Fast and fair permitting for renewable energy and green hydrogen projects

A 9-POINT PLAN FOR FAST AND FAIR PERMITTING
Nine sets of proposed actions and recommendations for fast, effective and trust-building permitting.

Throughout the world planning and permitting is holding up the energy transition. Here are nine universal recommendations for fast, effective and trust-building permitting.

Recommendation 1: Innovate to shorten permitting timeframes.

a. Establish clear timelines.
b. Digitised permitting.
c. Set targets to cut application processing times by half.
d. Adopting a “rule of positive silence”.
e. Assign priority status to renewable energy, green hydrogen projects and related infrastructure.
f. Setting strategic vision for renewables deployment.

Recommendation 2: Streamline permitting processes in a transparent and predictable manner.

a. Streamline framework.
b. One-stop-shop permitting.
c. Create a renewables project data observatory.
d. Standardise permits for green hydrogen plants.
e. Flexible permitting for different projects.

Recommendation 3: Engage communities from the outset.

b. Engage early.
c. Preliminary surveys to assess attitude towards a project.
d. Financial incentives at the local level such as power rebates.
e. Involve local governments.
f. Consider aesthetic design of projects.

Recommendation 4: Deploy carefully designed and regulated benefit-sharing mechanisms.

a. Auctions.
b. Community development agreements.
c. Community co-design.
d. Community shared ownership.
e. Community benefit funds.
f. Access to electricity.
g. Employment and skills development.
Recommendation 5: Put in place strong policies and safeguards to limit environmental impacts.

a. "Do No Significant Harm".
b. Biodiversity conscious and nature positive development.
c. Recognise ecological diversity in auctions.
d. Integrated renewable energy and agricultural planning.
e. Company level environment and nature positive strategies.
f. Create and maintain extensive environmental data banks.

Recommendation 6: Accelerate grid infrastructure build-out and integration.

a. Higher grid flexibility.
b. Planning new grid and transmission infrastructure.
c. Transmission line planning avoiding protected areas.
d. Development of joint grid feed-in points for combined renewable energy projects.
e. Priority for grid connection to repowering projects and those that are installed in acceleration zones for renewables.
f. Planning hydrogen transportation infrastructure and pipelines.

Recommendation 7: Allocate land appropriately and strategically.

b. Strategic Spatial Planning and "renewable acceleration areas".
c. Digital mapping tools to aid deployment.
d. Early dialogue and consultations.
e. Data availability.
f. Green Hydrogen Valleys.

Recommendation 8: Strengthen and optimise institutional capacity at central and local levels.

a. Sufficient resourcing and competence enhancement.
b. Sufficient staffing for permitting roles.
c. Distinct roles in the permitting process.
d. Regular assessment of resources and framework.
e. Regular Monitoring.
f. Evaluating opportunities for interagency coordination to facilitate knowledge sharing.
g. Creation of administrative units dedicated to permit acceleration.

Recommendation 9: Avert technological risks by adopting rigorous standards.

a. Regulatory certainty through pre-feasibility studies.
b. Development and monitoring of safety standards.
c. Adoption of renewable energy and hydrogen standards and certification.
d. Averting water permitting risks.