

Compensation for the use of suitable forest land for solar power generation

Does land use for solar energy compete with other land uses?

Based on the spatially defined LUE of solar energy, as well as the identified potential for solar energy in urban areas, deserts and dry scrublands, land use for solar energy competes with other land uses through the inherent relative profitability of each land use.

Should solar farms be placed over forests or through deforestation?

Placing solar farms over forests or through deforestation should be discouraged. Forests and solar energy are both critical to achieving the climate goals proposed by the Paris Agreement. However, large-scale deployment of solar farms requires vast land areas, potentially posing conflicts with other land uses.

Can unused lands be used to build PV solar farms?

According to the land use policy in China, unused lands, such as deserts, gobi, and wastelands, were considered most suitable for constructing PV solar farms. Using unused lands such as Gobi, desert and wasteland to build PV plants can reduce the construction cost of photovoltaic projects and improve the economy.

How can governments reduce land competition between solar farms and forests?

Governments should act now to mitigate the land competition between solar farms and forests and require technological innovation to place solar farms over deserts, abandoned mines, artificial canals, reservoirs, and rooftops, despite these sites being characterized by more scarce, more unstable, and more expensive solar energy.

Are solar farms a viable alternative to forests?

Forests and solar energy are both critical to achieving the climate goals proposed by the Paris Agreement. However, large-scale deployment of solar farms requires vast land areas, potentially posing conflicts with other land uses. For example, solar farms have been built in forested regions or with a direct cost to forests (through deforestation).

Is solar energy a land use efficiency?

However, recent studies based on satellite views of utility-scale solar energy (USSE) under operation, either in the form of photovoltaics (PV) or concentrated solar power (CSP), show that their land use efficiency (LUE) is up to six times lower than initial estimates¹⁷⁻¹⁹.

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