



Press release  
7 February 2022

---

## **Gondosolar: Project for the construction of Switzerland's largest photovoltaic installation in the Valais Alps**

**Gondo-Zwischbergen / Brig – Plans are being drawn up to build Switzerland's largest photovoltaic installation above the Valais village of Gondo. Thanks to its optimal location at over 2000 metres above sea level, Gondosolar will produce around 23.3 million kilowatt-hours of electricity per year – more than half of which will be produced in the winter months. The Gondosolar project, presented today in Brig, is a joint project by the municipality of Gondo-Zwischbergen, the local power plant and grid operator, Energie Electrique du Simplon (EES), and the project initiator, Renato Jordan.**

The largest photovoltaic installation in Switzerland and the largest high-alpine photovoltaic installation in the Alps is set to be built in the canton of Valais at an altitude of between 2,000 and 2,200 metres above sea level. The project is known as Gondosolar. Its sponsors are planning to install 4,500 bifacial solar elements on an area of around 100,000 square metres above Gondo. Each solar element consists of 8 PV modules. The investment amounts to around CHF 42 million.

### **Gondosolar supplies significantly more winter electricity than a facility in the lowlands**

With a total installed capacity of 18 MW, Gondosolar produces around 23.3 million kilowatt-hours (kWh) of electricity and covers the average annual demand of at least 5200 households. Due to the altitude, the planned project produces around twice as much electricity per square metre as a comparable facility in the Swiss Plateau. In addition, 55 percent of its electricity is produced in winter and Gondosolar produces four times as much winter electricity per area as a PV installation in the lowlands. Gondosolar is thus making an important contribution to the expansion targets for power production from solar energy set by both the federal government and the canton of Valais.

As soon as the approval procedure has been completed and the financial support from the federal government has been secured, the Gondosolar project can be built and fully commissioned within three years. The idea for the project is supported in principle by the



canton of Valais. The next step is to apply for the project to be included in the cantonal guidance planning.

### **Community project with local sponsorship**

The Gondosolar project was presented today at a media conference in Brig. The municipality of Gondo-Zwischbergen, the local power plant and grid operator, Energie Electrique du Simplon (EES), and the project initiator, Renato Jordan, who owns the plot of land at the Alpjerung location high above the border village with Italy, are backing this project.

Several industry and academic partners, in particular Alpiq and the Zurich University of Applied Sciences (ZHAW), are supporting the project. Alpiq, Switzerland's second-largest producer of electricity from renewable energies, is the main shareholder in EES and is managing the Gondosolar project. Professor Jürg Rohrer of ZHAW has broad experience in the field of high-alpine photovoltaic installations and is the co-initiator and operator of an alpine pilot facility in Davos. The experienced Upper Valais companies WINSUN, Stahleinbau, Roccaval, Pronat and Geoformer are also involved in the planning of the project.

Bifacial photovoltaic systems are PV installations that are active on both sides and are particularly efficient in high alpine environments. Furthermore, solar radiation is significantly stronger at higher altitudes than on the Swiss Plateau and cloud cover is relatively low. The reflection of sunlight by the snow increases production and the low temperatures make operating conditions advantageous. These factors ensure that the total production from high-alpine solar facilities is almost two times higher than production from PV installations on the Swiss Plateau and that the amount of the total annual electricity which is produced in winter is also significantly higher. This is particularly important bearing in mind that supply is critical in the winter months.

### **Potential to become a showcase project for the energy transition**

The Alpjerung location above Gondo is ideal for the use of solar energy. It does not affect protected areas and is not considered critical by experts in terms of natural hazards. The impact on the environment, biodiversity and landscape is relatively low. The planned ground-mounted PV installation will not be visible from populated areas. The electricity will be transported away via an underground cable and via the nearby medium-voltage grid to the existing Gabi substation. A temporary cable car will be installed from the national road in Gondo to help with the construction. This means there will be no need for the construction of new power cables or roads.

A comprehensive feasibility study ultimately concludes that the project is not only environmentally and technically feasible, but also economically viable, provided that the federal parliament enacts the subsidy model and Gondosolar receives the maximum



subsidy of 60%. Gondosolar has the potential to become a showcase project for the energy transition with an impact beyond the country's borders.

### **Gondo traditionally produces power from renewable energy**

Electricity has been produced from renewable energies for more than 100 years on the south side of the Simplon. EES currently produces around 250 million kWh of electricity from hydropower at its Gondo, Gabi and Tannuwald power plants. The shareholders of EES, Alpiq (81.97%), EnAlpin (10.79%), EWBN (3.06%), FMV (2.68%) and private shareholders (1.5%), are continuously investing in the optimal use of renewable energies with the Gondosolar project. In the future they will also invest in photovoltaics with local partners.

For more information on the project please visit: [www.gondosolar.ch](http://www.gondosolar.ch)

Gondosolar press contact:

Guido Lichtensteiger  
Tel. +41 27 979 29 74  
info@gondosolar.ch