

Dutch targets under threat

Headwinds put dent in 2030 solar capacity ambition, writes Karolin Schaps

The Netherlands has this year surpassed 30GW of installed solar power capacity, but annual growth rates are not expected to exceed 1.4GW in the near future, according to the Netherlands Enterprise Agency, RVO.

Weak electricity prices, deepening grid congestion, slow-moving permitting and rising construction costs have combined to throw the Netherlands' 2030 target of 59.3GW in solar capacity into doubt.

An annual growth rate of 5.1GW is needed to stay on track of the target's trajectory, according to RVO data.

"The investment climate for stand-alone solar parks has become significantly more challenging in recent years. Investors and financiers are taking an increasingly critical look at projects that are heavily dependent on the electricity market," said Chint Solar country manager for the Netherlands, Sofian Eljarroudi.

Last year, the Dutch electricity market counted a record 584 occurrences of negative electricity prices, severely impacting the profitability of solar farms, especially the newest ones whose subsidy contracts exclude compensation for negative prices.

An average Dutch solar farm lost around 20-25% of annual output last year because of production curtailment forced by negative power price revenues, according to Derek Steeman, specialist for financing at industry association Holland Solar.

"It's a very challenging time,



FIELD DAY: Eekerpolder solar farm under construction Photo: Novar

especially the financing of new projects. Existing solar plants are in quite difficult times with the negative hours, so producers are not able to put in a lot of their own capital right now," Steeman added.

With traditional lenders more cautious about investing in solar farms, developers in the Netherlands are increasingly turning to crowdfunding. The country's largest solar power crowdfunding platform, Zonhub, has helped raise more than €50m for solar funds which aim to finance specific solar project pipelines. Crowdfunding is also a means for solar developers to satisfy the requirement for local participation in solar farms.

Developer TPSolar has raised nearly €10m through the platform since 2022, with one funding round in July 2025 collecting €3.51m to finance the build-out of the company's project portfolio.

Worsening grid congestion, which means that parts of the Netherlands are unable to connect new power production sites, is also continuing to severely hamper solar farm developments.

"It's a very big problem (and) is still underestimated. It is costing the country billions of euros," said Michel Arninkhof, project development manager at Pure Energie. The company is currently unable to move forward with around 200MW of solar projects because of a lack of grid connections, he added. "We can't realise projects that we have developed and put our money into. They're not just delayed by a year; there are projects where we have to wait until 2035 for a connection, which is ridiculous," Arninkhof said.

Dutch high-voltage grid operator TenneT and distribution network operators are expanding the grid where possible and are working on freeing up space through various initiatives, including signing deals with power producers to use their connections more flexibly.

Other developers have taken

matters into their own hands and have invested in building their own grid connections where projects were given long waiting times.

For example, developer Novar earlier this year opened its closed distribution system (CDS) in Avermieden, a standalone grid connection that is linked to the Netherlands' largest solar farm, the 200MW Eekerpolder site and a second solar farm still in

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NEXT UP IN NETHERLANDS

Project	MW	Developer
Online in 2026		
Almere A27	30	Novar
Bellingwolde - Westerwolde, Groningen	72	Novar
De Groene Energie Corridor, Noord-Holland	136	Energy Solutions Group
Eekerpolder, Groningen	195	Novar
Enerzyk Skülenboarch, Friesland	46	GroenLeven
Hoofddorp A5, Noord-Holland	59	Vattenfall
Zuidvelde, Drenthe	50	TPSolar, Chint Solar, Ankehaar Solar BV
Online in 2027		
Bijvanck, Gelderland	35	Pure Energie
Budel Dorplein Nyrstar II, Noord-Brabant	58	Greenchoice
De Heul, Utrecht	31	Chint Solar
De Knoest, Utrecht	32	Chint Solar
De Schorf, Limburg	35	Pure Energie
Energielandgoed Wells Meer, Limburg	65	Gemeente Bergen
Energiepark A59, Noord-Brabant	49	Eneco
Kijfhoek, Zuid Holland	45	Novar, Eneco, Drechtse Energie
Lanakerveld, Limburg	61	Sunvest
Oirlo-Leunen, Limburg	32.5	Novar
Otterpeel-Maashorst, Noord-Brabant	34	Novar
Panderweg-Oost, Gelderland	40	Vattenfall
Westerveerdijk, Flevoland	148	Novar
Zon Aan De Schelde, Zeeland	43.5	Zeeuwind, Hopmans Zon
Online in 2028		
Hijkerleek, Drenthe	36	TPSolar
Laarakkerdijk, Noord-Brabant	35	TPSolar
Westerlee, Groningen	55	Pure Energie

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Grid fee relief for developers

Dutch solar developers have welcomed an amendment made by the Dutch energy regulator that will exempt projects that take a final investment decision before the end of 2031 from a new grid charge for two decades.

The tariff on producers will likely enter into force on 1 January 2032 and is aimed at encouraging large producers to use the electricity network more efficiently. Currently, network costs are only billed to end-users. By spreading network costs across a larger number of users, the average grid tariff is expected to fall for all users.

Following concerns voiced by the government and industry representatives, as well as changes made to a similar tariff being introduced in Germany,

the Netherlands Authority for Consumers and Markets announced the exemption in late June.

"There will be a transfer period of 20 years so we can be a little bit relieved," said Michel Arninkhof, project development manager at Pure Energie.

