

# Brazil market outlook for photovoltaic solar energy: A Survey Study

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## ABSTRACT

There is great concern worldwide about increased greenhouse gas emissions and the consequences of climate change. Photovoltaic solar energy emerges as an alternative source of renewable energy with low environmental impacts. Through a bibliographical review on the subject, this paper presents an analysis of the scale insertion of this energy in Brazil, demonstrating the benefits that can be generated of this technology, impediments and future perspectives. The conclusion is that Brazil has great potential for the energy generation, collaborating to reduce the environmental impacts as a reduction of the greenhouse gases emission. The barriers to introducing photovoltaic solar energy have been lack of investment, lack of more aggressive incentive programs, technological capacity and professional training.

*Keywords: Photovoltaic; Solar Energy; Renewable Energies; Climate Change.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Electricity has become an indispensable and strategic resource for the socioeconomic development of countries and regions. However, the growing interest in the search for new renewable sources of energy has been triggered by environmental impact due to pollution, depletion of resources and climate change, with some effects more worrying than others [1].

The temperature of the earth's surface is expected to increase over the years. It is very likely that heat waves will occur more often and last longer, and extreme events of precipitation will become more intense and frequent in many regions. The ocean will continue to heat and acidify and the average level of the oceans will rise. Continuity of high emissions will lead to mostly negative impacts on biodiversity, ecosystems, services and economic development and could increase the risks to livelihood, food and human security [2].

Due to the growing concern about environmental issues and the need to achieve a sustainable economy, there is a necessity to develop new solutions and energy sources strategies with less environmental impact and economically viable [3]. In this scenario, the technologies for generating energy from renewable sources with low greenhouse gas emissions become increasingly attractive [1]. In recent years, in Brazil, photovoltaic energy generation has been considered as a renewable and promising energy technology [4]. Implanted gradually, it offers an option that complements the Brazilian energy matrix [5].

Brazil is a privileged country for the installation of these systems, considering the possibility of using the high solar radiation indices in the country compared to the developed nations [6]. The possibility of using the solar radiation in the urban environment for the energy generation makes the city more sustainable [3].

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41 For these reasons, given the importance of this subject in the world, this article analyze the  
42 photovoltaic solar energy insertion in the Brazil energy matrix, with the objective of verifying the  
43 implementation benefits, future perspectives and the new technology impediments to achieve large  
44 scale. This work aims to demonstrate that the increase of incentives can improve the economic and  
45 environmental results of the country.

## 46 2. METHODOLOGY

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48 The methodology used in the research was the bibliographic review on the proposed theme. The  
49 research sought to identify, evaluate and interpret a set of documents available in academic collections  
50 and institutions and energy sector entities.

51 The selection criteria took into account the following aspects: (i) titles of articles aligned with the  
52 research theme; (ii) abstracts aligned to the research theme; (iii) result relevance filter; and (iv) full text  
53 of articles aligned with the research theme. There was no temporal delimitation of the publications. The  
54 analysis result of the information obtained was used for the article elaboration.

