

# 36 countries launch world alliance for geothermal energy

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Part of the Ol-Karia geothermal power generation complex is seen from a vantage point on the floor of the Kenyan Rift Valley, near the shores of Lake Naivasha some 120 kilometers north-east of capital, Nairobi on August 28, 2015

Thirty-six countries gave the official start Monday to an initiative to promote geothermal energy in developing economies as a cleaner alternative to oil, gas and coal.

The Global Geothermal Alliance, launched on the sidelines of the UN climate talks in Le Bourget, aims at a sixfold increase in geothermal electricity production and a tripling of geothermal-derived heating by 2030.

At present, geothermal is growing modestly, at three to four percent per year, providing 12 gigawatts of electricity annually.

But this is just a fraction of its overall potential of 100 gigawatts, according to the industry. Only 24 out of 90 [countries](#) with geothermal potential actually use the resource.

The alliance said its members will seek to overcome "political uncertainty" about geothermal and strengthen the industry's skills base.

The Global Geothermal Alliance initiative was sketched out in September 2014 at a summit organised by UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon.

Members include countries on thermal "hotspots" in Africa, Southeast Asia and Latin America, ranging from Kenya and Tanzania to Malaysia, the Philippines and Guatemala.

Geothermal energy entails drilling into hot rock and using the heated water to generate electricity or provide heating for communities.

It is considered exceptionally clean, as the heat extraction process requires far lower emissions of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) compared with fossil fuels.

It is also deemed sustainable, given the almost limitless source of the energy, although individual wells can cool down or run out of water.

Obstacles to geothermal are the high cost of drilling and risks entailed in the exploration phase.

"Geothermal [energy](#) development particularly in developing countries faces important challenges," the alliance said.

"Due to risks related to geological drilling during the exploration phase, along with the associated costs, financing the early stage of the process is limited to investors that understand and accept the possible associated risks."

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