

Press release

GP JOULE and Airbus sign PPA contract

GP JOULE supplies the Airbus site in Donauwörth with electricity generated at a new 3.5 megawatt solar park via direct power line

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Airbus Helicopters manufactures helicopters and aircraft doors in Donauwörth. The company will soon be purchasing low-cost solar power for this purpose. GP JOULE and Airbus have concluded a PPA contract, i.e. a power purchase agreement, which includes the construction of an open-space photovoltaic plant with a capacity of 3.5 megawatt peak in the municipality of Tapfheim. The electricity is distributed via a direct power line to the factory site about five kilometres away. The agreement secures stable, favourable electricity prices for Airbus in the long term - and thus strengthens the company's location in Donauwörth- Airbus will also be reducing its CO2 emissions in this way.

GP JOULE will install almost 8,000 modules from Trina Solar at Energiepark Donauried GmbH & Co. KG. These will generate about 3.85 gigawatt hours of electricity per year for Airbus. The plant covers an area of around 4.6 hectares. Planning permission has been granted and installation is expected to begin in early 2022. GP JOULE is building the plant itself and will also be in charge of the technical and commercial management. An almost six kilometre long direct power line connects the solar park with Airbus' medium-voltage grid.

"The project marks a turning point. Regionally generated electricity from solar and wind power plants is already cheaper for many businesses than the electricity supplied by their utilities. A long-term direct supply contract enables the plant operator to manufacture its products inexpensively and supplies the energy customer with the energy so urgently needed for a long time at low cost" explains Heinrich Gärtner, co-founder and CTO of the GP-JOULE group of companies. But the project is also a milestone in other respects: "The solar park does not receive any state-guaranteed remuneration under the Renewable Energy Sources Act (EEG) and will therefore be realised without any subsidies. In such regional supply concepts, photovoltaics and wind energy hold their own in the market without support," Gärtner emphasises.

Long-term stable, favourable energy prices are a key location factor for many companies

The fact that the electricity from the Donauried Energy Park is so favourably priced in comparison is not only due to the fact that the costs of photovoltaics have fallen so sharply in recent years, but also because the electricity is of course generated without emitting climate-damaging CO₂. Thus, unlike fossil fuel power plants, renewable energy plants do not incur any costs for CO₂ certificates. In view of the EU's higher climate targets, the CO₂ price will rise significantly in the next few years. This means a considerable price risk for companies that supply themselves with electricity by conventional means or that operate their own fossil fuel power plants.

"Energy costs are a key location factor for businesses - a factor that will become even more important as CO2 costs rise," explains Patrick Augustin, project manager at the Swabian Chamber of Industry and Commerce (IHK). "That's why I'm sure that the supply model that GP JOULE and Airbus have agreed upon will find imitators. After all, it creates reliable framework conditions for companies in the long term." Augustin is convinced that the whole region could benefit from such PPA contracts. "As energy costs fall, the attractiveness of a location for a company increases. And that ultimately benefits the entire local economy."

Images



BU Proposal: In early 2022, construction work will begin at the Donauried energy park (here is a sample picture) so that Airbus Helicopters, Donauwörth, will soon be supplied directly with solar power.

Image rights: GP JOULE

About GP JOULE

Founded in 2009 based on the belief that a 100 per cent renewable energy supply is feasible, GP JOULE is now a system provider for integrated energy solutions from solar, wind and biomass power as well as being a partner at the supply level for electricity, heat, hydrogen and electromobility. This makes GP JOULE a pioneering company in the area of cross-sector linkage. Some 400 people work for the medium-sized group of companies in Germany, Europe and North America. GP JOULE holds the 2019 Schleswig-Holstein Business Environmental Award.

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