



Making the switch takes partnership

Ireland is moving ahead at some pace with its shift towards a greater use of renewable energy, particularly with the recent government announcement of zero VAT on solar. We thought it was a good time, therefore, to speak to SKE's Akash Bais, Technical Sales Manager, Ireland, about how the distributor is finding things in this territory and how it differs from others around the world.



Based in Austria, founded in 2008, SKE is one of the leading companies in the European solar market. As a PV specialist, we take over all sales and service activities for Huawei FusionSolar and support customers throughout Europe.

We always strive to provide the best possible pre and after-sales service. Our technical sales management team provides all our partners with in-depth product knowledge via dedicated roadshows and hands-on practice training. And our highly experienced key account management team supports our corporate accounts within the Irish market.

PES: What kind of solutions are you able to offer the industry through this partnership and what new things are coming to market to overcome some of the challenges the sector is facing?

AB: We offer products for residential, commercial, and industrial (C&I) and utility markets. The solar sector in Europe is still at an emerging stage and will require a huge push of the governments and regulators to sustain growth. There are new technologies coming up for hydrogen, for example, but there is no imminent threat to the industry.

For instance, Huawei FusionSolar Residential is an intelligent PV technology for solar energy generation in all private living areas. Huawei FusionSolar C&I is a smart PV technology for commercial and industrial infrastructures and helps businesses become independent of unpredictable electricity prices. Huawei FusionSolar Utility-Scale is the leading technology for solar power generation with large-scale PV systems. Every Huawei FusionSolar PV system is a smart investment for maximum yield and return.

PES: How many countries do you work in?

AB: We currently serve 16 countries: Albania, Bosnia, Bulgaria, UK, Greece, Ireland, Kosovo, Croatia, North Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Austria, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia, and Cyprus.

PES: How does Ireland differ from other territories you are present in?

AB: This country has a very high potential for PV projects due to its geography and demography. The Irish government announcing the TAMS grant and zero VAT on solar will boost the business and we are already experiencing good customer engagement to gear for another successful year. At our recently held installer event, we showcased our new generation of inverters and received a very positive response from our partners.

PES: How are you seeing technology developing for solar, as demand increases?

AB: As demand for solar energy continues to grow, there are several technological advancements that are being developed to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of solar energy systems. Here are some of the

PES: A warm welcome back to PES Solar Akash. I'm looking forward to learning more about the work of SKE Solar. As a distributor within the sector, how busy are things for you now and how has this changed over the last year or so?

Akash Bais: Thank you for having us. The solar industry is experiencing a period of good demand and we at SKE are managing the steady supply to our Tier 2 partners and customers. As the transformation from fossil energy to solar energy generation progresses, we are proud to be part of the change, with global partnerships that drive sustainable, solar energy production.

We are taking the initiative to increase environmental awareness through our development and distribution of environmentally friendly technologies. Carbon neutrality requires the transformation of energy systems to digitalized energy systems, which enormously accelerates the switch to

renewable, climate-neutral energy supply. We are convinced that digital technologies will play a crucial role in overcoming our environmental challenges.

After Covid-19, we experienced a peak in demand and managed to generate good business in the last financial year. This year has also started well, for example with the Irish government announcing the TAMS grant and zero VAT on solar, so we are geared for another successful year.

PES: You predominantly distribute Huawei products, is that right?

AB: Yes, we are Huawei Value Added Partner.

PES: Tell us a bit more about that partnership and how it works.

AB: SKE is a VAP, or Value Added Partner, of Huawei and is responsible for distributing products in the Middle and Southeastern European market, as well as Ireland and the UK.



trends in solar technology development that I'm seeing.

Energy storage systems: As solar energy becomes more popular, the need for energy storage systems is increasing. There are several new energy storage technologies being developed, as I mentioned earlier, to store solar energy for use during periods of low sunlight.

Higher efficiency solar cells: The efficiency of solar cells has been steadily increasing over the years, and this trend is likely to continue. Scientists are working on developing new materials and processes to increase the efficiency of solar cells and reduce the cost of manufacturing them.

Floating solar farms: Floating solar farms are being developed to take advantage of unused bodies of water, such as reservoirs and ponds. These systems can be more efficient than ground-mounted solar systems because they are cooler, which can improve the performance of solar panels.

Overall, I believe that we will continue to see significant advancements in solar technology as demand for clean energy continues to grow.

PES: What new technologies are you seeing coming through and why?

AB: About 1500 GW of renewable energy from PV is expected to be additionally installed by 2027, which is a major challenge for the power grids. Here, Huawei can make an important contribution to the security of supply with the LUNA2000 series storage systems. From 5 KWh to 2 MWh capacity, they can easily cover the range from residential to utility-scale. They are easy to install, reliable, and powerful offering the perfect back-up for the future.

PES: As the technology advances, it's important that the support is there for

your customers. Particularly in terms of ensuring the solar systems stay on grid and remain reliable. How do you address this at SKE Solar?

AB: SKE has a state-of-the-art ticketing system which is being monitored regularly. We have multi-lingual tech support teams sitting across different strategic locations across Europe to support customers.

PES: Can you give one or two examples of how your customers are benefiting from your service?

AB: First is our SKE Hands-on Practice training program, which we conduct multiple times per month. Customers can come and receive training from our technical team. Second, is the SKE Roadshow where we go to the premises of our Tier 2 partners and their customers can see the live demo of the products all over Europe.

HOP, or Hands-on Practice, is our expert training. This is the main part of the SKEPP, or SKE Partner Program, to become certified and listed as an SKE Partner. The training takes place either at our headquarters in Steyregg or on-site in the SKE countries. Each training session consists of a theoretical and a practical part. To become a certified SKE partner, everyone without exception has to take part and pass the exam.

The SKE Roadshow Trucks are on the road throughout Europe. On site, at wholesalers and installers sites, we present the Huawei FusionSolar portfolio and our experts are available to answer any questions. All current dates for the training and Roadshow Tour stops are on our website.

PES: And more generally for the solar industry, what do you think it will look like in 10 and then perhaps 20 years from now?

AB: In the next 10 to 20 years, I believe the solar industry will continue to experience significant growth and innovation. Here are some of the trends I predict will shape the industry in the coming years.

Cost reduction: The cost of solar energy has been steadily declining over the years, and I expect this trend to continue. As technology improves and economies of scale are achieved, the cost of solar energy will become even more competitive with traditional sources of energy.

Increased adoption: As solar energy becomes more affordable and accessible, I expect to see a continued increase in the adoption of solar energy by homeowners, businesses, and governments around the world. This will be driven in part by government incentives and regulations that encourage the use of clean energy.

Energy storage: The development of more efficient and cost-effective energy storage systems will be a major driver of growth in the solar industry. As energy storage technology improves, solar energy will become a more reliable and practical source of energy.

Integration with other technologies: Solar energy will increasingly be integrated with other technologies, such as electric vehicles and smart homes. This will create new opportunities for energy management and optimization, and help to further drive down the cost of solar energy.

Overall, I believe that the solar industry will continue to be a major player in the energy sector in the coming years, as technology improves and the world continues to shift towards clean, renewable energy sources.

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