



## Editorial

Prof. Bernard McNelis  
Managing Director, IT Power  
Programme Leader, IEA-RESDC

IT Power was formed almost thirty years ago, when “IT” meant Intermediate Technology, NOT “Information Technology”. The aim of the founders was to develop and promote Renewable Energies Technologies for Electrification and Basic Rural Services. We emerged from a team principally developing a “modern” mechanical wind pump for drinking water supply and irrigation (The IT Windpump), with partners in Botswana, Egypt, India, Kenya, Oman and Pakistan. But our first commercial contract was with the World Bank to undertake the Global Solar Pumping Programme (1978 – 1984) when our team tested equipment in the UK and conducted field trials of PV pumps in Egypt, Mali, Philippines and Sudan, and market potential studies in Bangladesh, Brazil, Kenya, Mexico, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Thailand. Another early contract was to assist the World Health Organisation (WHO) starting in 1981 to develop solar vaccine refrigerators. This all sounds like ancient history now, but the message we developed has not changed: decentralised renewable energy systems, particularly PV, in small solar home systems or village mini-grids, can provide services, such as lighting, water supply and refrigeration, far better than any of the alternatives.

Ten years ago, we started to work through the International Energy Agency (IEA) to further promote PV for developing countries. The justification was the huge number of failures of PV Systems in developing countries, mostly supplied by well-meaning international donor agencies, such as the European Development Fund. PV was generally described by the aid community as an expensive technology which did not work! As Task 9 of the IEA Photovoltaic Power Systems Programme (PVPS), now known as “Renewable Energy Services for Developing Countries” (RESDC), an international team has been striving to overcome repetition of past failures, through preparation and promotion of Recommended Practice Guides.

We, IT Power and RESDC, welcome the formation of the Alliance for Rural Electrification, and we are delighted to be members. We were pleased to have our last experts meeting hosted by EPIA in the Renewable Energy House, and to have EPIA and ARE as active members. Our current work programme has a major element on water services, where we will build on the achievements of the past and with a serious input from the PV pump industry. Our next event will be a workshop on PV pumping for the African Development Bank, in Tunis in early 2008.

There is a huge challenge ahead. In the recent past there has been a significant increase in International funding, but some of the old mistakes have been perpetuated! It is time for a new look. PV is uniquely capable of delivering on several of the targets of the Millennium Development Goals. RESDC’s mission is to help make this happen. But funding must be increased orders of magnitude, while contractual bureaucracy, endless feasibility and market studies; project micro-management by donors, audits and the like must also be reduced by orders of magnitude!

The Alliance for Rural Electrification can be the catalyst for this change of mindset, and has already made an impressive start.



## News from the Alliance

### **New members in the Alliance and new partnerships**

Two large industries (CONERGY, QCELLS), an important consulting company ( IT POWER) and a Spanish energy agency, the “Instituto para Diversificación y Ahorro de la Energía” (IDAE -The Spanish Institute for Energy Diversification and saving -) have become members of ARE.

Through these memberships, the renewable energy industry is showing, once again with facts, their willingness to be present within the emerging off-grid markets and to develop socially responsible actions that will contribute to increase the access to electricity within the developing world. Moreover, by joining ARE, they are showing their trust in the Alliance’s added value.

Likewise, IDAE is setting an institutional example of commitment with clean and environmentally friendly technologies and, like the private sector, is also expressing its determination to move from words to actions by actively participating within ARE activities in the field of rural electrification

We hope that more energy agencies will follow the example in the near future!

These new members will bring in different and complementary expertise which will reinforce the position of ARE and increase the quality of its work as well as its possibilities.

Likewise, these new partnerships are also the result of the integrative, global and result-based approach of the Alliance. In fact, through its activities especially the Working Groups, the Alliance is slowly gaining confidence and representation among the main actors of the renewable energy market.

### **ARE-IEA PVPS Task 9**

Talking of partnerships, ARE has also linked with the International Energy Agency through its Photovoltaic Power System Program (IEA PVPS) which has a task devoted to PV and developing countries.

Bernard Mc Neelis, program leader, presenting the Task 9:

*“The International Energy Agency’s (IEA) Implementing Agreement on Photovoltaic Power Systems (PVPS) was signed by 20 member countries in 1991. Initially all the tasks contained in the agreement were related to applications with IEA countries, almost all grid-connected. But a few “activists” within the PVPS team argued that a logical place to develop PV markets would be in the unelectrified rural areas of developing countries, where PV was already cost-competitive.*

*Over time, this message got through, and at the same time the IEA adopted a new policy for Technology Co-operation with non-member countries. So, after a lot of effort and argument, Task 9 of the PVPS was finally approved in Sydney in 1998 and had its first formal Experts Meeting in Utrecht in 1999 (...).”*

This task, composed by PV experts as well as by representatives of the World Bank and United Nations Development Program, is working to increase the sustainable use of PV and other renewable energy technologies in developing countries.

