

Case studies: Renewable energy & human rights

Agriculture & livestock

Mexico: Lubricant fuel spills in Juchitan, Oaxaca

Country: Juchitan, Oaxaca, Mexico	Companies: EDF (developer), Acciona SA (developer), Gamesa Corp Tecnologica SA (turbine manufacturer)
Project : Wind turbines in Juchitan, Oaxaca, Mexico	
<p>The smell of lubricating fuel used for wind turbines is a common complaint among local communities in Oaxaca, Mexico. In 2017, a lubricant leak from a wind turbine operated by EDF in Juchitan reached ground level. According to a Bloomberg article reporting the incident, the company cleaned the turbine, removed contaminated soil and compensated the landowner. Similar problems have been encountered by other companies operating in the area, with turbine manufacturers noting that lubricating fuel leaks are relatively common and can often be cleaned before reaching ground level depending on weather conditions. Civil society argues that the accumulation of small lubricant leaks in Oaxaca, due to the number of turbines (around 2,000) poses a threat to the quality of soil and water in the region. Civil society organisation ProDESC has observed poor turbine maintenance in the region, and shared that local communities had noticed a decreased in the numbers of fish arriving in local lagoons in the last five to six years, although couldn't confirm whether there was any correlation between the two.</p>	
Sources: Mexico's Wind Farms Brought Prosperity but Not for Everyone , Even Clean Energy Has Its Little Oil Spills	

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Mexico: Wind turbines threaten ecosystem

Country: Yucatán, Mexico	Companies Involved: Elecnor, SunPower
Project: Wind Turbines	
<p>Renewable energy, including both solar and wind, has rapidly expanded in Yucatán, Mexico. These new renewable energy projects will require an estimated 12,000 hectares of land close to protected areas, local populations, or sacred and archaeological sites. Local communities have warned that this scramble for land could negatively impact the region's ecosystem. For example, construction of wind turbines on leased land parcels next the region's protected mangroves is likely to disrupt natural progression of water towards these mangroves, altering that ecosystem's resources. In addition, local farmers have expressed fear that wind turbines will impact their agricultural production and in particular their beekeeping trade. Although environmental and social impact assessments have been conducted for individual projects, there is no strategic impact assessment done at the regional level to understand the overall impact of a concentrated installation of multiple energy projects.</p>	
Sources: Fast & fair renewable energy: A practical guide for investors , Business and Human Rights Resource Center , Mexico Communities Denounce Lack of Consultation	

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Norway: Indigenous people oppose offshore wind farms

Country: Norway	Company: Statkraft
<p>The Norwegian state energy company, Statkraft, began construction of Norway's largest onshore wind project, Fosen Vind, in 2016 with electricity production estimated to begin in 2020. The local Southern Saami reindeer-herding community oppose the project, filing complaints with national authorities and the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. They argue that the project would result in a loss of 44% of their winter pastures, forcing many families to abandon their traditional trade of reindeer herding. Statkraft has already been the target of an OECD complaint filed by the Saami people in 2012 relating to the impacts of multiple wind farm projects built on traditional lands in Jämtland, Sweden. The National Contact Points in Sweden and Norway had provided recommendations to Statkraft to work in a manner that promotes indigenous people's rights. In 2018, Statkraft faced renewed opposition from the Saami people, this time in Norway. The Saami people filed a complaint with the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. In December 2018, the Norwegian Petroleum and Energy Ministry refused to suspend the Fosen Wind project while the Committee examined the complaint, stating that "after careful consideration...there is no basis for stopping the building of Storheia wind turbines."</p> <p>On 16 January 2020, the Society for Threatened People (STP) filed a complaint with the Swiss National Contact Point against energy company BKW for investing in a wind farm project in western Norway.</p>	
More on Statkraft and complaints filed against it: Sweden	

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