

Nuon Solar Team ready to race on solar energy Titleholder team from Delft goes for 4th victory in World Solar Challenge in Australia

AMSTERDAM, Tuesday, 26 June 2007 – Nuna4, the Nuon Solar Team's solar-powered racing car was unveiled today in Amsterdam. At the end of October, the Nuon Solar Team will race Nuna4 in the ninth Panasonic World Solar Challenge. The team of 11 students from the Delft University of Technology who designed and constructed Nuna4, now face the serious task of defending the previous team's title. The reason for this being that the Nuna1, 2 and 3 consecutively raced to victory in the prestigious yet gruelling 3,010-kilometre-long World Solar Challenge.

Nuna4

Weighing in at hardly 200 kilograms, the pearl-white Nuna4 has undergone something of an extreme makeover in comparison with its predecessors. While the basic concept of the car has remained largely the same, aerospace and Formula-1 technology have been applied to appear at the starting line with an even stronger car. A number of far-reaching changes were necessary in order to comply with the stricter entry criteria put in place for the 2007 World Solar Challenge. For example, the solar cars competing in this race must be equipped with roll bars, an upright seating angle for the driver and a maximum surface area of 6 m² devoted to solar cells. In other words, the solar cars have to more closely resemble 'real' cars. And with energy consumption on a par with that of a vacuum cleaner, Nuna4 takes another step towards the car of the future – without roaring engines, but gliding along swiftly using energy from solar panels.

Race down under

The starting gun for the race will sound on 21 October 2007 in subtropical Darwin in northern Australia. Expectations are that the race will finish on or around 26 October down south in Adelaide. The World Solar Challenge is held every two years with teams competing from more than 30 countries, racing down Stuart Highway that cuts right across Australia. Along with other solar cars, Nuna4 will be competing under extreme weather conditions, having to navigate between other traffic on the road – the notorious road trains, as well as crossing kangaroos and other obstacles. Competition this year will be greater than ever; the American team from the University of Michigan even managed to secure a bigger budget for the construction of its solar car with the specific aim of dethroning the Dutch team of students from the Delft University of Technology. And let's not overlook competition from the low lands either: others set to arrive at the starting line in October will include teams from the Twente University of Technology and the Belgian Umicore team of the 'Hogeschool Groep T' from Leuven.

Nuon Solar Team

The group of 11 students from the Delft University of Technology, who together form the new Nuon Solar Team, began preparing the design and construction of Nuna4 in absolute secrecy back in September 2006. The team's strongest features include varied origins (ranging from the Netherlands, Belgium, US and Lebanon to the island of Curaçao), and a wealth of knowledge derived from different studies (electrical engineering, aerospace technology, industrial design, mechanical engineering and maritime technology). "The combination of a strong team, an amazing solar car and a sophisticated strategy, provides us with a fantastic edge," said Stefan Roest proudly. He heads up the Nuon Solar Team.

Nuon and the Nuon Solar Team

Since 2001, energy company Nuon has been the Nuon Solar Team's main sponsor. This year, too, Nuon confidently chose to financially support the makers of Nuna4. The company hopes to stimulate interest in sustainable energy and innovation by backing the team during this challenging and adventurous race. The students of the Delft University of Technology can use this solar car to demonstrate the broad range of solar energy applications as well as how young, ambitious people can make a substantial contribution towards technological innovation and a sustainable future.

About Nuon

Nuon is a leading energy company that provides customers in the Netherlands, Belgium and Germany with electricity, gas, heating and related services. The company is active in the production, trading, transport and supply of (sustainable) energy. Nuon pursues balanced growth for all its stakeholders: shareholders, employees, customers, the environment and society at large. Total net turnover for 2006 amounted to EUR 5.6 billion. At the end of 2006, the number of employees totalled 9,768 FTEs. Nuon's major shareholders include the Provinces of Gelderland and North Holland, the Municipality of Amsterdam and Houdstermaatschappij Falcon BV, whose shares are held by the Province of Friesland.

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