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Trends in the United Kingdom

Facts from the *Renewables 2021 Global Status Report*

The United Kingdom's Top Highlights in 2020

- In 2020, the UK announced its renewable hydrogen strategy and also offered GBP 139 million (USD 189 million) to support industry efforts to cut greenhouse gas emissions, including switching from fossil-based gas to renewable hydrogen for fuel-heavy industry. The country also announced an end to all public financing for international fossil fuel projects.
- For the first time since 2015, the UK decided to allow projects for solar PV¹, onshore wind power, hydropower, landfill gas, sewage gas and energy from waste to participate in auctions.
- In 2020, the United Kingdom announced a new wind power capacity goal that boosts the previous target for 30 GW of offshore wind by 2030 to 40 GW (up from the 10 GW installed currently). The country also maintained its lead for total wind offshore capacity (10.4 GW), followed by China (10 GW). Wind generation rose 18% relative to 2019 due to increased capacity and even more so to favourable wind conditions and it represented 24.2% of the total country's generation.

In the UK, bio-power capacity grew 135 MW to 8.0 GW and the country broke solar generation records early in the year.

Where does the United Kingdom stand among G20 countries?

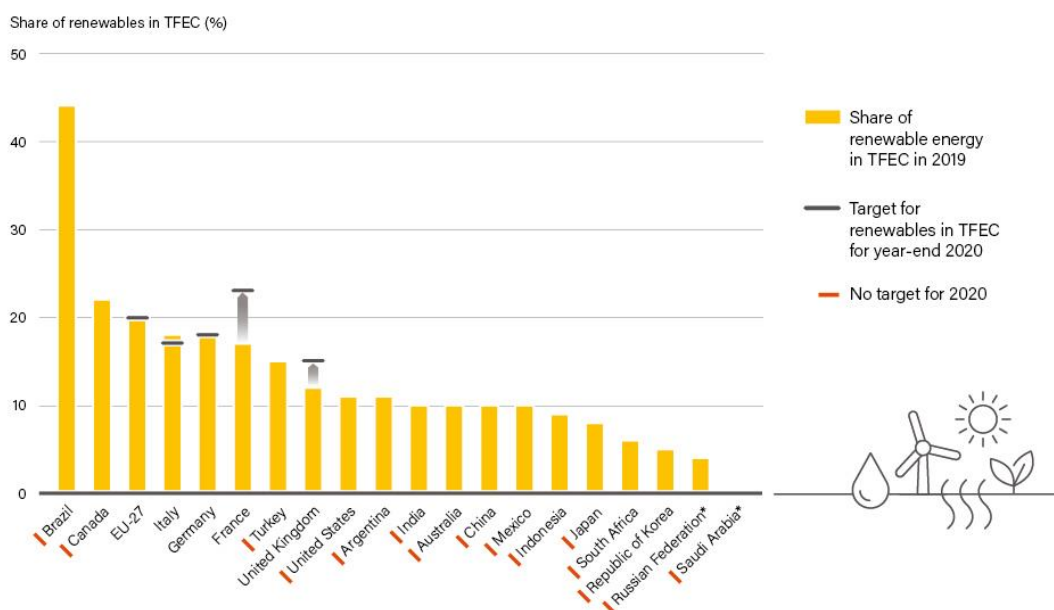
The figure below shows that renewable energy made up around 11% of the United Kingdom's total final energy consumption (TFEC), ahead of several G20 countries, such as the United States but trailing the world's largest economies in the European Union and in the Americas. The United Kingdom trailed behind its 2020 target of a 15% share of renewables.

As seen in the figure below, the United Kingdom was one of only five of the world's largest member economies in the G20 – the others were the EU-27, France, Germany and Italy – to have set 2020 targets to achieve a certain share of renewables in final energy use.

Do net zero targets² or targets for renewable shares actually support the uptake of renewables? Targets are needed, as they are binding objectives that can be used to hold countries accountable. Setting net zero targets alone does not necessarily lead to greater attention to renewables or to success in meeting renewable energy targets. Alongside any kind of target, robust policies and regulations are needed to ensure these targets are met.

¹ Solar PV capacity data are provided in direct current (DC).

²Click here to read REN21's brief overview of net zero targets: <https://www.ren21.net/net-zero-basics/>


Renewable Energy Shares and Targets, G20 Countries, 2019 and 2020


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Global rankings

Total renewable power capacity, end-2020 (Gigawatts)

1. China (908)
2. United States (313)
3. Brazil (150)
4. India (142)
5. Germany (132)
- ...13. **United Kingdom** (48)

Renewable power capacity per person, not including hydropower, end-2020 (kilowatts per person)

1. Iceland (2.1)
2. Denmark (1.7)
3. Sweden (1.6)
4. Germany (1.5)
5. Australia (1.1)
- ...13. **United Kingdom** (0.7)

Offshore wind installed capacity, 2020 (Gigawatts)

1. **United Kingdom** (10.4)
2. China (10.0)
3. Germany (7.7)
4. The Netherlands (2.6)
5. Belgium (2.3)
6. Denmark (1.7)

The *Renewables 2021 Global Status Report* material is available here: <https://www.ren21.net/gsr>

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