However, projects due to reach financial close after the 2031 deadline will be exposed to the feed-in-tariff and face additional pressure on their business case due to the extra costs.

"This puts an extra cost component onto big projects that will start operating from 2032 onwards and it will increase the risks for long-term developments," said Jesse Hetteema, head of the Netherlands at Aurora Energy Research. ■

16 development. The system includes a 33kV cable that connects the sites with a transformer station built by Novar, designed to

push electricity onto TSO TenneT's high-voltage network. Early next year, Novar is expected to sign off on an investment in a 22MW/91MWh battery to integrate

with the site. "We are looking at some other CDS (projects) but it's quite a high investment so it will stay a niche market," said Sander Daniëls, head of realisation at Novar.

Slow progress in the Dutch solar development pipeline also stems from reluctance by local authorities in many regions to grant new permits. Tighter rules around building utility-scale solar farms passed by the government three years ago remain unclear in practice to an extent that some local authorities refrain from approving new sites.

One of the solutions to some of the market's challenges which solar developers are continuing to focus on is investment in battery energy storage systems (BESS). Storing electricity at times when prices are low – or even negative – and releasing it back into grid when prices rise, is an attractive option for asset owners to deal with the market conditions.

"Our business is definitely switching to the battery side. What we are already seeing in the projects that we are currently actively working on is that they are now mostly batteries,"

said Novar's Daniëls. New solar projects are unlikely to be developed now without the addition of BESS and asset owners are also progressing with plans to add storage elements to existing plants.

The 29MW Branderwal solar farm in Gerderland was in July fitted with the Netherlands' largest Huawei-technology battery.

TTEP, a 50/50 joint venture between Total Energies and EPH, is optimising the use of the 20MW/80MWh BESS as part of its long-term PPA with the solar farm.

"The investments in the solar market will mainly be redirected from PV systems towards batteries," said Hrvoje Medarac, head of Dutch New Energy Research (DNER).

However, existing issues around permitting, availability of land and high construction costs are also impacting the roll-out of battery projects. Further, the projected high growth of BESS in the Netherlands is expected to have a weakening effect on electricity prices. TenneT expects 5-7GW of Dutch BESS capacity by 2030. ■



HANGING TOUGH:
Transformer delivery at
Avermieden

Photo: Novar

Fresh flight path regulations

The Dutch government will this month publish tighter guidelines on installing solar panels near airports.

The temporary new framework, which is not yet legally binding, will include norms on distance to runways and minimum surface space of solar farms, the Dutch minister for infrastructure has said.

"The temporary framework describes at what times and in what manner aviation parties and the ILT Aviation Authority can be involved in the development of solar parks at airports," the minister said in a letter to parliament.

The government's aim is to use the temporary guidelines as a basis for formulating legally-binding rules. "We don't know when the new regulations will be adopted, a spokesman for the minister told reNEWS.

"In the second half of this year, a temporary framework will provide guidance to all parties involved in the development of solar farms near an airport."

The impending changes follow several incidents near Amsterdam's Schiphol airport where glare from solar panels restricted pilots' vision and led to the replacement of 228,000 panels at the 136MW De Groene Energie Corridor solar farm. The project will shortly start operating with



TIME FOR REFLECTION:
Anti-reflective panels have
been installed at De Groene
Energie Corridor solar farm

Photo: De Groene Energie Corridor solar farm

newly installed anti-reflective panels.

The guidelines will only apply to new projects, the government said. Any projects that have already entered

the permitting process but which have not yet been approved, may face additional scrutiny from authorities.

Earlier this year, the Dutch minister

for infrastructure intervened to temporarily block the development of the 8.8MW Schietecoven solar farm near Maastricht Aachen airport over concerns about glare following complaints from the airport's authority.

Industry association Holland Solar has called for an independent assessment of the current rules and new proposals.

"Before stricter rules are introduced that could impact the development of sustainable energy, it is important to first determine whether those rules are actually necessary," the group said. ■

Belgian capacity gains mask deeper concerns

The Belgian solar market is expected to grow a little faster in 2026 than in previous years, but capacity additions lag far behind the numbers needed to reach regional targets.

In Flanders, new installations are this year seen to exceed the 617MW added in 2025 thanks to a surge in interest in energy self-sufficiency due to the ongoing US-Iran war impacting Europe's energy needs.

ODE, the Flemish sustainable energy association, told reNEWS it is expecting the Flemish solar market to remain stable over the coming

years and to continue to be driven by rooftop installations, but that it won't return to peak installation rates seen before 2024.

Wallonia is also slated for higher solar capacity installations this year compared to 2025, with the Federation of Renewable Energy Companies (Edora) expecting a growth rate of 180-200MW.

"Such installation rates are far too low to reach the Wallonian share of the objectives for 2030," said Eric Monami, energy adviser at Edora.

"We expect Belgian solar not to grow as much as it did in the past.

This has to do with both Flanders and Wallonia having reduced incentives to build rooftop solar," said Jesse Hettema, head of the Netherlands and Belgium at Aurora Energy Research.

The subsidy changes have already caused a shift in focus from residential installations to commercial and industrial projects.

At the same time, non-residential projects are starting to experience insufficient grid connections as an increasingly common hurdle as the Belgian power network is becoming congested in some areas. ■