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Sustainable Energy for All (SEforALL)

1. Background/Context

The Sustainable Energy for All (SEforALL) initiative is a multi-stakeholder partnership between Governments, development partners, the private sector, and civil society. Launched by the UN Secretary-General in 2011, it has three interlinked objectives to be achieved by 2030:

1. Ensuring universal access to modern energy services;
2. Doubling the global rate of improvement in energy efficiency; and
3. Doubling the share of renewable energy in the global energy mix.

SEforALL has been a driving force for the intergovernmental processes related to energy in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for the post-2015 development agenda. As a result, energy has been centrally placed as goal number 7 in the SDGs, which stipulates “*access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all by 2030*”. The objective and its accompanying targets on energy access, energy efficiency and renewable energy build on the objectives of SEforALL.

The SEforALL is implemented by the Global Team - now a registered nonprofit organization - based in Vienna, SEforALL’s Advisory Board, a unique body co-chaired by the UN Secretary-General and the President of the World Bank Group providing strategic guidance to the initiative. Regional Hubs facilitate the implementation of the initiative at the regional level and Thematic Hubs support SEforALL’s key thematic areas.

In Africa, the SEforALL Africa Hub is hosted by the African Development Bank in partnership with the African Union Commission, the NEPAD Agency, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the Regional Economic Communities (RECs). In 2016, SADC joined the Oversight Committee of the Hub representing the RECs and replacing ECOWAS. The Africa Hub was the first of the SEforALL Hubs to be established in 2013, following a mandate from the Conference of Energy Ministers of Africa (CEMA) in 2012.

The SEforALL Africa Hub has been at the forefront of the implementation of the initiative, contributing particularly in four areas of actions: policy elaboration and guidelines, technical assistance, finance mobilization knowledge management. This leadership role has been recognized in the Strategic Framework for SEforALL that was finalized in July 2016 referring to the Africa Hub as “*the most active of the Regional Hubs*”.

2. The status of SEforALL implementation in Africa

The SEforALL Africa Hub has led the development of the SEforALL country action processes, including the design of the SEforALL Action Agenda template, the set-up of the quality circle review mechanism and the development of the Investment Prospectus concept note. As of February 2018, Action Agendas were developed in 20 countries, while in 9 they are being finalized. The Investment Prospectuses were developed in 4 countries, while in 23 countries they are currently being finalized (see: Figure 1). The Action Agendas processes followed, in most cases, the guidance provided the Africa Hub. In the ECOWAS region the Action Agenda and Investment

Prospectus development processes have been following a regionally coordinated approach, led by ECREEE.

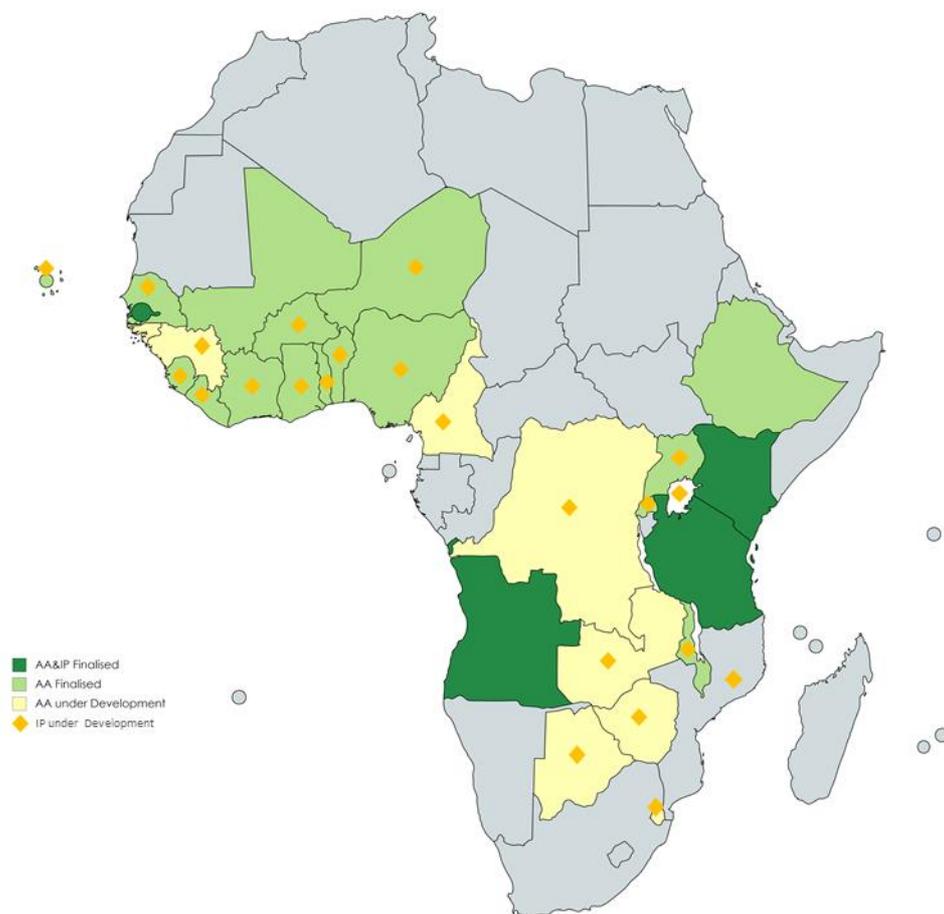


Figure 1- Countries developing the AA and IP as of February 2018

The role of the Action Agenda as a suitable national implementation framework for the implementation of SDG 7 Several has been highlighted in several international and African processes and documents, such as the SEforALL Advisory Board meeting (May 2015), the Financing for Development Outcome Document (July 2015), the G20 Action Plan on Energy Access in Sub-Saharan Africa (October 2015), the SEforALL Africa Workshop outcome document (February 2016).

