

14 June 2016

## **NextEnergy Capital announces private equity fund for Italian solar**

### ***First close of €150 million achieved***

NextEnergy Capital Group (“NEC”), the leading solar investor and operator, announces the successful first close of NextPower II, a private equity fund focused on acquiring operating solar power projects in Italy. NextPower II has secured an initial commitment of €150 million, and will begin deploying capital imminently.

NextPower II’s strategy is to consolidate the large but highly fragmented Italian solar market. Italy has the second largest installed base of operating solar plants in the EU, and is the fifth-largest market globally, but is fragmented with the top 10 players accounting for only 7% of the market. The majority of Italy’s solar assets were constructed in the period between 2010 and 2012, and have been operating for at least four years.

The fund has initial commitments of €150 million, secured from the Prudential Assurance Company Limited, the UK subsidiary of Prudential plc. NextPower II is targeting to raise further capital from new investors shortly.

Through its investment manager NEC, the fund is differentiated by a significant acquisition pipeline and access to a 50-strong dedicated solar team with a proven track record of acquiring and operating solar PV plants across Europe. NEC has identified and is pursuing a portfolio amounting to approximately €1 billion in investment value for the fund.

NEC also manages NextEnergy Solar Fund Limited, an LSE-listed investor in solar power plants with invested capital of c.£480 million and installed capacity of more than 414MW. NEC’s specialist solar asset management company, WiseEnergy, is the leading manager of operating solar plants, with c.1,700MW and c.1,250 individual utility-scale power plants under management.

Michael Bonte-Friedheim, Founding Partner and CEO of NEC, commented:

*“We are delighted with a €150m first close of our new fund, established to pursue the attractive long-term opportunity in Italian solar. We have a strong acquisition pipeline and expect to announce our first investments shortly. We look forward to securing new investors in due course.”*

*“Adding a large-scale private equity vehicle to our stable of solar activities – which already include the leading solar operating asset manager and largest LSE-listed solar energy fund\* – underlines NEC’s status as the leader in European solar.”*

Aldo Beolchini, Managing Partner and CFO of NEC, commented:

*“NextPower II is an exciting opportunity – we intend to lead the consolidation of the Italian solar sector, a large market with some 19,000MW of installed capacity which contributes significantly to power generation in Italy. We have been pursuing this opportunity since we began developing and investing in solar projects in Italy in 2008.*

*“Our unique expertise, both in solar and in Italy, will enable us to identify attractive acquisition opportunities, execute multiple transactions in parallel and drive operating and technical*

*improvements as well as cost and financing synergies. We will drive an increased competitiveness in the Italian solar sector.”*

Notes:

*\* By installed solar capacity*

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#### **Notes to Editors:**

*NextEnergy Capital Group (NEC)*

NEC was founded in 2007 to become the leading investment and operating asset manager in the European solar sector.

Since its inception, it has been active in the development, construction and ownership of European solar assets. In addition, NEC owns WiseEnergy, the largest specialist operating asset manager in the solar sector, and is the investment manager of NextEnergy Solar Fund (NESF) – at present the largest listed solar energy fund on the London Stock Exchange in terms of MW capacity owned – and NextPower II, a private equity fund set up to consolidate the Italian solar market.

NESF is a specialist investment company that invests in operating solar power plants in the UK. It currently owns 414MW spread among 33 individual plants in the UK comprising an invested capital of c.£480m. NESF has raised equity proceeds of c.£285m since its initial public offering on the main market of the London Stock Exchange in April 2014. It also has credit facilities of c.£223m in place.

WiseEnergy is the leading specialist operating asset manager in the solar sector, providing solar asset management, monitoring and other services to over 1,250 utility-scale solar power plants with an installed capacity in excess of 1,700MW. WiseEnergy’s clients comprise leading debt and equity financiers to the European solar sector.

NextPower II is a private equity fund investing in operating solar power plants, focused on Italy. Its strategy is to consolidate the substantial, highly fragmented Italian solar market, and has initial commitments of €150 million, secured from the Prudential Assurance Company Limited, the UK subsidiary of Prudential plc. NextPower II intends to raise further capital through new investors imminently.

Further information on *NEC*, *WiseEnergy* and *NESF* is available at [www.nextenergycapital.com](http://www.nextenergycapital.com), [www.wise-energy.eu](http://www.wise-energy.eu) and [www.nextenergysolarfund.com](http://www.nextenergysolarfund.com).