

Africa-EU Renewable Energy Cooperation Programme

Creating opportunities for renewable energy



Fact File

ECOWAS RENEWABLE ENERGY POLICY (EREP) ECOWAS

Background

Almost all of the 15 countries in the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) face the challenges of ensuring energy security, providing energy access and reducing the environment impacts of energy use. Low electrification rates and unreliable supply are holding back economic development and high reliance on wood-fuel no longer meets the growing demand, leading to an overexploitation of wood resources.

Due to growing energy deficit within ECOWAS, many member states wish to mainstream renewable energy into their national policies. However substantial policy gaps remain in the way of achieving this. Policy gaps exist on how to accommodate renewable energy based power generation systems, either as stand-alone systems or embedded in the existing energy supply systems. Regulations are often not in place to attract potential independent power producers; feed-in tariffs and technical regulations for power generation are insufficiently addressed by some current policies and regulations.

The growing need for a regional policy for renewable energy in the ECOWAS region thus became apparent. Such a policy was needed to complement or facilitate the adoption of national policies and promote a regional market for renewable energy investments.

In 2008, the ECOWAS Council of Ministers formally established the ECOWAS Regional Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (ECREEE). The overall objective of ECREEE is to contribute to the sustainable economic, social and environmental development of West Africa by improving access to modern, reliable and affordable energy services, energy security and reducing energy related GHG emissions.

The ECOWAS Renewable Energy Policy (EREP) was spear-headed by ECREEE and supported by the EUEI PDF through the Africa-EU Renewable Energy Cooperation Programme (RECP).



PROJECT OVERVIEW

Region	ECOWAS
Project partner	ECOWAS Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (ECREEE)
Term	September 2011 – October 2012

Objectives

The objective of EREP was to facilitate renewable energy investments and applications at regional and national levels, to enhance energy access, energy security and help to reduce the energy system's environmental impacts. The vision of the EREP is to support universal access to electricity in the region by 2030, by increasing use of renewable energy, and facilitate transition to more sustainable and safe provision of domestic energy services for cooking. This will enhance the region's socio-economic development and reduce negative environmental externalities and dependence on imported fossil fuels.

The EREP adds value by working at regional level to garner political support for renewable energy, with the aim of catalysing both regional initiatives, including harmonisation of policies and standards, as well as enhanced national policy frameworks, targets and action plans. Furthermore, the EREP aims at mainstreaming gender in renewable energy-related issues and strengthening synergies between regional renewable energy and energy efficiency policies.

Activities

The regional policy approach was developed with the support of ECOWAS Member States. The development of the EREP involved extensive analysis of existing policy frameworks including assess-





ment of the effectiveness, coherence and gaps of policies at both national and regional levels. The work took into account recent experience in Europe and other parts of the world.

The initial assessment included establishment of the status quo for renewables, market trends and potentials and the development of feasible short and long-term renewable energy targets for the ECOWAS region. This was followed by the development of a set of renewable energy policy instruments (regulatory, fiscal, financial and technical).

The process of developing EREP involved continuous consultation with ECOWAS Member States including:

- » national consultations, with the support of ECREEE national focal points
- » a consultation and validation workshop in Dakar in June 2012, attended by senior officials from all ECOWAS member states.

These consultations resulted in a baseline study and policy guidelines, which were subsequently adopted by ECOWAS Energy Ministers at a High-Level Forum in Accra, Ghana, in October 2012.

The EREP included an Implementation Strategy based on the principle of subsidiarity. Accordingly, ECREEE's suggested role was to take charge of developing activities having an added value at the regional level, while Member States were encouraged to prepare and adopt their own National Renewable Energy Policies (NREPs) and Action Plans. The EREP comprised six key actions:

1. To secure a coherent, efficient and flexible legal institutional and regulatory framework in order to develop consistency between regional and national renewable energy policies
2. Member States to develop or revisit National Renewable Energy Policies (NREPs) with associated implementation strategies and five-year rolling plans
3. Actions to make renewable energy power production an attractive business proposition for private investors and entrepreneurs.
4. Actions to enhance the capacity of actors in the renewable energy sector at national and regional levels.

5. Financial intermediation at national and regional levels, with the aim of increasing the involvement of private and banking sectors.
6. Advocacy, awareness raising and knowledge management at national and regional levels.

Three groups of regional targets, to be met by 2020 and 2030, were established on 1) grid-connected renewable energy; 2) off-grid; 3) domestic applications and biofuels. These targets will be used to monitor regional progress with regard to renewable energy.

Results

In June 2013 the EREP was adopted by the ECOWAS council, and in July 2013 ECOWAS Heads of State approved and signed the document highlighting the political commitment to the renewables sector in the region. By consensus it has been agreed by all Member States that the EREP Policy will be the guiding document to develop national renewable energy policies (where they do not exist already) and action plans, demonstrating the value of policy development at regional level.

Follow up

ECREEE is driving the follow-up to the endorsement of the EREP. To date templates for the National Renewable Energy Action Plans (NREAPs) have been developed and validated by Member States. The NREAPs will include a national renewable energy benchmark outlining the status quo, and will propose attainable targets based on national potential and socio-economic assessments. The plans will also propose laws, incentives and measures to help countries achieve their targets.

The next stage involves development of the NREAPs and where required, National Renewable Energy Policies (NREPs). In parallel a monitoring system will be established to check progress within member states.

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