

2020 was best year yet for utility-scale solar

Official figures released today by Wiki-Solar confirm 2020 as another record year with over 50 GW_{AC} – about 65 GW_P – of new utility-scale solar brought online worldwide, taking the cumulative total over 270 GW_{AC}. Renewed momentum in the USA, Spain and Australia were major contributors, while China and India had a relatively quieter year.

Rank	Country	Cumulative to end-2020		Change since end 2019		
		Plants	GWac	Plants	GWac	Rank
1	China	2,293	88.621	97	12.838	1
2	United States	1,840	47.566	242	12.078	2
3	India	1,069	34.059	85	4.406	3
4	Spain	345	9.812	52	3.923	4
5	Japan	399	7.660	24	0.906	13
6	Germany	846	7.236	99	0.818	11
7	Australia	98	7.054	29	3.612	5
8	Mexico	64	6.847	15	1.702	6
9	United Kingdom	889	6.795	11	0.162	23
10	Vietnam	88	5.720	14	1.505	8
11	France	640	5.667	173	1.483	7
12	Brazil	42	3.425	3	0.679	14
13	Chile	137	3.229	25	0.620	15
14	South Africa	51	2.822	11	0.844	12
15	United Arab Emirates	7	2.270	2	0.494	16
16	Italy	214	2.063	6	0.192	22
17	Canada	141	1.958	5	0.096	25
18	Netherlands	171	1.802	90	0.932	9
19	Argentina	40	1.795	21	0.914	10
20	Ukraine	42	1.653	4	0.322	18
21	Russia	100	1.644	15	0.274	19
22	Egypt	34	1.641	1	0.020	29
23	Thailand	138	1.531	1	0.045	28
24	Turkey	185	1.458	5	0.055	27
25	Philippines	51	1.249	4	0.144	24
26	Kazakhstan	23	1.079	13	0.414	17

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Countries with over 1 GW_{AC} of cumulative installed capacity

The top three countries in cumulative capacity remain unchanged, though the USA came close to overtaking China in new installations for the year. But there are many risers and fallers lower down the table.

The UK's position as #4 for several years looks a distant memory as Spain, Japan, Germany, Australia and Mexico have all surged past, with Vietnam and France queuing up to follow. Spain rises to #4 after an impressive year, thanks to a burst of unsubsidised plants including ACS Group's Escatrón-Chiprana-Samper project at 730-MW_{AC} and Iberdrola's 500-MW Núñez de Balboa. Remember Spain was the world's top country in 2009-2012, but had slumped to #7 by 2017-2019.



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Another climber was Australia, as it gradually overcomes connection problems to bring new capacity online – with a significant pipeline of further projects to follow. Lower down the table, the Netherlands also doubled its utility-scale capacity as new SDE+ projects came on stream.

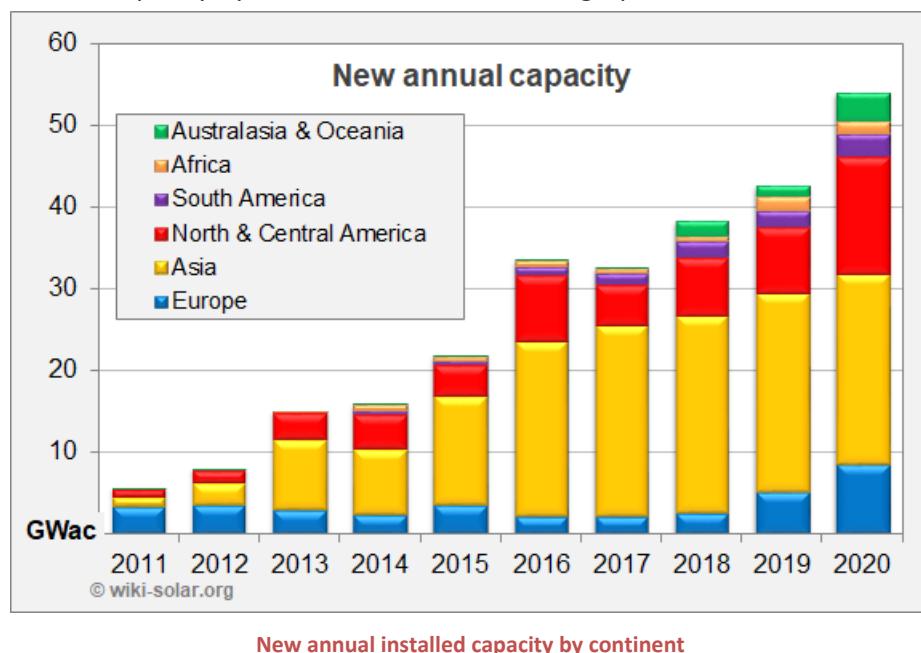
Joining the UK on the way down are Italy and Canada where new installations have tailed off in the 2020's.

Early indications are that 2021 could be yet another record year, provided that India manages to complete its many tendered projects as planned. The USA is shaping up for a further bumper year, while Spain has now joined the 10-GW club.

TEXT ENDS

Notes for editors:

- [1] This release on the utility-scale solar market is available here:
http://wiki-solar.org/library/public/210323_Year-end_2020_utility_solar_figures.pdf
- [2] Wiki-Solar defines 'utility-scale solar' as 4 MW_{AC} and above ($\approx 5\text{MW}_P$ for PV; \approx electricity for 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 is the leading authority on utility-scale solar with a database covering over 15,000 utility-scale solar projects, of which about two-thirds are operational. All figures are based on the AC export rating of operational plants. Projects under development are excluded until they have been commissioned.
- [5] New installed capacity by continent is shown in this graph:



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