

FIRST SOLAR, INC.
Form 424B5
June 11, 2013
Table of Contents

The information in this preliminary prospectus supplement is not complete and may be changed. This preliminary prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus are not an offer to sell these securities and are not soliciting an offer to buy these securities in any jurisdiction where the offer or sale is not permitted.

Filed Pursuant to Rule 424(b)(5)
Registration No. 333-189236

SUBJECT TO COMPLETION, DATED JUNE 11, 2013

Preliminary Prospectus Supplement

(To Prospectus dated June 11, 2013).

8,500,000 Shares

First Solar, Inc.

Common Stock

We are hereby selling 8,500,000 shares of our common stock.

Our common stock is listed on The NASDAQ Global Select Market (Nasdaq) under the symbol FSLR. On June 10, 2013, the last reported sale price for our common stock on Nasdaq was \$56.40 per share.

Investing in our common stock involves risks. See Risk Factors on page S-4 of this prospectus supplement and page 3 of the accompanying prospectus and in our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2012 (which document is incorporated by reference herein) to read about factors you should consider before buying shares of our common stock.

	Per Share	Total
Public offering price	\$	\$
Underwriting discount	\$	\$

Edgar Filing: FIRST SOLAR, INC. - Form 424B5

Proceeds to us (before expenses)	\$	\$
----------------------------------	----	----

We have granted the underwriters solely to cover over-allotments for a period of 30 days from the date of this prospectus supplement the right to purchase up to an additional 1,275,000 shares of common stock at the public offering price, less the underwriting discount.

Neither the Securities and Exchange Commission nor any state securities commission has approved or disapproved of these securities or passed upon the accuracy or adequacy of this prospectus supplement or the accompanying prospectus. Any representation to the contrary is a criminal offense.

The underwriters expect to deliver the shares of common stock against payment in New York, New York on June , 2013.

J.P. Morgan Morgan Stanley BofA Merrill Lynch Citigroup

Credit Suisse

HSBC

Credit Agricole CIB

Goldman, Sachs & Co.

June , 2013.

Table of Contents**TABLE OF CONTENTS****Prospectus Supplement**

	Page
<u>About This Prospectus Supplement</u>	S-ii
<u>Prospectus Supplement Summary</u>	S-1
<u>Risk Factors</u>	S-4
<u>Cautionary Statement Regarding Forward-Looking Statements</u>	S-6
<u>Use of Proceeds</u>	S-7
<u>Price Range of Common Stock and Dividends</u>	S-8
<u>Underwriting</u>	S-9
<u>Material United States Federal Tax Consequences For Non-U.S. Holders</u>	S-16
<u>Legal Matters</u>	S-20
<u>Experts</u>	S-20
<u>Where You Can Find More Information</u>	S-20

Prospectus

About This Prospectus	1
First Solar, Inc.	2
Risk Factors	3
Cautionary Statement Regarding Forward-Looking Statements	7
Selling Security Holders	7
Use of Proceeds	7
Ratio of Earnings to Fixed Charges	8
Description of Common Stock	8
Description of Debt Securities	8
Description of Preferred Stock	20
Description of Warrants	21
Plan of Distribution	22
Legal Matters	23
Experts	23
Where You Can Find More Information	23

You should rely only on information contained in or incorporated by reference in this prospectus supplement, the accompanying prospectus and any related free writing prospectus. We have not authorized anyone to provide you with any information or to make any representations other than those contained or incorporated by reference herein or in any free writing prospectuses we have prepared. We take no responsibility for, and can provide no assurance as to the reliability of, any other information that others may give you. This prospectus supplement is an offer to sell only the shares of common stock offered hereby, but only under circumstances and in jurisdictions where it is lawful to do so. We are not making an offer to sell nor seeking offers to buy these securities in any jurisdiction where an offer or sale is not permitted. The information contained in this prospectus supplement is current only as of the date of this prospectus supplement regardless of the time of delivery of this prospectus supplement or of any sale of our common stock. Our business, financial condition, results of operation and prospects may have changed since that date.

Table of Contents

ABOUT THIS PROSPECTUS SUPPLEMENT

Unless the context otherwise requires, the terms First Solar, we, our, us and the Company refer to First Solar, Inc. and its subsidiaries on a consolidated basis.

This document is in two parts. The first part is this prospectus supplement, which describes the specific terms of this offering and certain other matters. The second part, the base prospectus, gives more general information about us and our common stock. Generally, when we refer to this prospectus, we are referring to both parts of this document combined and when we refer to the accompanying prospectus, we are referring to the base prospectus only. To the extent information in this prospectus supplement conflicts with information in the accompanying prospectus, you should rely on the information in this prospectus supplement. You should rely only on the information contained, or incorporated by reference, in this prospectus. Neither we nor the underwriters have authorized anyone to provide you with different information.

Neither we nor the underwriters are making an offer of our common stock in any jurisdiction where the offer is not permitted. You should not assume that the information contained in this prospectus supplement, the accompanying prospectus or any information incorporated by reference herein or therein is accurate as of any date other than the date of this prospectus supplement, the accompanying prospectus or the document incorporated by reference, as applicable. Our business, financial condition, results of operations and prospects may have changed since the date of such information.

Table of Contents

PROSPECTUS SUPPLEMENT SUMMARY

The following summary is provided solely for your convenience. It is not intended to be complete. You should read this entire prospectus supplement, the accompanying prospectus and all the information included or incorporated or deemed incorporated by reference herein or therein carefully. You should pay special attention to the Risk Factors sections in this prospectus supplement, the accompanying prospectus, our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2012, and our Quarterly Report on Form 10-Q for the quarterly period ended March 31, 2013, which are incorporated by reference in this prospectus, before making an investment decision. For additional information, you should refer to the information described in the section entitled Where You Can Find More Information in the accompanying prospectus.

First Solar, Inc.

We manufacture and sell photovoltaic solar modules with an advanced thin-film semiconductor technology, and we design, construct, and sell photovoltaic solar power systems that use the solar modules we manufacture. We are the world's largest thin-film photovoltaic solar module manufacturer and one of the world's largest photovoltaic solar module manufacturers.

In addressing overall global demand for photovoltaic solar electricity, we have developed a differentiated, fully integrated systems business that can provide a competitively priced turn-key utility-scale photovoltaic solar power system solution for system owners and competitively priced electricity to utility end-users. Our photovoltaic solar power systems draw upon our full range of capabilities or any combination of individual products and services we provide, including (i) project development, (ii) engineering, procurement, and construction services, (iii) operating and maintenance services, and (iv) project finance expertise, and are sold directly to investor owned utilities, independent power developers and producers, commercial and industrial companies, and other system owners. Additionally, we may in the future decide to retain ownership of one or more of our photovoltaic solar power systems for a period of time up to the useful life of the system if we determine it would be of economic and strategic benefit to do so. Our fully integrated systems business, which uses the solar modules we manufacture, has enabled us to increase module throughput, drive cost reduction across the value chain, identify and break constraints to sustainable markets, and deliver compelling solutions to our customers and end-users.

In furtherance of our goal of delivering affordable solar electricity, we are continually focused on reducing photovoltaic solar power system costs in five primary areas: module manufacturing, balance-of-system costs (consisting of the costs of the components of a solar power system other than the solar modules), project development costs, the cost of capital, and the operating expenses of a photovoltaic solar power system. We believe that combining our reliable, low-cost module manufacturing capability with our systems business enables us to more rapidly reduce the price of solar electricity, accelerate the adoption of our technology in utility-scale photovoltaic solar power systems, and identify and remove constraints to the successful migration to sustainable solar markets around the world. Depending on the market opportunity, our sales offerings range from third party module only sales, to module sales with a range of engineering, procurement and construction products and solutions, to full turn-key photovoltaic solar power system sales. We expect these sales offerings to continue to evolve over time as we work with our customers to optimize how our photovoltaic solar power system solutions can best meet our customers' energy and economic needs.

In May 2012, we provided information regarding our long term strategic plan to transition our business to primarily sustainable opportunities by the end of 2016. In executing the plan, we are focusing on providing photovoltaic solar power system solutions using our modules to sustainable geographic markets that we believe have a compelling need for mass-scale photovoltaic electricity, including markets throughout the Americas, Asia,

Table of Contents

the Middle East, and Africa. As part of our plan, we are focusing on opportunities in which our photovoltaic solar power systems will compete directly with fossil fuel offerings on a levelized cost of energy basis. We are focusing our resources in those markets and energy applications in which photovoltaic solar power can be a least-cost, best-fit energy solution, particularly in regions with high solar resources, significant current or projected electricity demand and/or relatively high existing electricity prices. Execution of our plan entails a reallocation of resources around the globe, in particular dedicating resources to regions such as Latin America, Asia, the Middle East, and Africa where we have not traditionally conducted significant business to date. We expect joint ventures or other business arrangements with strategic partners to be a key part of our plan and related strategy, and we have begun initiatives in several markets using such arrangements to expedite our penetration of those markets.

First Solar, Inc., a Delaware corporation, was incorporated on February 22, 2006. We operated as a Delaware limited liability company from 1999 until 2006. Our corporate headquarters is located at 350 West Washington Street, Suite 600, Tempe, Arizona 85281 and our telephone number is (602) 414-9300. We maintain a website at www.firstsolar.com. *The information contained in or connected to our website is not a part of this prospectus.*

Revolving Credit Facility

We are currently undertaking a process to amend and extend our \$600 million Senior Secured Revolving Credit Facility. The proposed amendments would extend the maturity date of the facility to July 2018 for existing lenders consenting to the amendment and any additional lenders, expand the collateral securing the facility and effect certain changes to the terms and restrictions applicable to the facility. Any amendment to the facility will be subject to the receipt of consents from certain existing lenders under the facility and/or additional lenders, the satisfaction of customary closing conditions and the completion of the sale of our common stock in this offering.

Table of Contents

The Offering

The following summary of the offering contains basic information about the offering and our common stock and is not intended to be complete. It does not contain all the information that may be important to you. For a more complete understanding of our common stock, please refer to the section of the accompanying prospectus entitled Description of Common Stock.

Common stock offered	8,500,000 shares.
Underwriters' option	We have granted the underwriters a 30-day option to purchase up to an additional 1,275,000 shares of common stock at the public offering price, less the underwriting discount, to cover over-allotments, if any.
Common stock outstanding as of June 10, 2013	87,868,658 shares.
Common stock to be outstanding after the offering	96,368,658 shares, or 97,643,658 shares if the underwriters exercise their option to cover over-allotments.
Use of proceeds	We intend to use the proceeds from the sale of our common stock offered hereby for general corporate purposes, which may include acquisitions of under development photovoltaic solar power system projects, investments in photovoltaic solar power system projects that will be jointly developed with strategic partners and capital expenditures or strategic investments to develop certain business units and expand in new geographies.
Dividend policy	We have never paid, and it is our present intention for the foreseeable future not to pay, dividends on our common stock.
Nasdaq symbol for our common stock	FSLR.
Risk factors	For a discussion of certain risks that should be considered in connection with an investment in our common stock, see the description of risks set forth or incorporated in the sections entitled Risk Factors and Cautionary Statement Regarding Forward-Looking Statements in this prospectus supplement.

Table of Contents

RISK FACTORS

Investing in our securities involves risks. Potential investors are urged to consider the risks described below and to read and consider the risk factors and other disclosures relating to an investment in our securities described in our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2012, and our Quarterly Report on Form 10-Q for the quarterly period ended March 31, 2013, as updated by annual, quarterly and other reports and documents we file with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) after the date of this prospectus supplement and that are incorporated by reference herein. Before making an investment decision, you should carefully consider those risks as well as other information we include or incorporate by reference in this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus. The risks and uncertainties we have described are not the only ones facing our company. Additional risks and uncertainties not presently known to us or that we currently consider immaterial may also affect our business operations.

Risks Relating to Our Common Stock

The price of our common stock has been volatile and continued volatility could affect the price at which you could sell your shares of our common stock.

The closing market price for our common stock has varied between a high of \$56.40 and a low of \$24.70 between January 1, 2013 and June 10, 2013. This volatility may affect the price at which you could sell our common stock. The price for our stock could continue to be volatile and subject to price and volume fluctuations in response to market and other factors, including factors discussed in the risks related to our business operations, variations in our quarterly operating results from our expectations or those of securities analysts or investors, downward revisions in securities analysts' estimates, competitive developments and the addition or removal of our common stock listing in various market indexes.

In addition, the broader stock market has experienced significant price and volume fluctuations in recent years. This volatility has affected the market prices of securities issued by many companies for reasons unrelated to their operating performance and beyond their control and may adversely affect the price of our common stock. Also, our announcements of our quarterly operating results, changes in general conditions in the economy or the financial markets and other developments affecting us, our affiliates or our competitors could cause the market price of our common stock to fluctuate substantially.

Future sales of our common stock may dilute the interests of the holders of our common stock and may depress our stock price.

The market price of our common stock could decline as a result of sales of a large number of shares of our common stock in the market after this offering or the perception that these sales could occur. Future sales of our common stock may also dilute the interests of the holders of our common stock. These sales, or the possibility that these sales may occur, also might make it more difficult for us to sell equity securities in the future at a time and at a price that we deem appropriate.

We do not currently pay dividends and do not anticipate doing so in the foreseeable future.

We have never paid, and it is our present intention for the foreseeable future not to pay, dividends on our common stock. We intend to retain our earnings, if any, to use in our ongoing operations. In addition, our revolving credit facility imposes restrictions on our ability to declare or pay dividends.

We will have broad discretion in how we use the proceeds of this offering, and we may not use these proceeds effectively. This could affect our profitability and cause our stock price to decline.

Management and our board of directors will have considerable discretion in the application of the net proceeds of this offering, and you will not have the opportunity, as part of your investment decision, to assess

Table of Contents

whether we are using the proceeds appropriately. We currently intend to use the net proceeds for general corporate purposes, which may include acquisitions of under development photovoltaic solar power system projects, investments in photovoltaic solar power system projects that will be jointly developed with strategic partners and capital expenditures or strategic investments to develop certain business units and expand in new geographies. We may use the net proceeds for corporate purposes that do not improve our profitability or increase our market value, which could cause our stock price to decline.

If the market price of our common stock fluctuates after this offering, you could lose a significant part of your investment.

The market price of our common stock may be influenced by many factors, some of which are beyond our control, including the following:

the failure of securities analysts to cover our common stock or changes in financial estimates by analysts;

the inability to meet the financial estimates of analysts who follow our common stock;

announcements by us or our competitors of significant contracts, productions, acquisitions or capital commitments;

variations in quarterly operating results;

general economic conditions;

terrorist acts;

future sales of our common stock; and

investor perception of us and the renewable energy industry.

As a result of these factors, investors in our common stock may not be able to resell their shares at or above the offering price. These broad market and industry factors may materially reduce the market price of our common stock, regardless of our operating performance.

