

April 16, 2015

Dear GBCC Teams,

Enclosed you will find the case for the 2015 Global Business Case Competition **“First Solar, Inc. in 2013,” Stanford Graduate School of Business, Case SM-190B**. This case is set in 2013, but the questions that you answer will be about First Solar today (in April 2015).

Assume that you are outside business consultants who have been hired by the board of First Solar to review the global aspects of the company’s long-term strategic plan. Assume that the judges are the board members. The board of First Solar has charged you with addressing the following questions.

Question 1 – Forecast

In your opinion, what are the top three forces that will affect First Solar’s business over the next five years (through 2020)?

- Note 1: The “forces” should be external trends or developments, not the company’s own decisions or actions.
- Note 2: The board wants you to discuss three – no more or less.
- Explain any assumptions that you make.
- Describe how the trends/developments will affect First Solar.

Question 2 – Strategy recommendations regarding target markets

To date, First Solar has concentrated on the US market. The company’s long-term strategic plan recognizes that this will change. Review First Solar’s current global market strategy (see attached Addendum from the 2015 Annual Report). Recommend three target markets that you think should have top priority. What products/services should First Solar sell in these markets?

- You are not limited to the countries mentioned in the Addendum. The target markets should be countries, but you may identify specific regions within a country.
- What criteria should be used to prioritize markets?
- How should First Solar enter these markets?
- How should First Solar finance the market entry?
- What are the expected costs and revenues from your proposed strategy?
- What are the risks?
- Justify your recommendations with reference to your forecast in Question 1.

Competition Notes and Rules

- Obviously, you will need to do outside research in order to prepare your presentation.
 - However, you may not conduct any personal interviews as part of that research. For example, do not call, visit, or e-mail anyone at the case company. The only sources that you may use are publicly available ones (print or electronic).
 - Note: You are allowed to ask librarians where reference materials are located.
- Do not discuss the case, your research, or your presentation with anyone outside your team (this includes your advisor, your ambassador, and GBCC managers) before Saturday’s competition.
- If you have a question about the competition, the rules, these instructions or the case, contact Kathleen Hatch (khatch@uw.edu or 206-543-3960).

I look forward to seeing your presentations on Saturday. Have fun!



Debra Glassman, Faculty Director, Global Business Center