New Inverters for Solar Power Plants: SolarMax 300TS and SolarMax 330TS-SV **Sunshine in France:** Solar power plants in France pay off in spite of reduced remuneration **Higher, Larger, Wider:** Sonel operates its numerous special plants in Slovenia only using SolarMax inverters **Thinking and Acting Beyond Borders:** Sputnik Engineering founds a new branch office for international sales, service and consulting **Sputnik expands in France:** Didier Jeannelle develops Sputnik's French branch office

SolarMax Globe

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SWISS QUALITY

Chasing the Sun: Sputnik's new MT series finds the maximum power point on the most differing of roof areas, pitches and directions

Plant Data, PV Plant in Gornji Petrovci

Power	81.06 kW
Modules	386 polycrystalline solar modules from Kyocera
Inverters	SolarMax 20S (2x), SolarMax 35S (1x)
Commissioning	December 2009

Higher, Larger, Wider

The Slovenian company Sonel operates its numerous special plants only using SolarMax inverters

As one of the first Slovenian farmers to do so, Andrej Kresnik built his solar power plant on the roofs of his farm. In September 2008, the 36-kilowatt system went into operation in Smartno pri Slovevnj Gradcu, and Kresnik invited visitors from the entire country to an Open Door Day. It was a premiere in Slovenia: no photovoltaic system before had ever been equipped with a central inverter.

A few months later, the highest solar plant in Slovenia began generating electricity. The 24.66 kilowatt system, financially supported by the Slovenian government and the European Union, is found in the north-western Slovenian village Javorje, at 1,160 meters above sea level.

In the summer of 2009, three farmers in Podgorje pri Slovenj Gradcu built solar plants on eight roofs with a total power of 129 kilowatts. The location became known as the first solar village of Slovenia.

Convinced of Swiss quality

All three projects, built by the Slovenian company Sonel d.o.o., work with inverters from Sputnik Engineering AG. The company, which is among the first of its kind on the Slovenian photovoltaic market, was founded by Miran Močilnik, Iztok Jelen and Andreja Knez in 2006. Sonel sells turn-key solar power plants, planning services and photovoltaic studies. Convinced of the Swiss quality, the company has relied exclusively upon SolarMax inverters from Sputnik Engineering AG in its photovoltaic plants since 2008.

The largest photovoltaic plant in Slovenia using SolarMax inverters counts among Sonel's current projects. In the north-western city of Gornji Petrovci, this plant should be officially inaugurated in this year. With a power of 81 kilowatts, the freestanding system is the largest in the Prekmurje region. Sonel's

Weatherproof: The inverters of the SolarMax S series can be installed inside and out – even for this freestanding system in Gornji Petrovci.

boss, Andreja Knez, assumes that the solar plant will produce around 82,000 kilowatt hours of environmentally friendly solar electricity every year. Three SolarMax central inverters with nominal powers of 35 and 20 kilowatts transform the direct current from 386 polycrystalline solar modules into grid-compliant

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Feed-in Tariffs in Slovenia from 1 January 2010

	Fixed Price in eurocents per kWh			Operational Support in eurocents per kWh		
	Roof-top	Integrated	Freestanding	Roof-top	Integrated	Freestanding
< 50 kW	38.64	44.43	36.31	33.94	39.73	31.61
from 50 kW to 1 MW	35.34	40.64	33.45	30.64	35.94	28.75
< 5 MW	29.33	33.73	26.97	24.47	28.87	22.11
up to 125 MW	–	–	–	20.77	24.68	19.70

Interview with Didier Jeannelle, Managing Director of Sputnik Engineering France S.A.R.L.

What moved you to work for Sputnik?
I wanted to work for an international manufacturer who develops high-tech products for the renewable energies branch. It is a very dynamic market, which also fits well with my own values.

What role does environmental protection play in your life?
As a child I lived in Chamonix, surrounded by nature, then in Annecy on a very clean lake in natural surroundings. After I later lived in a filthy city with 22-million inhabitants in Asia, it became very important for me to work for a company that contributes to protecting our environment.

What goals do you have for Sputnik's French branch office?
The expansion of our French branch office and the move to Lyon come at exactly the right time. The French solar market is booming and we can expect stable growth until at least 2012. The future development is dependent upon legislation. I want to make the SolarMax brand better known, as well as our high quality products, sales and services. Moreover, I will continue to expand the partner network in the sector of medium-sized and large plants as well as sales in the French overseas departments.

Indeed, solar plant operators can continue to expect high returns. Additionally, the tariffs in France are secure until

Plant Data, Saint-Gilles

Power	111.78 kW
Modules	496 polycrystalline solar modules from Solon
Inverters	SolarMax 20S (5x)
Commissioning	August 2009

2012 and will not be readjusted to the degression every year as they are in Germany.

The SolarMax products have established themselves on the French mainland as well as in the French overseas departments for many years. While Sputnik Engineering exported four percent of its inverters to France in 2008, one year later this number had jumped to ten percent. For private solar plants, Sputnik is already the number two in France; the market share for medium-sized and large installations will grow short-term (please also see page 14). Jean-Paul Martin is very pleased with his SolarMax installation. He is already planning the construction of another photovoltaic plant.

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alternating current. The operator will receive the increased feed-in tariff – 35.97 eurocents for each kilowatt hour he produces – for 15 years.

New remuneration rates are valid for 15 years

Last year Slovenia introduced new feed-in tariffs for renewable energies. Now, plant operators are paid the remuneration rates for 15 years in full. Before they had to expect cuts after five and ten years. The amount of the tariff is based on plant size and type of installation. Building-integrated photovoltaic plants with up to 50 kilowatts of power receive the highest rate, large freestanding plants the lowest remuneration.

Plant operators can decide between fixed prices and the so-called operational support. The fixed price is received by those who sell their electricity to the state utility. The operational support, in contrast, is conceived for electricity producers who either use their electricity themselves or sell it on the free market.

The largest freestanding system in the region: This solar plant in north-slovenian Gornji Petrovci has a power output of 81 kilowatts.

Sonel wants to continue expanding its sales and install solar plants with a total power of a megawatt this year. "Our company is growing and we are pleased that we can grow with such an excellent partner as Sputnik Engineering AG", says Andreja Knez.