Wellingborough, UK – 27th February 2012: Suntech Power was the largest supplier of PV modules by shipment volumes for the second consecutive year, according to the latest market rankings released by IMS Research . For the first time, it was also joined by three other Chinese crystalline PV module manufacturers in the top five as Chinese manufacturers tightened their grip on the market, the analyst firm revealed.

According to IMS Research's latest quarterly report , despite challenging market conditions throughout 2011, Suntech became the first supplier to ship over 2 GW of modules, and topped IMS Research's module rankings for the second year in a row. The only non-Chinese manufacturer ranked in the top five was US-based thin film supplier First Solar which was ranked as second largest supplier, also for the second year running. Chinese suppliers Yingli, Trina and Canadian Solar (considered as a Chinese supplier as the majority of its operations are based in China) all gained one place in the rankings to make up the rest of the top five, displacing Japan's Sharp to sixth position.

IMS Research also found that the PV module supplier base consolidated considerably in 2011 with the largest suppliers collectively gaining share of the market. " *Leading suppliers were able to leverage their strong brands to grow their shipments in highly competitive market conditions in 2011,"*
commented Sam Wilkinson, Senior Market Analyst at IMS Research
. "2011 claimed a number of victims, but nearly all of the top-ten suppliers grew their shipments and collectively they accounted for nearly half of total industry shipments",
added Wilkinson.

Although eight of the ten largest suppliers grew their annual shipments by more than 10%, most suppliers recorded lower shipments in Q4'11 compared to the previous quarter. *"Despite a very strong end-of-year rush to install in Germany, high inventory levels for PV modules in the supply chain meant that this was not reflected in suppliers' shipments. The rush also came later than many expected and so many suppliers were not able to capitalise on this,* " commented Wilkinson.

Canadian Solar and Trina Solar were amongst the few suppliers that bucked this trend by increasing their shipments in Q4'11, with Canadian Solar becoming the third largest supplier in the quarter and increasing its annual market share by over one percentage point. Another significant market share gain allowed Chinese-based Jinko Solar to become the only new name in IMS Research's top ten suppliers in 2011. Having more than doubled its annual shipments, Jinko Solar was ranked as the seventh largest module supplier in 2011.

Detailed analysis of supply and demand dynamics in this market is available from IMS Research's latest quarterly report on the industry.

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About PV cell and module analysis

IMS Research has been publishing research on the global PV market since 2007. Its coverage extends from polysilicon to PV modules, as well as all other areas of the industry. Its team of analysts collects data from hundreds of suppliers and regularly publishes reports that are used by many of the world's largest suppliers.

About IMS Research – Photovoltaics

IMS Research is a leading independent supplier of market research and consultancy to the global electronics industry, offering syndicated market studies, bespoke research and consultancy services. The company is one of the most respected commentators in the renewable energy field, with a particular expertise in the PV (solar) market. We currently have nine analysts and a 15-person research team dedicated to researching the PV market. We now offer over 30 reports and cover every aspect of the supply chain from polysilicon supply to PV modules, inverters and PV system integrators. PV@imsresearch.com ; www.pvmarketresearch.com