The first Ordinary Session of the African Union Specialized Technical Committee on Transport, Intercontinental and Interregional Infrastructure, Energy and Tourism (STC-TIIET) that took place in March 2017, brought about the Declaration of Lomé, in which the convened African Ministers affirm:

“The role of the Sustainable Energy for All (SEforALL) Action Agendas as a suitable implementation framework for SDG7 at the national level and platform for coordination of partners”

And request that:

“The SEforALL Africa Hub to continue its coordination and facilitation role for the implementation of SEforALL in Africa and to place a particular focus on mobilizing support towards implementation of the priorities identified in the Action Agendas and Investment Prospectuses”,

While recommending that:

“The Member States ... set-up national Coordination Units to facilitate the implementation of the SEforALL Action Agendas”

In the last year, next to continuing the work on developing national SEforALL Action Agenda and Investment Prospectuses, the SEforALL Africa Hub has been shifting its focus on how to move from agenda setting to implementation. A key instrument for catalyzing investments, for instance, is the African Energy Market Place (AEMP): a new energy investment delivery platform developed by the AfDB to be launched in the second half of 2018. The AEMP is a tri-partite energy sector platform involving governments, the private sector, and development partners with the objectives to: (i) agree on required sector reforms to increase private investment into the energy sector, (ii) fast-track ongoing deals with challenges to bankability and (iii) generate new deal pipeline by moving projects from concept to bankability.

Furthermore, the SEforALL Africa Hub supported the establishment of SEforALL Secretariats in Kenya and Tanzania, aimed at ensuring a better coordination of SEforALL Activities at a national level.

3. Challenges

In many African countries a majority of the population remains without access to both clean cooking and electricity. Crucially, despite some progress, in almost all countries the access growth rate is slower than the required pace to achieve universal energy access, particularly in rural areas.

Most recent data from the SEforALL Global Tracking framework 2017 shows that between 2012 and 2014 the electricity access shares in Africa slightly increased from 45.1% to 46.9%, with new connections able to surpass population growth to some extent. The increase, however, has been concentrated in urban areas, while in rural areas population growth still exceeds the energy access rate. Excluding the countries that are already close to the target (like Cabo Verde 90%, Gabon 89% and South Africa 86%), no other country is progressing so far at a pace that is compatible with universal energy access in 2030. The ones that are closer to the required trajectory are Comoros and, to a lesser extent, Ghana and Equatorial Guinea.

For the clean cooking sector, the data does not show signs of significant improvement so far. Between 2000 and 2014, the share of the population cooking with clean fuels and technologies edged up only marginally, from 24.6% to 26.0%.

Although energy access is clearly a priority for Africa, the renewable energy and energy efficiency objectives are not less important, and in many ways the objectives are interconnected. For example, in the case of rural areas with dispersed population, off-grid renewable energy systems are in most cases

the fastest and cheapest way to expand access to electricity and the use of highly efficient appliances is mandatory to maximize the energy services delivered.

Implementing the SEforALL/SDG 7 objectives at country-level presents many challenges, notably in terms of institutional capacity, coordination, monitoring, and financing:

- Reinforcement of the institutional capacity of energy ministries, regulators, rural electrification agencies, utilities and other institutions to deliver on the national Action Agendas is key. In this regard it is important – and envisaged in many Action Agendas – that an “institutionalization” of the SEforALL initiative takes place at country level, i.e. with the setting-up of a dedicated implementation/delivery unit (i.e. SEforALL secretariat) and of a multi-partner and inter-ministerial coordination group(s);
- The ability of countries to attract adequate financing (both from public and private sources including domestic funds) to make the necessary investments is probably the most important condition to be met to progress towards universal energy access. The priorities identified in the Action Agendas and the investment opportunities identified in the Investment Prospectuses require substantial support in terms of technical assistance and notably investments. The mobilization of these resources from public and private sources (including domestic resource mobilization) is therefore of critical importance. Linking demand with supply will be important including through dedicated platforms and initiatives, such as AfDB’s Africa Energy Market Place (AEMP) mentioned previously;
- Another challenge that needs to be addressed concerns the monitoring of the energy access targets. Energy access monitoring is particularly complex given that the binary indicators of access, which are still widely used today, do not give a sufficient level of granularity to assess in detail the changes in access conditions. The new Multi-tier Energy Access Framework (MTF) – developed by the World Bank in the context of SEforALL – provides a much more detailed and accurate approach to measure energy access.

4. Issues to be discussed by STC experts

The following issues should be addressed and discussed by the STC Experts during First Ordinary Session of the STC Sub-Committee on Energy of the STC on Transport, Intercontinental and Interregional Infrastructure, Energy and Tourism (STC-TTIET), from 21 – 23 March, 2018 in Nouakchott, Mauritania:

- How continuous improvement, updating and showcasing of the Action Agendas and Investment Prospectuses with a view to mobilizing the financing needed for projects and reforms be ensured?

- As we scale-up national SEforALL Coordination Units, what key tasks and functions should they be performing to support AA and IP coordination and implementation processes?
- How can the monitoring of energy access be improved using new methodologies such as the Multi-tier Energy Access Framework (MTF)?
- Beyond promoting investments, what should be other priorities for the SEforALL Africa Hub?

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