Table of Contents

CAUTIONARY STATEMENT REGARDING FORWARD-LOOKING STATEMENTS

This prospectus supplement, the accompanying prospectus and the information incorporated herein and therein by reference contain forward-looking statements within the meaning of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended (the Exchange Act) and the Securities Act of 1933, as amended (the Securities Act), which are subject to inherent risks, uncertainties and assumptions that are difficult to predict. All statements in this prospectus supplement, the accompanying prospectus or in a document incorporated or deemed to be incorporated by reference herein or therein, other than statements of historical fact, are forward-looking statements. These forward-looking statements are made pursuant to safe harbor provisions of the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995. The forward-looking statements include statements, among other things, concerning our business strategy, including anticipated trends and developments in and management plans for, our business and the markets in which we operate; future financial results, operating results, revenues, gross margin, operating expenses, products, projected costs, warranties, balance of systems roadmap, restructuring, product liability and capital expenditures; our ability to continue to reduce the cost per watt of our solar modules; research and development programs and our ability to improve the conversion efficiency of our solar modules; sales and marketing initiatives; and competition. In some cases, you can identify these statements by forward-looking words, such as estimate, expect, anticipate, project, plan, intend, seek, believe, forecast, foresee, likely, may, should, goal, target, might, and the negative or plural of these words, and other comparable terminology. Forward-looking statements are only predictions based on our current expectations and our projections about future events. All forward-looking statements included in this prospectus supplement, the accompanying prospectus or in a document incorporated or deemed to be incorporated by reference herein or therein speak only as of the date of this prospectus supplement, the accompanying prospectus or in the document incorporated or deemed to be incorporated by reference herein or therein, as the case may be. You should not place undue reliance on these forward-looking statements. We undertake no obligation to update any of these forward-looking statements for any reason. These forward-looking statements involve known and unknown risks, uncertainties and other factors that may cause our actual results, levels of activity, performance, or achievements to differ materially from those expressed or implied by these statements.

Table of Contents

USE OF PROCEEDS

We estimate that our net proceeds (after deducting underwriting discounts and commissions payable to the underwriters and our estimated offering expenses) from this offering will be \$457.5 million (\$526.6 million if the underwriters exercise their option to acquire additional shares in full), assuming a public offering price of \$56.40 per share, the last reported sale price of our common stock on Nasdaq on June 10, 2013. We intend to use the proceeds from the sale of our common stock offered hereby for general corporate purposes, which may include acquisitions of under development photovoltaic solar power system projects, investments in photovoltaic solar power system projects that will be jointly developed with strategic partners and capital expenditures or strategic investments to develop certain business units and expand in new geographies. Until we use the net proceeds as described above, we intend to invest the net proceeds in highly-rated short-term marketable securities.

Assuming the number of shares offered by us, as set forth on the cover page of this prospectus supplement, remains the same, after deducting underwriting discounts and commissions and other estimated offering expenses payable by us, a \$1.00 increase (decrease) in the assumed public offering price of \$56.40 per share (the last reported sale price of our common stock on June 10, 2013) would increase (decrease) our expected net proceeds by approximately \$8.2 million.

S-7

Table of Contents**PRICE RANGE OF COMMON STOCK AND DIVIDENDS**

Our common stock is listed on Nasdaq under the symbol FSLR. The following table sets forth, for the periods indicated, the high and low sales prices for our shares as reported on Nasdaq.

	High	Low
Fiscal Year 2013		
First Quarter	\$ 36.98	\$ 24.46
Second Quarter (1)	59.00	25.66
Fiscal Year 2012		
First Quarter	\$ 50.20	\$ 24.50
Second Quarter	25.16	11.43
Third Quarter	26.31	13.81
Fourth Quarter	33.38	19.68
Fiscal Year 2011		
First Quarter	\$ 175.45	\$ 130.24
Second Quarter	163.00	111.40
Third Quarter	134.21	61.55
Fourth Quarter	67.72	29.87

(1) For the period commencing April 1, 2013 through June 10, 2013
On June 10, 2013, the last reported sale price for our common stock on Nasdaq was \$56.40 per share.

We have never paid, and it is our present intention for the foreseeable future not to pay, dividends on our common stock. In addition, our revolving credit facility imposes restrictions on our ability to declare or pay dividends. The declaration and payment of dividends is subject to the discretion of our board of directors and depends on various factors, including the continued applicability of the above-referenced restrictions under our revolving credit facility, our net income, financial condition, cash requirements, future prospects, and other factors deemed relevant by our board of directors.

Table of Contents**UNDERWRITING**

We are offering the shares of common stock described in this prospectus through a number of underwriters. J.P. Morgan Securities LLC and Morgan Stanley & Co. LLC are acting as representatives of the underwriters. We have entered into an underwriting agreement with the underwriters. Subject to the terms and conditions of the underwriting agreement, we have agreed to sell to the underwriters, and each underwriter has severally agreed to purchase, at the public offering price less the underwriting discounts and commissions set forth on the cover page of this prospectus, the number of shares of common stock listed next to its name in the following table:

Name	Number of Shares
J.P. Morgan Securities LLC	
Morgan Stanley & Co. LLC	
Merrill Lynch, Pierce, Fenner & Smith Incorporated	
Citigroup Global Markets Inc.	
Credit Suisse Securities (USA) LLC	
HSBC Securities (USA) Inc.	
Credit Agricole Securities (USA) Inc.	
Goldman, Sachs & Co.	
Total	8,500,000

The underwriters are committed to purchase all the common shares offered by us if they purchase any shares. The underwriting agreement also provides that if an underwriter defaults, the purchase commitments of non-defaulting underwriters may also be increased or the offering may be terminated.

The underwriters propose to offer the common shares directly to the public at the initial public offering price set forth on the cover page of this prospectus and to certain dealers at that price less a concession not in excess of \$ per share. Any such dealers may resell shares to certain other brokers or dealers at a discount of up to \$ per share from the initial public offering price. After the initial public offering of the shares, the offering price and other selling terms may be changed by the underwriters. Sales of shares made outside of the United States may be made by affiliates of the underwriters.

The underwriters have an option to buy up to 1,275,000 additional shares of common stock from us to cover sales of shares by the underwriters which exceed the number of shares specified in the table above. The underwriters have 30 days from the date of this prospectus to exercise this over-allotment option. If any shares are purchased with this over-allotment option, the underwriters will purchase shares in approximately the same proportion as shown in the table above. If any additional shares of common stock are purchased, the underwriters will offer the additional shares on the same terms as those on which the shares are being offered.

The underwriting fee is equal to the public offering price per share of common stock less the amount paid by the underwriters to us per share of common stock. The underwriting fee is \$ per share. The following table shows the per share and total underwriting discounts and commissions to be paid to the underwriters assuming both no exercise and full exercise of the underwriters' option to purchase additional shares.

	Without over-allotment exercise	With full over-allotment exercise
Per Share	\$	\$
Total	\$	\$

Table of Contents

Pursuant to an engagement agreement, we have retained Lazard Frères & Co. LLC (Lazard), a FINRA member, to act as our financial advisor in connection with this offering. We have agreed to pay Lazard, upon the completion of this offering, a fee of 10% of the total gross spread, fees, commissions and economics payable to all underwriters in this offering up to a maximum of \$1.5 million, including the over-allotment option. The services provided by Lazard included customary business and financial analysis. Lazard is not acting as an underwriter and will not sell or offer to sell any securities and will not identify, solicit or engage directly with any public or institutional investors. In addition, Lazard will not underwrite or purchase any of our shares of common stock in this offering or otherwise participate in any such undertaking.

We estimate that the total expenses of this offering, including registration, filing and listing fees, printing fees, legal and accounting expenses and the fees payable pursuant to the engagement agreement described above, but excluding the underwriting discounts and commissions, will be approximately \$2.7 million.

A prospectus in electronic format may be made available on the web sites maintained by one or more underwriters, or selling group members, if any, participating in the offering. The underwriters may agree to allocate a number of shares to underwriters and selling group members for sale to their online brokerage account holders. Internet distributions will be allocated by the representatives to underwriters and selling group members that may make Internet distributions on the same basis as other allocations.

We have agreed that we will not (i) offer, pledge, sell, contract to sell, sell any option or contract to purchase, purchase any option or contract to sell, grant any option, right or warrant to purchase or otherwise transfer or dispose of, directly or indirectly, or file with the Securities and Exchange Commission a registration statement under the Securities Act relating to, any shares of our common stock or securities convertible into or exchangeable or exercisable for any shares of our common stock, or publicly disclose the intention to make any offer, sale, pledge, disposition or filing, or (ii) enter into any swap or other arrangement that transfers all or a portion of the economic consequences associated with the ownership of any shares of common stock or any such other securities (regardless of whether any of these transactions are to be settled by the delivery of shares of common stock or such other securities, in cash or otherwise), in each case without the prior written consent of J.P. Morgan Securities LLC and Morgan Stanley & Co. LLC for a period of 90 days after the date of this prospectus, other than the shares of our common stock to be sold hereunder, grants of options or other equity awards pursuant to existing management incentive plans, shares of our common stock issued upon the exercise or settlement of options or other equity awards granted under our existing management incentive plans, the registration of shares of our common stock to be offered to our employees in connection with a management incentive plan or agreement or the issuance of shares of our common stock, not to exceed 10% of the shares of our common stock outstanding immediately after this offering, in connection with an acquisition, joint venture, commercial relationship or other strategic transaction.

Our directors and executive officers, and certain of our significant shareholders have entered into lock up agreements with the underwriters prior to the commencement of this offering pursuant to which each of these persons or entities, for a period of 60 days after the date of this prospectus, may not, without the prior written consent of J.P. Morgan Securities LLC and Morgan Stanley & Co. Incorporated, (1) offer, pledge, sell, contract to sell, sell any option or contract to purchase, purchase any option or contract to sell, grant any option, right or warrant to purchase, or otherwise transfer or dispose of, directly or indirectly, any shares of our common stock or any securities convertible into or exercisable or exchangeable for our common stock (including, without limitation, common stock or such other securities which may be deemed to be beneficially owned by such directors, executive officers, managers and members in accordance with the rules and regulations of the SEC and securities which may be issued upon exercise of a stock option or warrant) or (2) enter into any swap or other agreement that transfers, in whole or in part, any of the economic consequences of ownership of the common stock or such other securities, whether any such transaction described in clause (1) or (2) above is to be settled by delivery of common stock or such other securities, in cash or otherwise, or (3) make any demand for or exercise any right with respect to the registration of any shares of our common stock or any security convertible into or exercisable or exchangeable for our common stock, other than, subject to certain limitations, transfers (a) as bona

Table of Contents

vide gifts, (b) to members or stockholders of such director, executive officer or significant shareholder, (c) to any immediate family member of such director, executive officer or significant shareholder, (d) to any trust for the benefit of such director, executive officer or significant shareholder or any immediate family member thereof, (e) of shares of our common stock issuable upon the exercise of an expiring stock option in order to pay any associated tax liabilities, (f) upon the death of such director, executive officer or significant shareholder, by the estate of such director, executive officer or significant shareholder or (g) of shares of our common stock acquired in open market transactions after the completion of this offering.

We have agreed to indemnify the underwriters against certain liabilities, including liabilities under the Securities Act of 1933.

Our common stock is listed/quoted on the NASDAQ Global Market under the symbol FSLR .

In connection with this offering, the underwriters may engage in stabilizing transactions, which involves making bids for, purchasing and selling shares of common stock in the open market for the purpose of preventing or retarding a decline in the market price of the common stock while this offering is in progress. These stabilizing transactions may include making short sales of the common stock, which involves the sale by the underwriters of a greater number of shares of common stock than they are required to purchase in this offering, and purchasing shares of common stock on the open market to cover positions created by short sales. Short sales may be covered shorts, which are short positions in an amount not greater than the underwriters' over allotment option referred to above, or may be naked shorts, which are short positions in excess of that amount. The underwriters may close out any covered short position either by exercising their over allotment option, in whole or in part, or by purchasing shares in the open market. In making this determination, the underwriters will consider, among other things, the price of shares available for purchase in the open market compared to the price at which the underwriters may purchase shares through the over allotment option. A naked short position is more likely to be created if the underwriters are concerned that there may be downward pressure on the price of the common stock in the open market that could adversely affect investors who purchase in this offering. To the extent that the underwriters create a naked short position, they will purchase shares in the open market to cover the position.

The underwriters have advised us that, pursuant to Regulation M of the Securities Act of 1933, they may also engage in other activities that stabilize, maintain or otherwise affect the price of the common stock, including the imposition of penalty bids. This means that if the representatives of the underwriters purchase common stock in the open market in stabilizing transactions or to cover short sales, the representatives can require the underwriters that sold those shares as part of this offering to repay the underwriting discount received by them.

These activities may have the effect of raising or maintaining the market price of the common stock or preventing or retarding a decline in the market price of the common stock, and, as a result, the price of the common stock may be higher than the price that otherwise might exist in the open market. If the underwriters commence these activities, they may discontinue them at any time. The underwriters may carry out these transactions on the NASDAQ Global Market, in the over the counter market or otherwise.

In addition, in connection with this offering certain of the underwriters (and selling group members) may engage in passive market making transactions in our common stock on The Nasdaq Stock Market prior to the pricing and completion of this offering. Passive market making consists of displaying bids on The Nasdaq Stock Market no higher than the bid prices of independent market makers and making purchases at prices no higher than these independent bids and effected in response to order flow. Net purchases by a passive market maker on each day are generally limited to a specified percentage of the passive market maker's average daily trading volume in the common stock during a specified period and must be discontinued when such limit is reached. Passive market making may cause the price of our common stock to be higher than the price that otherwise would exist in the open market in the absence of these transactions. If passive market making is commenced, it may be discontinued at any time.

Table of Contents

Certain of the underwriters and their affiliates have provided in the past to us and our affiliates and may provide from time to time in the future certain commercial banking, financial advisory, investment banking and other services for us and such affiliates in the ordinary course of their business, for which they have received and may continue to receive customary fees and commissions. Certain of the underwriters and their affiliates, including JPMorgan Chase Bank, N.A., Morgan Stanley Bank, N.A., Bank of America, N.A., Citibank, N.A., Goldman Sachs Bank Europe Plc, HSBC Bank USA, National Association, Credit Agricole Corporate and Investment Bank New York Branch and Credit Suisse, Cayman Islands Branch, are party to the Amended and Restated Credit Agreement, dated as of October 15, 2010, among First Solar, Inc., the borrowing subsidiaries party thereto, the lenders party thereto, Bank of America N.A. and The Royal Bank of Scotland PLC, as documentation agents, Credit Suisse, Cayman Islands Branch, as syndication agent and JPMorgan Chase Bank, N.A., as administrative agent, as amended. In addition, from time to time, certain of the underwriters and their affiliates may effect transactions for their own account or the account of customers, and hold on behalf of themselves or their customers, long or short positions in our debt or equity securities or loans, and may do so in the future.

Selling Restrictions

Other than in the United States, no action has been taken by us or the underwriters that would permit a public offering of the securities offered by this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus in any jurisdiction where action for that purpose is required. The securities offered by this prospectus may not be offered or sold, directly or indirectly, nor may this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus or any other offering material or advertisements in connection with the offer and sale of any such securities be distributed or published in any jurisdiction, except under circumstances that will result in compliance with the applicable rules and regulations of that jurisdiction. Persons into whose possession this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus comes are advised to inform themselves about and to observe any restrictions relating to the offering and the distribution of this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus. This prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus does not constitute an offer to sell or a solicitation of an offer to buy any securities offered by this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus in any jurisdiction in which such an offer or a solicitation is unlawful.

