

SADC Regional Energy Access Strategy and Action Plan

Background

Over 250 million people in 15 countries make up the Southern African Development Community (SADC), where access to energy is frequently restricted, inadequate and often harmful to health. The core objective of the intergovernmental SADC is to promote sustainable and equitable economic growth and socio-economic development. Improving access to modern energy services is clearly a prerequisite for the sustainable development of the entire region and is a major element of SADC's work. The 1996 SADC Energy Protocol, signed in Maseru, Lesotho, therefore identifies the need for a coordinated approach to formulating and planning a regional energy strategy.

In light of this, the SADC secretariat requested the support of EUEI PDF in developing a Regional Strategy for Energy Access and an Action Plan for its implementation.

EUEI PDF in turn contracted the Economic Consulting Association to develop the Strategy and Action Plan in order to meet the region's current and future energy needs.

Strategic Targets

For SADC to determine which activities would be most effective, the following goals were agreed at a high-level Regional Energy Access Workshop in 2009:

Region	SADC
Project Partner	SADC Secretariat
Project Manager	Ingmar Stelter
Term	March 2009 – April 2010

- ▶ Strategic goal: Through national and regional action, Member States will harness regional energy resources to ensure that all citizens of the SADC Region have access to adequate, reliable, least-cost and environmentally sustainable energy services.
- ▶ Operational goal: Endeavour to halve the number of people without access to energy within 10 years and halve this number again in successive five year periods until universal access for all end-users is achieved.

Strategy Actions

The following points were identified to achieve these goals:

Energy Access Statistics

Statistical data is needed to determine the priority areas of current policies, strategies and plans. To generate this data, and as a first step of the Regional Strategy, questionnaires were sent to the Directors of Energy of all SADC Member States in early April 2009.

Based on these findings, the following tools were developed to improve the quality of planning and measure the impact of strategies:

- ▶ An energy access index
- ▶ Guidelines for energy access reporting
- ▶ A baseline SADC energy statistics yearbook
- ▶ An annual report on SADC Energy Access

These tools will enable a better understanding of the current status of national energy sectors, which in future will lead to improved policies.



Energy is a driving force for economic development. Renewable energy can help increase economic productivity and social development in the SADC region.



A pilot local off-grid electrification plan was developed and discussed.

Energy Portfolio to Meet End User Needs

Most SADC citizens live in rural areas and use a variety of inefficient and low-intensity energy sources, which are often harmful to their health. The strategy thus states that the varied uses of light, heat and power demand a range of energy types and must utilise least-cost and socially acceptable energy services for each end use.

More awareness of existing methods to access energy and of new, successful and suitable approaches for the SADC region were raised through:

- ▶ The creation of a SADC Energy website
- ▶ Replicable and commercially viable pilot projects in many SADC countries

The Continued Importance of Biomass

There is little doubt that biomass has a dominant role in the current and future energy balance of most SADC countries. To harness this resource more efficiently, sustainable biomass production needs to increase and more uses must be found for biomass through the development of inexpensive standalone biomass energy technologies.

Economics of Energy Access: Prices and Subsidies

Expanding modern energy services is best achieved when economic principles determine energy pricing and subsidy policies. Recommendations for better targeting of subsidies were discussed with stakeholders and included in guidelines for national energy strategies.

Energy Access and Development

It is not just improved access that counts in the SADC region, but also energy-efficient use. Additionally, productive use must be included in energy investment plans so as to boost economic development and reduce poverty.

Energy Access and Capacity Building

To develop a long-term commitment to their energy goals and objectives, SADC Member States not only need experts with technical know-how, but also the procedures, incentives and governance structures to put their know-how to use.

Institutional and individual performances in terms of policy making, regulatory oversight and energy delivery can be improved by:

- ▶ Exchange visits
- ▶ Blogs
- ▶ Establishment of borrowing options for pilot projects (drawdown facilities)
- ▶ Regional experience sharing

The Way Forward

Ministers at the 31st Meeting of SADC Energy Ministers in April 2010 in Luanda, Angola, approved the EUEI PDF-supported document and urged Member States to develop national roadmaps based on the SADC Regional Energy Access Strategy and Action Plan. A number of SADC Member States have requested further technical assistance from EUEI PDF in developing their roadmaps.

For more information,
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