## 55 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

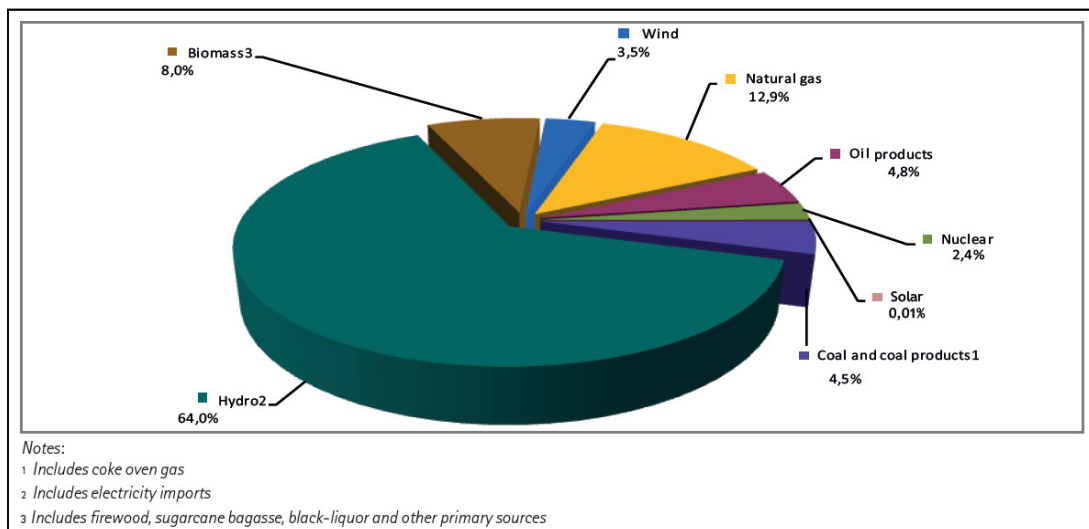
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57 This chapter presents the main concepts about the research basic theme, including considerations  
58 about the current energy matrix in Brazil, the country solar potential and future perspectives of  
59 photovoltaic solar energy in the world.

### 60 3.1 Brazil Energy Matrix

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62 According to a report published by the Ministério de Minas e Energia [7], the Brazil electric energy  
63 generation in public service and self-producers has reached 581.5 TWh/year in 2015. The energy  
64 matrix is predominantly renewable, with hydraulics responsible for 64% of the domestic supply (Fig. 1).



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Fig. 1. Internal supply of energy by source [8].

#### 71 3.1.1 Brazilian solar potential

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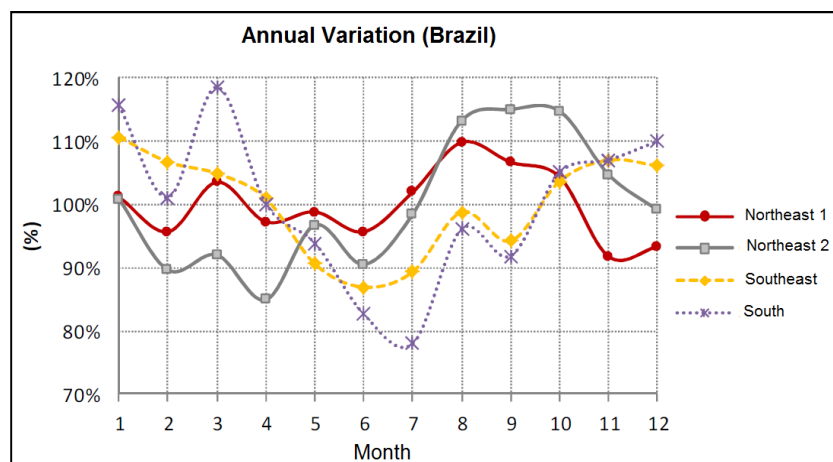
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An inexhaustible energy source, the solar radiation use as both a source of heat and light is one of the most promising alternative sources of energy for human development [9]. Despite the different climatic

74 characteristics observed in Brazil, the annual average of solar irradiation shows good uniformity, with  
75 relatively high annual averages. In addition, the incidence in any region of the country (1500-2500  
76 kWh/m<sup>2</sup>/year) is higher than in most European Union countries, such as Germany, which varies  
77 between 900-1250 kWh/m<sup>2</sup>/year and Spain 1200-1850 kWh/m<sup>2</sup>/year [10].

78 It is important to note that solar photovoltaic generation has a seasonal behavior differentiated by  
79 geographic region (Fig. 2). Long-term trends and cycles are negligible, with temporal behavior not  
80 correlated with other variable sources such as hydro and wind. Thus, it favors the integration of  
81 photovoltaic energy into the electric system to reduce uncertainty regarding energy availability [4].

