

Local Solar Market Target for Vekselberg

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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MILAN, Italy — Hevel Solar, building Russia's first thin film solar module manufacturing plant, sees its main market at home where renewable energy is set to grow, its senior executive said.

It plans to start up the plant in central Russia, some 600 kilometers away from Moscow, early next year and reach full production capacity of 130 megawatts of photovoltaic panels a year in July 2012, Dmitry Pryakhin, deputy chief executive in charge of business development, said Wednesday.

"A considerable part of our production will be sold in Russia. Russia will be our No. 1 market," Pryakhin told Reuters on the sidelines of a solar energy conference in Milan.

Pryakhin refuted the assumption that Russia did not enjoy enough sun for solar power. He said solar irradiation in central Russia was comparable to that of Germany, Europe's solar

energy leader.

A precise breakdown of Hevel's output to be sold in Russia depends on which support scheme the government will choose to help develop solar power generation as part of efforts to boost clean energy, Pryakhin said.

Russia aims to raise the share of renewable energy in the energy mix to 4.5 percent in 2015 from 1.5 percent last year, he said. Hevel Solar has also been looking for partners in North Africa and the Middle East, which it considers important export markets, despite turmoil in the region, and sees chances to develop big projects there, he said.

Eastern Europe was also a potentially interesting export market. Facing competition from established international players, Hevel Solar, which will use technology developed by Swiss engineering group Oerlikon to make solar panels, aims to boost panels' efficiency and reduce costs thanks to its own research and development center, he said.

Set up in 2009, Hevel is 51 percent owned by tycoon Viktor Vekselberg's holding group Renova with the remaining 49 percent owned by state nanotechnology corporation Rusnano. Renova owns about 46 percent of Oerlikon.

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