

Utilities join the party as solar power goes mainstream

The list of the world’s top solar power plant owners released today by Wiki-Solar.org shows that leading energy utilities are building significant solar portfolios. Chinese, US and Indian power companies now have substantial solar capacity in their home markets, while European multinationals are building global portfolios. This marks a major shift – just five years ago there were only six utilities in the top thirty.

The top solar generation owners, based on identified cumulative capacity to the end of 2018 were:

Rank	Plant owners © wiki-solar.org	Plants number	Capacity MW _{AC}
1	State Power Investment Corporation [CN]	50	2,659
2	NextEra Energy [US]	43	2,627
3	Global Infrastructure Partners [US]	36	2,060
4	ENEL Green Power [IT]	33	2,015
5	Adani [IN]	28	1,957
6	Panda Green Energy [CN]	31	1,832
7	ACME [IN]	32	1,629
8	Southern Power [US]	25	1,494
9	National Thermal Power Corporation [IN]	15	1,391
10	AES Corporation [US]	60	1,301
11	Consolidated Edison Development [US]	25	1,256
12	EDF – Électricité de France [FR]	59	1,182
13	Dominion Energy [US]	42	1,153
14	Lightsource BP [GB] (part owned by BP)	149	1,102
15	Canadian Solar [CA]	28	1,100
16	Enerparc [DE]	141	1,076
17	Cypress Creek Renewables [US]	136	975
18	Sempra Energy [US]	13	941
19	GCL-Poly Energy Holdings [HK]	26	910

Top utility-scale solar generation capacity owners

“Leading Chinese and US utilities like SPIC and NextEra have been prominent for some years” says Wiki-Solar founder Philip Wolfe, “while dynamic growth in India has brought utilities like Adani and NTPC into the list. The top European utilities have held position by investing overseas; notably for ENEL in South and Central America, and for EDF in Asia and America.” Last year’s acquisition by BP of a stake in Lightsource may herald renewed interest by other oil companies in a burgeoning solar market.

Independent power producers (IPPs) hold a relatively lower share, now the utilities are more active, but are still building significant portfolios. Infrastructure funds like GIP and Berkshire Hathaway in the US are prominent. Leading specialist solar investors are Panda Green Energy (formerly GoldPoly), Acme, Enerparc and Cypress Creek Renewables.



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Some of these top owners develop their own projects, but many also buy projects from specialist developers. The top project developers not also listed as major plant owners are:

Rank	Project developers © wiki-solar.org	Projects number	Capacity MW _{AC}
1	First Solar [US]	70	4,414
3	SunEdison [US] (in insolvency)	121	3,053
9	Shunfeng [CN]	9	1,588
10	SunPower Corporation [US]	43	1,514
14	BrightSource Energy [US]	6	1,220
15	Abengoa Solar [ES]	17	1,179
17	JinkoSolar [CN]	15	1,139
18	Hareon Solar [CN]	10	1,074
22	juwi AG [DE]	83	951
25	Bharat Heavy Electricals [IN]	4	883
27	FRV [NL] (now part of ALJ)	28	806
28	8minutenergy [US]	13	797
33	Strata Solar [US]	110	701
35	Neoen [FR]	25	677

In addition to specialist developers like FRV, juwi, 8minutenergy and the late SunEdison; leading solar equipment producers have been active in developing projects to utilise their products.

Wiki-Solar points out that the contributions of some participants, both on and off these lists, may be understated, because it holds full participant data for only about 30% of projects. “Several leading players keep us informed about their contributions”, says Wolfe, “but the involvement of others may be substantially understated.”

It should be noted that these lists total only projects of 4MW_{AC} and above that had been commissioned by the end of 2018.

TEXT ENDS

Notes for editors:

- [1] This release on the UK utility-scale solar market is available here: http://wiki-solar.org/library/public/190305_Top_utility-solar_owners+developers.pdf
- [2] Further details of the top owners and developers are available at: <http://wiki-solar.org/company/owner/index.html>
<http://wiki-solar.org/company/developer/index.html>
- [3] Wiki-Solar defines ‘utility-scale solar’ as more than 4 MW_{AC} (~ 1,500 households in Europe) see: <http://wiki-solar.org/data/glossary/utility-scale.html>.
- [4] ‘Solar Photovoltaic Projects in the mainstream power market’ was [published](#) in 2012.
- [5] Wiki-Solar’s database covers over 10,000 utility-scale solar projects, of which about two-thirds are operational, and the remainder are in construction or development. These figures are based solely on capacity that was operational at the end of 2018.

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