During the last meeting of Task 9, ARE had the opportunity to present its work and to explain its goals. The Alliance succeeded in raising the interest of this Task, as both organizations are committed to the same objectives.

We were also recognized our added value as a direct representative of the Industry involved in rural electrification within developing countries. Therefore, we set up the first milestone towards the development of future joint activities .

“The launch of the Alliance for Rural Electrification was exciting news for RESDC (“Renewable Energy Services for Developing Countries”). The aims of RESDC and ARE are closely in line (...). At the last meeting of RESDC hosted by EPIA and ARE in the Renewable Energy House in Brussels, the Alliance and RESDC agreed to collaborate closely. RESDC is currently updating its Workplan for the next two years and through close liaison, this will be elaborated so as to be complementary to ARE initiatives.”

## **EU Market Access Strategy**

On April 2007, The European Commission adopted the Communication Global Europe: A Stronger Partnership to deliver Market Access for European exporters. This strategy for breaking down trade barriers abroad and creating new export opportunities is part of the Commission's new Global Europe trade policy framework. At the heart of this strategy, a new partnership between the Commission, Member States and business should be set up to improve work on barrier detection, analysis and removal

A Market Access Advisory Committee (MAAC) has been already activated to discuss market access issues and different Market Teams will be also being created as support bodies. A Market Team is already functioning in Brussels and is currently implementing a number of useful “market tools” such as a monthly Newsletter to report regularly about the activities of the Market Teams; a Market Access Database (<http://madb.europa.eu>) with information about market access conditions in non-

EU countries. Further, a Complaint Register will be launched by the end of this year to serve as a single entry point for all barrier complaints from business.

The European Renewable Energy Industry is also confronted with a number of trade barriers such as unfair tax rules or abuse of monopolistic rights that are slowing down their market penetration within developing countries and, consequently, the possibility of contributing to rapidly increase the electrification rates within the most needed areas. Therefore, from the Alliance we strongly encourage the renewable energy sector to make use of the aforementioned tools and to contribute to improve them with your input and valuable experience.

For more information [http://ec.europa.eu/trade/issues/sectoral/mk\\_access/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/trade/issues/sectoral/mk_access/index_en.htm)

## **EUSEW UPDATE: PARTICIPATION AND SPONSORSHIP!**

EUSEW, one of the biggest events for renewable energies in the world, is slowly but surely coming up on the international energy agenda and ARE, as Campaign Associate is already preparing its event on renewable energies and rural electrification.

The cooperation between European actors and developing countries on Energy as well as the Energy issues in developing countries in general, will be present during this week for the first time and will represent a key issue. The EC is already supporting rural electrification through its development and external relation policies, whereas the “Sustainable Energy Cooperation with Developing Countries” is one of the nine main campaigning areas supported by the Sustainable Energy Europe Campaign.

During the EUSEW, ARE will help strengthening this position by organizing the only event solely focusing on rural electrification and decentralized energy market in developing countries.

This week will be a great occasion to promote renewable energies for rural electrification, to present technological solutions for rural electrification and to reinforce the position of the Alliance and its members as key partners of the European Commission.

More details as to how to participate in our event and the sponsorship opportunities will come soon!

If you want to receive information on how to sponsor this event or if you want to assist or participate please contact us.



## **THE 5TH EPIA ROUND-TABLE (BRUSSELS, 8TH NOVEMBER 2007)**

Co organized by ARE, the 5th EPIA Round-table event focused on the EU development policy and how photovoltaic energy can provide cost competitive, tailor made and sustainable technological solutions for rural electrification. 1, 6 billion people have no access to electricity in developing

countries; however, with adapted tools within the EU development policy, photovoltaic electricity could contribute rapidly to reduce this figure.

Access to energy has been identified as one of the priority areas of the European Development Policy in order to fight against poverty in developing countries. Therefore, the European Commission has recently put in place several programs to trigger investment in sustainable energy projects in developing areas, such as: COOPENER, ACP-EU Energy Facility and the up-coming GEEREF (Global Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Fund).

