

Press release

Freiburg, Germany, July 17, 2019

NexWafe GmbH receives the Baden-Württemberg Environmental Technology Award - Umwelttechnikpreis

NexWafe GmbH, Freiburg, receives the Umwelttechnikpreis (Environmental Technology Award) Baden-Württemberg in the category "Material Efficiency" for its Kerfless wafering process production of silicon wafers. In the patented process, the number of energy-intensive production steps is significantly reduced, and silicon losses are cut by more than 90 percent. NexWafe is planning to commence mass production of its EpiNex™ -silicon wafers for the photovoltaic industry in 2021.

The production processes patented by NexWafe follow a completely different approach compared to conventional wafer production, in which nearly half of the silicon is lost. The EpiNex™ wafers are grown on reusable seed wafers using in-line processes with high throughput which are key for scaling and cost reduction. EpiNex™ wafers behave like conventional wafers and can be used without modification in the existing solar cell and module production. EpiNex™ as monocrystalline wafers, they are suitable for high efficiency solar cells. NexWafe's disruptive process can also produce ultra-thin wafers which are much thinner than previously possible with sawing technologies. Such ultra-thin wafers are flexible and can be mounted to curved structures. Thus, applications like vehicles roofs and bodies can be fitted by EpiNex™ based solar cells and would reduce the dependence on charging stations for e-mobility. The most expensive component of a high-efficiency solar module is the wafer.

"That's why it's particularly important to cut costs. The fact that our wafers save energy, avoid silicon waste and generate higher yield from solar power plants also fundamentally improves the environmental balance and the energy payback time of solar modules. We want to help accelerate the spread of photovoltaics" says Dr. Frank Siebke, Chief Financial Officer and Co-founder at NexWafe GmbH.

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About NexWafe GmbH

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NexWafe GmbH is a spinoff company of the Fraunhofer Institute for Solar Energy Systems ISE in Freiburg, Germany. The company is industrializing its breakthrough technology for epitaxial fabrication of silicon wafers for solar photovoltaics. In Freiburg, Germany, the company runs a fully integrated pilot production line producing and providing superior quality monocrystalline wafers that are fully compatible with standard cell and module fabrication processes. In the disruptive EpiWafer process, crystalline silicon layer is deposited on a seed wafer and subsequently detached to produce a freestanding wafer of any desired thickness without kerf loss.

