

Global windfarm installations expected to surge after Covid drop, says report

Offshore energy boom in China will grow world's windfarm capacity by more than 12GW in 2021



Wind turbines of Walney and West of Duddon Sands Offshore Wind Farm near the Lake District. Photograph: Rob Arnold/Alamy

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Windfarm installations are expected to double to record global levels this year, after a short-lived Covid-19 slowdown, according to the Global Wind **Energy** Council (GWEC).

The group's annual report found that the world's offshore windfarm capacity grew by 6.1GW last year, down slightly from a record 6.24GW in 2019, but would rebound to more than 12GW in 2021 powered by an offshore wind boom in **China**.

China led the world in new installations for the third year in a row with more than 3GW of offshore wind grid connected in 2020, and remains on track

to **surpass the UK as the world's biggest offshore wind market** by the end of the decade.

The world's biggest economy connected more than 3GW of offshore wind to its electricity grid last year, almost half the global total, while installations in smaller Asian countries such as Taiwan and Vietnam stalled due to Covid-19 delays.

GWEC has forecast a fresh record year for offshore wind growth in 2021 as China's wind industry rushes to install 7.5GW before the expiry of government subsidies at the end of this year.

The future of the industry's growth is also expected to be powered by a record year for offshore wind financing, according to the report, after the \$8bn investment in the world's biggest offshore windfarm off the UK's Yorkshire coast.

The **Dogger Bank offshore windfarm**, to be built by SSE and Norwegian energy giant Equinor, will use the biggest turbines in the world to generate enough renewable electricity to power 4.5m UK homes.

Ben Backwell, the chief executive of GWEC said the offshore wind industry has continued "to break records, reduce prices, and innovate to new heights and depths" while generating socioeconomic benefits.

"But as the G20 recognised at its most recent summit, we are in a climate emergency and we can no longer be content with simply breaking records – the scale of growth we need to achieve for the future of our planet goes beyond anything we have seen before," he added.



Gone with the wind: why UK firms could miss out on the offshore boom

GWEC expects the **offshore wind industry** to deliver 235GW of new capacity over the next decade under current government policies, more than seven times the existing global offshore wind total, but warned that the pace of growth will need to accelerate to meet global climate targets.

The report has called for “a step-change in political action” in order to streamline planning and permitting regimes and reduce red tape.

Under analysis undertaken by the International Energy Agency and the International Renewable Energy Agency the world may need up to 2,000 GW of offshore wind by 2050 to have a chance of keeping global temperature from rising above 1.5C of pre-industrial levels, which is crucial to avert catastrophic levels of global heating.

“The offshore industry believes they can meet this challenge, but there is a clear target and policy gap that countries need to fill for the industry to deliver,” Backwell said.