

ESG Solar Deal 2025 – Verso Energy's floating solar, France

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Eiffel-backed Verso Energy was chosen to win the solar ESG award for its first floating solar project in eastern France, celebrated by one judge for being “small but innovative”.

Another of the judges said: “Whilst small, the \$27 million financing for Verso Energy's Gueugnon floating solar power plant at Gravières de l'Arroux is a first-in-its-kind in France.

“It redevelops 5 former gravel pits in the Bourgogne-Franche-Comté region through the production of renewable local energy in compliance with EU green Taxonomy and sustainable finance requirements. That's a truly interesting development.”

The transaction supported the financing from BNP Paribas for the construction of floating solar plant at Gravières de l'Arroux.

The project, which represents an investment of around €24 million, is owned and financed by Verso Energy with its own funds and long-term bank financing secured from BNP Paribas.

The project is also open to citizen investment through a crowdfunding campaign reserved for residents of Saône-et-Loire and neighbouring departments.

This first large-scale floating solar project in Bourgogne-Franche-Comté, located in the municipalities of Gueugnon and Rigny-sur-Arroux, aims to enable the redevelopment of 5 former gravel pits through the production of renewable, carbon-free and local energy. The plant was scheduled to come into operation in Q3 (2025).

This solar PV installation will have a total capacity of 23.1 MWp, producing more than 26.4 GWh of electricity each year, equivalent to the consumption of 12,000 people.

The site will generate additional tax revenue for the region while also addressing land issues in the context of the development of renewable energy.

The floating solar power plants will be connected to each other and will occupy around half of the water surface without interfering with leisure activities, particularly fishing.

It will be the first in the department and the second largest in France.

For Verso Energy, it's a question of adding value to a site that had lost its economic usefulness. The floating solar will be installed on composite floats designed and manufactured in France (by Ciel & Terre) for this purpose. It contributes to the emergence of a promising national industry while also mobilising several local contractors (including Groupe Bouhet).

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