

World's largest solar park planned in Greece: PM

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A picture taken in 2010 shows solar pannels during the inauguration of a solar panel installation in eastern France. Debt-hit Greece plans to build the world's largest solar park over depleted coal mines in the northern city of Kozani, Prime Minister George Papandreou said this week.

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Estimated to cost 600 million euros (\$807 million) and with a capacity of 200 [megawatts](#) (MW), the project's electricity output will be "greater than any other photovoltaic park operational in the world until now," Papandreou told a development event in Kozani on Thursday.

The state-run Public Power Corporation (PPC) said it would organise an

international tender to find a strategic investor for the solar park, which is to be built over 520 hectares (1,285 acres) of disused company mines.

Papandreou said the project will serve as a model for the development of renewable energy and will boost employment in a country striving to stand on its feet amid a deep [economic crisis](#).

His Socialist government has sought to attract investment in renewable energy projects to offset thousands of jobs lost to a recession exacerbated by austerity measures adopted to tackle a national debt crisis.

It has also pledged to gradually shift [electricity production](#) away from lignite, a heavily polluting form of coal.

Last week Greece's unemployment rate skyrocketed to 13.5 percent in October 2010 from 9.8 percent in the same month the previous year.

The Greek economy is expected to shrink by three percent this year after two previous years of contraction.

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