United Kingdom

This prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus is only being distributed to and is only directed at (i) persons who are outside the United Kingdom or (ii) to investment professionals falling within Article 19(5) of the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 (Financial Promotion) Order 2005 (the Order) or (iii) high net worth entities, and other persons to whom it may lawfully be communicated, falling within Article 49(2)(a) to (d) of the Order (all such persons together being referred to as relevant persons). The securities are only available to, and any invitation, offer or agreement to subscribe, purchase or otherwise acquire such securities will be engaged in only with, relevant persons. Any person who is not a relevant person should not act or rely on this document or any of its contents.

European Economic Area

In relation to each Member State of the European Economic Area which has implemented the Prospectus Directive (each, a Relevant Member State), from and including the date on which the European Union Prospectus Directive (the EU Prospectus Directive) was implemented in that Relevant Member State (the Relevant Implementation Date) an offer of securities described in this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus may not be made to the public in that Relevant Member State prior to the publication of a prospectus in relation to the shares of common stock which has been approved by the competent authority in that Relevant Member State or, where appropriate, approved in another Relevant Member State and notified to the competent authority in that Relevant Member State, all in accordance with the EU Prospectus Directive,

Table of Contents

except that, with effect from and including the Relevant Implementation Date, an offer of securities described in this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus may be made to the public in that Relevant Member State at any time:

to any legal entity which is a qualified investor as defined under the EU Prospectus Directive;

to fewer than 100 or, if the Relevant Member State has implemented the relevant provision of the 2010 PD Amending Directive, 150 natural or legal persons (other than qualified investors as defined in the EU Prospectus Directive); or

in any other circumstances falling within Article 3(2) of the EU Prospectus Directive, provided that no such offer of securities described in this prospectus shall result in a requirement for the publication by us of a prospectus pursuant to Article 3 of the EU Prospectus Directive.

For the purposes of this provision, the expression an offer of securities to the public in relation to any securities in any Relevant Member State means the communication in any form and by any means of sufficient information on the terms of the offer and the securities to be offered so as to enable an investor to decide to purchase or subscribe for the securities, as the same may be varied in that Member State by any measure implementing the EU Prospectus Directive in that Member State. The expression EU Prospectus Directive means Directive 2003/71/EC (and any amendments thereto, including the 2010 PD Amending Directive, to the extent implemented in the Relevant Member State) and includes any relevant implementing measure in each Relevant Member State, and the expression 2010 PD Amending Directive means Directive 2010/73/EU.

Australia

This prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus is not a formal disclosure document and has not been lodged with the Australian Securities and Investments Commission, or ASIC. It does not purport to contain all information that an investor or their professional advisers would expect to find in a prospectus for the purposes of Chapter 6D.2 of the Australian Corporations Act 2001, or the Act, in relation to the securities or our company.

This prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus is not an offer to retail investors in Australia generally. Any offer of securities in Australia is made on the condition that the recipient is a sophisticated investor within the meaning of section 708(8) of the Act or a professional investor within the meaning of section 708(11) of the Act, or on condition that the offer to that recipient can be brought within the exemption for Small-Scale Offerings (within the meaning of section 708(1) of the Act). If any recipient does not satisfy the criteria for these exemptions, no applications for securities will be accepted from that recipient. Any offer to a recipient in Australia any agreement arising from acceptance of the offer, is personal and may only be accepted by the recipient.

If a recipient on-sells their securities within 12 months of their issue, that person will be required to lodge a disclosure document with ASIC unless either:

the sale is pursuant to an offer received outside Australia or is made to a sophisticated investor within the meaning of 708(8) of the Act or a professional investor within the meaning of section 708(11) of the Act; or

it can be established that our company issued, and the recipient subscribed for, the securities without the purpose of the recipient on-selling them or granting, issuing or transferring interests in, or options or warrants over them.

Hong Kong

The shares of common stock may not be offered or sold by means of any document other than (i) in circumstances which do not constitute an offer to the public within the meaning of the Companies Ordinance

Table of Contents

(Cap. 32, Laws of Hong Kong), or (ii) to professional investors within the meaning of the Securities and Futures Ordinance (Cap. 571, Laws of Hong Kong) and any rules made thereunder, or (iii) in other circumstances which do not result in the document being a prospectus within the meaning of the Companies Ordinance (Cap. 32, Laws of Hong Kong) and no advertisement, invitation or document relating to the shares may be issued or may be in the possession of any person for the purpose of the issue (in each case whether in Hong Kong or elsewhere), which is directed at, or the contents of which are likely to be accessed or read by, the public in Hong Kong (except if permitted to do so under the laws of Hong Kong) other than with respect to shares which are or are intended to be disposed of only to persons outside Hong Kong or only to professional investors within the meaning of the Securities and Futures Ordinance (Cap. 571, Laws of Hong Kong) or any rules made thereunder.

India

This prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus has not been and will not be registered as a prospectus with the Registrar of Companies in India. This prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus or any other material relating to these securities may not be circulated or distributed, directly or indirectly, to the public or any members of the public in India. Further, persons into whose possession this prospectus comes are required to inform themselves about and to observe any such restrictions. Each prospective investor is advised to consult its advisors about the particular consequences to it of an investment in these securities. Each prospective investor is also advised that any investment in these securities by it is subject to the regulations prescribed by the Reserve Bank of India and the Foreign Exchange Management Act and any regulations framed thereunder.

Japan

No registration has been made under Article 4, Paragraph 1 of the Financial Instruments and Exchange Law of Japan (Law No. 25 of 1948, as amended), which we refer to as the FIEL, in relation to the offering of the shares. The shares are being offered in a private placement to up to 49 investors under Article 2, Paragraph 3, Item 2 iii of the FIEL.

Korea

Our securities may not be offered, sold and delivered directly or indirectly, or offered or sold to any person for reoffering or resale, directly or indirectly, in Korea or to any resident of Korea except pursuant to the applicable laws and regulations of Korea, including the Securities and Exchange Act and the Foreign Exchange Transaction Law and the decrees and regulations thereunder. Our securities have not been registered with the Financial Supervisory Commission of Korea for public offering in Korea. Furthermore, our securities may not be resold to Korean residents unless the purchaser of our securities complies with all applicable regulatory requirements (including but not limited to government approval requirements under the Foreign Exchange Transaction Law and its subordinate decrees and regulations) in connection with the purchase of our securities.

Singapore

This prospectus has not been registered as a prospectus with the Monetary Authority of Singapore. Accordingly, this prospectus and any other document or material in connection with the offer or sale, or invitation for subscription or purchase, of the shares may not be circulated or distributed, nor may the shares be offered or sold, or be made the subject of an invitation for subscription or purchase, whether directly or indirectly, to persons in Singapore other than (i) to an institutional investor under Section 274 of the Securities and Futures Act, Chapter 289 of Singapore (the SFA), (ii) to a relevant person, or any person pursuant to Section 275 (1A), and in accordance with the conditions, specified in Section 275 of the SFA or (iii) otherwise pursuant to, and in accordance with the conditions of, any other applicable provision of the SFA.

Table of Contents

Where the shares are subscribed or purchased under Section 275 by a relevant person which is: (a) a corporation (which is not an accredited investor) the sole business of which is to hold investments and the entire share capital of which is owned by one or more individuals, each of whom is an accredited investor; or (b) a trust (where the trustee is not an accredited investor) whose sole whole purpose is to hold investments and each beneficiary is an accredited investor, shares, debentures and units of shares and debentures of that corporation or the beneficiaries rights and interest in that trust shall not be transferable for six months after that corporation or that trust has acquired the shares under Section 275 except: (i) to an institutional investor under Section 274 of the SFA or to a relevant person, or any person pursuant to Section 275 (1A), and in accordance with the conditions, specified in Section 275 of the SEA; (ii) where no consideration is given for the transfer; or (iii) by operation of law.

Switzerland

The shares may not be publicly offered in Switzerland and will not be listed on the SIX Swiss Exchange (SIX) or on any other stock exchange or regulated trading facility in Switzerland. This document has been prepared without regard to the disclosure standards for issuance prospectuses under art. 652a or art. 1156 of the Swiss Code of Obligations or the disclosure standards for listing prospectuses under art. 27 ff. of the SIX Listing Rules or the listing rules of any other stock exchange or regulated trading facility in Switzerland. Neither this document nor any other offering or marketing material relating to the shares or the offering may be publicly distributed or otherwise made publicly available in Switzerland.

Neither this document nor any other offering or marketing material relating to the offering, the Company, the shares have been or will be filed with or approved by any Swiss regulatory authority. In particular, this document will not be filed with, and the offer of shares will not be supervised by, the Swiss Financial Market Supervisory Authority FINMA (FINMA), and the offer of shares has not been and will not be authorized under the Swiss Federal Act on Collective Investment Schemes (CISA). The investor protection afforded to acquirers of interests in collective investment schemes under the CISA does not extend to acquirers of shares.

Dubai International Financial Centre

This prospectus supplement relates to an Exempt Offer in accordance with the Offered Securities Rules of the Dubai Financial Services Authority (DFSA). This prospectus supplement is intended for distribution only to persons of a type specified in the Offered Securities Rules of the DFSA. It must not be delivered to, or relied on by, any other person. The DFSA has no responsibility for reviewing or verifying any documents in connection with Exempt Offers. The DFSA has not approved this prospectus supplement nor taken steps to verify the information set forth herein and has no responsibility for the prospectus supplement. The shares to which this prospectus supplement relates may be illiquid and/or subject to restrictions on their resale. Prospective purchasers of the shares offered should conduct their own due diligence on the shares. If you do not understand the contents of this prospectus supplement you should consult an authorized financial advisor.

By accepting this prospectus, the recipient hereof represents and warrants that he is entitled to receive it in accordance with the restrictions set forth above and agrees to be bound by limitations contained herein. Any failure to comply with these limitations may constitute a violation of law.

Table of Contents

MATERIAL UNITED STATES FEDERAL TAX CONSEQUENCES FOR NON-U.S. HOLDERS

The following discussion is a general summary of the material U.S. federal income and estate tax consequences of the ownership and disposition of our common stock applicable to Non-U.S. Holders. As used in this prospectus supplement, a Non-U.S. Holder means a beneficial owner of our common stock that is neither a U.S. person nor a partnership for U.S. federal income tax purposes, and that will hold shares of our common stock as capital assets. For U.S. federal income tax purposes, a U.S. person includes:

an individual who is a citizen or resident of the United States;

a corporation (or any other entity treated as a corporation for U.S. federal income tax purposes) created or organized in, or under the laws of, the United States, any state thereof or the District of Columbia;

an estate the income of which is subject to U.S. federal income taxation regardless of its source; or

a trust that (a) is subject to the primary supervision of a court within the United States and the control of one or more U.S. persons or (b) otherwise has validly elected to be treated as a U.S. domestic trust.

If a partnership (including an entity treated as a partnership for U.S. federal income tax purposes) holds shares of our common stock, the U.S. federal income tax treatment of the partnership and each partner generally will depend on the status of the partner and the activities of the partnership and the partner. Partnerships acquiring our common stock, and partners in such partnerships, should consult their own tax advisors with respect to the U.S. federal income tax consequences of the ownership and disposition of our common stock.

This summary does not consider specific facts and circumstances that may be relevant to a particular Non-U.S. Holder's tax position and does not consider U.S. state and local or non-U.S. tax consequences. It also does not consider Non-U.S. Holders subject to special tax treatment under the U.S. federal income tax laws (including partnerships or other pass-through entities, banks and insurance companies, dealers in securities, holders of our common stock held as part of a straddle, hedge, conversion transaction or other risk-reduction transaction, controlled foreign corporations, passive foreign investment companies, foreign tax-exempt organizations, former U.S. citizens or residents, persons who hold or receive common stock as compensation and persons subject to the alternative minimum tax). This summary is based on provisions of the U.S. Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended (the Code), applicable Treasury regulations, administrative pronouncements of the U.S. Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and judicial decisions, all as in effect on the date hereof, and all of which are subject to change, possibly on a retroactive basis, and different interpretations.

This summary is included herein as general information only. Accordingly, each prospective Non-U.S. Holder is urged to consult its own tax advisor with respect to the U.S. federal, state, local and non-U.S. income, estate and other tax consequences of owning and disposing of our common stock.

U.S. Trade or Business Income

For purposes of this discussion, dividend income and gain on the sale or other taxable disposition of our common stock will be considered to be U.S. trade or business income if such income or gain is (a) effectively connected with the conduct by a Non-U.S. Holder of a trade or business within the United States and (b) in the case of a Non-U.S. Holder that is eligible for the benefits of an income tax treaty with the United States, attributable to a permanent establishment maintained by the Non-U.S. Holder in the United States. Generally, U.S. trade or business income is not subject to U.S. federal withholding tax (provided the Non-U.S. Holder complies with applicable certification and disclosure requirements); instead, U.S. trade or business income is subject to U.S. federal income tax on a net income basis at regular U.S. federal income tax rates in the same manner as a U.S. person. Any U.S. trade or business income received by a corporate Non-U.S. holder may be subject to an additional branch profits tax at a 30% rate or such lower rate as may be specified by an applicable income tax treaty.

Table of Contents

Dividends

Distributions of cash or property that we pay will constitute dividends for U.S. federal income tax purposes to the extent paid from our current or accumulated earnings and profits (as determined under U.S. federal income tax principles). A Non-U.S. Holder generally will be subject to U.S. federal withholding tax at a 30% rate, or, if the Non-U.S. Holder is eligible, at a reduced rate prescribed by an applicable income tax treaty, on any dividends received in respect of our common stock. If the amount of a distribution exceeds our current and accumulated earnings and profits, such excess first will be treated as a tax-free return of capital to the extent of the Non-U.S. Holder's tax basis in our common stock (with a corresponding reduction in such Non-U.S. Holder's tax basis in our common stock), and thereafter will be treated as capital gain. In order to obtain a reduced rate of U.S. federal withholding tax under an applicable income tax treaty, a Non-U.S. Holder will be required to provide a properly executed IRS Form W-8BEN certifying under penalties of perjury its entitlement to benefits under the treaty. Special certification requirements and other requirements apply to certain Non-U.S. Holders that are entities rather than individuals. A Non-U.S. Holder of our common stock that is eligible for a reduced rate of U.S. federal withholding tax under an income tax treaty may obtain a refund or credit of any excess amounts withheld by filing an appropriate claim for a refund with the IRS on a timely basis. A Non-U.S. Holder should consult its own tax advisor regarding its possible entitlement to benefits under an income tax treaty and the filing of a U.S. tax return for claiming a refund of U.S. federal withholding tax.

The U.S. federal withholding tax does not apply to dividends that are U.S. trade or business income, as defined above, of a Non-U.S. Holder who provides a properly executed IRS Form W-8ECI, certifying under penalties of perjury that the dividends are effectively connected with the Non-U.S. Holder's conduct of a trade or business within the United States.

