

**FINANCING  
PUTIN'S  
WAR**

07/2024

# TAIWAN'S IMPORTS OF RUSSIAN COAL ROSE 31% IN LAST 12 MONTHS

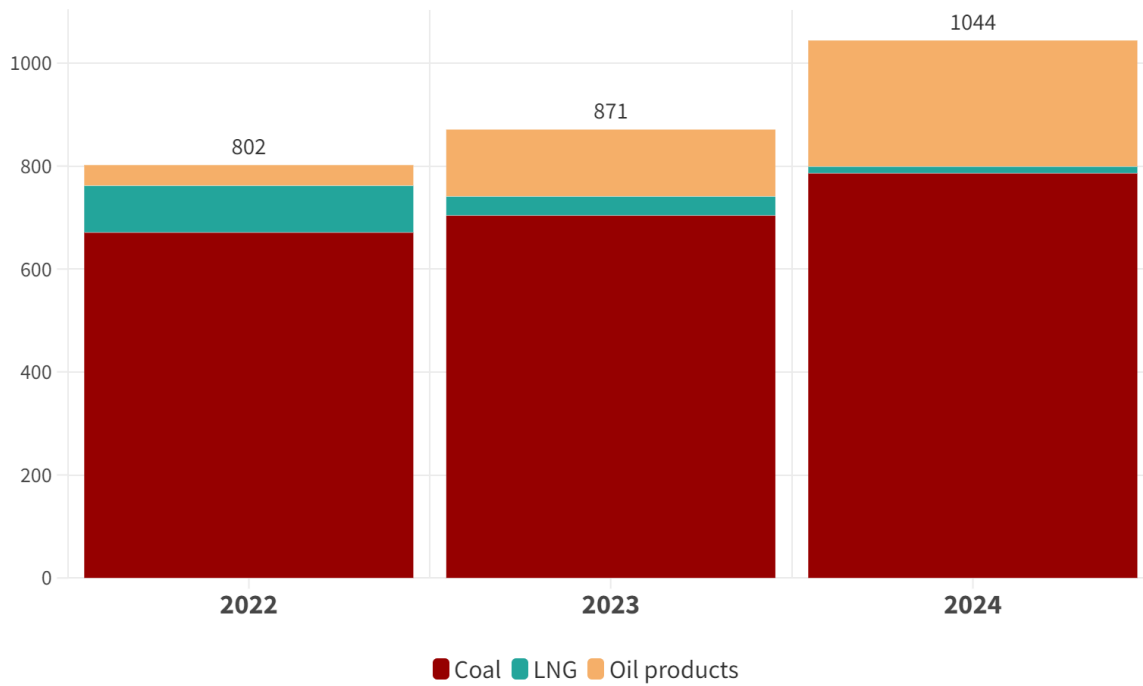
# Taiwan's imports of Russian coal rose 31% in last 12 months

## Key findings

- In 2022, 12% of Taiwan's coal came from Russia whilst, between January and May 2024, Taiwan's reliance on Russia for coal increased to 18%.
- Since the beginning of Putin's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 until the end of May 2024, Taiwan was the fifth largest buyer of Russian coal worldwide, purchasing 5% of all Russia's coal exports.
- Taiwan imported USD 6.6 bn worth of Russian fossil fuels from the beginning of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine until the end of May 2024; coal made up USD 3.5 bn of the total.
- Before Taipower decided to end their purchases of Russian coal in August 2022, they were the island's largest buyer of Russian coal. Despite Taipower not receiving any shipments of Russian coal since September 2022, Taiwan's imports of Russian coal rose 31% in the most recent 12 months due to private companies purchasing more of the commodity from Russia.
- Taiwan imported the second highest value of Russian coal per capita, with the average citizen in Taiwan purchasing USD 147 per person since the full-scale invasion until the end of May 2024.
- Taiwan has bought USD 2.9 bn of Russian oil products since the start of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, a 200% increase in the most recent 12 months compared to the prior year. These purchases of Russian oil products have contributed more than USD 600 mn in tax revenues for the Kremlin.
- Taiwan's reliance on Russian fossil fuels has increased since the full-scale invasion of Ukraine. From January to May 2024, the proportion of oil products imported from Russia more than doubled compared to the same period last year, making up 35% of their total imports in 2024.

