in performance, and a belief in contributing to a reliable and sustainable energy

supply.”

It is a good time for solar developers to start looking at the North African nation, as it is embracing renewable deployment. In fact, it set an ambitious target of having renewable energies make up 52% of its energy mix by 2030.

## SAM POTHECARY

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Sam joined pv magazine in 2016, primarily to manage the magazine's online presence. As well as writing and editing articles for the daily news section, he reports on the global solar industry and climate policies for the magazine.

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