



## **USIB CONCENTRATOR PHOTOVOLTAIC DEMONSTRATION PLANT INAUGURATED BY NAMIBIAN MINISTER OF MINES AND ENERGY**

*Windhoek, Namibia and Paris, France, June 9th, 2014* – Located near Rehoboth, 80 km south of Windhoek in central Namibia, the Usib concentrator photovoltaic (CPV) demonstration plant was today officially inaugurated by Honourable Isak Katali, Namibian Minister of Mines and Energy. The 26 kWp CPV plant, which consists of 2 CPV systems, results from a cooperative agreement between the French company Soitec, one of the world’s leading manufacturers of CPV modules, and NamPower, the national power utility of Namibia. The plant generates solar electricity which powers Usib Primary School and a water pump which irrigates the community garden.

Under the terms of the cooperative agreement, NamPower selected the site for the plant, liaised with the relevant stakeholders and, as of July 2015, will operate and maintain the CPV systems for a period of 18 years, while Soitec constructed and currently operates the plant, before transferring the knowledge, operations and maintenance to NamPower.

In his speech, Namibia’s Minister of Mines and Energy, Isak Katali highlighted this project as a concrete example of “renewable energy in practice”. He said: *“it is clear through projects such as this that plenty of opportunities exist for small-scale renewable energy projects. Namibia has a huge potential of renewable energy resources, with a direct solar radiation of about 3000kWh/square meters per annum in some areas of Namibia being one of the best in the world, and thus offering opportunities for households not connected to the national electricity grid.*

*Government therefore remains committed to supporting renewable energy technologies to complement conventional energy sources. Independent Power Producers (IPP) in solar, wind and biomass are thus strongly encouraged to invest in renewable energy projects such as this one.*

*The Rural Electricity Master Plan facilitated by my ministry has identified areas where grid-electrification will remain a challenge in the foreseeable future and hence solar power has been the solution. I would therefore like to request the project partners to consider replicating this project in other suitable areas, particularly to remote villages in the country that are far away from the national grid. I am aware of the huge financial implications of such projects, but I'm convinced that through forming partnerships this can be realised."*

José Bériot, vice president of European and African solar projects development with Soitec's solar energy division, commented: *"Our CPV technology is perfectly suited for countries like Namibia, where there is a high direct normal irradiance. In such regions, our technology – which is already installed in more than 20 countries – achieves a module efficiency of 32 percent."*

He added: *"Since the plant was connected to the grid in July 2013, it is producing an average of 136 kWh per day, reducing the amount of electricity consumed from the grid by Usib school and community to merely 4.6 kWh per day. We are very proud of this project, as it perfectly illustrates how our CPV technology contributes to social and economic development in Africa, to which Soitec is strongly committed"*.

The Managing Director of NamPower, Mr Paulinus Shilamba highlighted the fact that NamPower has done a lot in the past few years in terms of promoting the use of renewable sources of energy and said that the company will continue to do so to make sure that the share of renewable energy resources in the Namibian energy mix is increased to optimal levels. Referring to the Usib 26kW CPV Plant he said that *"this is an ideal blueprint in this regard as it provides the necessary technological framework and conditions for the successful transfer and deployment of this specific renewable energy technology for on-grid power generation. It is also a good example of how the energy sector can make a meaningful contribution to socio-economic development in the country through utilization of the energy of the sun; a natural resource Namibia is blessed with in abundance."*

## About Soitec

Soitec is an international manufacturing company, a world leader in generating and manufacturing revolutionary semiconductor materials at the frontier of the most exciting energy and electronic challenges. Soitec's products include substrates for microelectronics (most notably SOI: Silicon-on-Insulator) and concentrator photovoltaic systems (CPV). The company's core technologies are Smart Cut™, Smart Stacking™ and Concentrix™, as well as expertise in epitaxy. Applications include consumer and mobile electronics, microelectronics-driven IT, telecommunications, automotive electronics, lighting products and large-scale solar power plants. Soitec has manufacturing plants and R&D centers in France, Singapore, Germany and the United States. For more information visit: [www.soitec.com](http://www.soitec.com).

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### **About NamPower:**

NamPower's core business is the generation, transmission and energy trading, which takes place within the Southern African Power Pool (SAPP), the largest multilateral energy platform on the African continent. NamPower supplies bulk electricity to Regional Electricity Distributors (REDs), Mines, Farms and Local Authorities (where REDs are not operational) throughout Namibia. For more information on NamPower visit: [www.nampower.com.na](http://www.nampower.com.na)

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