

NEWS

Italy could add 2.3GW by 2020 through repowering

Italy has the potential to increase installed wind generation capacity by a net rise of 2.3GW by the end of 2020, but incentives are required to do so, according to Milan-based energy consultancy Althesys,

Italy could add 7.9GW of wind capacity through repowering old wind farms by 2030. This would correspond to a net increase of 4.5GW, which is 50pc of existing capacity, without developing any new sites, Althesys chief executive Alessandro Marangoni said.

Of the 7.9GW in additional capacity, 3.9GW could be added by 2020, with a likely net contribution of 2.3GW. A further 4GW of wind capacity, with a net contribution ranging from 0.8GW-2.2GW, could be added post-2020.

As incentives are due to expire for some plants by as early as 2017, repowering could start from next year, Marangoni said. But if the situation remains unchanged, up to 3.5GW could be dismantled by the end of 2032, he said.

He called on Italy to introduce incentives for repowering existing wind farms in the country, similar to ones in Germany and Denmark. And it should streamline permitting processes and institute bonuses linked to best practices, he said.

Italy's wind market faces a variety of hurdles, such as retroactive cuts to incentives introduced in 2014, lengthy and complex authorisation procedures, and environmental and infrastructural obstacles in upgrading existing plants. Growth in installed wind capacity has slowed down significantly since 2013.

In addition, there are uncertainties linked to the adoption of a new incentive mechanism for renewable energy sources other than photovoltaic, as the European Commission has yet to approve a draft scheme to regulate the market in 2016.

The draft calls for supporting an additional 800MW of greenfield wind plants and 40MW for upgrading existing plants.

Italy had already reached its 2020 targets for renewable energy by 2014, when 17pc of final consumption came from renewable sources. This was helped by a massive increase in solar generation from 2010-13.

But Italy's specific target for onshore wind energy is 12GW by 2020 and 16.8GW by 2030.

Italy's total installed wind capacity is around 9GW, according to the latest data from state-owned energy service manager GSE.