## Taiwan's monthly average import volume of Russian fossil fuels

January 2022 until end of May 2024 | Units in thousands of tonnes

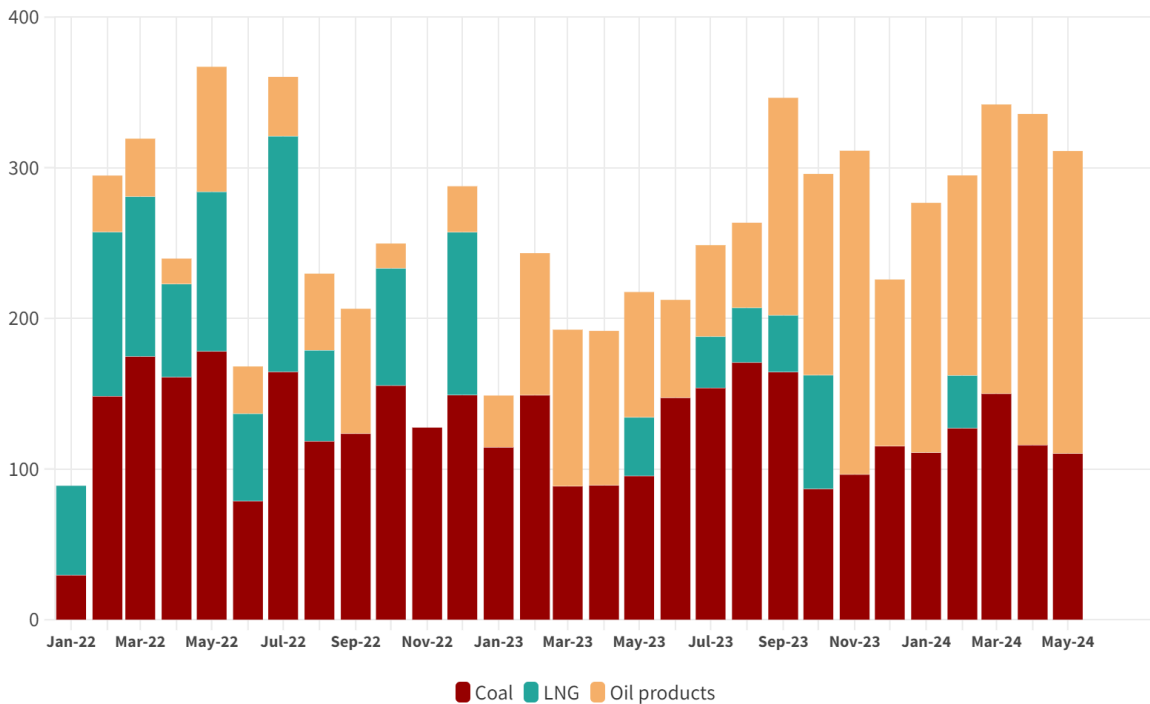


Source: CREA Analysis

# Taiwan is buying more Russian fossil fuels in 2024 than in the two years prior

## Taiwan's monthly imports of Russian fossil fuels by commodity type

January 2022 until end of May 2024 | USD in millions



Source: CREA Analysis



Taiwan imported 24 mn tonnes of Russian fossil fuels from the beginning of Russia’s full-scale invasion at the end of February 2022 until the end of May 2024. Taiwan's average monthly import volume of Russian fossil fuels was 24% higher in the first five months of 2024 compared to the monthly average in 2023. Monthly average coal imports from Russia have been 13% higher in 2024 compared to the previous year. Monthly average import volumes of oil products from Russia also shot up 100% whilst liquified natural gas (LNG) imports fell 65% compared to 2023.