82 Under clear sky conditions, photovoltaic solar generation can be predicted with great precision.  
83 However, at lower scales, the presence and random behavior of clouds may result in rapid variations in  
84 solar irradiance. This extreme variability complicates the large-scale insertion of solar in  
85 microgeneration (till 75kW) and minigeneration (till 5MW) into low voltage distribution circuits. The  
86 inverters are also subject to shutdowns in case of frequency deviation, short circuits or main voltage  
87 rapid variations. The generator parks spatial dispersion can significantly reduce the whole variability  
88 [4].



89 **Fig. 2. Intra-annual variation of photovoltaic generation in relation to the annual average**  
90 **(average = 100%) [4].**

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93 The graph presented in Fig. 2 refers to the intra-annual variation of photovoltaic generation (%)  
94 throughout the year (Month), where the southern region of Brazil presents the greatest variations,  
95 whereas the regions of the Northeast 1 and Southeast present a generation Photovoltaic near the  
96 average of 100%. Regarding to electrical demand of the cities, the typical behavior of most capitals in  
97 Brazil is peak demand in the daytime, where the consumption of commercial buildings dominates,  
98 coinciding with the greater availability of the solar resource and night demand peaks in residential  
99 regions [10, 11]. For this reason, it is essential to analyze the regions where their use brings the  
100 greatest benefits [11].

101 In addition to analyzing the solar supply, it is necessary to study solar demand and supply in all periods  
102 of the year. The research highlights that as the south region has high consumption in the summer,  
103 importing energy from the southeast and west regions, and that in these months solar supply is the  
104 highest among all Brazilian regions, the insertion of photovoltaic energy in the south region may result  
105 in enormous benefit to the electrical system besides the economic advantages like jobs generation.

106 This type of energy does not replace the expansion of the installed electric system capacity, but can be  
107 seen as a clean energy source [4, 12]. During drought, the reservoirs volume in hydroelectric power  
108 plants is reduced by the lack of rainfall and energy diversity can take advantage of the lack of rainfall to  
109 complement the energy generation with solar photovoltaic generation, because precisely in the dry  
110 season with fewer clouds the sun shines with greater intensity [12].

111 **3.1.2 Brazilian solar energy current situation**

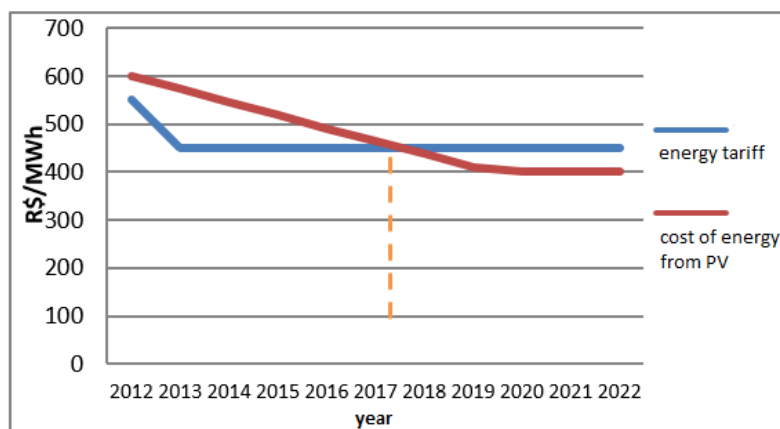
112 According to the Ministério de Minas e Energia and its projections for energy use [8], in 2050, the world  
113 will possibly present a reality quite different from what is known today. The Brazilian economy growth,  
114 bottlenecks resolution in infrastructure, social mobility improvement, and access to goods and services  
115 more elaborated due to the better quality of life of the population will lead to the need to increase the  
116 average consumption energy per capita. In this sense, it will be essential to seek new energy efficiency  
117 actions to reduce the need to expand energy supply in the long term, avoiding, for example,  
118 environmental impacts resulting from new projects. The Empresa de Pesquisa Energética (EPE)  
119 forecasts that between 2013 and 2050 total energy demand will increase slightly more than twice, with  
120 emphasis on natural gas, electricity and oil products.

