



September 11, 2013

## **VDE Americas and First Solar Implement New Standards for Bankability and Quality Assurance**

- Rigorous certification uses First Solar PV solar power systems as benchmark
- "VDE Quality Tested" mark strengthens confidence, reduces risk

TEMPE, Ariz.--(BUSINESS WIRE)-- VDE Americas, a wholly-owned subsidiary of the globally recognized certification body VDE Institute, and First Solar, Inc. (Nasdaq: FSLR) announced today the establishment of a strategic relationship that significantly raises the industry bar for technical bankability and risk reduction for PV power plant operators, investors and financial entities.

For years, First Solar — a world-class leader in PV solar power system and module manufacturing quality and reliability — has relied on module-level testing and manufacturing processes that went well beyond currently established international standards. Working with third-party independent certification body VDE, First Solar has now set a benchmark for the highest levels of quality and reliability for entire PV solar power systems.

"At First Solar we are committed to providing the lowest risk and highest quality products in the solar industry," said Azmat Siddiqi, First Solar's Senior Vice President of Quality and Reliability. "This expanded relationship with VDE documents rigorous quality assurance requirements at the PV plant/system level, and establishes our position as a leader in technical bankability."

The "VDE Quality Tested" mark for PV power plants was designed by VDE together with its partner, the Fraunhofer Institute for Solar Energy Systems (ISE), a world-leading applied research institute in the field of solar energy. The testing portfolio delivers significant advantages in four key areas: electrical and mechanical safety of the system; system performance (through a highly accurate energy yield report); proper system operation; and independent verification for investors, lenders, insurance companies and other stakeholders by highly competent and reputable independent experts.

"VDE has been engaged with First Solar for many years in the certification of modules and manufacturing processes. We're pleased that First Solar will be leading the industry by implementing our new VDE Quality Tested mark for their PV solar power systems," commented John Sedgwick, President of VDE Americas. "VDE and our partner Fraunhofer ISE are committed to reducing the technical risk often associated with PV power plant investments. We will continue to work closely with industry players to help raise the standard for the solar sector."

### **About VDE Americas:**

VDE Americas is a wholly owned subsidiary of the VDE Testing and Certification Institute, Germany. The new subsidiary is located in Silicon Valley and will service VDE markets and customers in North, South and Latin America. VDE Americas is staffed by highly experienced solar industry professionals. The subsidiary will serve as the hub for initial sales, marketing and technical service provision into the Americas regions.

### **About VDE Institute:**

The VDE Testing and Certification Institute is a significant part of the VDE Association for Electrical, Electronic and Information Technology, which is one of the largest technical and scientific associations in Europe with more than 35,000 members. The VDE Institute is an independent institution which is responsible for testing and certifying the safety and performance of electronic devices, components and systems for the consumer and the general public using the highest standards of quality. Cooperation agreements in more than 50 countries ensure that the inspections of the VDE Institute are internationally recognized. Millions of electrical products worldwide carry VDE certification marks.

### **About Fraunhofer ISE:**

With a staff of 1,270, the Fraunhofer Institute for Solar Energy Systems ISE, based in Freiburg, is the largest solar energy research institute in Europe. Fraunhofer ISE is committed to promoting energy supply systems which are sustainable,

economic, safe and socially just. It creates the technological foundations for supplying energy efficiently and on an environmentally sound basis in industrialized, threshold and developing countries. To this end, the institute develops materials, components, systems and processes for a total of eight different business areas: Energy-Efficient Buildings, Applied Optics and Functional Surfaces, Solar Thermal Technology, Silicon Photovoltaics, Photovoltaic Modules and Systems, Alternative Photovoltaic Technology, Renewable Power Supply and Hydrogen Technology. Fraunhofer ISE also has numerous accredited test facilities. [www.ise.fraunhofer.de](http://www.ise.fraunhofer.de)

### **About First Solar, Inc.**

First Solar is a leading global provider of comprehensive photovoltaic (PV) solar systems which use its advanced module and system technology. The company's integrated power plant solutions deliver an economically attractive alternative to fossil-fuel electricity generation today. From raw material sourcing through end-of-life module recycling, First Solar's renewable energy systems protect and enhance the environment. For more information about First Solar, please visit [www.firstsolar.com](http://www.firstsolar.com).

### **For First Solar Investors**

This release contains forward-looking statements which are made pursuant to safe harbor provisions of the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995. These forward-looking statements include statements, among other things, concerning: our business strategy, including anticipated trends and developments in and management plans for our business and the markets in which we operate; future financial results, operating results, revenues, gross margin, operating expenses, products, projected costs, warranties, solar module efficiency and balance of systems ("BoS") cost reduction roadmaps, restructuring, product reliability and capital expenditures; our ability to continue to reduce the cost per watt of our solar modules; our ability to reduce the costs to construct photovoltaic ("PV") solar power systems; research and development programs and our ability to improve the conversion efficiency of our solar modules; sales and marketing initiatives; and competition. These forward-looking statements are often characterized by the use of words such as "estimate," "expect," "anticipate," "project," "plan," "intend," "believe," "forecast," "foresee," "likely," "may," "should," "goal," "target," "might," "will," "could," "predict," "continue" and the negative or plural of these words and other comparable terminology. Forward-looking statements are only predictions based on our current expectations and our projections about future events. You should not place undue reliance on these forward-looking statements. We undertake no obligation to update any of these forward-looking statements for any reason. These forward-looking statements involve known and unknown risks, uncertainties, and other factors that may cause our actual results, levels of activity, performance, or achievements to differ materially from those expressed or implied by these statements. These factors include, but are not limited to, the matters discussed in Item 1A: "Risk Factors," of our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2012, as updated and supplemented by risk factors included in our Prospectus dated June 12, 2013 filed with the SEC pursuant to Rule 424(b)(5) (the "Prospectus"), Quarterly Reports on Form 10-Q, Current Reports on Form 8-K and other reports filed with the SEC.

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Source: First Solar, Inc.

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