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Utility-scale solar in 2018
Still growing thanks to Australia and other later entrants

Utility-scale solar generating capacity grew by almost 40-GW in 2018 according to figures released today by Wiki-Solar.org, reaching a total of 180-GW by year end. In a surprise outcome, these new installations matched last year's record. The year had been expected to show a decline after eight years of successive records.

Growth did indeed slow in three of the top four countries, with only the US showing a small gain. But the shortfall was made up by accelerating deployment in nations lower down the table, led by Australia, Mexico and Brazil.

Top 20 countries by cumulative installed capacity at end 2018

Rank	Country	Cumulative @ end-2018		Added in 2018		Rank
		Plants	GW	Plants	GW	
1	China	1,308	62.847	269	11.289	1
2	United States	1,447	33.213	224	6.127	3
3	India	801	25.127	80	6.458	2
4	United Kingdom	903	6.828	9	0.079	27
5	Germany	607	5.455	110	0.611	13
6	Spain	230	4.866	2	0.669	11
7	Japan	244	4.460	25	0.945	7
8	France	346	3.318	72	0.644	12
9	Chile	39	2.582	2	0.131	24
10	Australia	49	2.132	34	1.777	4
11	Brazil	29	2.116	19	1.247	6
12	South Africa	41	2.059	4	0.260	18
13	Mexico	22	1.947	14	1.765	5
14	Canada	137	1.828	7	0.152	23
15	Philippines	63	1.757	22	0.795	8
16	Italy	164	1.510	0	0.000	30
17	Thailand	111	1.232	1	0.004	29
18	Turkey	101	1.017	44	0.541	14
19	Russia	68	0.994	42	0.725	10
20	Egypt	23	0.984	12	0.740	9
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China retained top position in new installations for the year, despite the reported slow-down. India, too, was affected by delayed and cancelled tenders, so failed to match the heady heights of the previous year. The USA rose slightly from 2017, but stayed below its 2016 peak.

The only change to the top-10 for cumulative installed capacity was the entry of Australia, which roughly quadrupled its installed capacity in 2018. Just four years ago, the country barely scraped into the top-30. Mexico and Brazil also enjoyed substantial growth and moved up the list. Egypt has started building the Benban Solar Park, making a significant contribution. Russia and Turkey, too, made major proportional increases to their installed capacity.
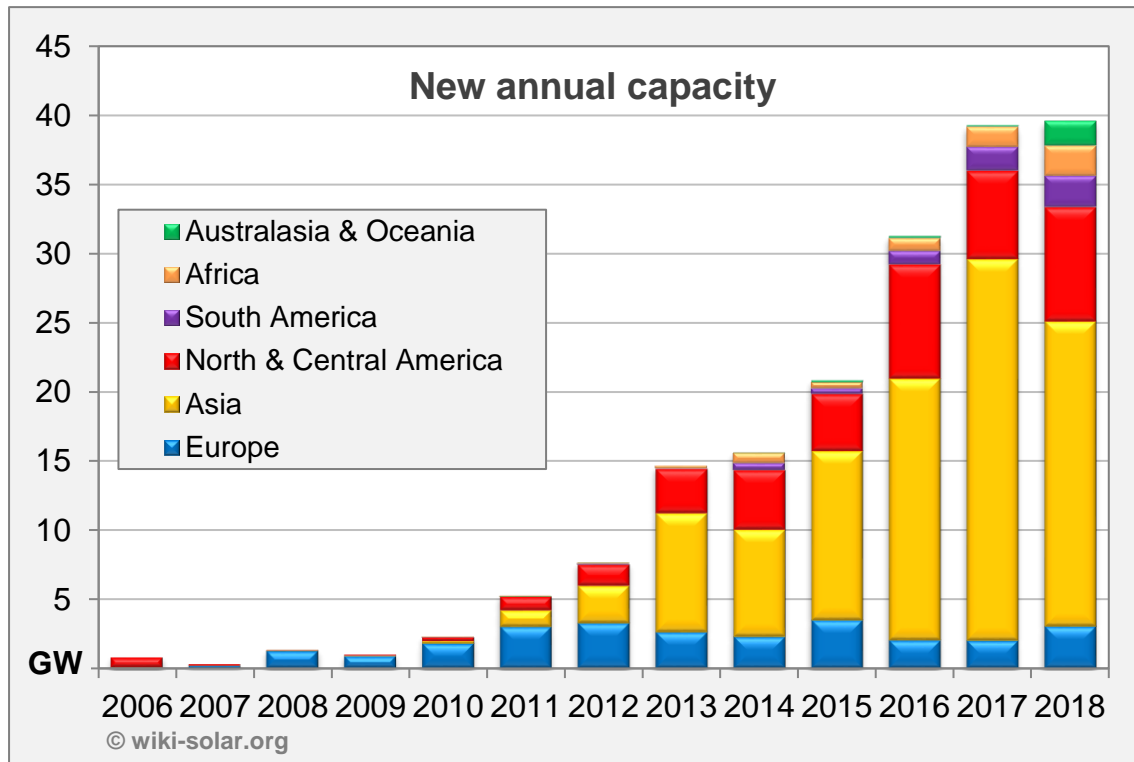
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Among the more established countries, Japan, France, Philippines and Germany all increased their rate of deployment. At the other end of the scale, Installations in the UK have stalled following the removal of all national support, and it is likely to slide down the table until grid parity is achieved.

The impact of all these movements is that the decline in Asia was almost exactly matched by growth in America, Australasia and Europe. Provisional figures for the new installed capacity for 2018 show between 39 and 40-GW, almost identical to 2017.

New utility-scale solar capacity installed by year and continent

A significant contribution also came from many countries now installing large solar for the first time. Four years ago, only 55 countries had any utility scale PV plant; by 2018 the number had almost doubled. The 88 countries outside the top-20 accounted for 4.5-GW of new capacity in 2018.

It should be noted that these figures are compiled solely from projects of 4-MW_{AC} and above that had been commissioned by the end of 2018.

T E X T   E N D S

Notes for editors:

[1]   This release on the UK utility-scale solar market is available here:
http://wiki-solar.org/library/public/190314_Utility-scale_solar_in_2018.pdf

[2]   Wiki-Solar defines 'utility-scale solar' as more than 4-MW_{AC} (~ 1,500 households in Europe) see: http://wiki-solar.org/data/glossary/utility-scale.html.

[3]   *'Solar Photovoltaic Projects in the mainstream power market'* was published in 2012.

[4]   Wiki-Solar's database covers over 10,000 utility-scale solar projects, of which about two-thirds are operational, and the remainder are in construction or development. These figures are based solely on capacity that was operational at the end of 2018.

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