ContainerPower Energy Solutions

Residents demand wind and solar power complementarity for communication base stations

Overview

Can a solar-wind system meet future energy demands?

Accelerating energy transition towards renewables is central to net-zero emissions. However, building a global power system dominated by solar and wind energy presents immense challenges. Here, we demonstrate the potential of a globally interconnected solar-wind system to meet future electricity demands.

Are solar and wind resources interconnected?

Theoretically, the potential of solar and wind resources on Earth vastly surpasses human demand 33, 34. In our pursuit of a globally interconnected solar-wind system, we have focused solely on the potentials that are exploitable, accessible, and interconnectable (see “Methods”).

What happens if solar-wind generation exceeds net power demand?

When solar-wind generation within a grid exceeds its net power demand (i.e., total demand minus baseload), surplus power is first transferred to interconnected grids experiencing shortages, with the remaining surplus stored until capacity is reached. Any surplus beyond storage capacity is curtailed.

What is interconnectability in offshore wind energy exploitation?

‘Interconnectability’ refers to the requirement that any proposed power plant must be located no farther than 10 kilometers from the existing transmission lines. Notably, offshore wind energy exploitation is confined to the exclusive economic zone.

How does interconnectivity affect solar-wind development?

As the degree of interconnectivity increases, solar-wind development gradually shifts towards regions with distinct resource advantages, such as the midwestern United States for superior solar resources, and coastal or highaltitude areas for high wind energy potential (Fig. 2a, b).

What are the technical parameters of energy storage?

Two key technical parameters of energy storage are considered: the maximum operational power and the average storage duration. The round-trip efficiency of energy storage is set to 90%, referencing commercial storage technologies 63.

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