121 In December 2015, the country made a commitment to the Paris Agreement during the United Nations  
122 Climate Conference to contribute to the reduction of global warming and to prevent global warming in  
123 excess of 1.5°C. In order to comply with this agreement, Brazil will need to reduce coal and gas power  
124 plants, and increase the share of renewable energy in its energy matrix in the coming years [13].

125 Based on these goals of reducing greenhouse gases and aiming to expand the energy matrix and for  
126 the country to present excellent conditions for all technologies for solar utilization, the Agência  
127 Nacional de Energia Elétrica (ANEEL) forecasts that by 2023 there will be an increase in the installed  
128 fotovoltaic capacity of 1,173 MW in Brazil [14]. This increase is extremely relevant in terms of  
129 environmental benefits due to the fact that this generation has very low environmental impacts.

130 Photovoltaic solar energy can be considered a low-risk investment depending heavily on the region  
131 regulatory framework for the competitive potential of solar energy [15]. Regarding regulatory barriers  
132 for small-scale generation and the introduction of a new energy compensation system in Brazil, ANEEL  
133 published Resolução Normativa 482/2012, establishing general conditions access for microgeneration  
134 and distributed minigeration. Seventeen photovoltaic projects were selected, totaling 23.6 MW to be  
135 installed in several regions of the country [4], with microgeneration and minigeration being  
136 responsible for the production of electric power from small generating plants connected to the  
137 distribution network with up to 5 MW of power [16]. By 2015, microgeneration and minigeration with  
138 photovoltaic solar energy with 20 GWh/year of generation and 13.3 MW of installed capacity [7].

139 Another incentive to accelerate the implementation of these energy generation systems is the incentive  
140 program called Programa de Incentivo às Fontes Alternativas de Energia Elétrica (PROINFA),  
141 responsible for providing the effective use of renewable energy in the country. Funded by the Banco  
142 Nacional do Desenvolvimento (BNDES), it provides for the diversification of the energy matrix and  
143 reduction of greenhouse gases, besides the creation of jobs, training and training of labor [6].



144 **Fig. 3. Economic viability estimation of the photovoltaic systems [8].**

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147 One of the barriers to the introduction of the most intensive photovoltaic solar energy in Brazil has  
148 been the investments associated with this technology compared to other technologies installed in the  
149 country. However, costs are showing significant reductions over the years, increasing the  
150 competitiveness of photovoltaic [9]. There is a prospect that the tariff parity of photovoltaic generation  
151 will be reached even in this decade as shown in Fig. 3 [8].

### 152 **3.1.3 Photovoltaic solar energy results of implementations in Brazil**

153 A recent study indicates that the implementation of a photovoltaic system at Presidente Prudente's  
154 college would reduce the local energy consumption and avoid 55 tons of carbon dioxide per year over  
155 30 years generating a positive environmental impact. It is concluded in his research that the payback  
156 would be approximately 12 years and 04 months, characterizing itself as economically viable project  
157 [3].

158 The implementation of grid-connected photovoltaic systems at a residence near São Paulo, for  
159 instance, demonstrated that the return on investment would be 19 years considering the 2014 charge  
160 for the local energy distributor. If the 2013 tariff were considered the return would be 12 years [17].

161 The Green Office of Federal Technological University of do Paraná located in Curitiba was inaugurated  
162 in 2011 and it was Brazil's first "carbon zero" sustainable office [18]. This system has already produced  
163 11.67 MWh in the last five years of uninterrupted operation, which represents an average monthly  
164 generation of approximately 200 kWh / month and becoming a zero energy building (ZEB). In the  
165 summer months, as the generation reached 304 kWh / month, it was possible to export energy to other  
166 nearby facilities making a positive energy building [19].

167 In the research conducted by [20], considering the evolution of tariffs based on inflation and without  
168 incentives to distributed generation, there is economic-financial viability of microgeneration in most  
169 Brazilian capitals. In the scenario of increasing energy tariffs above inflation, there is viability in all  
170 Brazilian capitals.