In value terms, Taiwan imported USD 6.6 bn of Russian fossil fuels from the beginning of Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine until the end of May 2024. Coal comprised half of Taiwan’s total purchases of Russian fossil fuels, oil products made up 36% and LNG 14%. In value terms, Taiwan’s monthly average spending on Russian fossil fuels was 2% higher in 2024 compared to the prior year. For Russian coal, Taiwan’s monthly average import value

was 2% higher in 2024 compared to the previous year. Since the EU/G7 sanctions on Russian coal were implemented in August 2022, [Russian coal prices have fallen](#) in the face of price competition as well as Russian sellers having to offer steep discounts to sell to new markets following Western sanctions. The monthly average import value of oil products from Russia rose 100% whilst LNG import value fell 62% compared to 2023.

## Taipower stops buying Russian coal but other companies increase their imports

Taiwan Power Company (also known as Taipower) has previously been a key buyer of Russian coal. Between the start of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 and August 2022, Taipower was the island's biggest buyer of Russian coal. Taipower, however, received its last shipment of Russian coal on 21 September 2022 and has since [publicly declared](#) that they would not be buying any more coal from Russia. According to customs data, Taipower's purchases of Russian coal reached USD 171 mn in 2022, making it the fifth-largest buyer of Russian coal over the period analysed (2022 and 2023<sup>1</sup>) and purchasing 8% of Taiwan's total import value.

In the meantime, private firms have increased their imports of Russian coal that have more than offset the losses from Taipower's decision to stop buying Russian coal. Coal imports into Taiwan have increased by 31% in the most recent 12 months compared to the prior 12-month period in volume terms.

## Taiwan is a key export market for Russia's coal industry

Taiwan was the fifth largest buyer of Russian coal since Putin's full-scale invasion of Ukraine until the end of May 2024, purchasing 5% of all Russia's coal exports. Taiwan purchased USD 3.5 bn of Russian coal since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine. Additionally, Taiwan bought the second highest value of Russian coal per capita out of all the top buyers globally, with the average citizen in Taiwan purchasing USD 147 per person since the full-scale invasion.

---

<sup>1</sup> The data was taken from the [Export Genius dataset](#) for the period between the start of 2022 and the end of 2023.

---

In the last 12 months, Taiwan imported USD 1.57 bn of Russian coal, which rose from USD 1.51 bn the prior year. Over the most recent 12 months, Taiwan purchased 9,744 thousand tonnes, which rose from 7,420 thousand tonnes the prior year.

