



PRESS RELEASE



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SOLVAY EXPANDS PRINTED ELECTRONICS DEVELOPMENT PLATFORM WITH INVESTMENT IN PLEXTRONICS

Innovative Technology for Mass-Production of Displays, Lighting, Solar Cells and 'Smart' Labels

Solvay announced today that it has decided to participate, as lead investor, in the recent capital increase of Plextronics, Inc., an innovator of technology for the printed electronics market. Based in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Plextronics specializes in the development and commercialization of polymer-based technologies for printed electronics such as displays, solar cells and RFID 'smart' tags.

The 10 million dollar investment grants Solvay a minority interest in Plextronics. It complements the recent R&D agreement between the Group's 100% subsidiary Solvay Solexis and Thin Film Electronics ASA of Oslo, Norway, to develop polymeric inks for the manufacturing of printed electronic circuits, as well as Solvay's research collaboration with the Georgia Institute of Technology's Center for Organic Photonics and Electronics.

Printed electronics is an emerging industry that takes advantage of printing technologies to manufacture electronic devices with a wider variety of shapes and supports, including thin, flexible substrates. Through the use of proprietary technologies, these devices can be manufactured efficiently (high-volume, low-cost) using adaptations of traditional printing processes.

"Plextronics has won a number of prestigious awards since it was founded in 2002, and is considered one of North America's most impressive emerging companies among high technology innovators," commented Léopold Demiddeleer, director of Solvay Corporate R&D and New Business Development. "Their expertise, which capitalizes on extensive research efforts at Carnegie Mellon University, and their market-driven activities are a perfect match for one of Solvay's most promising innovation platforms," added Demiddeleer.

According to Andy Hannah, president and CEO of Plextronics, building a strategic partner base is critical to the company and its success in fast growing global markets, particularly printed electronics.

"Solvay has a clear and exciting vision of building long-term, vibrant platforms in solar technology and printed electronics as demonstrated in its recent commitments to Georgia Tech and its joint development agreement with Thin Film Electronics ASA," Hannah said. "Plextronics shares that common vision and we plan to employ our technology platform to accelerate product commercialization and to support the growth of our organization."

Plextronics' technology has the potential to significantly reduce the cost of solar cells, compared with the cost of crystalline silicon-based solar energy systems, down to a commercially viable threshold of \$1 per watt. Likewise, printed Organic Light Emitting Diodes (OLED) displays are intended to challenge today's Plasma technology and Liquid Crystal Displays (LCD) with considerably lower production costs and immense possibilities in terms of shapes and size. In the same way, printed OLED could be used for new energy efficient diffuse lighting. Other potential applications of Plextronics' products include 'smart labels' such as RFID tags, whose development is currently hampered by the excessive cost of current technologies.

Solvay has identified Organic Electronics and Sustainable Energy as platforms for future growth based on radical innovation. The group believes that the new materials and technologies, which it is currently developing through its own R&D efforts and a number of partnerships with technological leaders, convey potential solutions to some of our contemporary societies' most acute issues, such as the cost-effective implementation of renewable energy sources.

PLEXTRONICS, INC. is a leading innovator of technology for printed electronics. The printed electronics market comprises next-generation light, power and circuitry products, including flexible displays, plastic solar cells and organic RFID tags. The market for printed electronics was approximately \$1 billion in 2006 and is expected to exceed \$300 billion within 20 years.

With a company vision of enabling 15 billion printed electronic devices by 2015, Plextronics is creating technology capable of commercial-scale performance and manufacturability. The company's device design, process technology and Plexcore® branded inks enable the formation of active electrical layers — the key drivers of printed electronics. For more information about Plextronics, visit www.plextronics.com.

SOLVAY is an international chemical and pharmaceutical Group with headquarters in Brussels. It employs some 29,000 people in 50 countries. In 2006, its consolidated sales amounted to EUR 9.4 billion, generated by its three sectors of activity: Chemicals, Plastics and Pharmaceuticals. Solvay (Euronext: SOLB.BE - Bloomberg: SOLB.BB - Reuters: SOLBt.BR) is listed on the Euronext stock exchange in Brussels. Details are available at www.solvay.com

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