Dispositions of Our Common Stock

A Non-U.S. Holder generally will not be subject to U.S. federal income or withholding tax in respect of any gain on a sale or other disposition of our common stock unless:

- the gain is U.S. trade or business income, as defined above;

- the Non-U.S. Holder is an individual who is present in the United States for 183 or more days in the taxable year of the disposition and meets other conditions; or

- we are or have been a U.S. real property holding corporation (a USRPHC) under section 897 of the Code at any time during the shorter of the five-year period ending on the date of disposition and the Non-U.S. Holder's holding period for our common stock.

An individual Non-U.S. Holder described in the first bullet point immediately above will be subject to tax on the net gain derived from the sale under regular graduated United States federal income tax rates. An individual Non-U.S. Holder described in the second bullet point immediately above will be subject to a flat 30% tax on the gain derived from the sale, which may be offset by United States source capital losses, even though the individual is not considered a resident of the United States. If a Non-U.S. Holder that is a foreign corporation falls under the first bullet point immediately above, it will be subject to tax on its net gain in the same manner as if it were a United States person as defined under the Code and, in addition, may be subject to a branch profits tax equal to 30% of its effectively connected earnings and profits or at such lower rate as may be specified by an applicable income tax treaty.

In general, a corporation is a USRPHC if the fair market value of its U.S. real property interests (as defined in the Code and applicable Treasury regulations) equals or exceeds 50% of the sum of the fair market value of its worldwide real property interests and its other assets used or held for use in a trade or business. If we are determined to be a USRPHC, the U.S. federal income and withholding taxes relating to interests in USRPHCs nevertheless will not apply to gains derived from the sale or other disposition of our common stock by a Non-U.S. Holder whose shareholdings, actual and constructive, at all times during the applicable period,

Table of Contents

amount to 5% or less of our common stock, provided that our common stock is regularly traded on an established securities market. We are not currently a USRPHC, and we do not anticipate becoming a USRPHC in the future. However, no assurance can be given that we will not be a USRPHC, or that our common stock will be considered regularly traded, when a Non-U.S. Holder sells its shares of our common stock. Non-U.S. Holders should consult their own tax advisors about the consequences that could result if we are, or become, a USRPHC.

Federal Estate Tax

Any of our common stock held by an individual Non-U.S. Holder at the time of death will be included in such holder's gross estate for U.S. federal estate tax purposes, unless an applicable estate tax treaty provides otherwise.

Information Reporting and Backup Withholding Requirements

We must annually report to the IRS and to each Non-U.S. Holder any dividend income that is subject to U.S. federal withholding tax, or that is exempt from such withholding tax pursuant to an income tax treaty. Copies of these information returns also may be made available under the provisions of a specific treaty or agreement to the tax authorities of the country in which the Non-U.S. Holder resides. Under certain circumstances, the Code imposes a backup withholding obligation (currently at a rate of 28%) on certain reportable payments. Dividends paid to a Non-U.S. Holder of our common stock generally will be exempt from backup withholding if the Non-U.S. Holder provides a properly executed IRS Form W-8BEN or otherwise establishes an exemption.

The payment of the proceeds from the disposition of our common stock to or through the U.S. office of any broker, U.S. or foreign, will be subject to information reporting and possible backup withholding unless the holder certifies as to its non-U.S. status under penalties of perjury or otherwise establishes an exemption, provided that the broker does not have actual knowledge or reason to know that the holder is a U.S. person or that the conditions of any other exemption are not, in fact, satisfied. The payment of the proceeds from the disposition of our common stock to or through a non-U.S. office of a non-U.S. broker will not be subject to information reporting or backup withholding unless the non-U.S. broker has certain types of relationships with the United States (a U.S. related person). In the case of the payment of the proceeds from the disposition of our common stock to or through a non-U.S. office of a broker that is either a U.S. person or a U.S. related person, the Treasury regulations require information reporting (but not the backup withholding) on the payment unless the broker has documentary evidence in its files that the holder is a Non-U.S. Holder and the broker has no knowledge to the contrary. Non-U.S. Holders should consult their own tax advisors on the application of information reporting and backup withholding to them in their particular circumstances (including upon their disposition of our common stock).

Backup withholding is not an additional tax. Any amounts withheld under the backup withholding rules from a payment to a Non-U.S. Holder will be refunded or credited against the Non-U.S. Holder's U.S. federal income tax liability, if any, if the Non-U.S. Holder provides the required information to the IRS on a timely basis. Non-U.S. Holders should consult their own tax advisors regarding the filing of a U.S. tax return for claiming a refund of such backup withholding.

Withholding under the Foreign Account Tax Compliance Act

In addition to the withholding described above, legislation enacted in 2010, known as the Foreign Account Tax Compliance Act (FATCA), generally imposes a withholding tax of 30% on dividends paid with respect to our common stock and on the gross proceeds of a sale or other disposition of our common stock, if the payments are made to a foreign entity, unless certain diligence, reporting, withholding and certification obligations and requirements are met. Subsequent U.S. Treasury regulations have delayed the implementation of withholding under FATCA with respect to dividends until after December 31, 2013, and with respect to payments of gross proceeds until after December 31, 2016.

Table of Contents

The withholding under FATCA may be avoided if (i) the foreign entity is a foreign financial institution (as defined in the Code) and such institution enters into an agreement with the U.S. government to collect and provide to the U.S. tax authorities substantial information regarding U.S. account holders of such institution (which would include certain equity and debt holders of such institution, as well as certain account holders that are foreign entities with U.S. owners) or (ii) the foreign entity is not a foreign financial institution and makes a certification identifying its substantial U.S. owners (as defined in the Code) or makes a certification that such foreign entity does not have any substantial U.S. owners. Foreign financial institutions located in jurisdictions that have an intergovernmental agreement with the United States governing FATCA may be subject to different rules. Under certain circumstances, a Non-U.S. Holder of our common stock might be eligible for refunds or credits of such withholding taxes, and a Non-U.S. Holder might be required to file a U.S. federal income tax return to claim such refunds or credits.

Non-U.S. Holders should consult their own tax advisors regarding the implications of this legislation on their investment in our common stock.

Table of Contents

LEGAL MATTERS

Certain legal matters in connection with the offering will be passed upon for us by Cravath, Swaine & Moore LLP, New York, New York. The underwriters have been represented in connection with this offering by Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP, Palo Alto, California.

EXPERTS

The financial statements and management's assessment of the effectiveness of internal control (which is included in Management's Report on Internal Control Over Financial Reporting) incorporated in this prospectus supplement by reference to the Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2012 have been so incorporated in reliance on the report of PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP, an independent registered public accounting firm, given on the authority of said firm as experts in auditing and accounting.

WHERE YOU CAN FIND MORE INFORMATION

We file annual, quarterly and current reports, proxy statements and other information with the SEC. Our SEC filings are available to the public over the internet at the SEC's website at <http://www.sec.gov> and our website at <http://www.firstsolar.com>. You may also read and copy any document we file with the SEC at the SEC's public reference room at 100 F Street, N.E., Washington, D.C. 20549. Please call the SEC at 1-800-SEC-0330 for further information on the public reference room.

We are incorporating by reference into this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus specific documents that we file with the SEC, which means that we can disclose important information to you by referring you to those documents that are considered part of this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus. Information that we file subsequently with the SEC will automatically update and supersede this information. We incorporate by reference the documents listed below, and any future documents that we file with the SEC under Section 13(a), 13(c), 14 or 15(d) of the Exchange Act until the termination of the offerings of all of the securities covered by this prospectus supplement has been completed.

We are incorporating by reference into this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus the following documents filed with the SEC (excluding any portions of such documents that have been furnished but not filed for purposes of the Exchange Act):

our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2012;

portions of our Definitive Proxy Statement on Form DEF 14A filed April 10, 2013 that are specifically incorporated by reference into our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2012;

our Quarterly Report on Form 10-Q for the fiscal quarter ended March 31, 2013;

our Current Reports on Forms 8-K filed on April 8, 2013, May 24, 2013 and June 4, 2013; and

the description of common stock contained in the final prospectus for First Solar filed pursuant to Rule 424(b)(4) of the Securities Act on August 13, 2007 with respect to the Registration Statement on Form S-1/A (Reg. No. 333-144714).

We will provide to each person, including any beneficial owner, to whom this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus are delivered, upon written or oral request and without charge, a copy of the documents referred to above that we have incorporated in this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus by reference. You can request copies of such documents if you call or write us at the following

Table of Contents

address or telephone number: Investor Relations, First Solar, Inc., 350 West Washington Street, Suite 600, Tempe, Arizona 85281, (602) 414-9315, or you may visit our website at <http://www.firstsolar.com> for copies of any such document.

This prospectus supplement, the accompanying prospectus or information incorporated or deemed incorporated by reference herein or therein, contains summaries of certain agreements that we have filed as exhibits to various SEC filings, as well as certain agreements that we will enter into in connection with the offering of shares of our common stock covered by this prospectus supplement. The descriptions of these agreements contained in this prospectus supplement, the accompanying prospectus or information incorporated by reference herein or therein do not purport to be complete and are subject to, or qualified in their entirety by reference to, the definitive agreements. Copies of the definitive agreements will be made available without charge to you by making a written or oral request to us.

Any statement contained in this prospectus supplement, in the accompanying prospectus or in a document incorporated or deemed to be incorporated by reference herein or therein will be deemed to be modified or superseded for purposes of this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus to the extent that a statement contained herein or therein, or in any other subsequently filed document which also is or is deemed to be incorporated by reference herein or therein, modifies or supersedes such statement. Any such statement so modified or superseded will not be deemed, except as so modified and superseded, to constitute a part of this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus.

S-21

Table of Contents

PROSPECTUS

FIRST SOLAR, INC.

Common Stock

Debt Securities

Preferred Stock

Warrants

The securities covered by this prospectus may be sold from time to time by First Solar, Inc. In addition, selling security holders to be named in a prospectus supplement may offer and sell from time to time securities in such amounts as are set forth in such prospectus supplement. We may, and any selling security holder may, offer the securities independently or together in any combination for sale directly to purchasers or through underwriters, dealers or agents to be designated at a future date. Unless otherwise set forth in a prospectus supplement, we will not receive any proceeds from the sale of securities by any selling security holder.

When we offer securities, we will provide you with a prospectus supplement describing the specific terms of the specific issue of securities, including the offering price of the securities. You should carefully read this prospectus and the prospectus supplement or free writing prospectus relating to the specific issue of securities, together with the documents we incorporate by reference, before you invest in any of these securities.

Our common stock is traded on The Nasdaq Global Select Market under the symbol FSLR.

Investing in our securities involves a high degree of risk. See Risk Factors on page 3 of this prospectus. You should carefully review the risks and uncertainties described under the heading Risk Factors contained in the applicable prospectus supplement and any related free writing prospectus, and under similar headings in the other documents that are incorporated or deemed incorporated by reference into this prospectus.

Neither the Securities and Exchange Commission nor any state securities commission has approved or disapproved of these securities or passed upon the accuracy or adequacy of this prospectus. Any representation to the contrary is a criminal offense.

The securities may be offered and sold to or through underwriters, dealers or agents as designated from time to time, or directly to one or more other purchasers or through a combination of such methods. See Plan of Distribution on page 21. If any underwriters, dealers or agents are involved in the sale of any of the securities, their names, and any applicable purchase price, fee, commission or discount arrangements between or among them, will be set forth, or will be calculable from the information set forth, in the applicable prospectus supplement.

Prospectus Dated June 11, 2013.

Table of Contents

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>About This Prospectus</u>	1
<u>First Solar, Inc.</u>	2
<u>Risk Factors</u>	3
<u>Cautionary Statement Regarding Forward-Looking Statements</u>	7
<u>Selling Security Holders</u>	7
<u>Use of Proceeds</u>	7
<u>Ratio of Earnings to Fixed Charges</u>	8
<u>Description of Common Stock</u>	8
<u>Description of Debt Securities</u>	8
<u>Description of Preferred Stock</u>	19
<u>Description of Warrants</u>	20
<u>Plan of Distribution</u>	21
<u>Legal Matters</u>	23
<u>Experts</u>	23
<u>Where You Can Find More Information</u>	23

Table of Contents

ABOUT THIS PROSPECTUS

This prospectus is part of a registration statement on Form S-3 that we filed with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission, which we refer to in this prospectus as the SEC, using the shelf registration process. Under the shelf registration process, we, or certain of our security holders, may from time to time sell the securities described in this prospectus in one or more offerings.

This prospectus provides you with a general description of the securities that we or a selling security holder may offer. Each time we, or, under certain circumstances, our security holders, sell securities in a manner not described herein, we will provide you with a prospectus supplement containing specific information about the terms of the offering and the means of distribution of the securities. The prospectus supplement may also add, update or change information contained in this prospectus and may include other special considerations applicable to such offering of securities. If there is any inconsistency between the information in this prospectus and any prospectus supplement, you should rely on the information in the prospectus supplement. You should read carefully this prospectus and any prospectus supplement together with the additional information described under the heading **Where You Can Find More Information**.

The prospectus supplement will describe: the terms of the securities offered, any initial public offering price, the price paid to us for securities, the net proceeds to us, the manner of distribution and any underwriting compensation and the other specific material terms related to the offering of the applicable securities. For more detail on the terms of the securities, you should read the exhibits filed with or incorporated by reference in our registration statement of which this prospectus forms a part.

In this prospectus, unless the context otherwise requires, the terms **First Solar**, **we**, **our**, **us** and the **Company** refer to First Solar, Inc., a Delaware corporation, whose shares of common stock are publicly traded on The Nasdaq Global Select Market under the symbol **FSLR**, and its subsidiaries. References to **securities** include any security that we or our security holders might sell under this prospectus or any prospectus supplement.

We prepare our financial statements in U.S. dollars and prepare our financial statements, including all of the financial statements incorporated by reference in this prospectus, in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States, or U.S. GAAP. Our fiscal year ends on December 31. In this prospectus, except where otherwise indicated, references to **\$** or **dollars** are to the lawful currency of the United States.

This prospectus contains summaries of certain provisions contained in some of the documents described herein. Please refer to the actual documents for complete information. All of the summaries are qualified in their entirety by the actual documents. Copies of the documents referred to herein have been filed, or will be filed or incorporated by reference as exhibits to the registration statement of which this prospectus is a part, and you may obtain copies of those documents as described below under **Where You Can Find More Information**.

Pursuant to this registration statement, we may offer, issue and sell securities as set forth on the cover page of this prospectus. Because we are a well-known seasoned issuer, as defined in Rule 405 of the Securities Act of 1933, as amended, which we refer to in this prospectus as the Securities Act, we may add to and offer additional securities, including securities held by security holders, by filing a prospectus supplement with the SEC at the time of the offer. In addition, we are able to add our subsidiaries and securities to be issued by them if we guarantee such securities.

