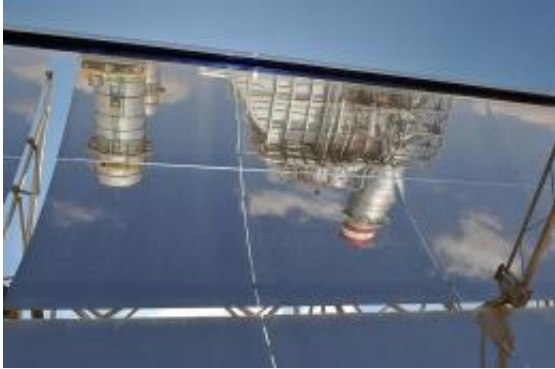


France to fund Morocco's solar energy plan

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A view of the panels of the solar power station of Ain Beni Mathar, near Oujda, in May 2011. A French minister said Monday that Paris was allocating 103 million euros (146 million dollars) to help finance Morocco's solar energy plan.

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Industry and Energy Minister Eric Besson made the announcement on a visit to Rabat where he met his Moroccan counterpart Amina Benkhadra.

He said the funds would be disbursed by the French Development Agency for a project he described as "the centerpiece of the Mediterranean solar plan".

Morocco announced in 2009 it was launching a project to produce 2,000

[megawatts](#) of solar-generated [electricity](#) at a cost of nine billion dollars.

The program is expected to become operational in 2020 when production will cover 42 percent of the country's electricity needs.

Besson said Paris and Rabat would seal a deal by year's end for the long-term purchase of clean electricity from Morocco.

France, Spain and Morocco will also cooperate to boost their electrical interconnection networks, with a summit on the issue planned before the end of the year, the French minister added.

Besson was also due to hold talks with Moroccan [Foreign Minister](#) Taieb Fassi Fihri and Industry Minister Ahmed Chami.

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