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## Concept by US breaks into Africa

Florida, USA-based energy storage start-up Concept by US is due to start shipping its all-in-one battery systems to Africa in May.

For the African market, the company has created a 50Hz, 220V, three-phase version of its Powerstation 247 Plus integrated battery system. It will be installing the units in Africa on behalf of an un-named African energy firm.

Units will be going into African locations ranging from high-end resorts to small off-grid communities, said Sara Kissing, vice president and chief operating officer.

The Powerstation 247 Plus is a solar, wind and diesel genset-ready edition of what Concept by US claimed was the market's first true integrated home storage system when it launched last year.

Concept by US expects to sell 800 units this year, split almost evenly between African and America. In the US, the company's biggest markets are California, Texas and Florida.

### A deal with Solar CenTex

The company's Texas business pipeline received a boost earlier this year when Concept by US inked a deal with Solar CenTex, a PV installer, to install solar-plus-storage systems across the state.

"We started with Concept because it was the first to offer the peak inverting power that Texas homeowners need with the storage capacity that our high electric demand requires," said Howard 'Scot' Arey, Solar CenTex's owner.

Currently, though, "the biggest demand comes from California," Kissing said.

Concept by US is looking to set up a Silicon Valley sales office later this year. Kissing cited New Jersey, New York, Virginia and Hawaii as other US markets currently being eyed by the company.

It is also expecting sales from a tie-up with Fortis Groep, a vertically integrated real estate, infrastructure and sustainable energy developer, unveiled last month.

### Systems for new home developments worldwide

The alliance will allow "Fortis Groep to provide completely self-contained, solar energy storage and usage systems for new home developments worldwide," said Concept by US in a press statement.

Finally, Concept by US is hoping to be able to sell the 50Hz version of the Powerstation 237 Plus in Europe. For next year, "we are looking at volumes in the thousands," said Kissing.



Concept by US has the African market in its sights. Pic: Pixabay.

The 50Hz system is just one of several product changes that have taken place since Concept by US launched its plug-and-play battery and inverter system last year.

The Powerstation originally came in 5kW, 10kW and 15kW variants, with one, two and three inverters, respectively, and 17.28kWh of storage across the range.

But Concept by US abandoned production of its 5kW, single inverter system after noting that 90% of its orders were for the 15kW, three-inverter product.

### **Focus on the larger system**

The focus on the larger system may have been due to the Powerstation's popularity among commercial and industrial energy users instead of homeowners.

Between 60% and 70% of the systems sold so far have been to commercial and industrial customers, said Kissing. Concept by US has also significantly reduced the pricing of its products.

The 10kW system has gone down in price from USD\$33,000 to \$26,900 while the 15kW unit has been reduced from \$37,000 to \$29,900. Further changes to the company's product portfolio are in the pipeline.

As part of its product development, for example, Concept by US is testing alternatives to the CALB USA lithium-iron-phosphate batteries it is using today.

And although its original 5kW unit has been discontinued, the company is looking to return to the residential market with another small-scale model later this year.

### **A new cabinet design**

The 5kW, 14kWh Powerstation Flex will have a new cabinet design, Kissing said.

Furthermore, Kissing said Concept by US was also actively seeking investors to develop a 200kW, modular, scalable commercial and industrial product called the Powerstation Giga by the first quarter of next year.

So far, the company has been bankrolled by Kissing's husband, the entrepreneur Uwe Corbach.

Kissing said the company was not dependent on external financing but was keen to secure additional funds to grow more quickly.

Concept by US's foray into Africa follows the demise last week of Aquion, a highly-regarded battery maker with ambitious growth plans and a clear focus on emerging markets.

### **Environmentally friendly alternative**

Aquion's saltwater batteries were sold as an environmentally friendly alternative to lead-acid products.

Last year Aquion's chief commercial officer Tim Poor told Energy Storage Report the company was moving towards development of "a complete packaged energy storage solution."

It remains to be seen whether the more expensive, fully integrated system being offered by Concept by US will succeed where Aquion failed.