Solar panels along the road
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The French Government intends to pave 1,000 kilometres of road with photovoltaic panels in the next five years, which would be supplying power to millions of people. If successful, these solar panels could provide five million people with electricity (about eight per cent of the French population).

The tenders for the ‘Positive Energy’ initiative have already been issued and the tests of the photovoltaic panels would begin in spring. According to France’s Agency of Environment and Energy Management, four metres of solarised road is enough to supply one household’s electricity needs and one kilometre will light a settlement with 5,000 homes.

The solarising of France’s roads involves glueing seven-millimetre-thick strips to the surface of the carriageway. The basic technology for this has already been developed by Colas, a subsidiary of the French industrial group, Bouygues. The company’s Wattway panels, which took five years to develop, were unveiled in October 2015.

Wattway cells collect solar energy using a thin film of polycrystalline silicon, but are resistant to the passage of heavy goods vehicles and offer sufficient traction to prevent skids.