## Increased reliance on Russian coal poses energy security threats

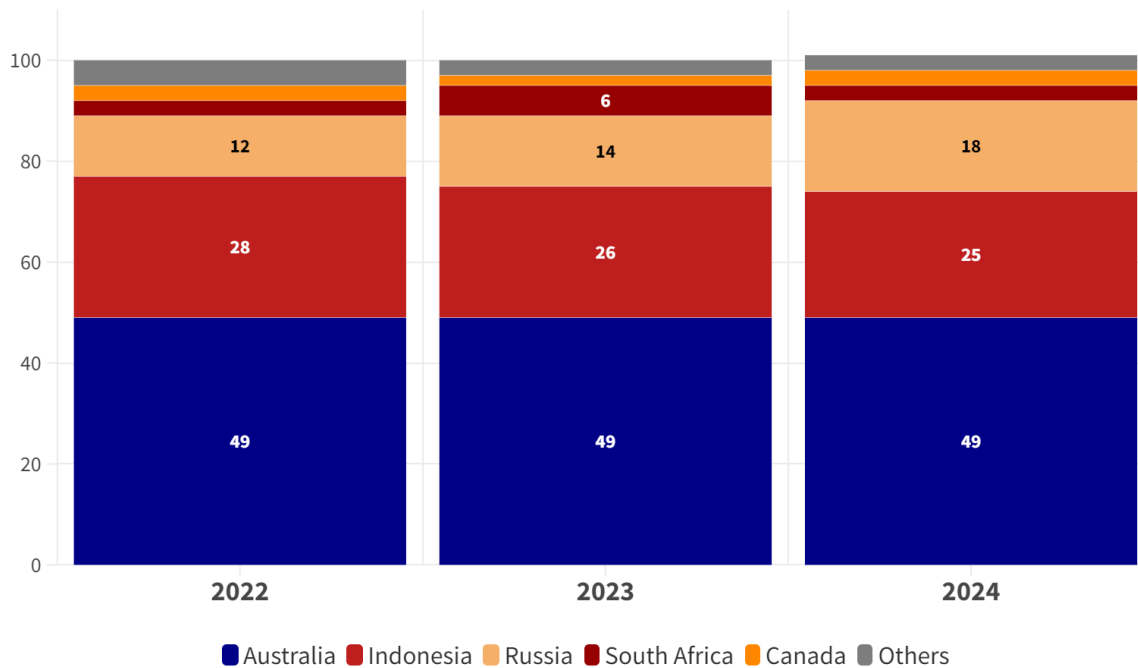
Taiwan is heavily reliant on coal for its power generation. In 2023, [42% of all of Taiwan's power generation came from coal](#). Russia was the third largest seller of coal to Taiwan between late February 2022 and the end of May 2024, amounting to 15% of Taiwan's total coal imports in volume terms. The two largest suppliers of coal to Taiwan were Australia followed by Indonesia.

In 2022, 12% of Taiwan's coal came from Russia whilst between January and May 2024, Taiwan's reliance on Russia for coal increased to 18%.

In the summer of 2022 when [pipeline gas from Russia to Europe was cut](#), unprecedented spikes in gas prices were experienced in Europe. Average household gas prices in the EU shot up [over 200%](#) from the first half of 2021 to October 2022. Any dependence on Russia for fossil fuels comes with the inherent risk that supplies and therefore prices are held to the whims of those in the Kremlin. It is essential that regions such as Taiwan do not increase their reliance on imported fossil fuels from nations that could cut supply, leading to energy security threats and huge spikes in energy prices.

## Taiwan's coal import reliance by country

2022, 2023 and 2024 (January until the end of May in 2024) | % of total coal import volume



Source: CREA Analysis

## Which companies in Taiwan are buying Russian coal?

The chart shown in the Annex of this document provides a list of Taiwan's top 20 buyers of Russian coal by company from the start of 2022 until the end of 2023 (in USD) taken from the [Export Genius database](#).

Taipower has [stated that it made its last payment to Russia for coal imports in August 2022](#). The entity received its last import of Russian coal on 21 September 2022 according to customs data. A spokesperson from the company mentioned that before the war they had agreed to buy USD 280 mn worth of Russian coal in 2022. In 2022, data shows that they bought USD 171 mn between January and September 2022. As Taipower ended its purchases of Russian coal, however, private firms significantly increased their imports from Russia.

The second largest buyer of Russian coal in Taiwan between 2022 and 2023 was a company named Black Sand Commodities FZ LLC that purchased USD 261 mn in that two year period (equivalent to 12% of all Taiwan’s imports that came from Russia). The Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) — the sanctions enforcement and administering agency in the United States — has [apparently placed Black Sand Commodities FZ LLC under sanctions](#).

[Kru Overseas Dmcc](#) and [Kru Overseas limited](#) are two of the three largest buyers in Taiwan of Russian coal; the entities appear to be registered in India and Cyprus respectively. Additionally, the company [Suek Ag](#) bought 6% of Taiwan’s imports of Russian coal between 2022 and the end of 2023 — valued at USD 126 mn. The company Suek was [added to OFAC’s sanction list](#) due to its involvement in providing trucking and other transportation services to the Russian Ministry of Defense. Companies in Taiwan that do business with sanctioned entities risk facing secondary sanctions from OFAC — this could result in their US bank accounts being frozen and their access to US service providers prohibited if they are also added to the sanctions list.

