Press release 8 June 2020

Solar energy for Essen’s drinking water supplies

STEAG subsidiary SENS constructs a photovoltaic system for Essen’s waterworks

Essen/Würzburg. For Wassergewinnung Essen GmbH, a subsidiary of the Stadtwerke Essen AG and Gelsenwasser AG municipal companies, sustainability and the conservation of resources are central cornerstones of its activities. The most recent project of the company, which supplies around one million people in its catchment area with drinking water every day, shows that these principles are put into practice. Supported by the team from STEAG Solar Energy Solutions (SENS), the Essen water supply company has entered the field of green electricity generation by means of photovoltaics.

A PV system with an output of around 200 kilowatts (kWp) has now been installed on the roof of the waterworks in Essen-Überruhr. In future, 608 solar panels with a total surface area of almost 2,000 m2 will produce around 170,000 kilowatt-hours (kWh) of green electricity per year. This means annual CO2 savings of over 91 tonnes. By comparison, this amount is roughly equivalent to the annual emissions of 13 medium-sized cars driving 50,000 km per year.

Launch of the company’s own power generation

For the Essen water production facility this completed measure is a pilot project, with further installations to follow: "We intend to generate a growing proportion of our electricity locally here from renewable energies. This fits in perfectly with our approach, which is geared towards environmental compatibility and resource conservation," explains Tobias Grau, Commercial Manager of Wassergewinnung Essen GmbH. "Moreover, the power we generate here is more than cost-effective, so that ecology and economy go hand in hand".

The calculations of the SENS experts had already shown in advance the enormous savings potential that the installation of the PV system would offer the Essen water supply company. The Würzburg-based provider of renewable energy services had been successful in the tendering process and was able to make an impact in particular with a well thought-out overall package

"At this point, we are particularly pleased that we were successful in the award procedure. After all, Essen isn't just any old city but the headquarters of our parent company", says Moritz Wickert, Head of Energy Systems at SENS.

Drinking water protection and the coronavirus no obstacles

The starting signal for the construction work was given on schedule in April. The system will officially go into operation as early as the end of June - and this despite challenging conditions due to the coronavirus crisis and of course in compliance with all the applicable social-distancing and hygiene measures. During the installation work on the perimeter of such critical infrastructure, the special requirements of drinking water protection also had to be ensured. "The cooperation with the people responsible for the Essen water supply was close and helpful, and ensured that everything ran smoothly," says Moritz Wickert, summarising the project from the point of view of SENS.

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| **About Wassergewinnung Essen GmbH**  In 2003 Stadtwerke Essen AG and Gelsenwasser AG founded the joint Wassergewinnung Essen GmbH based in Essen, in this way pooling their activities for water supplies in the Ruhr area. In 2016 the two shareholders invested a total of around 56 million euros in the construction of a new, state-of-the-art water treatment plant at the Essen-Überruhr location. This is one of the most modern facilities of its kind in Europe, operates virtually free of chemicals and ensures very high drinking water quality at all times. Further information can be found on the company's website at [**www.wg-essen.de**](http://www.wg-essen.de)  **About STEAG Solar Energy Solutions**  STEAG Solar Energy Solutions GmbH (SENS) is a service provider based in Würzburg with worldwide operations in the field of renewable energies. Its range of services includes the development and construction of turnkey solar parks, the maintenance and operational management of PV systems and the implementation of energy solutions for commerce and industry such as rooftop PV systems, e-charging stations and energy storage systems. SENS has been part of the STEAG Group since July 2019 and employs approx. 170 people at seven locations in Germany and abroad.  **About STEAG**  For more than 80 years STEAG has represented efficient and reliable power generation, both in Germany and internationally. As experienced partners we provide our customers with comprehensive support on all aspects of energy supplies. We plan, develop, implement, operate and market highly efficient power plants and their ancillary products. In addition to custom-made solutions for the supply of electricity and heating, we offer a wide range of energy services based to an ever-increasing extent on renewable energies. |