

Bordeaux and Paris, 11 June 2025

Neoen marks 10 years of large-scale photovoltaic production in Cestas

- Neoen is celebrating the 10th anniversary of the Cestas solar park near Bordeaux
- With a capacity of 300 MWp, it was once the most powerful solar farm in Europe and remains the most powerful in France today
- Since 2015, the site has generated more than 3 TWh, providing enough energy to power a city the size of Bordeaux every year
- Thanks to an innovative pilot project launched in 2022 with RTE, France's transmission system operator, Cestas is the only solar plant that contributes to grid stability, even at night

Neoen, one of the world's leading independent producers of exclusively renewable energy, is today celebrating the tenth anniversary of the commissioning of the Cestas solar park in Gironde, in southwestern France. With an installed capacity of 300 MWp, the site is made up of almost one million photovoltaic panels and generates an average of 345 GWh of carbon-free electricity each year – enough to meet the annual energy needs of over 240,000 residents (excluding heating). It was the most powerful photovoltaic facility in Europe when it was commissioned in 2015 and remains the most powerful solar farm in France to this day.

The solar park was developed in close collaboration with local stakeholders and built on former forestland devastated by Storm Klaus in 2009. Completed in under a year – an exceptionally short timeline for a solar park of this scale – its construction was a major industrial challenge, successfully met by a Franco-German consortium made up of Eiffage, Schneider Electric and Krinner. At the peak of construction, up to 250 people were working on site, with installation of almost 15,000 modules a day, equivalent to 5 MWp.

Other than its scale, the Cestas solar farm stands out for its innovative design. Its east-west orientation limits land use while optimising power generation: by facing panels in both directions, the plant delivers a more consistent electricity output throughout the day. Furthermore, since 2022, a groundbreaking partnership has been in place with RTE, the French transmission system operator. By granting access to a share of its inverters, the Cestas facility contributes to voltage regulation and thereby helps stabilise the grid, particularly during periods of low electricity demand. This innovation is unique in France and enables the plant to support the grid even when not generating power, including at night. The results of this pilot project have been highly positive, with significant impacts on high-voltage grid management in the Bordeaux area.

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For the past decade, maintenance of the plant has been carried out by a consortium formed by Eiffage Énergies Systèmes and Schneider Electric, with around ten people working on site daily to oversee day-to-day operations. In addition, much of the site's vegetation is maintained through eco-grazing involving a flock of 120 sheep.

A five-hectare area within the site has been preserved to support biodiversity. Environmental monitoring is conducted by independent ecologists who track the presence of local species and make recommendations to enhance their habitat. Bird nesting boxes, bat shelters and reptile refuges have been installed as part of this initiative. In addition, a hedgerow measuring 1,000 metres in length and comprising 120 fruit trees has recently been planted in partnership with the children from the Cestas youth council to encourage pollinating insects.

Guillaume Decaen, Neoen's Director in France, commented: *"We are extremely proud to be celebrating the tenth anniversary of this landmark photovoltaic plant, which marked the beginning of a decade of success for both Neoen and the French solar sector. This milestone is an opportunity to warmly acknowledge and thank everyone who has made the project possible and who has kept operations running smoothly since 2015. For the past ten years, Cestas has demonstrated that large-scale solar can be seamlessly integrated into its environment while meeting the challenges of the energy transition."*

Pierre Ducout, Mayor of Cestas, added: *"The town of Cestas is delighted to celebrate the tenth anniversary of France's largest solar farm. From the outset, we recognised the relevance of this project, and it was favourably received by local residents. Despite its size, it has fitted harmoniously into our area since it was built and started operating. We are proud to have placed our trust in Neoen and to see Cestas playing a tangible role in France's energy transition."*

Xavier Barbaro, CEO of Neoen, concluded: *"With the Cestas solar park, we have demonstrated over the past ten years that a very large-scale solar project can become a cornerstone of the French power system. It shows that large projects can play a vital role, alongside power plants of all sizes, in building an energy mix that is resilient, competitive and integrated into local communities and regions. This is the vision that Neoen is promoting in Nouvelle-Aquitaine, across France and around the world."*

About Neoen

Founded in 2008, and owned since April 2025 by Brookfield Renewable Holdings SAS, Neoen is one of the world's leading independent producers of exclusively renewable energy, with expertise in power generation – solar and onshore wind power – and storage. Neoen plays an active role in accelerating the energy transition of the countries where it operates by delivering clean, competitively priced local energy. Neoen is a high-growth company: its capacity in operation or under construction has quadrupled over the last six years, and now stands at 8.9 GW, with the ambition to reach 10 GW in 2025.

Neoen operates close to 200 assets across three continents. Its flagships include Western Downs Green Power Hub in Australia, comprised of the largest solar farm in the country (460 MWp) and Western Downs Battery (212 MW / 424 MWh); Collie Battery (219 MW / 877 MWh), one of the world's most powerful large-scale storage systems; France's most powerful solar farm (300 MWp) in Cestas; and Finland's largest wind farm (404 MW) in Mutkalampi.

For more information: www.noen.com

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