

Global Wind Energy Council launches Africa WindPower

In order to accelerate Africa's energy transition, the Global Wind Energy Council (GWEC) has launched Africa WindPower (AWP), a regional body representing the wind industry. AWP aims to offer a platform for dialogue between Africa's wind industry and government stakeholders, with the ultimate goal of scaling up and accelerating wind project development and deployment across the entire continent.



Source: Gallo/Getty

Despite an early start for wind energy in Africa, wind energy deployment has often been held back as fossil fuel generation sources such as natural gas continue to make inroads in some markets, and coal, heavy fuel oil, and diesel remain a large part of the energy mix.

A recent report commissioned by the International Finance Corporation (IFC) shows that Africa has 59,000GW of technical onshore and offshore wind potential, enough to meet the continent's energy demand 250 times over. Building out wind farms that utilise Africa's vast wind resource will drive investment, create clean energy jobs and critical infrastructure, and help support thriving local economies in line with the region's sustainable development goals.



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Job creation, economic growth

Commented Ben Backwell, GWEC CEO: "Africa has already begun its transition to a clean energy future, but this process is moving far too slowly with incumbent fossil fuels playing too prominent a role. Countries

across the continent have the crucial ingredients to develop thriving local wind industries, which would bring significant jobs and economic growth to diverse communities. Despite what we are hearing on the world stage ahead of COP26, it is not only 'climate finance' but greater collaboration between the private and public sectors that will drive Africa's energy transition and increase access to reliable sources of electricity

GWEC's latest data shows that Africa is only tapping into 0.01% of its wind resource, with over 7GW of installed capacity as of the end of 2020, led by South Africa. Current installed wind energy capacity in Africa helps to avoid 10.7 million tonnes of CO2 emissions annually – equivalent to taking 2.3 million passenger cars off the road.



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By Gavin Noeth 27 Sep 2021

Potential to leapfrog fossil-fuel based systems

Wangari Muchiri, Africa WindPower coordinator, added: "Africa has the opportunity to leapfrog traditional fossil-fuel based energy systems to achieve a robust renewable energy mix. Wind power is a vital part of this clean energy transition allowing for decentralised, affordable and clean energy. In addition, Africa boasts a fantastic wind resource which can power the continent 250 times over while creating jobs and enabling the development of local industries. GWEC's Africa WindPower will bring various stakeholders together to decrease the knowledge gap and increase the development and deployment of wind power throughout the continent."

Africa WindPower is supported by GET.invest, a European programme which aims to mobilise investment in renewable energy, supported by the European Union, Germany, Sweden, the Netherlands, and Austria.

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