You should rely only on the information contained in this prospectus or incorporated by reference in this prospectus. We have not authorized anyone to provide you with different information. The distribution of this prospectus and sale of these securities in certain jurisdictions may be restricted by law. Persons in possession of this prospectus are required to inform themselves about and observe any such restrictions. We are not making an offer to sell these securities in any jurisdiction where the offer or sale is not permitted. You should assume that the information appearing in this prospectus is accurate as of the date on the front cover of this prospectus only. Our business, financial condition, results of operations and prospects may have changed since that date.

Table of Contents

FIRST SOLAR, INC.

We manufacture and sell photovoltaic solar modules with an advanced thin-film semiconductor technology, and we design, construct, and sell photovoltaic solar power systems that use the solar modules we manufacture. We are the world's largest thin-film photovoltaic solar module manufacturer and one of the world's largest photovoltaic solar module manufacturers.

In addressing overall global demand for photovoltaic solar electricity, we have developed a differentiated, fully integrated systems business that can provide a competitively priced turn-key utility-scale photovoltaic solar power system solution for system owners and competitively priced electricity to utility end-users. Our photovoltaic solar power systems draw upon our full range of capabilities or any combination of individual products and services we provide, including (i) project development, (ii) engineering, procurement, and construction services, (iii) operating and maintenance services, and (iv) project finance expertise, and are sold directly to investor owned utilities, independent power developers and producers, commercial and industrial companies, and other system owners. Additionally, we may in the future decide to retain ownership of one or more of our photovoltaic solar power systems for a period of time up to the useful life of the system if we determine it would be of economic and strategic benefit to do so. Our fully integrated systems business, which uses the solar modules we manufacture, has enabled us to increase module throughput, drive cost reduction across the value chain, identify and break constraints to sustainable markets, and deliver compelling solutions to our customers and end-users.

In furtherance of our goal of delivering affordable solar electricity, we are continually focused on reducing photovoltaic solar power system costs in five primary areas: module manufacturing, balance-of-system costs (consisting of the costs of the components of a solar power system other than the solar modules), project development costs, the cost of capital, and the operating expenses of a photovoltaic solar power system. We believe that combining our reliable, low-cost module manufacturing capability with our systems business enables us to more rapidly reduce the price of solar electricity, accelerate the adoption of our technology in utility-scale photovoltaic solar power systems, and identify and remove constraints to the successful migration to sustainable solar markets around the world. Depending on the market opportunity, our sales offerings range from third party module only sales, to module sales with a range of engineering, procurement and construction products and solutions, to full turn-key photovoltaic solar power system sales. We expect these sales offerings to continue to evolve over time as we work with our customers to optimize how our photovoltaic solar power system solutions can best meet our customers' energy and economic needs.

In May 2012, we provided information regarding our long term strategic plan to transition our business to primarily sustainable opportunities by the end of 2016. In executing the plan, we are focusing on providing photovoltaic solar power system solutions using our modules to sustainable geographic markets that we believe have a compelling need for mass-scale photovoltaic electricity, including markets throughout the Americas, Asia, the Middle East, and Africa. As part of our plan, we are focusing on opportunities in which our photovoltaic solar power systems will compete directly with fossil fuel offerings on a levelized cost of energy basis. We are focusing our resources in those markets and energy applications in which photovoltaic solar power can be a least-cost, best-fit energy solution, particularly in regions with high solar resources, significant current or projected electricity demand and/or relatively high existing electricity prices. Execution of our plan entails a reallocation of resources around the globe, in particular dedicating resources to regions such as Latin America, Asia, the Middle East, and Africa where we have not traditionally conducted significant business to date. We expect joint ventures or other business arrangements with strategic partners to be a key part of our plan and related strategy, and we have begun initiatives in several markets using such arrangements to expedite our penetration of those markets.

First Solar, Inc., a Delaware corporation, was incorporated on February 22, 2006. We operated as a Delaware limited liability company from 1999 until 2006. Our corporate headquarters is located at 350 West Washington Street, Suite 600, Tempe, Arizona 85281 and our telephone number is (602) 414-9300. We maintain a website at www.firstsolar.com. *The information contained in or connected to our website is not a part of this prospectus.*

Table of Contents

RISK FACTORS

Investing in our securities involves risks. Potential investors are urged to read and consider the risk factors and other disclosures relating to an investment in securities issued by First Solar described below and in our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2012, as updated by annual, quarterly and other reports and documents we file with the SEC after the date of this prospectus and that are incorporated by reference herein. Before making an investment decision, you should carefully consider those risks as well as other information we include or incorporate by reference in this prospectus and any prospectus supplement. The risks and uncertainties we have described are not the only ones facing our company. Additional risks and uncertainties not presently known to us or that we currently consider immaterial may also affect our business operations. To the extent a particular offering implicates additional risks, we will include a discussion of those risks in the applicable prospectus supplement.

An increased global supply of photovoltaic modules has caused and may continue to cause structural imbalances in which global photovoltaic module supply exceeds demand, which could have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition and results of operations.

Solar manufacturers had installed production capacity that significantly exceeded global demand in 2012, which excess capacity has continued into 2013. We believe this structural imbalance between supply and demand (i.e., where production capacity significantly exceeds current global demand) will continue for the foreseeable future, and we expect that it will continue to put pressure on module pricing. In light of the increase in global production capacity, we engaged in a series of restructuring initiatives in 2012 to better align production with expected market demand including the closure of our German manufacturing operations at the end of 2012. During the first five months of 2013, industry average sales prices per watt have continued to be highly competitive, as competitors reduced average sales prices to sell-through inventories worldwide. If our competitors reduce module pricing to levels near or below their manufacturing costs, or are able to operate at minimal or negative operating margins for sustained periods of time, or if demand for photovoltaic modules does not grow sufficiently to justify the current production supply, our business, financial condition and results of operations could be adversely affected.

Thin-film technology has a short history, and our thin-film technology and solar modules and systems may perform below expectations; problems with product quality or performance may cause us to incur significant and/or unexpected warranty and related expenses, damage our market reputation, and prevent us from maintaining or increasing our market share.

Researchers began developing thin-film semiconductor technology over 25 years ago, but were unable to integrate the technology into a solar module production line until about a decade ago. We perform a variety of quality and life tests under different conditions upon which we base our expectations and related warranty of module performance over its expected useful life. However, if our thin-film technology and solar modules perform below expectations, we could lose customers and face substantial warranty expense.

We provide a limited warranty against defects in materials and workmanship under normal use and service conditions for 10 years following delivery to the owners of our solar modules. We also typically warrant to our owners that solar modules installed in accordance with agreed-upon specifications will produce at least 90% of their labeled power output rating during the first 10 years following their installation and at least 80% of their labeled power output rating during the following 15 years. As a result, we bear the risk of potential extensive warranty claims and expense long after we have sold our solar modules and recognized the net sales and initial product warranty for such sale. As an alternative to our module power output warranty, we have offered a system level module performance warranty for a limited number of our recent sales, and we currently expect to extend this system level module performance warranty to most future systems sales arrangements. As of March 31, 2013, our accrued warranty liability was \$185.6 million, of which, \$64.6 million was classified as current and \$121.0 million was classified as noncurrent.

Table of Contents

Estimates of product warranty liability involve significant management judgment and discretion and require the use of multiple assumptions relating to, among other factors, the number of affected modules in the field, the customer return rates for affected products and the costs of satisfying valid warranty claims through the various warranty remedies that are provided for in our limited warranty obligation. We continuously evaluate and validate the estimates and assumptions underlying our accrued warranty liability, including in connection with our quarterly and annual filings with the SEC. In addition to ongoing monitoring of the performance of our modules in the field, we have in the past and will continue to engage in various testing procedures in a variety of environments, with the findings of such testing procedures being incorporated into our product warranty liability estimates. For example, we are currently conducting certain controlled tests to evaluate the performance of our modules in a variety of scenarios, the results of which, when completed, will be considered in our overall product warranty liability estimates. We believe that our accrued warranty liability reflects our best estimate as of any balance sheet date, but our estimates for product warranty liability are subject to future change as the assumptions and performance data informing those accruals are updated based on our ongoing performance testing and the evaluation of our product performance in the field. We have historically estimated our product warranty liability for power output and defects in materials and workmanship under normal use and service conditions to have an estimated warranty return rate of approximately 3% of modules covered under warranty. As of March 31, 2013, a 1 percentage point change in the estimated warranty return rate would change our estimated product warranty liability by approximately \$49 million.

During the period from June 2008 to June 2009, a manufacturing excursion occurred whereby certain modules manufactured during that time period may experience premature power loss once installed in the field. We initiated a voluntary remediation program beyond our standard warranty pursuant to which we made commitments to customers with systems containing modules affected by the manufacturing excursion that we would cover certain costs of remediation efforts. We have expensed approximately \$271.2 million total through March 31, 2013 for the estimated costs of remediating systems affected by modules manufactured during the relevant period.

If any of our assumptions used in estimating the above referenced warranty or manufacturing excursion costs prove incorrect, we could be required to incur additional expenses, which could adversely impact our financial position, operating results and cash flows. Although we believe we have taken corrective actions to avoid similar manufacturing excursions in the future, we cannot guarantee that our internal quality and testing programs will prevent a future manufacturing excursion from occurring. Any future manufacturing excursions including any commitments made by us to take remediation actions in respect of affected modules beyond our limited warranty could adversely impact our financial position, operating results and cash flows.

Although our power output warranty extends for 25 years, our oldest solar modules manufactured during the qualification of our pilot production line have only been in use since 2001. As a result, our estimated product warranty liability is based primarily upon a variety of quality and life tests that enable predictions of durability and future performance based on (i) actual performance data from modules in the field over the time period such modules have been in service, (ii) expected performance data from accelerated life testing in laboratory environments and (iii) expected performance from reliability modeling. These predictions, however, could prove to be materially different from the actual performance over the full life of our solar modules, causing us to incur substantial expense to repair, replace, or pay liquidated damages for defective solar modules in the future based upon the remedies we have the discretion to elect under our limited warranty obligation. For example, our glass-on-glass solar modules could break, delaminate, corrode, or experience power degradation in excess of expectations, and our manufacturing operations or supply chain could be subject to process variations that could cause affected modules to underperform compared to our expectations. These risks could be amplified as we implement design and process changes in connection with our efforts to improve our product, accelerate module conversion efficiency and manufacturing production throughput improvements as part of our long term strategic plan. In addition, as we increase the number of installations in non-temperate climates, in accordance with our long term strategic plan, we may experience increased failure rates due to deployment into such climates. Any widespread product failures may damage our market reputation, cause our net sales to decline, require us to

Table of Contents

repair, replace, or pay liquidated damages for the defective modules, and cause us to take voluntary remedial measures beyond warranty terms to enhance customer satisfaction, which could have a material adverse effect on our financial results.

In addition to our solar module warranty described above, for solar power plants built by our systems business, we typically provide a limited warranty on the balance of the system against defects in engineering design, installation, and workmanship for a period of one to two years following the substantial completion of a phase or the entire solar power plant. Any widespread failures of solar power plants built by us could result in significant increases to warranty expense, damage our market reputation, cause our sales to decline, cause us to incur unexpected costs to remedy defects or otherwise negatively affect our results of operations.

Project development or construction activities may not be successful and projects under development may not receive required permits, real property rights, power purchase agreements (PPAs), interconnection and transmission arrangements or financing or construction may not commence or proceed as scheduled, which could increase our costs and impair our ability to recover our investments.

The development and construction of solar power electric generation facilities and other energy infrastructure projects involve numerous risks, including project development and construction risks. We may be required to spend significant sums for land and interconnection rights, preliminary engineering, permitting, legal, and other expenses before we can determine whether a project is feasible, economically attractive, or capable of being built. Success in developing a particular project is contingent upon, among other things:

obtaining satisfactory land rights, including environmental mitigation lands;

receipt from governmental agencies of required land use and construction permits and approvals;

receipt of rights to interconnect the project to the electric grid or to transmit energy;

payment of interconnection and other deposits (some of which are non-refundable);

negotiation of satisfactory engineering, procurement, and construction agreements;

entering into financeable arrangements for the purchase of the electrical output and renewable energy attributes generated by the project;

securing a project site and necessary rights of way;

our ability and the ability of our customers to obtain construction financing, including debt, equity and funds associated with the monetization of tax credits and other tax benefits; and

timely implementation and satisfactory completion of construction.

Successful completion of a particular project may be adversely affected by numerous factors, including:

delays in obtaining and maintaining required governmental permits and approvals, including appeals of approvals obtained;

Edgar Filing: FIRST SOLAR, INC. - Form 424B5

potential challenges from project stakeholders, including local residents, environmental organizations, and others who may not support the project;

unforeseen engineering problems;

construction delays and contractor performance shortfalls;

work stoppages;

cost over-runs;

labor, equipment and materials supply shortages or disruptions;

Table of Contents

additional complexities when conducting project development or construction activities in foreign jurisdictions (either on a stand-alone basis or in collaboration with local business partners), including operating in accordance with the U.S. Foreign Corrupt Practices Act and applicable local laws and customs;

unfavorable tax treatment;

adverse weather conditions;

potential concerns relating to wildlife or biota;

adverse environmental and geological conditions; and

force majeure and other events out of our control.

If we are unable to complete the development of a solar power facility, we fail to meet one or more agreed target construction milestone dates, any agreed upon system-level energy output warranties (including, for some projects, twenty-five year system-level module performance warranties), or other contract terms, or our projects cause grid interference or other damage, we may be subject to forfeiture of significant deposits under power purchase agreements or interconnection agreements or termination of such agreements, significant liquidated damages, penalties and/or other obligations under the engineering, procurement, and construction (EPC) agreement or other agreements relating to the project (including obligations to repair, replace and/or supplement additional modules and balance of system materials for the project), particularly if our liabilities are not capped under the terms of such agreement, and we typically will not be able to recover our investment in the project. Some of these penalties might require us to repurchase the project from the buyer or to down-size the project from original designs, under certain circumstances. If we were required to repurchase a project, we may have insufficient cash or capital resources necessary to make the repurchase payment or we may be unable to resell the project in a timely manner or on terms commercially satisfactory to us, which would adversely impact our liquidity and results of operations. Some of these investments in solar power projects are included as assets on our consolidated balance sheet under the line item Project assets. If we are unable to complete the development or construction of a solar power project, we may write-down or write-off some or all of these capitalized investments, which would have an adverse impact on our net income in the period in which the loss is recognized. In 2013, we expect to invest a significant amount of capital to develop and construct projects owned by us or third parties, which may limit the availability of capital to use for other purposes, such as contract damages or repurchase payments.

We may enter into fixed-price EPC contracts in which we act as the general contractor for our customers in connection with the installation of their solar power systems. All essential costs are estimated at the time of entering into the EPC contract for a particular project, and these are reflected in the overall fixed-price that we charge our customers for the project. These cost estimates are preliminary and may or may not be covered by contracts between us or the subcontractors, suppliers, and other parties to the project. In addition, we require qualified, licensed subcontractors to install most of our systems. Shortages of such skilled labor could significantly delay a project or otherwise increase our costs. Should miscalculations in planning a project occur (including those due to unexpected increases in inflation, commodity prices or labor costs) or delays in execution occur and we are unable to increase commensurately the EPC sales price, we may not achieve our expected margins or we may be required to record a loss in the relevant fiscal period. Additionally, in order to create or maintain a market position in certain strategically targeted markets in accordance with our long term strategic plan, our EPC and project development related offerings from time to time may need to be competitively priced at levels associated with minimal gross profit margins, which may adversely affect our results of operations. We expect the profitability associated with our various EPC and project development related sales offerings to vary from one another over time, and possibly vary from our internal long-range profitability expectations and targets, depending on the market opportunity and the relative competitiveness of our offering compared with other energy solutions, fossil fuel based or otherwise, that are available to potential customers.