However, it is still unclear to what extent the European programs have succeeded, or will succeed, especially in financing the relatively small scale projects needed to bring energy to the most secluded areas.

Gathering within a large panel experts from the European Commission, managers from important PV companies as well as a Member of the European Parliament, the EPIA-ARE roundtable was the occasion to confront these experts and to stress out the obstacles met by the industry in these countries but also what appear as the lack of coherence of the EU policy. This event also let the opportunity to the speakers to propose solutions to increase electrification rates in developing countries.

“The photovoltaic technology has proven to be one of the best solutions to bring flexible and long term solutions for rural electrification in the poorest areas of the planet. Therefore, the EC must ensure that its initiatives address the real energy needs and the suitable technology to provide sustainable access to electricity. A main criterion is to reinforce support to small and medium sized projects” said Ernesto Macias, President of the Alliance for Rural Electrification and Vice-president of EPIA.

It is also essential that the EU continues to address the political level in developing countries in order to promote adapted frameworks for renewable energy as well as to work against climate change. Ernesto Macias concluded that “what we need is a global energy policy that includes not only PV, but all renewables”.

Following this meeting as well as the general outcome shared by the different actors, different recommendations were advanced strongly supported by ARE and EPIA. Therefore, the EC should:

Take more the potential and the effectiveness of Photovoltaic solutions into account in the EU development policy, especially concerning rural electrification and small scale project;

Provide financing instruments adapted to the scale of rural electrification projects; Address the political level in developing countries to create favorable environments for renewable energies.

As representatives, not only of the PV sector but of the whole renewable sector, the Alliance for Rural electrification and EPIA also propose strengthening the dialogue between the European Institutions and the PV sector in order to ensure that the potential of Photovoltaic is fully exploited in the fight against climate change and poverty in the developing countries.

## **WORKING GROUP HYBRID SYSTEMS**

On the 31st of October, ARE held the second meeting of the "Working Group: Technological Solutions for Hybrid Systems" where its members, experts coming from different renewable energy

sectors, discussed the existing technological configurations for hybrid systems and jointly worked in the first deliverable of this Working Group, a brochure with the most suitable technological configurations.

This brochure will, mainly, target decision makers and financing actors and will illustrate with case examples and solid arguments the suitability of these systems for rural and also urban areas and their flexibility as well as their cost-effectiveness.

In sum, the ARE Working Group will put forward a technological solution based on hybrid systems and a mini-grid in order to tackle in a sustainable and cost-effective way the lack of electricity in rural areas, as well as to fight climate change and poverty.

## **RURAL ELECTRIFICATION PROJECTS**

As part of its activities, we are currently developing a suitable framework to promote projects on rural electrification and are willing to support dynamic and innovative approaches on this field.

Our objective is to become a meeting point for ambitious actors willing to develop rural electrification's projects. Through this work, we want to channel projects' proposals and to contribute to their implementation.

Even though we can not provide, for the time being, a direct financial support we will work to facilitate the establishment of collaboration links and business relationships between projects' promoters and interested industries and organizations to foster sustainable rural electrification.

To start with, we have created a new section in the website named "Rural Electrification Projects" where we will include different proposals looking for funding. These proposals will have, of course, to be in line with the objectives of ARE and will have to fulfill a number of criteria, as explained in our webpage.

Many organizations, currently looking for funding, technical support etc., are already sending us offers and proposals for projects and we want to assist them and to support them in their efforts to increase rural electrification rates throughout the world. By publishing and disseminating these proposals we want to encourage relevant stakeholders (private sector, donors, etc) to provide the necessary funding, as well as other material or technical assistance, to make the proposals come true!

For more information on this initiative you can visit our webpage. Please do not hesitate to send us your ideas and proposals.

Organizations with an interest in rural electrification and willing to invest in particular projects can also contact us at the same address.



## NEWS FROM THE RURAL ELECTRIFICATION WORLD

### **From The Monitor (Kampala – Uganda), 6 November 2007:**

There is urgent need to increase Uganda's electricity supply and more importantly reduce the country's dependence on the presently meager hydroelectric power generation and on the expensive fossil fuels which power our thermo-plants.

The Ministry of Energy is concerned about energy saving techniques, as well as renewable energies. Therefore, there are plans to construct more hydropower stations along the Nile apart from the already started Bujagali, but among the latest hypothesis the gasification of biomass is also pushed forward (To generate those 100 MW thermal the Ugandan population burn more than half a million litres of diesel per month).

In an attempt to provide Uganda with such expertise in the fuel chain and gasification techniques, CREEC (Centre for Research in Energy and Energy Conservation) has developed a programme to work with this pioneer and help other private sector players to join the renewable energy group.

