

Dutch Trains Are World's First to Run on 100% Wind Power

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The Netherlands, aka Windmill Country, is now operating 100 percent of its electric trains with [wind](#) energy.

As of Jan. 1, 600,000 daily train passengers have been traveling completely carbon neutral, according to an announcement from the Netherlands' principal passenger railway operator, [NS](#).

Dutch electric trains are running on 1.2 billion kilowatt-hours of wind energy supplied by [sustainable energy supplier](#), Eneco. As [Brightvibes](#) noted, a "decreasing and relatively small number" of Dutch trains are still running on diesel.

NS and Eneco [first announced](#) their plan of a wind-powered railway in 2015 in order to drastically slash train ride emissions. Their original goal was to transition the trains to 100 percent [renewable energy](#) by 2018, but that target was moved up after reaching 75 percent in 2016. Impressively, this means their initial goal was met one whole year ahead of schedule.

[According](#) to Eneco, the power used by the carriers comes from newly built wind farms in the Netherlands, Scandinavia and Belgium. By tapping into both domestic and foreign sources of wind power, it "[ensures] that there is always sufficient green power available on the grid for rail companies, even if the wind is not blowing," the company explained.

As Eneco's account manager Michel Kerkhof [pointed out](#), the "key objective is to avoid procuring energy from the limited existing number of sustainable energy projects in the Netherlands, thus promoting renewable growth both domestically and Europe-wide."

"This partnership ensures that new investments can be made in even newer wind farms, which will increase the share of renewable energy," Kerkhof continued. "In this way, the Dutch railways aim to reduce the greatest negative environmental impact caused by CO2 in such a way that its demand actually contributes to the sustainable power generation in the Netherlands and Europe."

[Railway Gazette](#) reports that NS records about 1.2 million passenger-journeys per day, with an annual energy requirement for 1.2 billion kWh. The company aims to further reduce consumption by 2 percent a year with an energy efficiency program, with total consumption already reduced by 30 percent since 2005. The company is also looking for a "dramatic" reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.

In this video, NS CEO Roger van Boxtel is humorously strapped to a windmill blade as he touts his company's latest renewable energy achievement. The clip is in Dutch so set the captions to "translate" if you do not speak the language.

Wind farms—both onshore and offshore—are regarded as a key component in [renewable energy](#) policy and an important tool in mitigating the risks of [climate change](#).

The Netherlands currently has a total of 2,200 wind turbines across the country, according to [DutchNews.nl](#). The turbines supply enough energy to power 2.4 million households.

The Dutch government is looking to ramp up the nation's share of renewable energy from 4 percent in 2014 to 16 percent in 2023. This year the country is due to start operating a 600-megawatt [offshore wind farm](#), called Gemini.