### 171 **3.1.4 Technology negative environmental impacts**

172 Despite generating more energy, hydroelectric plants have large environmental impacts, while solar  
173 energy has reduced impacts [12]. Photovoltaic solar energy implies no greenhouse gas emission  
174 during operation and does not emit other pollutants (such as sulfur and nitrogen oxides); additionally, it  
175 consumes little or no water. As local air pollution and use of fresh water for cooling thermal power  
176 plants are becoming serious concerns in hot or dry regions, these benefits of photovoltaic solar energy  
177 become increasingly important [21].

178 However, a recent study [22] points out that although the negative impacts presented by photovoltaic  
179 systems are very small compared to the positive impacts and advantages of implementation, **the**  
180 **problems that arise are presented at Tab. 1.**

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**Tab. 1. Negative impacts on PV x possible solutions [22].**

Environment	Negative impacts [22]	Possible solutions
Physical	Landscape alteration and/or degradation; solid waste generation and risks of soil contamination from human activities; dust and gases generation and quality of the air alteration during the work; generation or intensification of erosive processes and changes in water behavior and surface hydrological flow; morphological changes and temporary instability of the surface.	Integration of grid-connected photovoltaic systems through Building Integrated Photovoltaics (BIPV) and Building Attached Photovoltaic (BAPV), which can supply the demands of energy in the urban environment and in a decentralized way contributing to the reduction of peak daytime demand in cities. On the other hand, regarding the large power plants, it is possible to expand the energy capacity by the installation of floating photovoltaic panels on the river and lakes in Brazilian territory.
Biotic	Vegetal cover loss; change in the dynamics of local ecosystems; scaring and escaping local wildlife; reduction of ecological potential (environmental attributes and biodiversity); accidents risk with animals or caused by animals.	
Socioeconomic	Employment and income generation; local economy growth and increase in tax collection; flow of vehicles increase; materials consumption; work accidents risks; equipment efficiency increase; energy source use; security improvement, electricity reliability and supply.	Uses of electric vehicles could reduce the CO <sub>2</sub> emissions and can store the excess energy. Investing in technical training and sustainable processes could reduce both of work accidents risks as guarantee security improvements in this activity and the material production.

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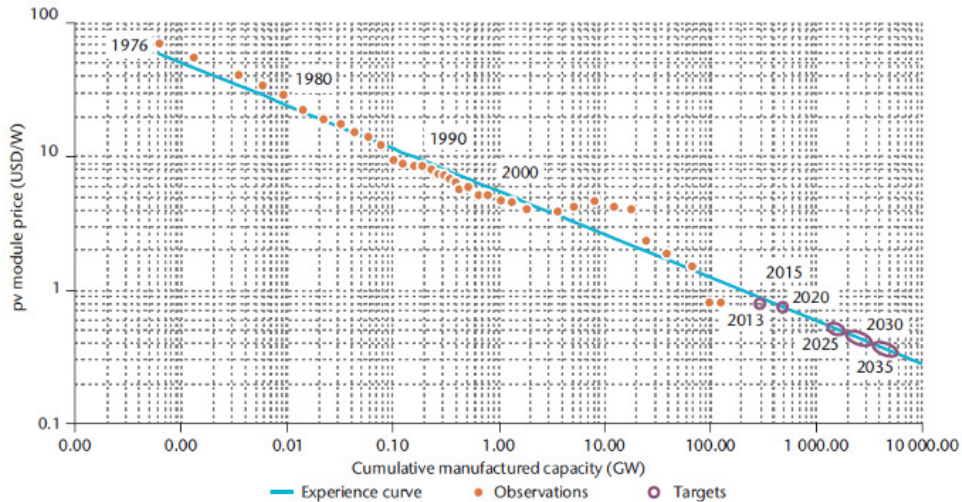
183 It is important to highlight that during its operation, the photovoltaic system does not emit pollutants and is  
 184 a sustainable energy alternative. The most significant environmental impacts are caused during  
 185 manufacturing, system assembly and implantation. However, most of the implantation phase negative  
 186 impacts are temporary. While most of the positive impacts are consolidated in the operation phase,  
 187 environmental control and monitoring are needed to minimize possible system degradation resulting  
 188 from the Photovoltaic Solar Power Plant [22].

