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# Overall review of distributed energy development in China: Status quo, barriers and solutions



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#### ABSTRACT

As a good power supplement form of super power and large-scale energy base, distributed energy has the characteristics of less investment and flexible power generation. Facing with the double pressure of the sustainable development of energy use and environmental protection, it has become an efficient solution to meet the demand of load growth, reduce environmental pollution and improve the comprehensive utilization of energy and the reliability of power supply. However, the development of distributed energy starts relatively late in China and confronts many difficulties. So this paper analyzes the present development situation and existing problems of the distributed energy in China. Then it elaborates from the aspects of policies and regulations, technical specifications, price policy and grid-interconnection codes. At last, this paper puts forward relevant policy suggestions of the guarantee mechanism of distributed energy. This paper argues that, with the attention of the development of distributed energy increasing, a series of policies to promote the construction and interconnection of distributed energy will be introduced, and distributed energy will get scaled development in China.

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#### **Contents**

1.	Introd	ntroduction					
2.	The distributed energy development present situation in China						
	2.1.	The construction situation.					
		2.1.1.	Natural gas distributed energy	. 1227			
		2.1.2.	Distributed photovoltaic	. 1228			
		2.1.3.	Distributed wind generation	1229			
		2.1.4.	Small hydropower	1230			
	2.2.	The dev	velopment trend	1230			
		2.2.1.	Natural gas distributed energy	. 1230			
		2.2.2.	Distributed photovoltaic	. 1230			
		2.2.3.	Distributed wind generation	. 1231			
		2.2.4.	Small hydropower	. 1231			
	2.3.	Policies	and regulations	1231			
3.	Existi	Existing problems and analysis of distributed energy development in China					
	3.1.	The pol	licies and regulations	1231			
		3.1.1.	Distributed natural gas	. 1231			
		3.1.2.	Distributed photovoltaic	. 1231			
		3.1.3.	Distributed wind power	. 1232			
		3.1.4.	Small hydropower	. 1232			
	3.2.	The tec	hnical aspecthnical aspect	1233			
		3.2.1.	Distributed natural gas	. 1233			
		2 2 2	Distributed photovoltais	1722			

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		3.2.3.	Distributed wind power	. 1233			
			Small hydropower	. 1233			
	3.3.	Electrici	ty prices	. 1233			
		3.3.1.	Distributed natural gas	. 1233			
		3.3.2.	Distributed photovoltaic	. 1234			
		3.3.3.	Distributed wind power	. 1234			
		3.3.4.	Small hydropower	. 1234			
3.4. Grid-con			nnected	. 1234			
		3.4.1.	Distributed natural gas	. 1234			
		3.4.2.	Distributed photovoltaic	. 1234			
		3.4.3.	Distributed wind power	. 1234			
		3.4.4.	Small hydropower	. 1234			
4.	Relevant policies recommendations						
	4.1.	Policy g	uarantee mechanism	. 1235			
		4.1.1.	Strengthen the overall planning				
		4.1.2.	Improve the relevant laws and regulations				
1 1 0			al equipments safeguard mechanism				
		4.2.1.	Build the technical standards				
		4.2.2.	Enhance the technological innovation	. 1235			
	4.3.	The sup	porting price mechanism	. 1236			
		4.3.1.	Improve the mechanism of feed-in tariff				
		4.3.2.	Perfect the subsidy mechanism of grid connection				
	4.4.	Grid-cor	nnected mechanism	. 1236			
		4.4.1.	Improve the quality of grid connection service				
		4.4.2.	Speed up the matched grid construction	. 1237			
5.	Concl	usion		. 1237			
Acknowledgment							
References							

#### 1. Introduction

Distributed energy has advantages of high energy efficiency, clean and green, safety and flexible operation mode. As the fossil energy continuous depletion, environmental problem and the climate change have become increasingly prominent. The development of distributed energy has become a basic consensus and core strategy in many countries around the world [1,2]. Distributed energy refers to the distribution in the client-side energy comprehensive utilization system. It is an energy cascade utilization system which uses renewable energy or fossil fuels for energy supply to meet a variety demand of the users. Distributed energy combines electricity, heating and refrigeration technology, so that each level of the energy can give play to its most effectiveness [3,4].

With the rapid growth of China's economic, energy security has risen to national security. In 2009, China's energy utilization rate was only 33%, about 10% lower than the developed countries, and the energy consumption per unit of mainly products is 40% more than the world average level [5]. According to experts predict, China's installed generation capacity is 1 billion kW, and annual energy production is 4.6 trillion kW h in 2020 [6]. If still using the traditional generation mode, it will cause great threat to China's energy supply. Meanwhile fossil energy consumption will cause serious environmental pollution and greenhouse gas emissions [7,8]. In conclusion, the energy development in China is facing energy mix, energy utilization efficiency, energy supply security, environmental pollution and so on [9]. Distributed energy system realizes the cascade reasonable and comprehensive utilization of energy, improve the energy efficiency [10]. What is more, because of using clean natural gas and renewable energy generation, the distributed energy system has low pollution emissions and the effects of energy saving and emission reduction are very obvious. So the system greatly reduces the environmental cost of economic operation [11–13]. Distributed generation operation flexibly, facing

the user directly. In the event of large power grid emergencies caused by natural disasters, distributed generation can help ensure the safety of local small power supply, reduce the power supply rely too much on the centralized power system, improve the ability to resist natural disasters and unexpected events [14]. Therefore, developing distributed generation is the inevitable requirement to improve the energy efficiency, and to promote of energy conservation and emissions reduction [15].

This paper expounds on the current situation of the development of distributed energy in China, seeks the problems existing in the development of distributed energy, and analyzes the causes of the problems. And it gives the relevant suggestions about promote the development of distributed energy combining with the actual situation in China.

## 2. The distributed energy development present situation in China

Distributed energy in China mainly includes: natural gas distributed energy, distributed photovoltaic, distributed wind power, and other forms of power supply. In some remote mountainous area, there are a number of small hydropower stations, which are also a kind of distributed energy in the broad sense. In this section, the construction situation, development trend, and the related policies and regulations are analyzed based on the various types of distributed energy respectively.

#### 2.1. The construction situation

#### 2.1.1. Natural gas distributed energy

The development of natural gas distributed energy in China is in its infancy. In recent years, under the support of government and enterprises, China's natural gas distributed energy gets preliminary development, mainly in Beijing, Shanghai, Guangdong, Sichuan, etc.

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