## Cost benefits of Russian coal attracts new buyers but the supply is of lower quality

Based on Taiwan’s customs data taken from the [CPT Statistics Database](#), Russian coal does appear to be purchased at a lower price than non-Russian coal. In Taiwan, the average monthly price of imported Russian coal from the beginning of 2022 until the end of January 2024 was USD 180 per tonne. Taiwan purchased non-Russian coal at a monthly average price of USD 230 dollars per tonne during the same time frame. Taiwan’s imports of Russian coal therefore were 22% cheaper than non-Russian coal. The quality of the coal, often measured by the grade or calorific value, purchased from Russia compared to other key suppliers such as Australia and Indonesia, will vary, therefore influencing the price difference.

In 2024, only 1% of Taiwan’s imports of high calorific value coal came from Russia whilst Australia supplied over 86% of this high-grade coal. Of Taiwan’s imports of Russian thermal coal, about 2% was of high calorific value in comparison to Australian — 72% of Australia’s exports to Taiwan comprised high calorific value coal. Furthermore, Russia made up 5% of Taiwan’s imports of high calorific value coal but supplied 15% of Taiwan’s total coal imports from the start of Putin’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine until the end of May 2024. This analysis shows that Russia exports a higher proportion of low quality coal to Taiwan



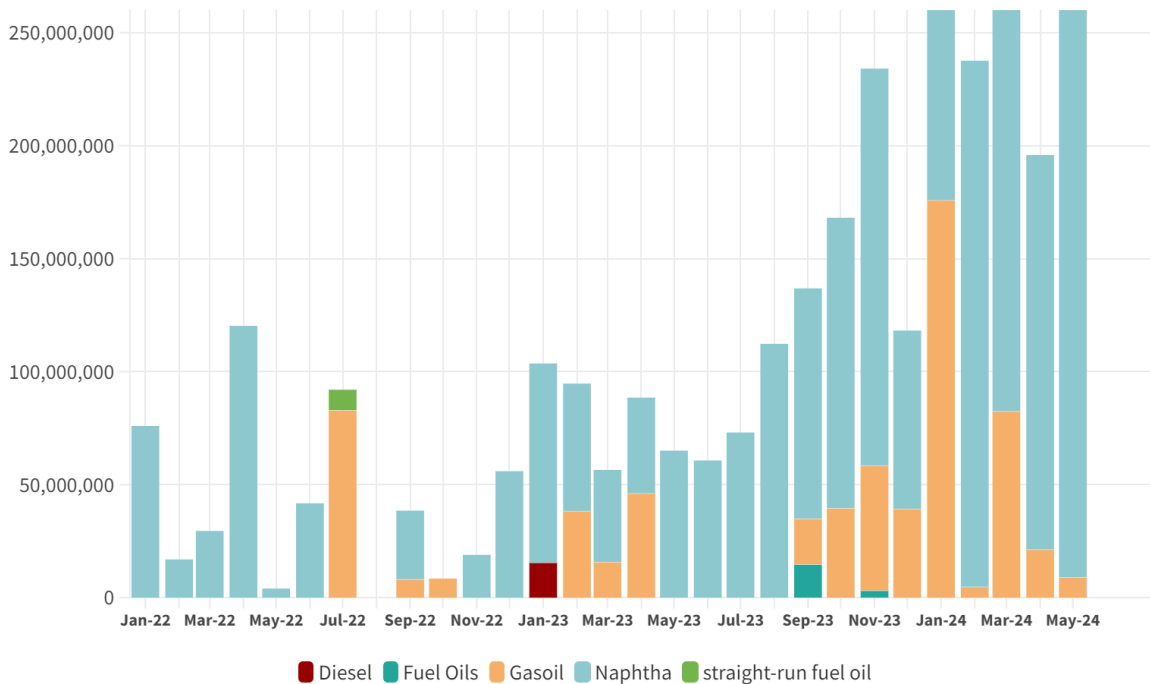
compared to its other trade partners. This therefore shows that Russian coal of lower price was also of lower calorific value or quality. The difference in the lower average quality or calorific value of Russian coal partially explains why it is sold to Taiwan at a lower price than coal from Australia, the largest supplier to Taiwan.