Table of Contents

CAUTIONARY STATEMENT REGARDING FORWARD-LOOKING STATEMENTS

This prospectus, any accompanying prospectus supplement and any free writing prospectus and the information incorporated or deemed to be incorporated herein and therein by reference contain forward-looking statements within the meaning of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended, which we refer to in this prospectus as the Exchange Act, and the Securities Act, which are subject to inherent risks, uncertainties and assumptions that are difficult to predict. All statements in this prospectus, other than statements of historical fact, are forward-looking statements. These forward-looking statements are made pursuant to safe harbor provisions of the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995. The forward-looking statements include statements, among other things, concerning our business strategy, including anticipated trends and developments in and management plans for, our business and the markets in which we operate; future financial results, operating results, revenues, gross margin, operating expenses, products, projected costs, and capital expenditures; our ability to continue to reduce the cost per watt of our solar modules; research and development programs and our ability to improve the conversion efficiency of our solar modules; sales and marketing initiatives; and competition. In some cases, you can identify these statements by forward-looking words, such as estimate, expect, anticipate, project, plan, intend, seek, believe, forecast, foresee, likely, may, should, goal, target, might, will, negative or plural of these words, and other comparable terminology. Forward-looking statements are only predictions based on our current expectations and our projections about future events. All forward-looking statements included in this prospectus, any applicable prospectus supplement or in a document incorporated by reference into this prospectus speak only as of the date of this prospectus, the prospectus supplement or the document incorporated by reference, as the case may be. You should not place undue reliance on these forward-looking statements. We undertake no obligation to update any of these forward-looking statements for any reason. These forward-looking statements involve known and unknown risks, uncertainties and other factors that may cause our actual results, levels of activity, performance, or achievements to differ materially from those expressed or implied by these statements.

SELLING SECURITY HOLDERS

We may register securities covered by this prospectus for re-offers and resales by any selling security holders to be named in a prospectus supplement. Because we are a well-known seasoned issuer, as defined in Rule 405 of the Securities Act, we may add secondary sales of securities by any selling security holders by filing a prospectus supplement with the SEC. We may register these securities to permit selling security holders to resell their securities when they deem appropriate. A selling security holder may resell all, a portion or none of their securities at any time and from time to time. We may register those securities for sale through an underwriter or other plan of distribution as set forth in a prospectus supplement. See Plan of Distribution. Selling security holders may also sell, transfer or otherwise dispose of some or all of their securities in transactions exempt from the registration requirements of the Securities Act. We may pay all expenses incurred with respect to the registration of the securities owned by the selling security holders, other than underwriting fees, discounts or commissions, which will be borne by the selling security holders. We will provide you with a prospectus supplement naming the selling security holders, the amount of securities to be registered and sold and other terms of the securities being sold by a selling security holder.

USE OF PROCEEDS

Unless otherwise indicated in a prospectus supplement, we intend to use the net proceeds from the sale of our securities for general corporate purposes, possible future repayments of indebtedness or for such other purposes as may be specified in the applicable prospectus supplement. Unless otherwise set forth in a prospectus supplement, we will not receive any proceeds from any sales of our securities by any selling security holder to be named in a prospectus supplement.

Table of Contents**RATIO OF EARNINGS TO FIXED CHARGES**

The following table sets forth our ratio of earnings to fixed charges for the years and periods indicated. As we have no shares of preferred stock outstanding as of the date of this prospectus, no ratio of earnings to combined fixed charges and preferred stock dividends is presented.

	December 31, 2012	December 31, 2011	Year Ended December 31, 2010	December 26, 2009	December 27, 2008
Ratio of Earnings to Fixed Charges			49.9	54.8	49.5

For purposes of calculating our ratios of earnings to fixed charges, Earnings consist of income from continuing operations before income taxes, fixed charges and amortization of capitalized interest, less capitalized interest. Fixed charges consist of interest expense, capitalized interest, amortization of debt discount and issuance costs and an estimate of the interest within our rental expense. Our fixed charges do not include any dividend requirements with respect to preferred stock because we do not have any shares of preferred stock outstanding.

Earnings for each of the years ended December 31, 2012 and December 31, 2011 were inadequate to cover fixed charges due to a loss from continuing operations in such years. In order to achieve a ratio of earnings to fixed charges of 1:1, additional Earnings of \$41.8 million and \$65.3 million are required for the years ended December 31, 2012 and December 31, 2011, respectively.

DESCRIPTION OF COMMON STOCK

For a description of the common stock we or selling security holders may offer, see Description of Capital Stock in First Solar's Registration Statement on Form S-1/A (Reg. No. 333-144714), filed with the SEC on August 3, 2007, including any form of prospectus contained therein filed pursuant to Rule 424(b) under the Securities Act, which description is incorporated herein by reference. See Where You Can Find More Information.

DESCRIPTION OF DEBT SECURITIES

The following description of the terms of the debt securities sets forth certain general terms and provisions of the debt securities to which any prospectus supplement may relate. The particular terms of the debt securities offered by any prospectus supplement and the extent, if any, to which these general provisions may apply to those debt securities will be described in the prospectus supplement relating to those debt securities. Accordingly, for a description of the terms of a particular issue of debt securities, reference must be made to both the prospectus supplement relating thereto and to the following description.

We may issue debt securities from time to time in one or more series. The debt securities will be general obligations of First Solar. The debt securities may be fully and unconditionally guaranteed on a secured or unsecured senior or subordinated basis, jointly and severally, by guarantors, if any. In the event that any series of debt securities will be subordinated to other indebtedness that we have outstanding or may incur, the terms of the subordination will be set forth in the prospectus supplement relating to the subordinated debt securities. Debt securities will be issued under one or more indentures between us and one or more trustees named in the prospectus supplement, which we refer to as the trustee. A copy of the form of indenture has been filed as an exhibit to the registration statement filed with the SEC. The following discussion of certain provisions of the indenture is a summary only and should not be considered a complete description of the terms and provisions of the indenture. Accordingly, the following discussion is qualified in its entirety by reference to the provisions of the indenture, including the definition of certain terms used below. You should refer to the indenture for the complete terms of the debt securities.

Table of Contents

General

The debt securities will represent direct, general obligations of First Solar and:

may rank equally with other unsubordinated debt or may be subordinated to other debt we have or may incur;

may be issued in one or more series with the same or various maturities;

may be issued at a price of 100% of their principal amount or at a premium or discount;

may be issued in registered or bearer form and certificated or uncertificated form; and

may be represented by one or more global notes registered in the name of a designated depositary's nominee, and if so, beneficial interests in the global note will be shown on and transfers will be made only through records maintained by the designated depositary and its participants.

The aggregate principal amount of debt securities that we may authenticate and deliver is unlimited. The debt securities may be issued in one or more series as we may authorize from time to time. You should refer to the applicable prospectus supplement for the following terms of the debt securities of the series with respect to which that prospectus supplement is being delivered:

the title of the debt securities of the series (which will distinguish the debt securities of that particular series from the debt securities of any other series);

the price or prices of the debt securities of the series;

any limit on the aggregate principal amount of the debt securities of the series that may be authenticated and delivered under the indenture (except for debt securities authenticated and delivered upon registration or transfer of, or in exchange for, or in lieu of, other debt securities of the series);

the date or dates on which the principal and premium with respect to the debt securities of the series are payable;

the rate or rates (which may be fixed or variable) at which the debt securities of the series will bear interest (if any) or the method of determining such rate or rates, the date or dates from which such interest, if any, will accrue, the interest payment dates on which such interest, if any, will be payable or the method by which such dates will be determined, the record dates for the determination of holders thereof to whom such interest is payable (in the case of securities in registered form), and the basis upon which interest will be calculated if other than that of a 360-day year of twelve 30-day months;

the currency or currencies in which debt securities of the series will be denominated, if other than U.S. dollars, the place or places, if any, in addition to or instead of the corporate trust office of the trustee (in the case of securities in registered form) or the principal New York office of the trustee (in the case of securities in bearer form), where the principal, premium and interest with respect to debt securities of the series will be payable or the method of such payment, if by wire transfer, mail or other means;

the price or prices at which, the period or periods within which, and the terms and conditions upon which debt securities of the series may be redeemed, in whole or in part, at our option or otherwise;

whether debt securities of the series are to be issued as securities in registered form or securities in bearer form or both and, if securities in bearer form are to be issued, whether coupons will be attached to them, whether securities in bearer form of the series may be exchanged for securities in registered form of the series, and the circumstances under which and the places at which any such exchanges, if permitted, may be made;

if any debt securities of the series are to be issued as securities in bearer form or as one or more global securities representing individual securities in bearer form of the series, whether certain provisions for

Table of Contents

the payment of additional interest or tax redemptions will apply; whether interest with respect to any portion of a temporary bearer security of the series payable with respect to any interest payment date prior to the exchange of such temporary bearer security for definitive securities in bearer form of the series will be paid to any clearing organization with respect to the portion of such temporary bearer security held for its account and, in such event, the terms and conditions (including any certification requirements) upon which any such interest payment received by a clearing organization will be credited to the persons entitled to interest payable on such interest payment date; and the terms upon which a temporary bearer security may be exchanged for one or more definitive securities in bearer form of the series;

the obligation, if any, to redeem, purchase or repay debt securities of the series pursuant to any sinking fund or analogous provisions or at the option of a holder of such debt securities and the price or prices at which, the period or periods within which, and the terms and conditions upon which, debt securities of the series will be redeemed, purchased or repaid, in whole or in part, pursuant to such obligations;

the terms, if any, upon which the debt securities of the series may be convertible into or exchanged for any issuer's common stock, preferred stock, other debt securities or warrants for common stock, preferred stock, indebtedness or other securities of any kind and the terms and conditions upon which such conversion or exchange will be effected, including the initial conversion or exchange price or rate, the conversion or exchange period and any other additional provisions;

if other than denominations of \$1,000 or any integral multiple thereof, the denominations in which debt securities of the series will be issuable;

if the amount of principal, premium or interest with respect to the debt securities of the series may be determined with reference to an index or pursuant to a formula, the manner in which such amounts will be determined;

if the principal amount payable at the stated maturity of debt securities of the series will not be determinable as of any one or more dates prior to such stated maturity, the amount that will be deemed to be such principal amount as of any such date for any purpose, including the principal amount thereof which will be due and payable upon any maturity other than the stated maturity or which will be deemed to be outstanding as of any such date (or, in any such case, the manner in which such deemed principal amount is to be determined), and if necessary, the manner of determining the equivalent thereof in U.S. dollars;

any changes or additions to the provisions of the indenture dealing with defeasance;

if other than the principal amount thereof, the portion of the principal amount of debt securities of the series that will be payable upon declaration of acceleration of the maturity thereof or provable in bankruptcy;

the terms, if any, of the transfer, mortgage, pledge or assignment as security for the debt securities of the series of any properties, assets, moneys, proceeds, securities or other collateral, including whether certain provisions of the Trust Indenture Act of 1939, as amended, or the Trust Indenture Act, are applicable and any corresponding changes to provisions of the indenture as then in effect;

any addition to or change in the events of default with respect to the debt securities of the series and any change in the right of the trustee or the holders to declare the principal, premium and interest, if any, with respect to such debt securities due and payable;

if the debt securities of the series will be issued in whole or in part in the form of a global security, the terms and conditions, if any, upon which such global security may be exchanged in whole or in part for other individual debt securities in definitive registered

Edgar Filing: FIRST SOLAR, INC. - Form 424B5

form, the depositary (as defined in the applicable prospectus supplement) for such global security and the form of any legend or legends to be borne by any such global security in addition to or in lieu of the legend referred to in the indenture;

any trustee, authenticating or paying agent, transfer agent or registrar;

Table of Contents

the applicability of, and any addition to or change in, the covenants and definitions then set forth in the indenture or in the terms then set forth in the indenture relating to permitted consolidations, mergers or sales of assets;

the terms, if any, of any guarantee of the payment of principal, premium and interest with respect to debt securities of the series and any corresponding changes to the provisions of the indenture as then in effect;

the subordination, if any, of the debt securities of the series pursuant to the indenture and any changes or additions to the provisions of the indenture relating to subordination;

with regard to debt securities of the series that do not bear interest, the dates for certain required reports to the trustee; and

any other terms of the debt securities of the series (which terms will not be prohibited by the provisions of the indenture).

The prospectus supplement will also describe any material U.S. federal income tax consequences or other special considerations applicable to the series of debt securities to which such prospectus supplement relates, including those applicable to:

securities in bearer form;

debt securities with respect to which payments of principal, premium or interest are determined with reference to an index or formula (including changes in prices of particular securities, currencies or commodities);

debt securities with respect to which principal or interest is payable in a foreign or composite currency;

debt securities that are issued at a discount below their stated principal amount, bearing no interest or interest at a rate that at the time of issuance is below market rates, or original issue discount debt securities; and

variable rate debt securities that are exchangeable for fixed rate debt securities.

Unless otherwise provided in the applicable prospectus supplement, securities in registered form may be transferred or exchanged at the office of the trustee at which its corporate trust business is principally administered in the United States or at the office of the trustee or the trustee's agent in the Borough of Manhattan, the City and State of New York, at which its corporate agency business is conducted, subject to the limitations provided in the indenture, without the payment of any service charge, other than any tax or governmental charge payable in connection therewith. Securities in bearer form will be transferable only by delivery. Provisions with respect to the exchange of securities in bearer form will be described in the prospectus supplement relating to those securities in bearer form.

All funds that we pay to a paying agent for the payment of principal, premium or interest with respect to any debt securities that remain unclaimed at the end of two years after that principal, premium or interest will have become due and payable will be repaid to us, and the holders of those debt securities or any related coupons will thereafter look only to us for payment thereof.

Global Securities

The debt securities of a series may be issued in whole or in part in the form of one or more global securities. A global security is a debt security that represents, and is denominated in an amount equal to the aggregate principal amount of, all outstanding debt securities of a series, or any portion thereof, in either case having the same terms, including the same original issue date, date or dates on which principal and interest are due, and

Table of Contents

interest rate or method of determining interest. A global security will be deposited with, or on behalf of, a depository, which will be identified in the prospectus supplement relating to such debt securities. Global securities may be issued in either registered or bearer form and in either temporary or definitive form. Unless and until it is exchanged in whole or in part for the individual debt securities represented thereby, a global security may not be transferred except as a whole by the depository to a nominee of the depository, by a nominee of the depository to the depository or another nominee of the depository, or by the depository or any nominee of the depository to a successor depository or any nominee of such successor.

The terms of the depository arrangement with respect to a series of debt securities will be described in the prospectus supplement relating to such debt securities. We anticipate that the following provisions will generally apply to depository arrangements, in all cases subject to any restrictions or limitations described in the prospectus supplement relating to such debt securities.