189 **3.1.5 Impediments and technology future prospects in Brazil**

190 The study related to future prospects, concludes that the market of micro and minigeneration in Brazil are  
 191 in an early stage of development and may be considered below their potential [23]. The possible  
 192 barriers identified in the study include regulation, incentives, technological capacity and professional  
 193 qualification, currently composing a non-development scenario required for the sector to prosper. It  
 194 was pointed out that most Brazilians still do not know about this topic. However, when presenting  
 195 information on the subject, they proved to be in favor of renewable generation demonstrating the  
 196 consolidation potential of these initiatives.

197 Large size centralized generation clearly is not competitive at the moment in Brazil. The economic  
 198 viability for distributed generation is closer to happen [4]. The expansion of these systems is driven by  
 199 self-consumption - the use of electricity directly in the same place where it is generated - being able to  
 200 carry small amounts of negotiated energy [21]. The possibility of using already built areas to fix panels,  
 201 reducing investments in transmission and distribution lines, contributing to the diversification of the  
 202 Brazilian energy matrix [5]. Nevertheless, the main disadvantages are the high cost of solar cells,  
 203 variation of the amount of energy produced according to the climatic situation and forms of storage still  
 204 not very efficient. However, they point out that there is no type of energy that only brings advantages  
 205 and the appropriate choice will depend on the priority aspect (cost, risk, short-term or long-term  
 206 environmental impact, space, resources, among others) [1].

207 In terms of the photovoltaic systems costs, 60% are from solar panels, 10% from the inverter and the  
 208 rest from support structures, auxiliary electrical equipment, as well as installation and assembly [4].  
 209 After analyzing photovoltaic systems in Brazil historical data, the total cost of implementing a complete  
 210 system shows a downward trend, mainly due to the trend of reducing the modules value [24], as shown  
 211 in Fig. 4. According to Solar Power Europe, the outlook is promising as the photovoltaic system price  
 212 has dropped by 75% over the last 10 years [15].



213 **Fig. 4. Photovoltaic modules old prices and 2035 projection [21].**

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Another reduction that can occur is in the solar panels themselves. In October of 2016, an United States company announced the production of solar roofs with renewable energy which promises to accelerate the solar energy use with this new technology. This new type of roof promises to be more economical than the normal roof combined with the energy savings the new system offers [25]. This new market could further accelerate the use of solar energy over the next few years and create a new scenario for the future in terms of system cost.

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At present, there are few research and development institutions in the area of solar panels in Brazil as well as excess solar panels with low cost being produced in other countries [4]. It would be necessary to present improvements and adaptations in the facilities available in Brazil both to develop materials for production of photovoltaic cells with thin film and also to include the production of silicon for solar use and complete modules assembly [26].

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Photovoltaic solar energy stands out given its potential and the wide range of applications possibilities from technological innovations in various sizes and scales. Despite the barrier to cost and efficiency limits of systems, the use of this technology is fully feasible with the government incentive programs creation, changing the way to generate, distribute and consume energy, in addition to the rapid diffusion of existing technologies [27]. In this scenario, the government role is preponderant to spread to expand the use of this technology [4, 27].

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Capital targeting decisions for the energy sector are increasingly shaped by government policy measures and incentives, rather than signals from competitive markets. Private sector participation is essential to meet the full energy investment needs, but the private mobilization and capital investors will require a concerted effort to reduce political and regulatory uncertainties [28].

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Satisfactory incentive laws such as some mechanisms observed in Europe, establishing a tariff that the electricity distribution concessionaire pays for each kWh of energy produced, is capable of encouraging large photovoltaic energy markets at a cost that ends up being distributed among all electricity consumption, allowing production costs to fall due to an increase in the scale of production [27].

