

Media Release

15.11.2022

Europe's first solar installation in satellite dish

Axpo subsidiary CKW and Leuk TDC are breaking new ground in photovoltaics with satellite dishes converted into solar systems. At 1,000 metres above sea level, Leuk TDC is largely self-sufficient thanks to the satellite dishes and additional solar panels on the roof of its data centre. Such innovative large-scale solar projects are an important step towards the transformation of Switzerland's energy supply.

Leuk TDC is the first company in Europe to use satellite dishes for energy production. Instead of disposing of disused satellite dishes, the existing infrastructure is being converted. This large-scale solar project was realised by Axpo subsidiary CKW. The solar panels are installed on the inside of the satellite dishes, where the solar radiation has the strongest effect.

With satellite dishes to self-sufficiency

Former satellite dishes are ideal for use as solar panels. They can be flexibly aligned with the sun, and therefore, produce more electricity than conventional solar panels. Also, snow hardly sticks to the solar panels, and thanks to its location at an altitude of 1,000 metres above sea level, the data centre and satellite dishes are often above the fog line. Hence, Leuk TDC can generate much more energy from solar radiation even in winter.

One dish generates around 110,000 kWh per year, which is equivalent to the energy needs of 25 households. The solar panels on the roof of the data centre produce an additional 550'000 kWh per year. Further solar projects are planned for Leuk TDC: Solar panels on two more satellite dishes and on open spaces to generate even more solar energy in Leuk in the future. The building permit for the second satellite dish has already been granted and it is to be built in spring.

Thanks to the solar power produced in-house and additional hydroelectric power, Leuk TDC's data centre will be powered with 99 percent renewable energy in the future.

Solar contracting - a model with high potential

In its collaboration with Axpo subsidiary CKW, Leuk TDC benefits from solar contracting. In this model, the solar plant is installed by CKW and Leuk TDC receives the solar electricity at a fixed price and for a fixed contract period. CKW takes care of maintenance and service work as well. At the end of the contract period, the solar plant belongs to Leuk TDC. Thanks to the electricity it produces itself, Leuk TDC is more independent and less affected by rising electricity prices. This enables Leuk TDC to fulfil customers' needs for low latency and high computing services in the data centre even in times of electricity uncertainty.

The partnership between Leuk TDC and CKW proves that data centres can also be operated sustainably despite their energy requirements. John Harris, CEO of Leuk TDC, emphasises: "This is possible by focusing on solar projects and promoting their expansion. By relying more on their own solar solutions in their energy procurement, companies are making an important contribution to achieving the goals of the Swiss energy goals."

There is enormous untapped potential in the solar sector in Switzerland. In particular, open-space installations in the Alps are a rarity in Switzerland. "We want to build more large-scale plants in the Alps, because they are more efficient and can even produce more electricity in winter than in summer," says CKW CEO Martin Schwab. The new system in the satellite dish of Leuk TDC is the best example of an innovative, efficient solar system with high winter electricity production.

More information incl. photos to download on www.ckw.ch/leuk_tdc

About Axpo:

Axpo is driven by a single purpose – to enable a sustainable future through innovative energy solutions. Axpo is Switzerland's largest producer of renewable energy and an international leader in energy trading and the marketing of solar and wind power. Axpo combines the experience and expertise of more than 5,000 employees who are driven by a passion for innovation, collaboration and impactful change. Using cutting-edge technologies, Axpo innovates to meet the evolving needs of its customers in over 30 countries across Europe, North America and Asia.

Additional information

Axpo Holding AG, Corporate Communications
T 0800 44 11 00 (Switzerland), T +41 56 200 41 10 (International)
(From 08.00 a.m. to 5.30 p.m.)
medien@axpo.com