

Maggio 2010

# THE JORDAN TIMES

## Plans for world's largest photovoltaic power plant unveiled

By Taylor Luck

AMMAN — An international consortium on Wednesday unveiled plans for what is expected to be the largest photovoltaic (PV) power plant in the world in Maan.

A consortium comprising Amman-based Kawar Energy and Italian firm Solar Ventures yesterday detailed the specifics of the Shams Maan project, a 100 megawatt (MW) solar power plant which would produce nearly twice the electricity of the current largest PV plant in Omedulla, Spain, a 60MW

structure.

In an event yesterday to unveil the progress of the project and explore solar power technology and financing options, Kawar Energy CEO Hana Zaghoul said the plant's capacity will have the potential to be expanded to over 200MW of electricity.

The plant, which is estimated to cost up to \$400 million, would save the Kingdom up to 160,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions annually, according to the consortium.

Earlier this year, the Maan Development Area provided the consortium

with a two-square-kilometre plot of land, an area that can be increased to five square kilometres should the power plant expand its capacity.

According to Solar Ventures Chairman Michele Appendino, the area is ideal due to its location in an area that receives one of the highest amounts of solar radiation on Earth, proximity to the electricity grid, road and railway infrastructure, and the low frequency of sandstorms.

Once operational, the plant will have an initial generation capacity of 1,600 to 2,200 kilowatt

hours per year, approximately 1.2 per cent of the country's current electricity generation.

The construction of the power plant, slated to begin in 2011, will create 500 job opportunities, while the management and maintenance of the power plant will employ at least 40 people, they indicated.

The consortium is currently in the process of examining PV technologies, and is considering either traditional PV cells or concentrated photovoltaic technology.

The National Energy Research Centre is to

carry out a detailed study on the site selected for the plant, in order to aid in the technology selection, the consortium said.

Deputising for His Majesty King Abdullah, Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources Khalid Irani said the project, the first large-scale private sector renewable energy generating project in Jordan, is in line with the ministry's national energy strategy, which calls for the production of 600MW of solar and 1,000MW of wind energy by 2020.

"The Middle East's deserts could be devel-

oped to generate energy to meet local, regional and extra-regional needs," he said at the opening.

Noting that the current economic climate has posed difficulties in funding renewable energy projects, Irani stressed that the government is formulating a strategy to facilitate investments in the sector through economic incentives to make ventures "financially viable".

Irani underlined that the energy strategy calls for the Kingdom to reduce fuel imports by 15-20 per cent, saving 2-2.5 per cent of its gross domestic

product.

If followed according to schedule, the goals outlined in the strategy are projected to create 2,500 new jobs for maintenance and operation as well as an additional 500 jobs for the installation of renewable energy projects and technology across Jordan.

The increase of renewable energy under the strategy is expected to cut emissions in the Kingdom by two million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent, with Jordan playing its part in reducing harmful gasses contributing to climate change, he said.