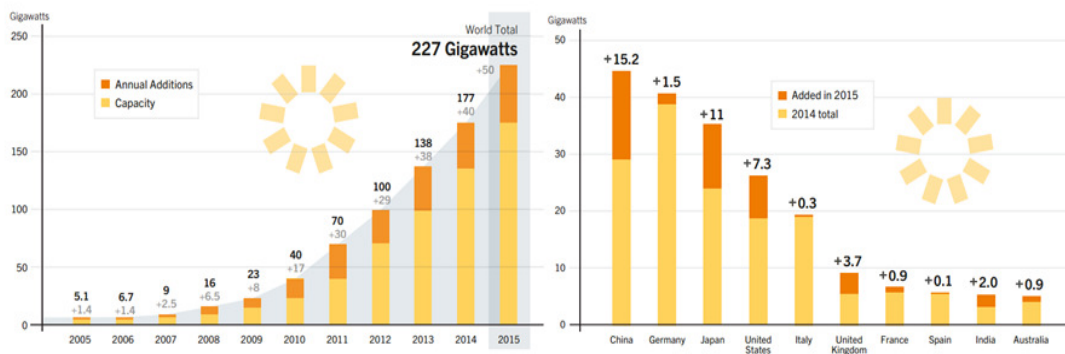
242 Among the incentive options, contracting models, financing models, tax incentives or even premium-  
 243 rate offers can be reported [4]. About contracting models, there are two main strands in the area of  
 244 incentive to solar generation: feed-in tariff and net metering. The first is the tariff payment generally  
 245 higher than the local concessionaire's energy tariff sand the cost can be assumed by the national  
 246 treasury or prorated by the energy consumers (this incentive form predominates in Europe mainly  
 247 Germany and is also adopted by Japan). The second consists of the credits accumulation in  
 248 concessionaires when solar energy exceeds local consumption. This model predominates in the United  
 249 States. It should be highlighted that the net metering instituted by ANEEL in Brazil has an ICMS tax  
 250 incidence in some states, which makes it impossible to apply this model in the country and making it  
 251 difficult to evolve in this sector [29].

252 **4. FUTURE GOALS AND PROSPECTS FOR PHOTOVOLTAIC SOLAR ENERGY IN THE**  
 253 **WORLD**  
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255 Despite the increase in energy consumption over the years, for the first time in four decades the  
 256 carbon dioxide global emission associated with energy consumption stabilized in 2014 as the economy  
 257 grew. This stabilization was attributed to the renewable energy introduction and improvements in  
 258 energy efficiency. Globally, there is increasing concern that has impacted the implantation of these  
 259 critical systems to reduce global warming, creating new economic opportunities and providing energy  
 260 for billions of people. This type of energy is an extremely important element for global climate  
 261 adaptation [30].

262 The year 2015 was extraordinary for renewable energies with the largest additions of global capacity till  
 263 now although the challenges remain. The year has had several developments that have an impact on  
 264 renewable energy, including a dramatic decline in global fossil fuel prices; a series of announcements  
 265 on the lowest prices of all long-term renewable energy contracts; a significant increase in attention to  
 266 energy storage; and a historic climate agreement in Paris that brought together the global community.  
 267 Rapid growth was driven by a number of factors, including improved cost of renewable technologies,  
 268 policy initiatives, improved access to finance, energy security and environmental concerns, increasing  
 269 energy demand for developing and emerging economies and the need for access to modern energy.  
 270 Consequently, new markets for both centralized and distributed renewable energy are emerging in all  
 271 regions [31].

