1995: The Pocantico Conference was convened by the Rockefeller Brothers Fund to debate strategies on mobilizing PV financing in the developing countries.

1996: The Japanese government announced a national PV strategy that included a 50% subsidy for residential rooftop applications, substantial increases in government funding of PV R&D, and government subsidies of interest rates to encourage banks to lend for PV applications. In Europe, Triodos Bank established its Solar Investment Fund (SIF), a $3 million fund focused on end-user financing in the developing countries. In the United States, a joint task force of the World Bank Group and charitable foundations led to plans for the Solar Development Group (SDG) and the proposed SolarBank Program.

1997: The Shell–Eskom joint venture was established in South Africa, providing nongrid electric service to rural households using a "fee-for-service" strategy. The World Bank closed a GEF-supported PV loan facility in Indonesia and laid out plans for PV loan programs in China, Argentina, and other countries.

1998: The PV Market Transformation Initiative (PVMTI) was launched in India, Kenya, and Morocco, sponsored by the International Finance Corporation (IFC) and funded by the Global Environmental Facility (GEF). In the United States, Astropower became the first successful Initial Public Offering (IPO) by a venture capital–backed PV company.

1999: Germany launched its 100 000 Roofs PV Program with a "feed-in tariff" for PV electricity and a national program of low-interest loans, which has been successful.

2000: The IFC's Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (REEF) Fund, a $100 million equity fund for such projects in the developing countries, raised its initial capital. In the United States, the Renewable Energy Development Institute (REDI) formalized its PV loan brokerage operation.

2001: The Solar Development Group, including the $20 million Solar Development Foundation (SDF) and the $29 million Solar Development Capital (SDC) fund, was launched by the World Bank, IFC, GEF, US Foundations, and European governments and donor agencies, to fund PV enterprises in the developing countries.

2002: Low-interest loan programs have begun to appear around the world, from California to Kenya.

Historical information from around the world suggests that financing will play a pivotal role in creating and sustaining the growth of PV market demand:

Developing countries: PV companies in India, Indonesia, South Africa, and the Dominican Republic report that only 2 to 5% of prospective purchasers can afford to buy a PV system with cash, while approximately 50% could buy if provided with reasonable third-party financing (please see Section 24.5 for details).

Germany: The KfW made low-interest loans available in conjunction with a DM 0.99 feed-in tariff, igniting a booming PV market that increased from nearly 0 MW in the year 1998, to 40 MW in the year 2000, and an estimated 75 MW in the year 2001 (see Reference [3]).

Indeed, the evidence suggests that market demand for photovoltaics can increase by tenfold with the availability of reasonable end-user credit, from approximately 5% of end users who can pay cash, to 50% of end users who could buy if credit on reasonable terms is made available.