Upon the issuance of a global security, the depository for such global security will credit, on its book entry registration and transfer system, the respective principal amounts of the individual debt securities represented by such global security to the accounts of persons that have accounts with the depository (participants). Such accounts will be designated by the dealers or underwriters with respect to such debt securities or, if such debt securities are offered and sold directly by us or through one or more agents, by us or such agents. Ownership of beneficial interests in a global security will be limited to participants or persons that hold beneficial interests through participants. Ownership of beneficial interests in such global security will be shown on, and the transfer of that ownership will be effected only through, records maintained by the depository (with respect to interests of participants) or records maintained by participants (with respect to interests of persons other than participants). The laws of some states require that certain purchasers of securities take physical delivery of such securities in definitive form. Such limitations and laws may impair the ability to transfer beneficial interests in a global security.

So long as the depository for a global security, or its nominee, is the registered owner or holder of such global security, such depository or nominee, as the case may be, will be considered the sole owner or holder of the individual debt securities represented by such global security for all purposes under the indenture. Except as provided below, owners of beneficial interests in a global security will not be entitled to have any of the individual debt securities represented by such global security registered in their names, will not receive or be entitled to receive physical delivery of any of such debt securities in definitive form, and will not be considered the owners or holders thereof under the indenture.

Payments of principal, premium, and interest with respect to individual debt securities represented by a global security will be made to the depository or its nominee, as the case may be, as the registered owner or holder of such global security. Neither we, the trustee, any paying agent or registrar for such debt securities nor any agent of ours or the trustee will have any responsibility or liability for:

any aspect of the records relating to or payments made by the depository, its nominee or any participants on account of beneficial interests in the global security or for maintaining, supervising or reviewing any records relating to such beneficial interests;

the payment to the owners of beneficial interests in the global security of amounts paid to the depository or its nominee; or

any other matter relating to the actions and practices of the depository, its nominee or its participants.

Neither we, the trustee, any paying agent or registrar for such debt securities or any agent of ours or the trustee will be liable for any delay by the depository, its nominee or any of its participants in identifying the owners of beneficial interests in the global security, and we and the trustee may conclusively rely on, and will be protected in relying on, instructions from the depository or its nominee for all purposes.

Table of Contents

We expect that the depository for a series of debt securities or its nominee, upon receipt of any payment of principal, premium or interest with respect to a definitive global security representing any of such debt securities, will immediately credit participants' accounts with payments in amounts proportionate to their respective beneficial interests in the principal amount of such global security, as shown on the records of the depository or its nominee. We also expect that payments by participants to owners of beneficial interests in such global security held through such participants will be governed by standing instructions and customary practices, as is now the case with securities held for the accounts of customers and registered in street name. Such payments will be the responsibility of such participants. Receipt by owners of beneficial interests in a temporary global security of payments of principal, premium or interest with respect thereto will be subject to the restrictions described in an applicable prospectus supplement. See "Limitations on Issuance of Securities in Bearer Form" below.

If the depository for a series of debt securities is at any time unwilling, unable or ineligible to continue as depository, we will appoint a successor depository. If a successor depository is not appointed by us within 90 days, we will issue individual debt securities of such series in exchange for the global security representing such series of debt securities. In addition, we may at any time and in our sole discretion determine to no longer have debt securities of a series represented by a global security and, in such event, will issue individual debt securities of such series in exchange for the global security representing such series of debt securities. Furthermore, if we so specify with respect to the debt securities of a series, an owner of a beneficial interest in a global security representing debt securities of such series may, on terms acceptable to us, the trustee, and the depository for such global security, receive individual debt securities of such series in exchange for such beneficial interests. In any such instance, an owner of a beneficial interest in a global security will be entitled to physical delivery of individual debt securities of the series represented by such global security equal in principal amount to such beneficial interest and to have such debt securities registered in its name (if the debt securities are issuable as securities in registered form). Individual debt securities of such series so issued generally will be issued:

as securities in registered form in denominations, unless otherwise specified by us, of \$1,000 and integral multiples thereof if the debt securities are issuable as securities in registered form;

as securities in bearer form in the denomination or denominations specified by us if the debt securities are issuable as securities in bearer form; or

as either securities in registered form or securities in bearer form as described above if the debt securities are issuable in either form.

Limitations on Issuance of Securities in Bearer Form

The debt securities of a series may be issued as securities in registered form (which will be registered as to principal and interest in the register maintained by the registrar for such debt securities) or securities in bearer form (which will be transferable only by delivery). If such debt securities are issuable as securities in bearer form, the applicable prospectus supplement will describe certain special limitations and considerations that will apply to such debt securities.

Certain Covenants

If debt securities are issued, the indenture, as supplemented for a particular series of debt securities, will contain certain covenants for the benefit of the holders of such series of debt securities, which will be applicable (unless waived or amended) so long as any of the debt securities of such series are outstanding, unless stated otherwise in the prospectus supplement. The specific terms of the covenants, and summaries thereof, will be set forth in the prospectus supplement relating to such series of debt securities.

Table of Contents

Subordination

Debt securities of a series, and any guarantees, may be subordinated, which we refer to as subordinated debt securities, to senior indebtedness (as defined in the applicable prospectus supplement) to the extent set forth in the prospectus supplement relating thereto. To the extent we conduct operations through subsidiaries, the holders of debt securities (whether or not subordinated debt securities) will be structurally subordinated to the creditors of our subsidiaries, except to the extent such subsidiary is a guarantor of such series of debt securities.

Events of Default

Each of the following will constitute an event of default under the form of indenture with respect to any series of debt securities:

default in payment of the principal or premium, if any, on the debt securities of that series, when such amount becomes due and payable at maturity, upon acceleration, required redemption or otherwise;

failure to pay interest on the debt securities of that series within 30 days of the due date;

failure to comply with the obligations described under **Mergers and Sales of Assets** below;

failure to comply for 60 days after notice with any of our other agreements in the debt securities of that series or the indenture or supplemental indenture related to that series of debt securities; or

certain events of bankruptcy, insolvency or reorganization affecting us.

A prospectus supplement may omit, modify or add to the foregoing events of default.

A default under the fourth clause above will not constitute an event of default until the trustee or the holders of 25% in principal amount of the outstanding debt securities notify us of the default and we do not cure such default within the time specified after receipt of such notice.

If any event of default (other than an event of default relating to certain events of bankruptcy, insolvency or reorganization) occurs and is continuing with respect to a particular series of debt securities, either the trustee or the holders of not less than 25% in aggregate principal amount of the debt securities of that series then outstanding by written notice to us (and to the trustee if such notice is given by the holders), may declare the principal amount of (or in the case of original issue discount debt securities, the portion thereby specified in the terms thereof), premium, if any, and accrued interest on the debt securities of that series to be immediately due and payable. In the case of certain events of bankruptcy, insolvency or reorganization, the principal amount of, premium, if any, and accrued interest on the debt securities of that series will automatically become and be immediately due and payable without any declaration or other act on the part of the trustee or any holders.

The holders of a majority in aggregate principal amount of the debt securities of any series then outstanding by notice to the trustee under the indenture may on behalf of the holders of all of such series of debt securities waive any existing default or event of default and its consequences under the applicable indenture except a continuing default or event of default in the payment of interest on, or the principal of, the debt securities of such series.

Subject to the provisions of the indenture relating to the duties of the trustee in case an event of default will occur and be continuing, the trustee is under no obligation to exercise any of its rights or powers under the indenture or debt securities at the request or direction of any of the holders of any series of debt securities, unless such holders have offered to the trustee indemnity or security satisfactory to it against any loss, liability or expense. Subject to such provisions for the indemnification of the trustee, the holders of at least a majority in aggregate principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of a series have the right to direct the time, method and place of conducting any proceeding for any remedy available to the trustee or exercising any trust or power conferred on the trustee with respect to such series of debt securities. The trustee, however, may refuse to follow

Table of Contents

any direction that conflicts with law or the indenture or that the trustee determines is unduly prejudicial to the rights of any other holder of such series of debt securities or that would involve the trustee in personal liability. Prior to taking any action under the indenture, the trustee is entitled to indemnification satisfactory to it in its sole discretion against all losses and expenses caused by taking or not taking such action.

Except to enforce the right to receive payment of principal, premium, if any, or interest when due, no holder of debt securities of a series has any right to institute any proceeding with respect to the indenture or debt securities, or for the appointment of a receiver or a trustee, or for any other remedy thereunder, unless:

such holder has previously given to the trustee written notice of a continuing event of default with respect to such series of debt securities;

the holders of at least 25% in aggregate principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of that series have made written request, and such holder or holders have offered reasonable security or indemnity against any loss, liability or expense, to the trustee to institute such proceeding as trustee; and

the trustee has failed to institute such proceeding, and has not received from the holders of a majority in aggregate principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of that series a direction inconsistent with such request, within 60 days after such notice, request and offer.

However, such limitations do not apply to a suit instituted by a holder of a debt security of such series for the enforcement of payment of the principal, premium, if any, or interest on such debt security on or after the applicable due date specified in such debt security.

The indenture provides that if a default with respect to a series of debt securities occurs and is continuing and is known to the trustee, the trustee must mail to each holder of such debt securities notice of the default within 90 days after it occurs. Except in the case of a default in the payment of the principal or premium, if any, upon acceleration, redemption or otherwise with respect to any debt security of a series when such amount becomes due and payable, the trustee may withhold notice if and so long as a committee of its trust officers in good faith determines that withholding notice is in the interests of the holders.

The indenture requires us to furnish to the trustee, within 120 days after the end of each fiscal year, a statement by certain of our officers as to whether or not we, to their knowledge, are in default in the performance or observance of any of the terms, provisions and conditions of the indenture and, if so, specifying all such known defaults.

Street name and other indirect holders should consult their banks and brokers for information on their requirements for giving notice or taking other actions upon a default.

Modification and Waiver

Modifications and amendments of the indenture, any supplemental indenture and any series of debt securities may be made by us and the trustee with the consent of the holders of at least a majority in aggregate principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of any series affected by such modification or amendment.

No such modification or amendment may, without the consent of each holder affected thereby:

make any change to the percentage of principal amount of debt securities of any series the holders of which must consent to an amendment;

reduce the principal amount of, premium, if any, or interest on, or extend the stated maturity or interest payment periods, of any debt security;

make any debt security payable in money or securities other than that stated in such debt security;

Table of Contents

make any change that adversely affects such holder's right to require us to purchase a debt security, if any;

impair the right to institute suit for the enforcement of any payment with respect to the debt securities;

in the case of any subordinated debt security or coupons pertaining thereto, make any change in the provisions of the indenture relating to subordination that adversely affects the rights of any holder under such provisions;

except as provided under Satisfaction and Discharge of the Indenture; Defeasance, release any security or guarantee that may have been granted with respect to the debt securities; or

waive a default in payment of principal of, premium, if any, or interest on the debt securities of a series or modify any provisions of the indenture relating to modification or amendment thereof.

Without the consent of any holder, we and the trustee may amend the indenture for one or more of the following purposes:

to evidence the succession of another person pursuant to the provisions of the indenture relating to consolidations, mergers and sales of assets and the assumption by such successor of the covenants, agreements and obligations in the indenture and in the debt securities;

to surrender any right or power conferred upon us by the indenture, to add to our covenants such further covenants, restrictions, conditions or provisions for the protection of the holders of all or any series of debt securities as our boards of directors will consider to be for the protection of the holders of such debt securities, and to make the occurrence, or the occurrence and continuance, of a default in respect of any of such additional covenants, restrictions, conditions or provisions a default or an event of default under the indenture (*provided, however*, that with respect to any such additional covenant, restriction, condition or provision, such supplemental indenture may provide for a period of grace after default, which may be shorter or longer than that allowed in the case of other defaults, may provide for an immediate enforcement upon such default, may limit the remedies available to the trustee upon such default or may limit the right of holders of a majority in aggregate principal amount of any series of debt securities to waive such default);

to cure any ambiguity or correct or supplement any provision contained in the indenture, in any supplemental indenture or in any debt securities that may be defective or inconsistent with any other provision contained therein;

to convey, transfer, assign, mortgage or pledge any property to or with the trustee, or to make such other provisions in regard to matters or questions arising under the indenture as will not adversely affect in any material respect the interests of any holders of debt securities of any series;

to modify or amend the indenture in such a manner as to permit the qualification of the indenture or any supplemental indenture under the Trust Indenture Act as then in effect;

to add to or change any of the provisions of the indenture to provide that securities in bearer form may be registerable as to principal, to change or eliminate any restrictions on the payment of principal or premium with respect to securities in registered form or of principal, premium or interest with respect to securities in bearer form; or to permit securities in registered form to be exchanged for securities in bearer form, so as to not adversely affect the interests of the holders of debt securities or any coupons of any series in any material respect or permit or facilitate the issuance of debt securities of any series in uncertificated form;

in the case of subordinated debt securities, to make any change in the provisions of the indenture relating to subordination that would limit or terminate the benefits available to any holder of senior indebtedness under such provisions (but only if each such holder of senior indebtedness consents to such change);

Table of Contents

to add guarantees with respect to the debt securities or to secure the debt securities;

to make any change that does not adversely affect the rights of any holder;

to add to, change, or eliminate any of the provisions of the indenture with respect to one or more series of debt securities, so long as any such addition, change or elimination not otherwise permitted under the indenture will (a) neither apply to any debt security of any series created prior to the execution of such supplemental indenture and entitled to the benefit of such provision nor modify the rights of the holders of any such debt security with respect to such provision or (b) become effective only when there is no such debt security outstanding;

to evidence and provide for the acceptance of appointment by a successor or separate trustee with respect to the debt securities of one or more series and to add to or change any of the provisions of the indenture as will be necessary to provide for or facilitate the administration of the indenture by more than one trustee; or

to establish the form or terms of debt securities and coupons of any series, as described under **General** above.

Mergers and Sales of Assets

The indenture provides that we may not consolidate with or merge into any other person or convey, transfer or lease all or substantially all of our properties and assets to another person, unless among other items: (a) the resulting, surviving or transferee person (if other than us) is organized and existing under the laws of the United States, any state thereof or the District of Columbia and such person expressly assumes, by supplemental indenture, all of our obligations under all of the debt securities and the indenture; (b) we or such successor person will not immediately thereafter be in default under the indenture; and (c) we will have provided the trustee with an opinion of counsel and officer's certificate confirming compliance with the indenture. Upon the assumption of our obligations by such a person in such circumstances, subject to certain exceptions, we will be discharged from all obligations under all debt securities and the indenture (except in the case of a lease).

Satisfaction and Discharge of the Indenture; Defeasance

Unless otherwise provided for in the prospectus supplement, the indenture will generally cease to be of any further effect with respect to a series of debt securities if (a) we have delivered to the trustee for cancellation all debt securities of such series (with certain limited exceptions) or (b) all debt securities and coupons of such series not theretofore delivered to the trustee for cancellation will have become due and payable, or are by their terms to become due and payable within one year or are to be called for redemption within one year, and we will have deposited with the trustee as trust funds the entire amount sufficient to pay at maturity or upon redemption all such debt securities and coupons (and if, in either case, we will also pay or cause to be paid all other sums payable under the indenture by us).

