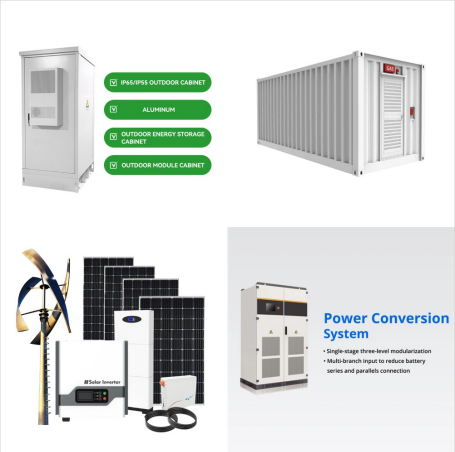

Rocky planets, like Earth, formed near the Sun, because icy and gaseous material couldn''t survive close to all that heat. Gas and icy stuff collected further away, creating the gas and ice giants. And like that, the solar system as we know it today was formed.

The story of our quest to discover how our Solar System formed is littered with false starts, and one that astronomers are still refining. The world's greatest thinkers originally had the Earth at the centre of creation, with the Sun, Moon, planets and stars circling around us.

Our solar system consists of our star, the Sun, and everything bound to it by gravity ??? the planets Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, and Neptune; dwarf planets such as Pluto; dozens of moons; and millions of asteroids, comets, and meteoroids.

HOW WERE THE PLANETS IN OUR SOLAR SYSTEM FORMED

Since the dawn of the Space Age in the 1950s and the discovery of exoplanets in the 1990s, the model has been both challenged and refined to account for new observations. The Solar System has evolved considerably since its initial formation.

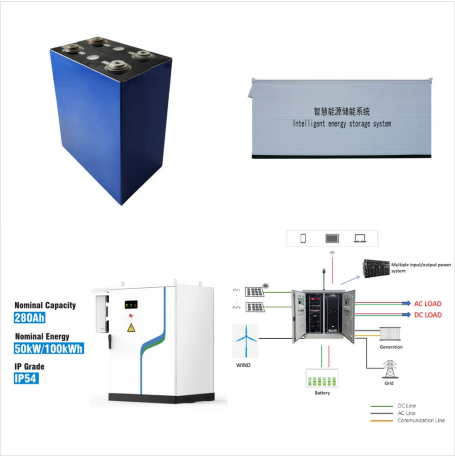

Diagram of the early Solar System's protoplanetary disk, out of which Earth and other Solar System bodies formed. The Solar System formed at least 4.568 billion years ago from the gravitational collapse of a region within a large molecular cloud.

As of now, eight planets officially grace our solar system: Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, and Neptune. And thousands of exoplanets, or planets orbiting other stars, have

HOW WERE THE PLANETS IN OUR SOLAR SYSTEM FORMED

? These were young planets, and eventually, over a long time and through many, many collisions, our eight planets were formed ??? Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, and Neptune. We call the pattern that the planets ???

Jupiter and Saturn are thought to have formed first and quickly within the first 10 million years of the solar system. In the warmer parts of the disk, closer to the star, rocky planets begin to form. After the icy giants form there's not a lot of gas left for the terrestrial planets to accrete.