

Taiwan chip giant TSMC to enter solar energy

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Multi-crystalline solar cells create energy from sunlight at a test facility in Golden, Colorado. Chip giant Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing is planning its first foray into solar energy with an investment in the island's largest producer of solar cells, a spokesman said Thursday.

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TSMC, the world's leading contract microchip maker by revenue, intends to pay 6.2 billion Taiwan dollars (192 million dollars) for 20 percent in Motech Industries Inc., making it the largest shareholder.

"We believe the [solar technology](#) sector offers high growth opportunities," said TSMC spokesman J. H. Tzeng.

As growth in the semiconductor business slows, TSMC and other companies in the sector hope to find new ways of making money, and [solar energy](#) is one area expected to see rapid expansion in the coming years.

"With this investment we intend to leverage Motech's established platform to accelerate our time to market, better evaluate opportunities along the solar value chain, and further formulate our overall solar strategy," he told AFP.

Motech was established in 1981 as a maker of test instruments, but started making solar cells in 1999.

"We plan to work closely with TSMC to address new business opportunities," Motech CEO Simon Tsuo said in a statement.

"We believe this partnership would further enhance Motech's leadership position in the [solar industry](#)."

Taiwan plans to boost its use of solar panels by a factor of 200 over the next decade and a half in an effort to increase clean energy, the island's Bureau of Energy said last week.

Solar panels across the island currently have a capacity of five megawatts, enough to power 500 buildings, but by 2025 that figure is targeted to rise to 1,000 megawatts, according to the bureau.

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