

MEDIA RELEASE

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Switzerland's most powerful ground-mounted solar facility to be built in Cressier (NE)

Zug, 13th January 2022 – VARO Energy Group ("VARO") and Groupe E, companies active in the energy transition, announced today that they will build the most powerful ground-mounted solar facility in Switzerland. 19,000 photovoltaic panels will generate a significant portion of electricity consumed by Switzerland's only refinery, located in Cressier. The facility will be integrated from a biodiversity perspective and is partnering with the CSEM, a Swiss research and development center to test a new generation of solar panels, demonstrating its commitment to innovation.

VARO, owner and operator of the refinery is commissioning the largest ground-mounted solar park in Switzerland with an installed capacity of 7.7 MW. Built in partnership with Groupe E, it will be located in an industrial zone, east of the refinery and cover an area of 45,000 m², the equivalent of about five football pitches. It will include over 19,000 static panels. The installations will be complemented by inverters and transformers, which will feed directly into the refinery's medium-voltage grid. The project will seek to protect wildlife and promote biodiversity. The investment amounts to CHF 6.5 million.

The energy produced from November 2022 onwards will be primarily consumed on site by the refinery, i.e. approximately 8.4 GWh per year, equivalent to the annual consumption of 2000 to 2500 households. At full power, the park will be able to supply more than 60% of the refinery's needs. This project will enable the production of local, renewable and sustainable electricity, contributing to the energy transition. Dev Sanyal, CEO of VARO, said: "We are delighted with our collaboration with Groupe E. This project in Cressier is an important step in VARO's strategy to create sustainable energy options for its existing assets and to drive value. As a leading energy transition company in Europe, VARO will continue to build partnerships to accelerate its portfolio transformation and to build new opportunities offered by the ongoing energy transition."

"The development of renewable energies is essential to decarbonise our society. The solar project with VARO is an important contribution to the energy transition,"

says Jacques Mauron, CEO of Groupe E. "We want to act as a responsible company concerned about passing on a planet that is good to live on to future generations."

A project in harmony with the environment

Measures in favour of biodiversity have been planned in conjunction with specialists in the field. These will help to protect birds and mammals. In addition, the solar farm will not generate any noise pollution. Its visibility will be very limited, particularly due to the presence of high hedges of trees.

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About VARO

VARO Energy ("VARO") is an energy company operating throughout the complete fuel supply chain with refining, storage, blending, distribution, sales and marketing assets. It safely delivers high-quality fuels from conventional and renewable sources to its national and international business customers and end-consumers.

The company owns manufacturing assets in Cressier, Switzerland, a majority share in the Bayernoil refinery, Southern Germany, as well as storage facilities, distribution and marketing businesses in Benelux, France, Germany and Switzerland.

VARO Energy owns a 51% stake in SilviCarbon, a global leader in nature-based Carbon Dioxide Removals (CDRs) and a 49.5% share in E-Flux, a leading provider of electric vehicle charging software.

For more information about VARO, please visit www.varoenergy.com.

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Groupe E, experts in comprehensive energy solutions

Operating in Western Switzerland, we help our customers to realise their projects by providing comprehensive, efficient and sustainable energy solutions, whether for the production and distribution of electricity and heat, electrical installations, home automation, soft mobility, air conditioning or water treatment. As an exemplary employer, we support the development of the skills of our 2,500 employees, including 280 apprentices, as well as the reconciliation of private and professional life.

You can find more information at www.groupe-e.ch.

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About CSEM

CSEM – technologies that make the difference.

CSEM is a Swiss research and development center active in the fields of precision microfabrication, digitalization, and renewable energy. CSEM builds up the ties between industry and academia. It supports companies as a hub of ingenuity, a center of technological excellence and innovation, and accelerator of the digital transformation. Learn more at: www.csem.ch Follow us on:

Main technical features

- Type of installation: ground-mounted
- Panel area: approx. 36,634 m²
- Surface area of the ground socket: approx. 47'250 m²
- Number of panels: 19,076
- Tilt: 20°, south-east facing
- Installed capacity: approx. 7.7 MW
- Estimated annual production: approx. 8.4 GWh/year, equivalent to the annual consumption of 2'000 to 2'500 households
- Self-consumption: 100% of the energy produced will be directly consumed on the refinery site
- Estimated project cost: CHF 6.5 million (Partnership between Varo Refining Cressier and Groupe E)
- Owner: Varo Refining Cressier SA
- Designer and project manager: Groupe E

Illustrations :

- Aerial view of the site with indication of the area covered by the panels
- Location map with indication of the area covered by the panels
- Illustration of the solar park in Payerne (similar type of construction)

Note to editor:

Innovative panels thanks to CSEM

In a spirit of innovation, VARO will make a 750 m² area available to CSEM, Swiss Centre for Electronics and Microtechnology, which will evaluate the performance of innovative photovoltaic panels, including bifacial panels. Initiated by EPFL and co-developed with CSEM, this technology is industrialised in Switzerland by the company Meyer Burger. It allows light to be captured at the front and back of the solar module, increasing the relative yield by 5 to 30% compared to traditional panels.

A project in harmony with the environment

The impact study demonstrates the compatibility of the project with the high environmental requirements. The soil of the solar park, located outside the Vieille Thielle reserve, will remain permeable and suitable for vegetation. Specific measures for biodiversity have been planned with the support of specialists. For example, the planting of a shrubby hedge will help protect young hares. The planting of mulberry

and raspberry trees will contribute to the feeding of birds and mammals. Small structures such as scree slopes, piles of branches or stumps will be created on the mound, as well as a shallow pond. These measures will be harmonised with other biodiversity features already in place at the refinery. The solar field will not generate any noise pollution. Its visual impact will be very limited due to the presence of high tree hedges. The black panels will limit reflections.

Sustainable and local production planned for this year

In December, the file for the enquiry was submitted simultaneously to the State of Neuchâtel and to the Federal Inspectorate for Heavy Current Installations (ESTI). The one-month public enquiry begins on 7 January. The building permit could be obtained next April, allowing work to begin at the end of the summer. Production is expected to start in November this year. VARO Energy is the project owner and Groupe E is responsible for the realisation and implementation of the project. The investment amounts to CHF 6.5 million.

Strong partnership between VARO Energy and Groupe E

After the implementation of a distance heating system in the Entre-deux-Lacs region using waste heat from the refinery, the construction of the solar facility is the second large-scale project in the region to be put out to tender by the two partners in the space of a few months. It is a tangible contribution to the energy transition, which is giving increasing importance to locally produced and sustainable energy.