

# Irish company to raise €25m for solar push

**Aine Coffey**

INVESTRICITY, a new Dublin-based solar energy venture, has closed a €14m deal to buy its first power station in the Rhône-Alpes in France and is finalising plans for a €25m fundraising to fuel expansion.

The company has signed exclusive deals on a 50MW solar power project pipeline across France and Italy, according to Peter McCarthy, its chief executive.

Investricity was co-founded by McCarthy, who previously worked in the property industry and spent a number of years working with Denis O'Brien at Digicel and Esat, and by Kevin Lynch, formerly of NTR.

Lynch chairs the company, which was set up in September last year.

"I wanted to go back and do something in the utility space, and Kevin and I were introduced by a mutual friend," said McCarthy.

France and Italy are both attractive solar power markets because they have good tariff and regulatory structures and good sunshine, he said.

"They are two good markets at the moment. They are emerging markets."

Investricity is investing in photovoltaic solar power, where arrays of cells contain a material that converts heat into direct-current electricity.

"It is a tried and tested technology and has been there for a long, long time," said McCarthy.

"It is the right technology, at the right price, at the moment."

More than 14GW of solar energy capacity will be installed in Europe this year, he said, more than that for wind energy.



**Solar deal: Investricity**

Investricity expects to start running its newly acquired 3MW French plant in the third quarter of this year, with more coming online in the fourth quarter.

Overall, it expects to commit more than €130m to about 40MW of solar projects by the end of 2010.

The plan also includes bringing 18MW of grid-connected plants online in Italy in the second half of the year.

The company is in talks about acquiring 17MW of power plants in Spain, as well as a development portfolio. It is also in discussions about building rooftop solar projects in Germany.

"This is a very interesting market at the moment, but it is very difficult and complicated," said McCarthy.

"There is a lot of process and due diligence work required to get projects over the line."

"You are looking at something that will generate revenue and you have to look at it over 20 years."