272 Since 2010, worldwide, there has been an increase in the photovoltaic systems capacity greater than  
 273 had occurred in the last four decades. New systems were installed in 2013 at a rate of 100 MW of  
 274 capacity per day led initially by Germany and Italy [21]. In 2014, 40 GW of capacity was added,  
 275 reaching a total of 177 GW of global capacity [30]. By 2015, it has reached 227GW of global capacity.  
 276 The countries that invested most in these systems were China, Japan and the United States, followed  
 277 by Germany and the United Kingdom [31], as shown in Fig. 5a and 5b. Depending on the evolution of  
 278 the solar energy markets in the coming years, the total capacity installed in 2019 could reach between  
 279 396 and 540 GW with the most likely scenario around 450 GW [15].



280 **Fig. 5. Global Capacity of Photovoltaic Systems (a); Capacity and Additions in 2015 (b) [31].**  
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283 With regard to global warming, the International Energy Agency (IEA) proposes to increase energy  
284 efficiency in industry, buildings and transport; to progressively reduce the use of less efficient coal-fired  
285 power plants and to prohibit their construction; increase investment in renewable energies; reduce  
286 subsidies for fossil fuel consumption and methane emissions from oil and gas production [32].

287 The road map established by the IEA [21] foresees the photovoltaic systems participation by 16% by  
288 2050, a significant increase in the 2010 roadmap target of 11%. China is expected to continue to lead  
289 the global market, accounting for about 37% of global capacity by 2050. This forecast would imply  
290 4,600 GW of installed capacity, avoiding 4 gigatons of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions annually, contributing to market  
291 development with a cost reduction of 25% by 2020, 45% by 2030 and 65% by 2050, leading to a range  
292 of \$ 40 to 160 / MWh, assuming a cost of capital of 8%.

293 The investment path outlined by the IEA [28] is far short of achieving climate stabilization goals, as  
294 today's policies and market signals are not strong enough to shift investment to low carbon sources  
295 and energy efficiency in the scale and speed required. It is estimated that \$ 53 trillion in cumulative  
296 energy supply and energy efficiency investment are required in the period up to 2035 (Scenario 450) to  
297 make the world follow an energy path compatible with the limiting global temperature increase to 2°C  
298 goal, limiting the greenhouse gases concentration in the atmosphere by about 450 parts per million of  
299 CO<sub>2</sub>.

## 300 **5. CONCLUSION**

301  
302 There is scientific evidence that the Earth's temperature is warming and that recent changes in the  
303 climate are most likely due to an increase in greenhouse gases produced by human activities. The  
304 renewable energy use is one of the solutions to adapt to climate change, improving the resilience of  
305 conventional energy systems and contributing to a more diversified and distributed energy matrix [30].

306 The growing global concern about climate change due to the greenhouse gases increase on the planet  
307 has caused Brazil to commit itself to the Paris Agreement at the United Nations Climate Conference to  
308 avoid global warming above 1.5°C [13]. In order to comply with this agreement, the country should  
309 increase the share of renewable energies in the energy matrix so that the technologies combination  
310 balances supply and demand and the country uses its natural resources better.

311 Based on the study presented, photovoltaic solar energy is a renewable energy option to complement  
312 the envisaged energy demand for the coming years, besides that it gives importance to the  
313 conservation of non-renewable resources and reduction of the gases emission from the greenhouse  
314 effect. The most environmentally sustainable policy proposals for Brazil have the scientific and  
315 technological challenge of developing and / or adapting the most eco-efficient solutions. When valuing  
316 natural resources, the green economy inserts a new way of using the territory and the natural  
317 patrimony contained in it [33].

318 Despite the energy sources in Brazil enormous diversity and all the photovoltaic solar energy benefits,  
319 the Brazilian energy policy has not yet created the necessary incentives to implement photovoltaic  
320 solar energy on a large scale and its potential is not used. It is evident that the government needs  
321 projects and incentives for massive implementation, removing regulatory barriers, increasing  
322 incentives, investing in technological capacity and professional training for the technology  
323 development. With more aggressive incentive programs, there will be rapid diffusion and  
324 implementation, contributing both to the supply and to the preservation of the planet and its  
325 ecosystems.

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## 329 **COMPETING INTERESTS**

330  
331 Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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