

**IMPIANTO AGRIVOLTAICO**  
SITO NEI COMUNI DI BRINDISI E CELLINO SAN MARCO  
IN PROVINCIA DI BRINDISI

**Valutazione di Impatto Ambientale**

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**Spazio riservato agli Enti:**

# Italy-Integrating big solar into olive groves

PV Magazine 22 March 2021

German energy company Steag wants to build three PV plants totaling 244 MW across several olive groves in the southern Italian region of Apulia. The unsubsidized agrivoltaic projects are expected to sell electricity through power purchase agreements. The distance between the rows of the olive grove and the photovoltaic system has been specifically designed both to avoid shadowing and allow the passage of the automatic machinery necessary for the cultivation of the olive trees.

MARCH 22, 2021 [EMILIANO BELLINI](#)



The trackers of the photovoltaic system will be interspersed with rows of olive groves.

*Image: Steag*

Steag Solar Energy Solutions, a unit of Germany-based power company [Steag](#), announced it will build three PV power plants with a combined capacity of 244 MW in the Italian southern region of Apulia for an unspecified investor.

The three unsubsidized projects will be located within a radius of 20 km in the province of [Foggia](#) and will integrate the production of olives and energy on the same field in order to save space and generate mutual benefit for both.

“The trackers of the photovoltaic system will be interspersed with rows of olive groves,” Steag’s press officer, Daniel Mühlenfeld, told **pv magazine**. “The distance between the rows of the olive grove and the photovoltaic system has been specifically designed both to avoid shadowing and allow the passage of the automatic machinery necessary for the cultivation of the olive trees.”



The basic design of the three plants.

*Image: Steag*

The main challenge in building these kinds of [agrivoltaic projects](#), according to Mühlenfeld, will be maintaining the maximum efficiency of both production systems keeping CAPEX and OPEX in mind. “There are additional costs to integrate the PV into olive groves, but there are also additional revenues as the intensive olive plant for itself is a business case,” he further explained.

Except for the trackers that need to be higher than usual, no special components are being used for the plants. “The concept and its design are the main special component,” Mühlenfeld added. The project has been designed “to optimize power yield and agricultural yield, but the power yield only is already enough for the bankability of the projects.”

Final approval for the three plants is expected to be obtained between the third or fourth quarter of this year. Construction is scheduled to start at the end of 2021.

Steag is currently also developing what could become [Italy's largest solar plant](#) — a 700 MW facility planned in unspecified areas on the southern island of [Sicily](#). German independent investment and asset manager [KGAL](#) is partnering with Steag on the project. “The plant is located in various places in the provinces of Palermo and Trapani,” a Steag spokesperson told [pv magazine](#) in February. “The construction will start in the third quarter of 2021 and the plant will be grid-connected during autumn 2022.”

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