

Esparity Solar appoints chair

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Newly established Iberian utility-scale solar PV developer Esparity Solar, led by chief executive James Sibony, has appointed banker Janin Campos as chairperson, as it builds out the team and targets building up a 1GW project portfolio.

Members of the Esparity Solar team based in London, UK and Valencia, Spain, include:

James Sibony – chief exec and founder (London)

Francisco Clavel – managing director (Valencia)

Janin Campos – chair (London)

Roberto Fernandez – engineering manager (Valencia)

Campos was most recently BBVA's head of corporate lending for Europe and Asia up to 2015, and in his 40-year career has also worked in RBS loan origination in Southern Europe and at JP Morgan responsible for debt markets in Spain and Portugal.

Esparity Solar is recruiting for a business development manager, who would work in deal origination.

Esparity Solar is targeting to build up a €1 billion (\$1.16 billion), 1GW portfolio of projects – in predominantly Spanish solar PV, as well as some Portuguese solar potentially. Esparity Solar launched in Q1 2018.

The company is sourcing projects from local developers – with a project sweet spot of 50MWp to 100MWp of capacity – though in the potential pipeline Esparity has projects with as much as 250MW capacity and as little as 25MW.

Projects can be up to 100% merchant, and could feature PPAs with corporates, utilities or

energy traders. Projects will have investment grade counterparties and be bankable to project finance standards.

Sibony has been a board of directors member since 2015 at ESCO Pacific, an Australia solar developer, which is a sister company with a similar business model.

Sibony told IJGlobal: “We are operating a co-development model, where we work with other developers and take the lead to fund projects up to financial close, thereafter raising third party debt and equity to finance construction... We look to get involved at a very early stage in the life of the project, signing a lease with landlords and negotiating grid connections. We may also look to get involved in projects at a later stage if the economics are right, either on a deal by deal basis, or to acquire more mature portfolios.”

He added: “Eventually we want to move to a model of financing and owning our projects long-term ... we could look to raise balance sheet capital.”

While the company is not announcing any projects yet, they do have exclusive positions on more than one.

Sibony said: “Our view of the Spanish solar market, which is quite an immature market still, is that there are potential IRRs in the 8-9% range for merchant projects or around 6% with a long-term PPA (post-tax).”

Developing batteries is not in scope initially, due to the economics, but in the future the company would look at them on a project-by-project basis as a good complement to solar.