

Alternative sustainable energy sources

Energy is the golden thread that connects economic growth, increased social equity, and an environment that allows the world to thrive. Development is not possible without energy, and sustainable development is not possible without sustainable energy."

Energy efficiency--using less energy to deliver the same goods or services, or delivering comparable services with less goods--is a cornerstone of many sustainable energy strategies.³⁶ The International Energy Agency (IEA) has estimated that increasing energy efficiency could achieve 40% of greenhouse gas emission reductions needed to fulfil the Paris Agreement's goals.³⁸

Efficiency improvements often lead to a rebound effect in which consumers use the money they save to buy more energy-intensive goods and services.⁴⁴ For example, recent technical efficiency improvements in transport and buildings have been largely offset by trends in consumer behaviour, such as selecting larger vehicles and homes.⁴⁵

Renewable energy sources are essential to sustainable energy, as they generally strengthen energy security and emit far fewer greenhouse gases than fossil fuels.⁴⁹ Renewable energy projects sometimes raise significant sustainability concerns, such as risks to biodiversity when areas of high ecological value are converted to bioenergy production or wind or solar farms.⁵⁰⁵¹

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