

Michael Grätzel Wins the 2010 Millennium Technology Grand Prize for Dye-Sensitized Solar Cells



The winner of the 2010 Millennium Technology Prize is Michael Grätzel from Switzerland, for his third generation, low cost, dye-sensitized solar cells. Professor Grätzel is the Director of the Laboratory of Photonics and Interfaces at Ecole Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne (EPFL). The President of the Republic of Finland, Tarja Halonen, handed the EUR 800,000 Grand Prize and the prize trophy "Peak" to Professor

Grätzel at an elaborate award ceremony at the Finnish National Opera, Helsinki. The award decision was made by the Board of Directors of Technology Academy Finland, based on the recommendation of the International Selection Committee.

"The constraint of solar energy has traditionally been its price. 'Grätzel cells' provide a more affordable way of harnessing solar energy. Grätzel's innovation is likely to have an important role in low-cost, large-scale solutions for renewable energy," said the President and CEO of Technology Academy Finland, Ainomaija Haarla, explaining why Grätzel was selected as the winner.

The technology, often described as "artificial photosynthesis," is a promising alternative to standard silicon photovoltaics. The solar cell is made of low-cost materials and does not need an elaborate system to manufacture. Though the so-called Grätzel cells are still in relatively early stages of development, they show great promise as an inexpensive alternative to inorganic silicon solar cells and as an attractive candidate as a new renewable energy source. Grätzel cells, which promise electricity-generating windows and low-cost solar panels, have just made their debut in consumer products.

The Millennium Technology Prize is awarded by Technology Academy Finland, an independent fund established by Finnish organizations, industry, and the Finnish state in a partnership, which aims to promote applied technology and research that leads to new technologies that have a positive impact on the quality of life and are based on humane values. The organization of Technology Academy Finland includes the Finnish Academy of Technical Sciences (TTA), Svenska Tekniska Vetenskapsakademien i Finland (STV), and the Industry Council, of which many Finnish industrial enterprises are members. On the Web at: www.technologyacademy.fi.

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