

# US solar firm to build \$300 mln Vietnam plant

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An employee makes a final check on a solar panel at the Renewable Energy Corporation (REC) factory in Singapore in November. A US solar panel maker Wednesday said it will build a \$300 million factory in Vietnam, boosting the country's efforts to reinvent itself as a hub for high-tech manufacturing.

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Arizona-based First Solar said Vietnamese authorities had approved the investment in Ho Chi Minh City's Cu Chi district, in the south of the country.

The facility will employ around 600 people and production is expected to begin in the second half of next year, a company spokeswoman told

AFP.

[Vietnam](#) is still a rural-based society that has relied on natural resources and unskilled labour to achieve growth. But the country's communist leaders now speak of moving to a more technologically advanced system of production.

"You're seeing more and more high-tech firms come into Vietnam," outgoing United States ambassador Michael Michalak said at his farewell press conference this month. He cited First Solar's plans as an example.

In October the US-based chip maker [Intel](#) opened a billion-dollar plant in Ho Chi Minh City.

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