



## **The Bureaucrat's Guide to Saving the World**

A step-by-step guide to strengthening the permitting process for renewable energy projects, and drastically accelerating the energy transition.



# Bureaucrats must save the world

The pledges are in. The technology is ready. We have everything we need to cut CO<sub>2</sub>-emissions in half by 2030 and get on track for the 1.5° target. [Everything except for enough permitted projects.](#)

Today, 100s of gigawatts of renewable capacity are caught in complex and lengthy permitting procedures. These procedures are suffering from a lack of focus and essential resources. The authorities that drive them are missing the political will and mandate to make decisions that could shorten the process. It takes up to a decade of documentation to achieve approvals to build renewable energy projects. In the EU alone, there is four times more wind energy trapped in permitting than there is under construction.<sup>1</sup>

Permitting represents a tangible, solvable barrier to the rapid scale up of wind energy. And more wind energy is one of the most direct pathways to solve the two biggest challenges facing the world today: the climate crisis and the energy crisis. According to the International Energy Agency (IEA), reducing global carbon emissions in line with the Paris Agreement means that global installed renewable capacity must reach more than 10,000 GW by 2030. Today we have around 3,000 GW. That is just seven years to install more renewables than we have in the past 40.

This may sound impossibly ambitious, but there is a straightforward solution that would drastically accelerate our progress towards this goal: faster permitting for new wind power projects. By greenlighting more projects, we can expand sustainable power generation, replace fossil fuels and increase energy security.

Furthermore, it will enable the wind industry supply chain to build sufficient scale to deliver on decarbonisation, jobs and economic growth.

Global crises are not solved with charismatic speeches. The solution is right in front of us, and it is less sexy to say the least. To fulfill the promises made by world leaders every year, we need to start implementing the technology we have.

But right now, the wind industry is not permitted to solve the climate crisis.

So now it is time for an unlikely hero: The Bureaucrat.

Bureaucrats, we need your help to drastically accelerate the decarbonisation of our societies. And to support you, this guide will provide guidance on how to shorten permitting processes and take action against climate breakdown.

1. Source: <https://www.energymonitor.ai/policy/data-insight-the-permitting-problem-for-eu-wind-farms>

**88 GW of wind** is currently caught in permitting in the EU<sup>2</sup>

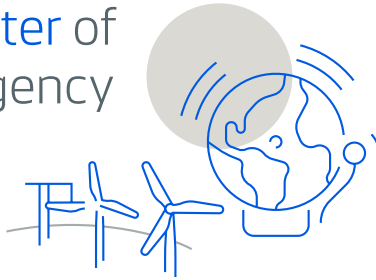
Permitting is one of the largest bottlenecks for decarbonising the global energy system. Luckily, we can solve this by taking the right steps



2. Source : <https://www.energymonitor.ai/policy/data-insight-the-permitting-problem-for-eu-wind-farms>

## Step 1

# Put renewables at the center of the emergency response



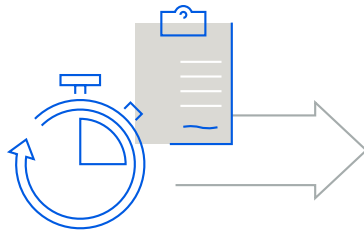
Whether it be the climate crisis or the energy crisis, renewable energy is the solution; to reduce emissions, stabilise energy markets, secure economic growth. More renewable energy ultimately builds more resilient societies.

## How:

- Renewable volumes must be drastically increased. More renewable capacity is critical to build more resilient energy systems. Resilience means long-term energy security, reduced vulnerability to fossil-fuel volatility and reduced vulnerability to geopolitical shifts.
- Energy investment and energy system flexibility must be incentivized. When system flexibility is increased, and renewable energy is expanded, energy systems and energy markets can become more stable and predictable, and therefore more attractive for investment.
- Permitting processes must be shortened. Permitting challenges are preventing renewable energy from expanding in energy systems, and these bottlenecks persist in spite of constant talk about expediting them from policy makers.

## Step 2

# Set short firm deadlines



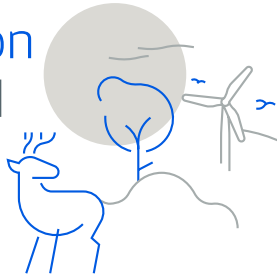
It currently takes up to a decade of documentation to permit renewable energy projects. We need to set shorter, firm deadlines and assign resources to ensure these deadlines can be met.

## How:

- The permitting process for new projects should run for a maximum of two years for both onshore and offshore wind projects..
- The permitting process for a repowering project should run for a maximum of one year.
- The 2-year deadline should include all administrative work, grid permits and Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs).

### Step 3

## Rethink decision making around bio-diversity impacts



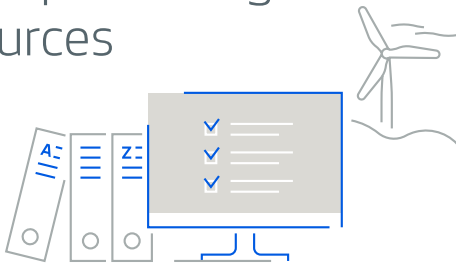
### How:

- Adjust decision-making procedures to allow central governments to play a larger role, offer more support to local authorities and build speed and consistency in the approach to permitting, aligned with renewable energy targets.

In many countries, 100 percent of onshore wind projects are challenged in the courts based on nature protection legislation. While the impact on local environments must be respected, we need to balance this with the potential to protect consumers from energy security risks, and the overall acceleration of the climate crisis; in itself a critical threat to biodiversity.

### Step 4

## Boost permitting resources



To unlock faster permitting, we also need to invest in bureaucracy. Skilled people, digitalization of processes and empowered decision makers are critically needed to turn permitting promises into reality.

### How:

- Strengthen the capabilities and resources in regional and central governments to be able to process the volume of permit cases now and in the future growth scenarios
- Differentiate between input providers and legally binding decision makers to ensure that overlapping decision tracks do not slow down the permitting process
- Increase digitalisation in the operational handling of permitting cases within permitting authorities
- Collaborate more closely with the private sector, allowing companies to carry the burden of permitting complexity, with public authorities performing final approvals



## Bureaucrats, the world needs you

Without removing the bottlenecks for renewable energy, we can't end the vicious cycle of fossil fuel volatility, and we have no hope of limiting its destructive impact on energy security, or global emission levels. Wind energy is the key to unlock a more secure future, where we can build resilience against the challenges we can see, and also the ones we cannot. It is time to invite wind into our energy systems, not stand in its way. Here's to shortening permitting processes, and to the heroes, the Bureaucrats, that will get us there. Now over to you.

**Wind.** It means the world to us.™

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