

Italy solar incentives

The Italian authorities have introduced new provisions in the DL Energia decree to ...

Solar power is an important contributor to electricity generation in Italy, accounting for 11.8% of total generation in 2023, up from 0.6% in 2010 and less than 0.1% in 2000.

Total installed solar power capacity in the country reached 30.3 GW at the end of 2023. Current (2023) government plans are targeting solar PV capacity to rise to 79 GW by 2030.

Like most countries, solar power usage in Italy was minimal before the 21st century. During the 2000s, however, Italy was the third country after Germany and Spain to experience an unprecedented boom in solar installations after actively promoting the energy source through government incentives. Solar capacity growth slowed in the 2010s, due to cessation of governmental subsidy programmes, but installations have picked up in the 2020s.

The entire nation of Italy retains high potential for solar energy production, ranging from 3.6 kWh per square meter per day in the Po river plain to 5.4 kWh per square meter per day in Sicily.

Installed capacity in Italy was less than 100 MW before 2008. Growth accelerated during 2008 and 2009 to reach over 1,000 MW installed capacity and tripled during 2010 to exceed 3,000 MW. The standout boom year in Italy was during 2011 when over 9,000 MW of solar power was added. This huge and rapid rise in installations was mostly due to the very generous "Conto Energia" support schemes operating during these years. A more responsive support scheme might have reduced support more quickly and lead to less rapid growth during 2011 but stronger medium term growth.

The "National Energy Strategy", SEN, published in 2017 and in the "Proposal of an Integrated National Plan for Energy and Climate" (PNIEC), published in December 2018 outline a target of reaching 50 GW of Solar PV installed power by 2030. This is part of a strategy to obtain 30% of Gross Final Energy Consumption from renewable sources by 2030, a measure including not only electrical energy but all energy consumed in Italy. A new Decree for Renewable sources is being awaited by the Solar industry which if adopted will support maintenance, re-powering and revamping of existing plants and new measures to benefit residential Solar PV.

More than a fifth of the total production in 2010 came from the southern region of Apulia. In 2011, 20% came from Apulia, followed by 10% from Emilia-Romagna. The annual energy production from solar PV in Italy ranges from 1,000 to 1,500 kWh per installed kWp.

Building Integrated Photovoltaic systems (BIPV) accounted for 2,650 MW of capacity in 2014, these are solar cells integrated into the building itself such as construction materials, roof tiles and ceramic or glass facades. Building Applied Photovoltaic systems (BAPV) measure 7,125 MW and are regular solar cell systems that are generally installed on top of roofs. Ground mounted PV totalled 8,650 MW whilst Concentrator Photovoltaics (CPV) amounted to 30 MW which use lenses or curved mirrors to focus sunlight onto small, highly efficient, multi-junction (MJ) solar cells.

Government targets for renewable energy sources (RES) and different support schemes, especially for solar photovoltaics, resulted in an increase from 7.9% (2005) to 18.2% (2015) in total share of renewable energy in the total primary energy supply (TPES). 1.6% of the 18.2% renewables share is made up of solar energy. From 2005 to 2015 solar power has increased on average by 63.7% per year. The share of renewables in electricity generation has increased from 17.2% in 2005 to 40.2% in 2015, including 9.3% of solar power. This is the highest share of solar in electricity among International Energy Agency (IEA) countries. And the third-highest share of solar power in TPES.

Important institutions that are responsible for energy policies, the promotion and development of renewable energy, energy efficiency, co-ordination and payment of incentives are the Ministry of Economic Development (MSE), the Ministry for the Environment, Land and Sea (MATTEM), the Ministry of Agricultural, Food and Forestry Policies (MIPAAF), the Regulatory Authority for Energy, Networks and Environment (ARERA, formerly AEEGSI, Autorit  per l'Energia elettrica e il Gas), the Gestore Servizi Energetici (GSE), the National Agency for New Technologies, Energy and Sustainable Economic Development (ENEA) and Terna.

The Directive 2009/28/EC establishes a framework for promoting the use of renewable energy sources. According to this Directive, 17% of Italy's final energy consumption must be supplied by renewable sources in 2020. Italy's 2010 National Renewable Energy Action Plan (NREAP) identifies sectoral targets and how to achieve them. In the 2013 National Energy Strategy (NES), Italy established energy aims to achieve by 2020 that rises the 17% EU target for renewable energy in final energy consumption to 19% or 20%. Energy efficiency, but also renewable energies, plays an important role for this strategy.

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