

Amid the market contraction in the EU, the past year saw several small and midsize suppliers of solar panels and power systems in China shifting to other product lines. A number have shut down completely. Among large enterprises, some reported significant cuts in net profit.

Projecting further declines in EU demand and faced with anti-dumping tariffs in the US, manufacturers are implementing various strategies to expand their customer base. Many are exploring opportunities in South and Central America, the Asia-Pacific region, the Middle East and Africa. Some companies are looking into the domestic market for better business prospects.

Selections are being updated to meet the requirements of different geographic markets and applications. At most enterprises, R&D efforts are geared toward higher conversion rates and panel power output.

Key findings

1. China-made PV panels and systems are expected to become less expensive in the months ahead amid the overcapacity in the market. Taking advantage of falling polysilicon rates, many enterprises intend to cut prices by more than 5 percent to attract orders.
2. In line with efforts to expand market reach, crystalline panel makers are working toward a conversion ratio of 20 percent for polycrystalline modules and 21 percent for monocrystalline types within five years. Suppliers of amorphous silicon modules are also upgrading product performance, now offering models capable of 10 percent efficiency.
3. Most panel suppliers guarantee a minimum performance of 90 percent nominal output power for the first decade and 80 percent for succeeding years.
4. Suppliers of PV systems are leveraging developments in PV modules and related technologies to broaden the line. Portable types comprise units compatible with various consumer electronics. Fixed installations include more designs for commercial and industrial applications.
5. Models are generally designed and manufactured according to CE, UL, VDE, RoHS and IEC requirements. Several makers also comply with the standards of Asia-Pacific countries.
6. Makers are keeping up-to-date with the latest trends and technologies by working closely with clients. Several send in-house R&D personnel to local and international workshops and trade shows.

Scope & methodology

This report covers the major types of solar panels and power systems exported from China.

Details about the products offered, their common features and price determinants are discussed in the Industry Overview. The section also elaborates on issues affecting production and exports, and identifies the common strategies manufacturers are employing to cope with challenges and enhance overall competitiveness.

The majority of the suppliers featured in this report are local, privately owned enterprises. More than 50 percent of these are based in Jiangsu and Zhejiang provinces, which are the key hubs for PV modules and systems.

To produce this report, Global Sources interviewed a wide range of suppliers. Rather than focus simply on

high-profile makers, we compiled a representative sample of large, midsize and emerging manufacturers. All profiled companies are export-oriented professional suppliers that are verified by Global Sources.

Each supplier is confirmed to be authentic with a legally registered business. All companies are visited three or more times by Global Sources to ensure they are export-ready and have real offices and products.

The listed contact person has been verified to represent the registered company. In each case, companies were required to answer specific questions designed to verify their manufacturing and export credentials.

All profiled suppliers participated in a survey designed to provide insight into price trends, sales outlook and target

markets in the next six to 12 months. All survey questions are single choice. Results were calculated based on the actual number of valid responses to each question.

Global Sources supplier rankings

★★★★★

Suppliers are ranked using a 6-star ranking system. Companies with a higher star ranking provide more business information and verification reports on their Global Sources online homepages.

Suppliers rated 5 or 6 stars have a Credit Check report from First Advantage or Sino-Trust and a Supplier Capability Assessment report provided by Bureau Veritas online.

The rankings are correct at the time of publication and may be subject to change.