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Atkins pioneers Middle East renewable energy research

Design and engineering consultancy Atkins is undertaking pioneering research and development in the Middle East to investigate the performance of Solar Photovoltaic Panels (PV).

Demand for alternative sources of energy are increasing across the world but there is still limited available data on the effectiveness of these technologies.

Atkins' team of sustainability experts, architects and LEED accredited professionals – led by architect Ronak Gawarwala – have set up a solar panel test rig in Dubai to measure a variety of climatic factors such as extreme temperatures, humidity, dust collection and wind speeds, which cannot be simultaneously assembled via practical lab tests or theoretical satellite readings.

“We believe this is the first research of its kind in the region,” says Ronak. “The Middle East currently lacks verifiable data on how solar panels of different technologies perform in this climate under different orientations and cleaning regimes. This will compare the relative commercial value in the long run.”*

“We hope to understand the efficiency and performance of the solar panels in local conditions, as we will be simulating various applications on a building, for example if used as a façade or sun shade in a north or south facing direction.”

In cooperation with a number of well known PV panel technologists and manufacturers, the data will be collected and analysed in detail over a 12 month period. The conclusions will then be ratified and presented in a technical paper to be published by Atkins and the British University in Dubai (BUiD). Atkins will also use the findings to make calculated recommendations to existing and potential clients.

Ronak add: *“Our data will also be collected in time to be able to make recommendations and implement this technology in key projects such as The Lighthouse and the Dubai Promenade, where the client is very determined to achieve a high sustainability rating for the building.”*



APReS (Atkins Photovoltaic Research Station)

** Differs from research currently being undertaken in the Middle East in that this is specifically targeted for building application, as opposed to industrial applications (power plants etc); Atkins test rig will be placed at height and will mimic the gamut of orientations, mirroring real life building related scenarios.*

ENQUIRIES:

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NOTES TO EDITORS:

Atkins (www.atkinglobal.com) plans, designs and enables the delivery of complex capital programmes for clients in the public and private sectors across the globe. Atkins is the largest multidisciplinary consultancy in Europe; the largest engineering consultancy in the UK; and the world's fifth largest design firm.

Atkins' current projects include:

Major infrastructure works, such as design and programme management of the civil works for the Dubai Metro red and green lines;

In the defence sector, the MoD's Future Rapid Effects System (FRES) programme – overseeing the development of the next generation of medium weight armoured vehicles for the military;

Significant road contracts, such as a £150 million, five-year integrated contract for Gloucestershire County Council, delivering highway maintenance, design, emergency response, winter maintenance, re-surfacing and recycling;

Key rail projects, including a £65 million, three-year resignalling contract in Basingstoke; and

High profile designs, such as Durrat Al Bahrain, a spectacular 20 sq km resort for 45,000 people on the south coast of Bahrain, comprising 13 man-made islands.

Atkins was named among the "20 Best Big Companies to Work For 2007" by *The Sunday Times*; *The Times* Top 100 Graduate Employers 2007; and *The Times* Top 50 Companies Where Women Want to Work 2007. The company was also sector winner in the Target National Graduate Recruitment Awards for the second successive year in 2007.

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