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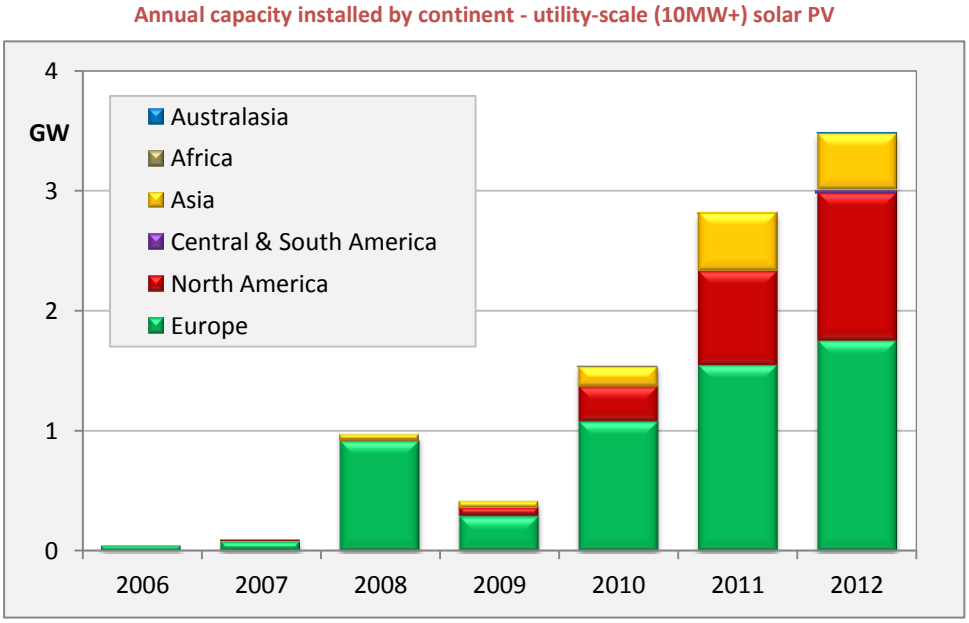
Utility-scale solar capacity tops 9GW, after another record year

Europe's dominance starts to slip

The global installed capacity of utility-scale solar power stations climbed through 9GW in 2012, thanks to another record year. According to analysis by industry experts Wiki-Solar, Germany again topped the list, thanks to a late surge in installations to beat changes to their feed-in tariffs. But the USA was only a whisker behind; both countries added about 1.1GW to their installed capacity; out of the global annual total of nearly 3.5GW.

Supported also by a good year in France and new entrant Bulgaria, Europe held just about 50% of the world market, well down from the 70% it achieved in 2010. China and India are also marching up the table, leading a growing contribution in Asia.



Reproduced below overleaf is Wiki-Solar's national ranking of utility-scale solar photovoltaic power plants, showing both the total installed capacity and the new installations added in 2012.

Predictions for 2013

Philip Wolfe predicts, based on Wiki-Solar's database of projects under development, that "the USA should deliver the highest increase in 2013. It should also reach the top of the all-time cumulative installations list, as Germany slows after large systems became ineligible for tariffs. Candidates to enter the top twenty for the first time include Chile, the UK and maybe South Africa, if it can get some of its project pipeline connected."

"We also expect continued growth from Asia, and a greater contribution from South America. It's good to see other countries picking up the lead, now that Germany and Spain have set the pace.

Much of the new US capacity this year is from projects, which are still under construction[1]; so there's plenty more to come from there."

Utility-scale (10MW+) solar plants by country: Cumulative & capacity added in 2012

			Total operating		Added in 2012		
Rank	*Chg*	**Country**	**Sites**	**MWp**	**Sites**	**MWp**	Rank
		Total	**345**	**9,378**	**103**	**3,476**	
1	→	Germany	96	2,784	35	1,129	1
2	↑	United States	60	1,951	27	1,081	2
3	↓	Spain	64	1,098	2	22	12
4	↑	China	24	701	4	191	5
5	↓	Italy	22	572	2	32	10
6	↑	France	12	465	4	271	3
7	↓	Canada	16	400	5	92	8
8	↑	India	16	356	12	266	4
9	↓	Ukraine	5	327	3	118	7
10	↓	Czech Republic	9	188	0	0	
11	↑	Bulgaria	4	170	4	170	6
12	↓	Thailand	1	73	0	0	
13	↓	Korea (South)	4	73	0	0	
14	↓	Portugal	2	57	0	0	
15	↑	Mexico	1	38	1	38	9
16	↓	Japan	2	29	1	13	14
17	↑	Puerto Rico	1	24	1	24	11
18	↑	Peru	1	20	1	20	13
19	↓	Belgium	1	13	0	0	
20	↓	Reunion	1	11	0	0	
21	↑	Australia	1	10	1	10	15
22	↓	United Arab Emirates	1	10	0	0	
23	↓	Greece	1	10	0	0	

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Notes for editors:

The statistics for utility-scale solar projects of 10MW and over are collated by wiki-solar.org and published on its website at: http://www.wiki-solar.org/country.html. Wiki-Solar also maps these projects at: http://www.wiki-solar.org/map.html.

Wiki-Solar's database includes a total of some 350 operational solar generating stations of 10MW and above, with a further 250+ sites under development (but not included in the figures, until they become operational). Projects of 10MW are typically capable of providing an annual output equivalent to the consumption of 3,000 households.

The total capacity figures are likely to be understated due to time delays in the publication of some projects after they are commissioned. Wiki-Solar updates its records continuously, so the national and global data is likely to evolve, with slight increases to some figures, after this release is issued.

Projects are now being developed at capacities up to ½ GW (500MW). The largest plant currently operating – and still under construction – is Agua Caliente in the South West corner of Arizona being developed and built for NRG Energy and MidAmerican Energy by First Solar. This topped 250MW in capacity in September and will eventually total over 300MW.

[1] Projects reported as part built and connected at the end of 2012; include Agua Caliente, California Valley and Mesquite in the USA and Shilin Kunming in China.

The book "Solar Photovoltaic Projects in the mainstream power market" was published by Routledge in October.

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