



## WWF Position on Wind Power

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### Background

To address climate change effectively and with the needed sense of urgency, a major switch from polluting to clean fuels is needed. Analysis indicates that despite an ambitious increasing in energy efficiency, a significant growth in renewable energy is needed to cut carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions substantially by up to 50% globally in the coming decades.

This is necessary to stay below a 2 degree Celsius increase compared with pre-industrial global temperatures. Wind power has the potential to become a key source of electricity in the next twenty years. This position paper defines a set of principles for a swift and well-managed expansion of wind power agreed by the WWF global network. WWF acknowledges that global principles can only provide a general guide.

### On the role of wind power WWF believes that:

1. A well-managed approach to the expansion of wind power has the potential to provide sustainable energy for the world.
2. When taking account of the environmental and social costs related to fossil fuels and nuclear power production and of the subsidies to conventional energy, wind power is a cost-effective and easily accessible source of energy. Jointly with other renewable energy sources, it can replace base-load power from conventional sources.
3. In comparison with fossil and nuclear fuels the environmental impacts associated with wind power are small. During operation, no carbon dioxide or any other atmospheric pollutants are emitted, and once dismantled, no dangerous waste is left behind.
4. Stimulating wind power development requires a cross-sectoral approach by governments, involving the Environment, Agriculture, Trade & Industry, Transport, and Defence as well as Civil Aviation Ministries and Agencies.
5. Governments have a key role to play in stimulating wind energy demand through a variety of measures including but not restricted to: preferential tariffs or quotas for wind power, capital grants, public procurement, development of demonstration projects, and the establishment of sensible aviation, noise, environmental and planning regulations.

### On the planning process for the development of wind power WWF believes that:

1. The development of wind farms should be managed sensitively and framed within regional and local spatial planning guidelines. This should include development of national, regional and local wind targets, assessing high value habitats and identifying no-go areas for wind development. In this way, any environmental impacts and conflicts with other land or marine uses would be identified and minimised.
2. The development of regional and local wind development targets and plans should be guided by a process that allows the positive benefits of developing renewable energy (e.g. greenhouse gas emissions reduction) to be balanced with any short-term negative environmental impact the development may have.
3. Careful siting and operation of wind energy projects can ensure that impacts on biodiversity are minimised and that they are integrated well within the local environment. Every proposal for wind energy projects

over a capacity of 20 MW or including more than 10 wind turbines should be subject to Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) before consent is given.

4. EIA should provide a comprehensive analysis of the potential impacts of the proposal upon fauna and flora, including marine and bird species, the potential interactions with other sea or area users that may result from the proposed project, and if the project will potentially result in unacceptable levels of intrusion. The EIA process should be transparent, involving full consultation with all interested parties early in the process, and should identify specific measures to be adopted in order to avoid or reduce any impacts where practicable.

**On a wind project consideration of environmental issues WWF believes:**

1. Proposals for wind farm developments within IUCN 1-2 protected areas and/or national parks should not be allowed, unless a comprehensive Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) clearly indicates that the proposed development will not cause adverse effects on the integrity or conservation objectives of statutory protected area.
2. Wind turbines can have a possible impact upon wildlife if sited in the wrong place and as such should not be placed in important bird nesting grounds or within identified bird migration routes, such as RAMSAR sites.
3. Site selection for a wind farm should avoid the need to clear a given High Value Habitat. New build of access roads should be kept to a minimum and routed sensibly to preserve farmland.
4. With appropriate siting of wind turbines, noise does not have to be a problem. Wind turbine developments should respect the local noise limits, preferably according to the world's best practices, such as the Dutch Wind Norm Curve 40.
5. Research is needed to obtain more detailed information on the precise impacts of large-scale offshore wind developments in marine environments, noting the data from existing offshore wind projects within Europe. However, the development of offshore wind farms should not be unduly delayed until all potential problems have been identified and solved.
6. The visual presence of wind turbines within a given landscape does not ubiquitously have a negative impact as visual appearance. Additionally the expansion of wind power across our regions can act as a positive symbol of clean and sustainable energy. However, effective planning tools and efficient procedures should be established to ensure the most appropriate integration of wind turbines in the rural and urban environments.

**WWF will:**

- Promote wind power to consumers as a viable alternative and environmentally sound source of energy to replace fossil fuel and nuclear-based power generation.
- Work with governments, industry, and NGOs to develop sensible and acceptable strategies that reflect the need to develop wind energy while continuing to protect and conserve natural habitats and wildlife.
- Assist local and regional authorities with best practices for planning guidance of wind energy developments and promote their careful siting.
- Advocate for the development of strategies and incentives that will stimulate investments in renewable energy projects.

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