

# Germany, Mexico, US top smart energy list

November 5 2009

---



Two vintage beetle Volkswagen taxis pass by a new "Metrobus" in Mexico City. Germany, Mexico and the United States have crafted some of the world's smartest policies for improving energy use, according to a study released on the sidelines of the UN climate talks here.

Germany, Mexico and the United States have crafted some of the world's smartest policies for improving energy use, according to a study released on Thursday on the sidelines of the UN climate talks here.

Making buildings more energy-efficient and providing tax breaks and tariff guarantees for [renewable sources](#) topped the "green new deal" policies scrutinised by two environment groups.

The scorecard examined energy initiatives launched by the European Union and six EU countries plus Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, South Korea, Turkey and the United States.

The schemes were measured chiefly for their capacity to reduce or save greenhouse-gas emissions, for their cost and their spur to economic activity.

[Germany](#) grabbed the top two spots with a programme to beef up [energy efficiency](#) in buildings through tougher construction standards supported by loans and grants, and with a "feed-in tariff" by which suppliers of renewable energy enjoy guaranteed price levels for 20 years.

The two initiatives scored 17.2 and 15.0 points out of 20, respectively.

Mexico came next with an urban bus system launched in [Mexico](#) City in 2005 that started to phase out creaky old buses.

Even though the programme was low technology, its environmental and economic effectiveness was extremely high when compared with the investment, earning 14.2 points out of 20.

In third place was the [United States](#), which won plaudits for its "weatherisation assistance programme" to insulate the homes of low-income families, and for its tax breaks for [energy](#) from wind, solar, geothermal and bio-energy. These rated 13.8 and 13.7 points respectively.

China gained a medium score of 10.2 points for its "1,000 Enterprise Programme," which aims at getting the country's 1,000 most energy-intensive companies to reduce carbon emissions by 250 million tonnes during the 2006-2010 five-year plan.

The best policies not only help combat the greenhouse effect, they also stimulate economies and create thousands of new jobs, said the report, compiled by WWF International and E3G.

"The economic recovery packages put forward by many countries involve very large sums of money. But economic recovery packages so far have not generated a green new deal," it said.

"This report clearly shows that a well-designed climate policy will not adversely affect economic welfare."

On the downside, the report dished out "minus" scores for subsidies for coal mining and energy-gobbling industries, branding these the least effective both environmentally and in economic spinoffs.

It also said that arguments for supporting nuclear power to help mitigate emissions from fossil fuels were undermined by the hidden cost of dealing with long-term storage of radioactive waste.

It gave only 10.3 points to the EU's carbon market, the much-trumpeted outcome of the Kyoto Protocol

The emissions trading scheme was flawed for its start-up phase, which delivered windfall profits to power producers and other companies enrolled in the scheme yet provided "little environmental impact."

"Although the policy has considerable potential to achieve emissions reductions in the long-term, the short-term implementation of the scheme led to little reductions so far," the report said bluntly.

*(c) 2009 AFP*

Citation: Germany, Mexico, US top smart energy list (2009, November 5) retrieved 10 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2009-11-germany-mexico-smart-energy.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.