

Global wind power surges in 2008

A Worldwatch Institute report claims global wind capacity increased by an estimated 27 051 megawatts (MW) to a total of 120 798 MW in 2008, a growth rate that exceeded the annual average of the past decade.



Credit: iStockphoto

The USA led in new installations, surpassing Germany to rank first in wind energy cumulative capacity and electricity generation.

The report also revealed:

1. For the first time last year, wind power represented Europe's leading source of new electric capacity, well ahead of natural gas and coal. By the end of 2008, wind power accounted for 8 per cent of Europe's power capacity.
2. Asia accounted for almost one-third of global wind capacity, with China quickly surpassing its 2010 wind target of 10 000 MW and ending 2008 with 12 200 MW in place.
3. Nearly 400 000 people are employed by the wind industry worldwide (though this number could slide in the near term due to project financing difficulties, particularly in the USA).
4. Wind now generates more than 1.5 per cent of the world's electricity, up from 0.1 per cent in 1997. Eighty countries are now using wind power on a commercial basis.

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