## Taiwan’s imports of Russian refined oil has doubled in the most recent 12 months

Taiwan’s imports of Russian oil products have shot up over the last two years. Taiwan’s import volumes of Russian oil products increased over 200% in the most recent year compared to the prior 12 months.

### Taiwan's monthly import value of Russian oil products by type

January 2022 until end of May 2024 | Units in USD



Source: CREA Analysis

According to CREA’s data, Russia was the second largest supplier of oil products to Taiwan following the United Arab Emirates between the start of Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine at the end of February 2022 and the end of May 2024. 16% of all of Taiwan’s imported oil products came from Russia (3,819 thousand tonnes) over the same period. However, in 2024 (between January and May), the proportion of oil products imported

---

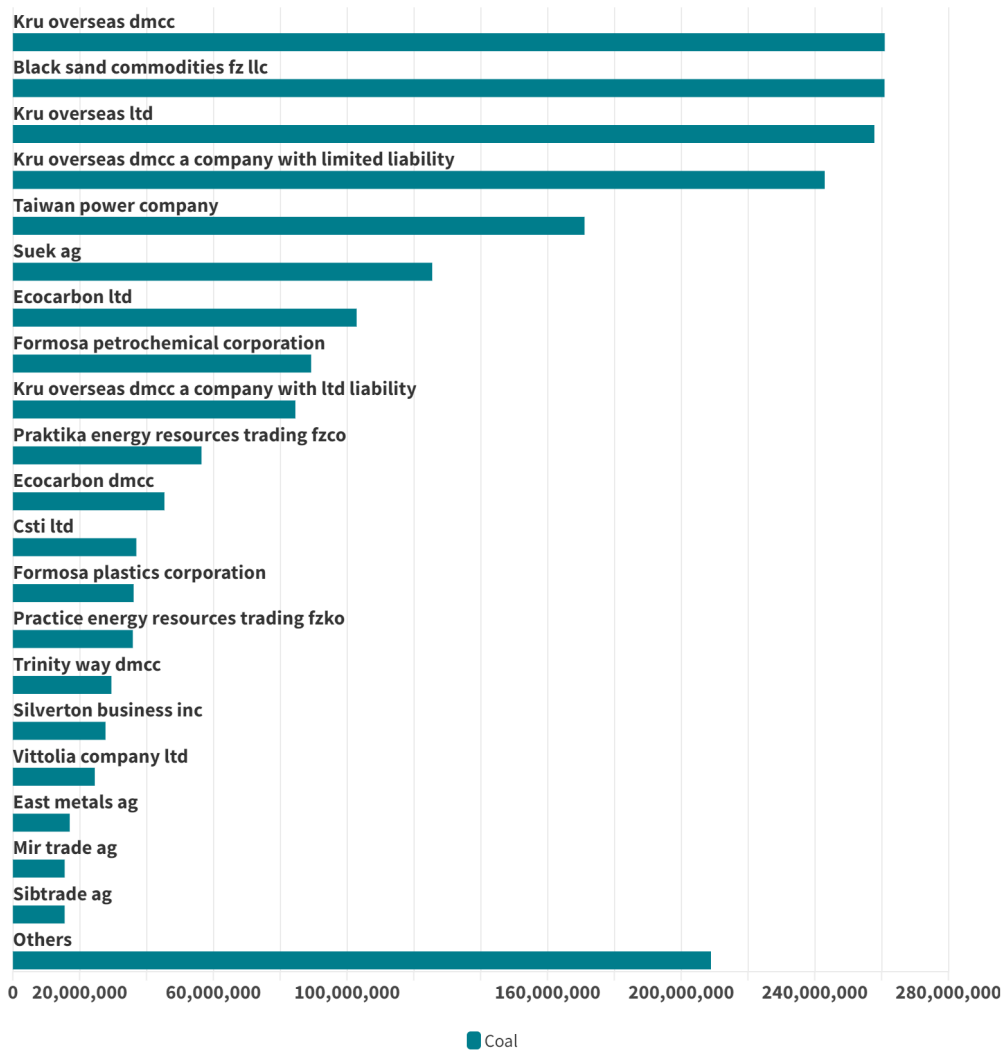
from Russia more than doubled compared to the same period last year, making up 35% of Taiwan's total imports. 81% of Taiwan's imported Russian oil products were Naphtha fuel, the rest was gasoil, and other fuel oils. From an energy security angle, it is essential that Taiwan reduce its reliance on energy sources from one seller to avoid the threat of spikes in prices and supply issues.

