

»»» Germans show broad support for the expansion of renewable energy

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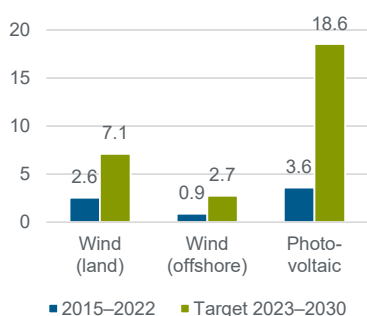
Renewables expansion is the backbone of the energy transition

The classic tug-of-war between securing supply, minimising costs and protecting the climate is particularly visible in the field of energy supply. The key lever that contributes to all three energy policy dimensions is the expansion of renewable energy (RE) generating capacity.

The targets set by the German Federal Government require domestic onshore wind generation capacity to double, photovoltaic (PV) solar generation to triple and offshore wind energy to nearly quadruple between now and 2030. In practical terms, for example, the Federal Government wants to have four to five new wind generators installed every day up to the year 2030.

Figure 1: RE expansion needs to accelerate

Historic and future renewables expansion rates required (in GW per year)



Sources: AGEE-Stat, Agora Energiewende (2023).

The current rate of RE expansion is nowhere near enough to achieve this target (Figure 1). The average annual increment over the next 8 years needs to be 28 GW, around four times higher than in the past 8 years and three times higher than last year, when an addi-

¹ Representative survey of 1,011 people in Germany, for database of. Römer, D. and Salzgeber, J. (2023): Wie reagieren die Menschen in Deutschland auf gestiegene Heizkosten? (How

tional 9.5 GW in total is estimated to have been installed.

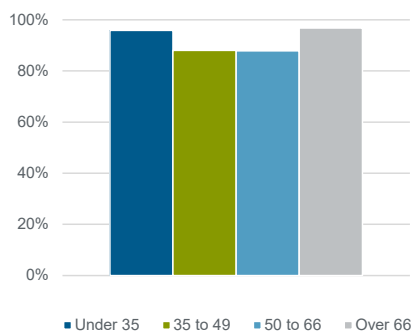
Various policy incentives to speed up the pace recently emerged, including moves to simplify planning and approval processes and the legal determination that renewable energies are predominantly in the public interest. But how does the public view this development?

All groups of society show very strong support

An overwhelming majority of 92% of the population is in favour of accelerating the pace of renewables expansion.¹ This is even higher than overall support for the energy transition, which has hovered around 90% for years and can be seen across various population groups.

Figure 2: Broad support for the expansion of renewables

Question: How do you view the following measures to provide relief for high energy prices? Speed up the pace of renewables expansion, shares of responses 'makes good sense' and 'makes sense', by age.



Sources: Supplementary survey to the KfW Energy Transition Barometer.

On the basis of net household income, more than 90% of respondents expressed support in all income quartiles. The type of heating system used did not play a role either. Users of gas and oil

do people in Germany respond to increased heating costs? – In German) Focus on Economics No. 416, KfW Research.

heating systems are also in favour of an expansion (91 and 94%). Across education levels, tertiary graduates exhibited the highest rate (97%), but just over 90% of respondents with vocational qualifications also support a faster expansion. Responses by age group showed a slightly lower rate around the middle years. But here, too, the differences were minimal (Figure 2).

One reservation: not in my neighbourhood

But there is one characteristic that reduces acceptance: Respondents typically are slightly less supportive of plants that are to be installed in their own neighbourhood. A representative survey recently showed that even so, nearly two thirds (63%) of respondents had a positive or very positive opinion about having a renewable energy facility in their neighbourhood. Interestingly, however, acceptance levels were higher among respondents who had already gained actual experience in their neighbourhood.²

Conclusion

Given the legal prioritisation of renewables and the intention to shorten approval procedures, the broad consensus among the population is an encouraging signal to resolutely press ahead with the expansion from now on.

If the intended acceleration in the expansion of renewables is implemented just as quickly as the construction of the first LNG terminals last year, this will not least strengthen Germany as a business location. Stepping up the pace of expansion of renewables forms the basis of Germany's transition to a green economy while reducing its dependence on energy imports.

² Cf. Renewable Energies Agency (2022): Survey: Desire for security of supply boosts acceptance of renewable energy.