

Italy microgrid development

Italy's long-awaited operational rules for energy communities are expected to spur development in the segment, which has only experienced limited growth volumes thus far.

Italian energy agency Gestore dei Servizi Energetici (GSE) has published the operating rules for energy communities, following the publication of the final provisions on Jan. 24.

The new rules describe how project developers can secure access to the rebates offered by the Italian government for the construction of energy communities under the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (PNRR), while also explaining how these incentives can be added with the feed-in tariffs being granted to these communities.

The new provisions also describe how PV systems deployed before Dec. 15, 2021, may be included in the incentive scheme. The rules establish that they can represent up to 30% of an energy community's total generating capacity.

In October 2023, the GSE published an interactive map of the primary substations in Italy. The tool allows users to geolocalize connection points for energy communities, as required by Italian legislation on self-consumption.

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The recent escalation in renewables marks a significant moment for Italy, as nearly half of the country's electricity needs are now being met by locally produced clean energy. This growth can be attributed not only to favorable climatic and environmental conditions but also to the proactive installation of new renewable capacity within the country. The addition of 2.5 GW of renewable capacity represents a staggering 120 percent increase over the same period in 2022, signaling a promising shift towards a greener energy landscape.

Terna's insightful report further reveals that electricity consumption in June 2023 reached 25.4 billion kilowatt-hours (kWh), a slight uptick compared to May 2023, but a notable 9.2 percent decline from the same

period the previous year. Notably, the IMCEI index, which closely monitors the industrial consumption of approximately 1,000 ‘energy-intensive’ companies, reported a noteworthy decrease of 5.8 percent when compared to June 2022. While certain sectors experienced negative changes, the transportation equipment and food industries showed positive trends.

Italy’s green energy sector has played a pivotal role in offsetting the decline in overall electricity consumption, with domestically produced renewable sources contributing an impressive 50.5 percent of the total net domestic electricity production. This significant contribution allowed clean energy to fulfill a commendable 44.3 percent of the country’s electricity demand.

Unsurprisingly, hydropower continued to reign as the leading contributor to renewable production, accounting for 43.5 percent of the total green energy output. Photovoltaics followed closely behind, contributing 31.4 percent, while biomass chipped in with 12.1 percent. Wind power, though somewhat more modest in its contribution, provided a noteworthy 9.2 percent of the renewable energy production.

The noteworthy increase in solar capacity played a pivotal role in boosting renewable energy generation, witnessing a staggering surge of 2,322 megawatts (MW) in the first half of 2023. This tremendous growth was largely driven by incentives for residential photovoltaic installations. Among the regions, Lombardy saw the most substantial increase, amassing an impressive 382 MW, closely trailed by Veneto with 327 MW, and Emilia-Romagna with 202 MW.

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