Since the start of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, Taiwan has bought USD 2.9 bn of Russian oil products. Conservative estimates state that Taiwan's purchases of Russian oil products since the start of Putin's full-scale invasion of Ukraine have contributed more than USD 600 mn to the Kremlin in tax revenues. Fossil fuels play a key role in financing Russia's military expansion and aggression in Ukraine. The Russian budget is hugely dependent on revenues from fossil fuels — estimates state that around 30% of the [Kremlin tax revenues](#) came from oil and gas in 2023 — and any losses cascade into limiting the Kremlin's federal budget. In 2024, [almost one-third](#) of Russia's total budget expenditure will be spent on national defence. This highlights the importance for Ukraine's allies to end their purchases of Russian fossil fuels that are financing Putin's war chest.

# Annex

## Top 20 companies in Taiwan buying Russian coal

Since the beginning of 2022 until the end of 2023 | USD of coal bought



Source: CREA Analysis using Export Genius data based on customs declarations

---

## Methodology and data sources

We use Kpler to track the seaborne fossil fuel exports from Russia. Kpler uses a variety of sources and metrics, including historical and live automatic identification system (AIS) data as well as customs data. Kpler implements their own models to estimate volumes and commodities exported on each shipment. More details on our data methodology for Russia's fossil fuel exports can be found [here](#). We undertook a comparison of Taiwan's imports of Russian fossil fuels as reported in Taiwan's customs data with the Kpler trade data to find similar estimates. We use multiple datasets to verify our findings.

Data on different regions' populations was taken from the [World Population Review figures for 2024](#) to calculate the USD spent on Russian fossil fuel imports per capita.

The methodology used to calculate Russian tax revenues associated with the exports of Russian oil products is detailed in the methodology section of [this document](#). We have used the conservative estimate of the Kremlin's tax revenues from associated oil products exports calculated as 22% of the export value.



---

## About CREA

The Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air (CREA) is an independent research organisation focused on revealing the trends, causes, health impacts, and solutions to air pollution. CREA uses scientific data, research, and evidence to support the efforts of governments, companies, and campaigning organisations worldwide to move towards clean energy and clean air, believing that effective research and communication are the keys to successful policies, investment decisions, and advocacy efforts. CREA was founded in Helsinki and has staff in several Asian and European countries.

## About Environmental Rights Foundation

Environmental Rights Foundation (ERF) is an NPO based in Taiwan. Its mission is to protect environmental rights as stipulated in the country's Constitution, the Basic Environment Act and other environmental laws.

ERF focuses on three key areas: environmental rights protection, community empowerment, and democracy deepening. The foundation provides legal assistance to affected communities domestically and abroad, advocates the right to participate in the decision-making process of environmental matters, and seeks to achieve environmental justice.

## About Ecodefense

Established in 1989, Ecodefense is one of the oldest environmental groups in Russia. Ecodefense campaigns for the climate, safe energy and the protection of nature. After Russia started the full-scale invasion in Ukraine in 2022, Ecodefense relocated to Europe where they are campaigning for peace and climate issues. The group has won a number of international awards including the Right Livelihood and the Baltic Sea Award. Ecodefense is funded by charitable non-governmental grants.