

Updated methodology for converting non-fossil electricity generation to primary energy

Traditionally, in bp's Statistical Review of World Energy, the primary energy of non-fossil based electricity (nuclear, hydro, wind, solar, geothermal, biomass in power and other renewables sources) has been calculated on an 'input-equivalent' basis – i.e. based on the equivalent amount of fossil fuel input required to generate that amount of electricity in a standard thermal power plant. For example, if nuclear power output for a country was 100 TWh, and the efficiency of a standard thermal power plant was 38%, the input-equivalent primary energy would be $100/0.38 = 263$ TWh or about 0.95 EJ.

For many years, the efficiency of this standard power plant has been assumed to be 38%. However, in reality, the world average efficiency of fossil fuel-based power changes over time and has risen from around 36% in 2000 to over 40% today. Moreover, given the much higher efficiency of the most modern power plant (e.g. the thermal efficiency of a modern gas turbine plant is above 55%), the global average is expected to increase in the future.

Therefore, to better assess primary energy trends, we have decided to move to a time-dependent thermal equivalence model. The conversion factor used each year to calculate the 'input-equivalent' consumption for a given level of generation is based on a simplified representation of measured average efficiency levels:

1965-2000: assumed constant efficiency of 36%

2000-2017: a linear increase from 36% to 40% based on observed data

2018 onwards: the annual rate of efficiency improvement is based on the simplified assumption that efficiency will increase linearly to 45% by 2050.

The table below quantifies these assumptions:

Thermal equivalent efficiency factors used to convert non-fossil electricity to primary energy

Year(s)	Efficiency factor	Year(s)	Efficiency factor
1965-2000	36%	2010	38.4%
2001	36.2%	2011	38.6%
2002	36.5%	2012	38.8%
2003	36.7%	2013	39.1%
2004	36.9%	2014	39.3%
2005	37.2%	2015	39.5%
2006	37.4%	2016	39.8%
2007	37.6%	2017	40.0%
2008	37.9%	2018	40.2%
2009	38.1%	2019	40.4%