

Japan's solar cell market more than tripled in 2009

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An employee of Japan's electronics giant Sanyo displays their portable solar power generators in Tokyo in 2009. Japan's solar cell market more than tripled in the year to March, as government incentives spurred households to purchase the eco-friendly technology, industry data showed Tuesday.

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Shipments of [solar cells](#) and modules in Japan rose 263 percent from the previous financial year, the Japan Photovoltaic Energy Association said.

Nearly 90 percent of the shipments were for household use, due to government cash subsidies and tax incentives for homeowners to install the greener technology.

The Japanese market saw solid growth through the early 2000s, but began to lose ground from around 2005 after [Tokyo](#) terminated earlier subsidies programmes.

However, subsidies resumed last year, triggering the rapid surge, an association official said.

"The market can continue to grow if appropriate policy actions are taken," he said. "Manufacturers also have a responsibility to reduce costs. We as an industry must work hard to popularise solar cells," he said.

Subsidies are needed as [Japan](#) had largely relied on the goodwill of companies to pay for expensive solar technologies that are priced higher than conventional power systems, the official added.

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