In addition, we will have a legal defeasance option (pursuant to which we may terminate, with respect to the debt securities of a particular series, all of our obligations under such debt securities and the indenture with respect to such debt securities) and a covenant defeasance option (pursuant to which we may terminate, with respect to the debt securities of a particular series, our obligations with respect to such debt securities under certain specified covenants contained in the indenture). If we exercise our legal defeasance option with respect to a series of debt securities, payment of such debt securities may not be accelerated because of an event of default. If we exercise our covenant defeasance option with respect to a series of debt securities, payment of such debt securities may not be accelerated because of an event of default related to the specified covenants.

The applicable prospectus supplement will describe the procedures we must follow in order to exercise our defeasance options.

Table of Contents

Regarding the Trustee

The indenture provides that, except during the continuance of an event of default, the trustee will perform only such duties as are specifically set forth in the indenture. During the existence of an event of default, the trustee may exercise such rights and powers vested in it under the indenture and use the same degree of care and skill in its exercise as a prudent person would exercise under the circumstances in the conduct of such person's own affairs.

The indenture and provisions of the Trust Indenture Act that are incorporated by reference therein contain limitations on the rights of the trustee, should it become one of our creditors, to obtain payment of claims in certain cases or to realize on certain property received by it in respect of any such claim as security or otherwise. The trustee will be permitted to engage in other transactions with us or any of our affiliates; *provided, however*, that if it acquires any conflicting interest (as defined in the indenture or in the Trust Indenture Act), it must eliminate such conflict or resign.

Governing Law

The indenture and the debt securities will be governed by the laws of the State of New York.

Table of Contents

DESCRIPTION OF PREFERRED STOCK

The following description of the terms of the preferred stock we may issue sets forth certain general terms and provisions of any series of preferred stock to which any prospectus supplement may relate. Particular terms of the preferred stock offered by any prospectus supplement and the extent, if any, to which these general terms and provisions will apply to any series of preferred stock so offered will be described in the prospectus supplement relating to the applicable preferred stock. The applicable prospectus supplement may also state that any of the terms set forth in this description are inapplicable to such series of preferred stock. This description does not purport to be complete and is subject to and qualified in its entirety by reference to applicable Delaware law and the provisions of our amended and restated certificate of incorporation relating to our preferred stock.

We currently have 30,000,000 authorized shares of preferred stock, par value \$0.001 per share. Preferred stock may be issued independently or together with any other securities and may be attached to or separate from the securities.

Pursuant to Delaware law and our amended and restated certificate of incorporation, our board of directors by resolution, and without the approval of shareholders, may establish one or more series of preferred stock and fix the number of shares constituting such series and the designation of such series, and the voting powers (if any) of the shares of such series, preferences and relative, participating, optional or other special rights, if any, and any qualifications, limitations or restrictions thereof, of the shares of such series. Such rights, preferences, powers and limitations as may be established could have the effect of discouraging an attempt to obtain control of First Solar.

Our board of directors, in approving the issuance of a series of preferred stock and the applicable prospectus supplement, will set forth with respect to such series, the following:

the number of shares constituting such series;

the designation of such series;

the voting powers, if any, of the shares of such series; and

preferences and relative, participating, optional or other special rights, if any, and any qualifications, limitations or restrictions thereof, of the shares of such series.

The terms of each series of preferred stock will be described in any prospectus supplement related to such series of preferred stock and will contain a discussion of any material U.S. federal income tax considerations applicable to the preferred stock.

Table of Contents

DESCRIPTION OF WARRANTS

We may issue warrants for the purchase of debt securities, preferred stock or common stock. Warrants may be issued independently or together with debt securities, preferred stock or common stock offered by any prospectus supplement and may be attached to or separate from any such offered securities. Each series of warrants will be issued under a separate warrant agreement to be entered into between us and a bank or trust company, as warrant agent. The warrant agent will act solely as our agent in connection with the warrants and will not assume any obligation or relationship of agency or trust for or with any holders or beneficial owners of warrants. The following summary of certain provisions of the warrants does not purport to be complete and is subject to, and qualified in its entirety by reference to, the provisions of the warrant agreement that will be filed with the SEC in connection with the offering of such warrants.

The prospectus supplement relating to a particular issue of warrants will describe the terms of such warrants, including the following:

the title of such warrants;

the offering price for such warrants, if any;

the aggregate number of such warrants;

the designation and terms of the securities purchasable upon exercise of such warrants;

if applicable, the designation and terms of the securities with which such warrants are issued and the number of such warrants issued with each such security;

if applicable, the date from and after which such warrants and any securities issued therewith will be separately transferable;

the principal amount of debt securities purchasable upon exercise of a warrant and the price at which such principal amount of debt securities may be purchased upon exercise (which price may be payable in cash, securities, or other property) and the number of shares of common stock or preferred stock purchasable upon exercise of a warrant and the price at which such shares may be purchased upon exercise;

the date on which the right to exercise such warrants shall commence and the date on which such right shall expire;

if applicable, the minimum or maximum amount of such warrants that may be exercised at any one time;

whether the warrants represented by the warrant certificates or debt securities that may be issued upon exercise of the warrants will be issued in registered or bearer form;

information with respect to book-entry procedures, if any;

Edgar Filing: FIRST SOLAR, INC. - Form 424B5

the currency or currency units in which the offering price, if any, and the exercise price are payable;

if applicable, a discussion of material United States federal income tax considerations;

the antidilution provisions of such warrants, if any;

the redemption or call provisions, if any, applicable to such warrants; and

any additional terms of such warrants, including terms, procedures, and limitations relating to the exchange and exercise of such warrants.

Table of Contents

PLAN OF DISTRIBUTION

We and any selling security holder may offer and sell the securities covered by this prospectus from time to time, in one or more transactions, at market prices prevailing at the time of sale, at prices related to market prices, at a fixed price or prices subject to change, at varying prices determined at the time of sale or at negotiated prices, by a variety of methods, including the following:

through agents;

to or through underwriters;

in at the market offerings, within the meaning of Rule 415(a)(4) under the Securities Act, to or through a market maker or into an existing trading market, on an exchange or otherwise;

through brokers or dealers;

directly by us or any selling security holders to purchasers, including through a specific bidding, auction or other process; or

through a combination of any of these methods of sale.

Registration of the securities covered by this prospectus does not mean that those securities necessarily will be offered or sold.

In effecting sales, brokers or dealers engaged by us or any selling security holder may arrange for other brokers or dealers to participate. Broker-dealer transactions may include:

purchases of the securities by a broker-dealer as principal and resales of the securities by the broker-dealer for its account pursuant to this prospectus;

ordinary brokerage transactions; or

transactions in which the broker-dealer solicits purchasers.

In addition, we and any selling security holder may sell any securities covered by this prospectus in private transactions or under Rule 144 of, or pursuant to other exemptions from registration under, the Securities Act rather than pursuant to this prospectus.

We may sell offered securities through agents designated by us from time to time. Any such agent in the offer or sale of the securities for which this prospectus is delivered will be named, and any commissions payable by us to that agent will be set forth, in the prospectus supplement to the extent required. Unless indicated in the prospectus supplement, such agents will have agreed to use their reasonable best efforts to solicit purchases for the period of their appointment.

In connection with the sale of securities covered by this prospectus, broker-dealers may receive commissions or other compensation from us or any selling security holder in the form of commissions, discounts or concessions. Broker-dealers may also receive compensation from purchasers of the securities for whom they act as agents or to whom they sell as principals or both. Compensation as to a particular broker-dealer may be in excess of customary commissions or in amounts to be negotiated. In connection with any underwritten offering, underwriters may receive compensation in the form of discounts, concessions or commissions from us or from purchasers of the securities for whom they act as

Edgar Filing: FIRST SOLAR, INC. - Form 424B5

agents. Underwriters may sell the securities to or through dealers, and such dealers may receive compensation in the form of discounts, concessions or commissions from the underwriters and/or commissions from the purchasers for whom they may act as agents. Any underwriters, broker-dealers, agents or other persons acting on our behalf that participate in the distribution of the securities may be deemed to be underwriters within the meaning of the Securities Act, and any profit on the sale of the securities by them and any discounts, commissions or concessions received by any of those underwriters, broker-dealers agents or other persons may be deemed to be underwriting discounts and commissions under the Securities Act.

Table of Contents

In connection with the distribution of the securities covered by this prospectus or otherwise, we or any selling security holder may enter into hedging transactions with broker-dealers or other financial institutions. In connection with such transactions, broker-dealers or other financial institutions may engage in short sales of our securities in the course of hedging the positions they assume with us or any selling security holder. We or any selling security holder may also sell securities short and deliver the securities offered by this prospectus to close out our short positions. We or any selling security holder may also enter into option or other transactions with broker-dealers or other financial institutions, which require the delivery to such broker-dealer or other financial institution of securities offered by this prospectus, which securities such broker-dealer or other financial institution may resell pursuant to this prospectus, as supplemented or amended to reflect such transaction. We or any selling security holder may also from time to time pledge our securities pursuant to the margin provisions of our customer agreements with our brokers. Upon our default, the broker may offer and sell such pledged securities from time to time pursuant to this prospectus, as supplemented or amended to reflect such transaction.

At any time a particular offer of the securities covered by this prospectus is made, a revised prospectus or prospectus supplement, if required, will be distributed which will set forth the aggregate amount of securities covered by this prospectus being offered and the terms of the offering. Such prospectus supplement, and, if necessary, a post-effective amendment to the registration statement of which this prospectus is a part, will be filed with the SEC to reflect the disclosure of additional information with respect to the distribution of the securities covered by this prospectus. In order to comply with the securities laws of certain states, if applicable, the securities sold under this prospectus may only be sold through registered or licensed broker-dealers. In addition, in some states the securities may not be sold unless they have been registered or qualified for sale in the applicable state or an exemption from registration or qualification requirements is available and is complied with.

In connection with an underwritten offering, we and any selling security holder would execute an underwriting agreement with an underwriter or underwriters. Unless otherwise indicated in the revised prospectus or applicable prospectus supplement, such underwriting agreement would provide that the obligations of the underwriter or underwriters are subject to certain conditions precedent, and that the underwriter or underwriters with respect to a sale of the covered securities will be obligated to purchase all of the covered securities, if any such securities are purchased. We or any selling security holder may grant to the underwriter or underwriters an option to purchase additional securities at the public offering price, less any underwriting discount, as may be set forth in the revised prospectus or applicable prospectus supplement. If we or any selling security holder grants any such option, the terms of that option will be set forth in the revised prospectus or applicable prospectus supplement.

Underwriters, agents, brokers or dealers may be entitled, pursuant to relevant agreements entered into with us, to indemnification by us or any selling security holder against certain civil liabilities, including liabilities under the Securities Act that may arise from any untrue statement or alleged untrue statement of a material fact, or any omission or alleged omission to state a material fact in this prospectus, any supplement or amendment hereto, or in the registration statement of which this prospectus forms a part, or to contribution with respect to payments which the underwriters, agents, brokers or dealers may be required to make.

Table of Contents

LEGAL MATTERS

The validity of the securities offered in this prospectus and any related prospectus supplement and certain legal matters will be passed upon for us by Cravath, Swaine & Moore LLP, New York, New York. If the securities are being distributed in an underwritten offering, certain legal matters will be passed upon for the underwriters by counsel identified in the related prospectus supplement.

EXPERTS

The financial statements and management's assessment of the effectiveness of internal control (which is included in Management's Report on Internal Control Over Financial Reporting) incorporated in this prospectus by reference to the Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2012 have been so incorporated in reliance on the report of PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP, an independent registered public accounting firm, given on the authority of said firm as experts in auditing and accounting.

WHERE YOU CAN FIND MORE INFORMATION

We file annual, quarterly and current reports, proxy statements and other information with the SEC. Our SEC filings are available to the public over the internet at the SEC's website at <http://www.sec.gov> and our website at <http://www.firstsolar.com>. You may also read and copy any document we file with the SEC at the SEC's public reference room at 100 F Street, N.E., Washington, D.C. 20549. Please call the SEC at 1-800-SEC-0330 for further information on the public reference room.

We are incorporating by reference into this prospectus specific documents that we file with the SEC, which means that we can disclose important information to you by referring you to those documents that are considered part of this prospectus. Information that we file subsequently with the SEC will automatically update and supersede this information. We incorporate by reference the documents listed below, and any future documents that we file with the SEC under Section 13(a), 13(c), 14 or 15(d) of the Exchange Act until the termination of the offerings of all of the securities covered by this prospectus has been completed. This prospectus is part of a registration statement filed with the SEC.

We are incorporating by reference into this prospectus the following documents filed with the SEC (excluding any portions of such documents that have been furnished but not filed for purposes of the Exchange Act):

our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2012;

portions of our Definitive Proxy Statement on Form DEF 14A filed April 10, 2013 that are specifically incorporated by reference into our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2012;

our Quarterly Report on Form 10-Q for the fiscal quarter ended March 31, 2013;

our Current Reports on Forms 8-K filed on April 8, 2013, May 24, 2013 and June 4, 2013; and

the description of common stock contained in the final prospectus for First Solar filed pursuant to Rule 424(b)(4) of the Securities Act on August 13, 2007 with respect to the Registration Statement on Form S-1/A (Reg. No. 333-144714).

We will provide to each person, including any beneficial owner, to whom a prospectus is delivered, upon written or oral request and without charge, a copy of the documents referred to above that we have incorporated in this prospectus by reference. You can request copies of such documents if you call or write us at the following

Table of Contents

address or telephone number: Investor Relations, First Solar, Inc., 350 West Washington Street, Suite 600, Tempe, Arizona 85281, (602) 414-9315, or you may visit our website at <http://www.firstsolar.com> for copies of any such document.

This prospectus, any accompanying prospectus supplement or information incorporated by reference herein or therein, contains summaries of certain agreements that we have filed as exhibits to various SEC filings, as well as certain agreements that we will enter into in connection with the offering of securities covered by any particular accompanying prospectus supplement. The descriptions of these agreements contained in this prospectus, any accompanying prospectus supplement or information incorporated by reference herein or therein do not purport to be complete and are subject to, or qualified in their entirety by reference to, the definitive agreements. Copies of the definitive agreements will be made available without charge to you by making a written or oral request to us.

Any statement contained herein or in a document incorporated or deemed to be incorporated by reference herein will be deemed to be modified or superseded for purposes of this prospectus to the extent that a statement contained herein, in any other subsequently filed document which also is or is deemed to be incorporated by reference herein or in any accompanying prospectus supplement, modifies or supersedes such statement. Any such statement so modified or superseded will not be deemed, except as so modified and superseded, to constitute a part of this prospectus.

Table of Contents

8,500,000 Shares

First Solar, Inc.

Common Stock

Prospectus Supplement

J.P. Morgan Morgan Stanley BofA Merrill Lynch Citigroup

Credit Suisse

HSBC

Credit Agricole CIB

Goldman, Sachs & Co.

