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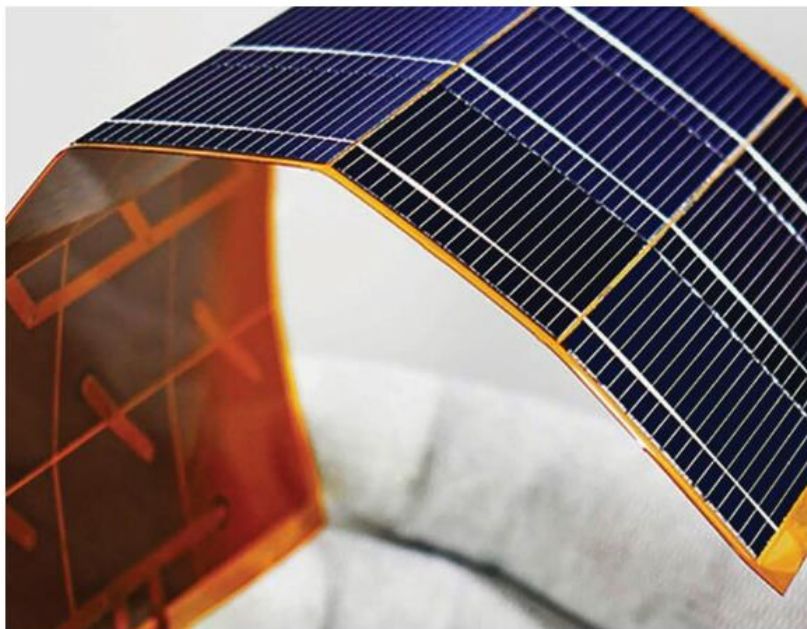
MPower Inks Airbus Solar Cell Deal

ENERGY: Will Generate 1.1 Megawatts of Power for Satellites

BY ELI WALSH

OCTOBER 22, 2024

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mPower's DragonSCALES are comprised of laser-cut lightweight solar cells that are affixed to a flexible substrate. Photo courtesy mPower.

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CARLSBAD – Solar energy tech company mPower Technology Inc. was chosen this month by international aerospace giant Airbus Netherlands B.V. to provide solar power cells for a line of satellites from Canadian space tech company MDA Space (TSX: MDA).

mPower, which is jointly headquartered in Carlsbad and Albuquerque, New Mexico, will provide its DragonSCALES solar power modules for Airbus' Sparkwing solar arrays. The arrays will be used in MDA Space's Aurora product line, which the company announced in March and has already garnered a customer in the Canadian satellite communications company Telesat.



Kevin Hell
CEO
mPower Technologies Inc.

According to mPower, its solar energy cells will provide more than 1.1 megawatts of power for more than 200 spacecraft as soon as next year. “We see this as a landmark deal for us in terms of validation in the space marketplace,” said mPower CEO Kevin Hell.

While the terms of the contract were not disclosed, Hell said it was one of the largest he's aware of in the space power industry. Hell said mPower has worked with Airbus for more than five years to get the Leiden-based company comfortable with mPower's solar cell technology.

Airbus said in an announcement last month that it will supply more than 200 solar arrays to MDA Space to support Telesat's low-earth orbit satellite constellation Lightspeed, which will benefit aeronautical, maritime, enterprise, telecommunications and government networks.

Airbus' Sparkwing solar arrays include two wings of five solar panels and are the world's first arrays available commercially and off the shelf, according to the company.

"Our industrialized Sparkwing solar array product not only meets the demands of this ground-breaking constellation project, but is also tailored to ensure optimal performance in space," said Rob Postma, managing director of Airbus in the Netherlands in a statement announcing the deal.

Turnkey Manufacturing

For mPower's role in the satellite supply chain, manufacturing partner Universal Instruments Corporation will produce DragonSCALES solar modules at an automated high-volume plant in New York.

DragonSCALES modules are comprised of laser-cut lightweight solar cells that are affixed to a flexible substrate. While the cells have a variety of possible uses, mPower's main focus is on a space tech market that was valued at \$30.53 billion in 2020 and is projected to reach \$107.42 billion by 2030, according to the market research firm Valuates Reports.

Hell argued mPower's turnkey manufacturing status was a major factor in its selection by Airbus, along with the company's competitive price point and its decade of experience in the industry.

"We don't see anyone else out in the marketplace right now that is ready to go like we are, and that can reach the cost point and the performance targets that we can," Hell said. "So we don't see any competition."

MDA Space's Aurora satellite product line is expected to provide telecommunications companies and other users with "unparalleled flexibility and functionality," according to the company. The software-defined satellites are primarily intended to be used in constellations at a reduced cost and quicker time to market.



*Rob Postma
Managing Director
Airbus NL*



Mike Greenley
CEO
MDA Space

“Delivering best-in-class satellite performance, attractive economics and more cost-effective constellation solutions, we are honored to have already secured two customers for Aurora, including Telesat as the anchor customer,” MDA Space CEO Mike Greenley said in an a March announcement of the new satellite line.

MDA Space was founded as MacDonald, Dettwiler and Associates in 1969 and later shortened as MDA. The company rebranded as MDA Space in March 2024.

‘Significant Turning Point’

In addition to the Airbus contract, mPower has roughly \$500 million in other engaged business, primarily as a solar power source for other low-earth orbit satellite constellations, space logistics missions and orbital transfer vehicles, which carry other satellites or payloads into space.

Hell added that the company expects to be the primary supplier for additional space energy and technology projects that are still awaiting funding.

“It is a very significant turning point for the company, and we’re very excited about the validation that it provides to mPower,” said Hell.

mPower Technologies

FOUNDED: 2015

CEO: Kevin Hell

HEADQUARTERS: Albuquerque (Engineering); Carlsbad (Business operations)

BUSINESS: Solar energy tech

EMPLOYEES: 15

WEBSITE: mpowertech.com

NOTABLE: In 2022, mPower was chosen by Gravmatics to provide solar power systems for its StarMax space station modules.