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Prosumers drive increasing demand for smarter solar building solutions

As concerns about increasing home energy costs continue, ABB expects to see stronger demand from 'Prosumers' in 2018 for smarter solutions to manage energy usage.

With 80 percent of consumers now owning at least one smart home device and over a third (36 percent) investing in energy management technology to provide greater control of their energy usage*, the rise of the prosumer highlights one of the most exciting trends in renewable energy, with ABB predicting even greater competition and innovation in the energy sector for 2018.

ABB believes that it is this desire to harness energy and use it only when required that will lead to increasing demand in 2018 for solar inverters with integrated energy storage, control and smart features, like its UNO-DM-PLUS inverter and REACT, that enables consumers to store excess energy for use it when it is most needed.

These 'prosumers', who install solar photovoltaic (PV) and energy storage solutions, will look to maximize self-consumption. Research by IHS Markit™ **predicts that the rate of self-consumed power will increase to more than 2.5 percent of total final electricity consumption in Germany, Italy and the United Kingdom by 2020, with more than 25 TWh of electricity being generated and self-consumed on site.

As Massimo Migliorini, Global Business Development manager for ABB Electrification Products division said: "These active energy users, who both consume and produce electricity, are having a dramatic impact on the electricity system. In effect, householders have now become the owners of the energy harnessed by their photovoltaic (PV) system and are deciding when to use it without wasting a Watt."

In response, ABB offers a broad range of inverters to meet the needs of modern homes. For example, its UNO-DM-PLUS single-phase inverter family is easy to install and fast to commission. The addition of Plug and Play connectors, both on the DC and AC side, together with wireless communication, enable a simple, fast and safe installation without the need of opening the front cover of the inverter, resulting in shorter installation time and lower costs.

UNO-DM-PLUS responds to the increasing demand for the smart capabilities prosumers are looking for. It allows customers to enjoy a remote monitoring experience, thanks to the embedded logging capabilities and the ability to directly transfer the data to the intranet (via Ethernet or WLAN). A comprehensive set of control functions with an embedded efficient algorithm, enabling dynamic feed-in control of the energy, make the inverter suitable for worldwide applications.

Innovations include the ability to collect and store PV energy, making it available when it's needed, after sunset, during the evening and first thing in the morning. ABB offers a range of advanced solutions for collecting and storing PV energy, including REACT, which manages the energy that the photovoltaic system produces, by storing it inside a high-performance battery. Thanks to its integrated load manager, it optimizes energy storage by aligning energy production with the levels of consumption.

When combined, the storage and load management elements make the best use of the energy harnessed within the PV system. This avoids consumption peaks, by spreading the electricity load to keep usage within the capacity of the energy produced.

In line with the demand for greater connectivity, REACT has a dedicated app for smartphones or tablets, allowing the user to monitor how much renewable energy is being produced and managed, while at home or away remotely.

“It’s this appetite for greater connectivity and smarter solutions that will drive the future of the residential solar market. Installers need to be able to link to this growing digitalization and capitalize on the solutions that put control for energy usage and storage back in to the hands of the homeowner”, concluded Massimo.

* www.techuk.org/downloads/Theconnectedhome 2017

** IHS Markit™ Grid Defection Report June 2017

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