

Gearing up Africa's energy transition by conducive policy and legislative frameworks

**4th of December 2023,
13.30 – 15:00**

Italy Pavilion, COP28 Side Event, Dubai Expo City

Africa's most pressing priority is its imperative for sustainable socio-economic development. African countries have an urgent and immense need to accelerate economic growth, develop infrastructures, create jobs, and expand access to basic services (education, healthcare, access to water, food and energy, among others). The socio-economic transformation of African countries will depend upon the ability to accelerate infrastructural development and industrialisation, and in order to do that on its ability to expanding access to modern, reliable and affordable energy. Indeed, energy and development are closely intertwined.

Policy and regulatory frameworks play a crucial role in the building of an enabling business environment. However, in the African context, investors point out policy and regulatory risks as a major – if not the major – barrier and deterrent to private sector participation in electricity infrastructure development. The scale-up of private investment is seen as necessary to achieve SDG-7 goals on the African continent but in order to do so enhancing policy and regulatory frameworks is a precondition to grow investment to the needed levels.

Attaining these goals will require a data-driven and fact-based dialogue on the current strengths and weaknesses of Africa's electricity framework, building consensus and acceptance of reform plans guided by successful experiences in Africa and globally, and strengthening the capacity of national regulators to drive reforms and monitor their proper implementation.

This side event will specifically focus on the critical area of conceiving and implementing an electricity sector reform agenda that explicitly take into account the need to crowd-in private sector investments to accelerate the sustainable transformation of electricity sectors in Africa and on the role of technical assistance programs to accelerate such outcome.

As part of the discussion, the side event will (1) present the main results of the collaboration between UNECA and RES4Africa Foundation on assessing electricity policy and regulatory environment in 16 African markets; (2) present the main targets and activities related to the European twinning programs developed by the Italian clean energy agency GSE in order to strengthen the institutional and technical capacity of the Malawi Energy Regulatory Authority; (3) introduce tools and instruments that can help decision-makers and regulators make informed decisions to plan, design, and implement reform plans; (4) provide a platform for dialogue on policy and regulatory challenges and solutions to accelerate private sector investment in Africa's electricity sector.

Participants in the side event will have the opportunity to take stock of the latest assessments and insights to contribute their perspectives and solutions as part of this conversation. By stimulating debate on these issues, the side event aims to discuss forward-looking ideas that will help African countries reform their policy and regulatory frameworks.

Tentative Agenda

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10 minutes	Welcoming remarks by RES4Africa and GSE
1 hour	<p>Advancing regulatory and policy improvements to accelerate private sector investment in electricity access and transition in Africa</p> <p>In conversation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Roberto Vigotti, Secretary General, RES4Africa Foundation - Yohannes Hailu, Economic Affairs Officer, PSDFD- Energy Infrastructure & Services Section, UNECA - Antonio Nodari, Head of Central & South Europe Region, AFRY Management Consulting - Alberto Biancardi, Head of International Affairs GSE - Dennis Mwangonde, Senior Economic Regulation Specialist, Malawi Energy Regulatory Authority (online) - Luciano Martini, Director of Distribution and Transmission Technologies, RSE <p>Moderator: Paolo Cutrone, Area Manager, RES4Africa</p>
10 minutes	Q&A session
10 minutes	<p>Closing remarks</p> <p>Roberta Ronzitti, Director International Environmental Cooperation, Italian Ministry for Environment and Energy Security</p>