



Solar Taskforce

Update on progress



Origin

The Solar Taskforce stems from a recommendation in Chris Skidmore MP's Review of Net Zero: "Set up a Taskforce and deployment roadmaps in 2023 for solar to reach up to 70GW by 2035". This report called for a solar revolution, cross-cutting actions on skills and supply chain issues, and broader measures, including network reform.

The recommendation to form a Taskforce was accepted as part of the 'Green Day' announcements in March. Its key objectives are:

- **Strategic roadmap:** assisting in the development of and securing cross-government and industry buy-in to a UK roadmap for solar, setting out a clear step-by-step deployment trajectory to achieve up to 70GW of solar by 2035
- **Taking action:** government and industry working together to identify and drive forward processes and measures to unlock deployment
- **Securing investment and value for money:** as the sector grows, put in place structures to facilitate continued progress on cost reduction and ensure investment in UK supply chains, jobs, skills, innovation and infrastructure is enabled sustainably

Solar Taskforce

The first meeting of the Taskforce's main leadership group was on 25 May, where it confirmed a proposed work plan and decided that several subgroups needed to be created to discuss matters in detail. It has since met every other month, chaired by Energy Minister Graham Stuart and Solar Energy UK Chief Executive Chris Hewett.

It has senior-level representation from MCS, Evo Energy, NextEnergy Capital, EDF Renewables, Lightsource BP, Segen, the UK Infrastructure Bank and the Energy Networks Association.

In addition to industry leaders, all subgroups bring in senior civil servants from relevant government departments, external expert advisors and Solar Energy UK staff.

Skills

The Skills Subgroup is working on how to develop and deliver the skills and training needed for the future solar workforce, aligning with the government-industry Green Jobs Delivery Group and other such initiatives. This includes, among other activities:

- Work to identify what additional training provision may be needed, including paid apprenticeships, short introductory training and more specialist courses
- Consideration of how the solar sector can develop quality assurance processes
- Exploration of the likely future skills needs and recruitment demand
- The development of a suite of career events aimed at prospective employees from a wide range of backgrounds
- Learning from other sectors regarding policies and practices to promote greater diversity and inclusion across the industry

The group is Chaired by Evo Energy Chairman Mark Wakeford, with SEUK Director of Policy and Delivery Gemma Grimes as vice-chair.

Supply Chain and Innovation

The role of the Supply Chain and Innovation Subgroup is to facilitate resilient, sustainable and innovative supply chains for both rooftop and ground-mount solar up to 2035 and beyond. This includes, among other areas:

- Mapping the existing global and domestic supply chain to identify risks and opportunities
- Exploring the potential for expansion within the existing UK supply chain and future opportunities
- Looking at ways to increase the attractiveness of the UK market for investment and understanding and unlocking the barriers to manufacturing
- Considering options for developing industry standards in products and contracts
- Innovation support and exploring the potential for international collaboration to strengthen the UK industry
- Identifying export opportunities

The subgroup is chaired by Liz MacFarlane, Director of Segen, with Chris Hewett, SEUK, as vice-chair.

Rooftop

The largest of the four groups, the Rooftop Subgroup, addresses barriers to increasing the deployment of commercial, industrial and domestic solar. The work of this group includes, among other things:

- Exploring barriers to private finance
- Potential innovations in the procurement of solar on the public estate
- Looking at ways to facilitate low-cost finance for households and businesses
- Installer certification and consumer protection
- Exploring the interaction between landlord/tenant/developer/occupier to better facilitate solar deployment

It is co-chaired by Tim Warham, Head of Established and Marine Technologies at the Department for Energy Security & Net Zero and Chris Hewett, SEUK.

Networks

The Networks Subgroup seeks to improve connection waiting times and reform the rules governing them, from solar farms to residential installations. Members of the subgroup have formed four focus groups to explore the potential for:

- Establishing a Common Access Platform – including the provision of information on project progression, application volumes and demand data, etc
- Simplifying Third Party Works – focussed on the transmission-distribution interface
- Improving the Standardisation of Services – across the various network operators
- Radical Simplification – removing unnecessary administrative burdens which deter and slow investment

The subgroup's work also seeks to align with other initiatives led by the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, Ofgem, National Grid ESO and the distribution and transmission operators and to ensure that the interests of the solar sector are taken into account in these initiatives.

The subgroup is chaired by Lawrence Slade, Chief Executive of the Energy Networks Association, with Gemma Grimes, SEUK, as vice-chair.

Communications

First convened in September, the Communications Subgroup is focused on helping the Taskforce and the solar industry as a whole to engage with households, businesses, and communities by answering the following questions:

- Why are we aiming for 70GW by 2035?
- What does it look like and where?
- Who does it impact?
- How will we achieve 70GW?

The subgroup is chaired by Lightsource BP's General Counsel Alex DeSouza, with Solar Energy UK's Head of Marketing and Communications Veronica Magoja as vice-chair.

Next Steps

Members of the Taskforce will continue to meet into early 2024 and are working at speed to compile a series of recommendations for the roadmap. The final roadmap towards 70GW is expected to be published by Spring 2024.



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