Uganda has a high potential for energy biomass production, with large amounts of land that could be used to produce sustainable yields with Short Rotation Coppice (SRC) systems on steep slopes, degraded land or agricultural fallows.

### **From Business Daily (Nairobi – Kenya), 6 November 2007:**

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) announced the 8th of November the launch of a pair of projects worth some \$100 million in the tea and sugar industries designed to boost the use of clean energy and stimulate development in Africa.

Both projects aim to develop new forms of local energy generation to help rural areas overcome poverty, cut dependency on imported and expensive fossil fuels, and contribute to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, UNEP said in a news release.

The tea initiative, which will deliver small-scale hydro-electric power to plantations across East Africa, is expected to reach over 8 million people in the tea industry. Burundi, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Rwanda, Uganda, Tanzania and Zambia are among the countries which have already endorsed the initiative.

In a separate but related initiative, a project funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) will help farmers use waste from the sugar industry to generate electricity - a move UNEP said will fuel sustainable economic growth.

The project aims to reach approximately 10 million sugar farmers and their dependants in Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Sudan, Swaziland, Uganda and Tanzania.

The sugar initiative builds on the successes achieved in Mauritius, where up to 40 per cent of the country's electricity needs are met by waste by-products from the sugar industry, UNEP said.

### **From The Analyst (Monrovia - Liberia), 30 October 2007 :**

According to Lands, Mines and Energy Minister, Dr. Eugene Shannon, the Liberian Draft Action Plan for Energy will explore the use of renewable energy technologies such as Biomass, Hydropower, Solar and Wind to enhance Rural Development in the country.

Minister Shannon disclosed that the One Day Workshop which starts from October 29-30, 2007 (sponsored by the Lands, Mines & Energy Ministry and the USAID) will identify strategic players and prospective partners operating in the rural areas including Micro Finance for Small Enterprise Development.

He said mechanisms for coordination among renewal energy and rural development stakeholders in the country from government Agencies and International Donors to local community leaders in order to ensure more efficient energy investment will be explored.

Mr. Shannon told newsmen that international experience indicated that Renewal Energy Technologies such as Biomass, Salor, and wind are particularly well suited to rural populations due to limited maintenance requirements; minimal operating costs are the ability to place power generation on or near the site of use.

**From Daily Guide (Ghana), 06 Nov 2007:**

Government is negotiating a 5million Euro grant from the Spanish government to provide solar facilities in areas not connected onto the national grid. The second phase of the Self Help Electrification Projects (SHEP) is to commence next year after over 190 communities have benefited from the current SHEP-4 programme.

This followed a similar project undertaken eight years ago to provide renewable energy for communities. Currently, 193 communities have benefited from the first phase of the self help electrification project-4, and Minister estimated that more communities would benefit.



## RURAL ELECTRIFICATION AND RENEWABLE ENERGIES EVENTS: INCOMING APPOINTMENTS

**November 19-21 2007, Expoenergética Fair, Valencia Spain:**

During the Conferences the power sector is going to have the opportunity to learn, know and to transmit the latest technological features and tendencies in the market. Given the present power demand and the forecasts of continued power increase, all types of generation are necessary. For that reason the fair and the conferences will serve as a contact point for all the professionals and companies involved in all area's of the energy sector. ([Read More](#)).

Conferences Programme [Here](#); Conference Leaflet [Here](#).

**March 4-6, 2008, the Washington International Renewable Energy Conference (WIREC) 2008, Washington DC USA:**

WIREC 2008 will bring together government, private-sector, and nongovernmental leaders to jointly address the goal of advancing renewable energy. It will focus on increasing the availability and use of renewable energy through four primary avenues: Agriculture and Rural Development; Technology/Research and Development; Finance; and Commercialization.

Hosted by the United States Government, in cooperation with the American Council On Renewable Energy, WIREC 2008 is the third global ministerial-level conference on renewable energy, following the successful events of Beijing in 2005 and Bonn in 2004.

WIREC 2008 will build upon the outcomes of these conferences to foster increased political support

and public awareness for renewable energy, new and innovative actions to promote widespread adoption of renewable energy, and advanced tools for collecting and disseminating best practices to end users.

[\(Read More\)](#)

**December 4, Conference-Debate: “Should climate change alter development policy thinking?”, Brussels, Belgium.**

Organizers: Friends of Europe in partnership with the World Bank, the UN, DFID, AFD.

Climate change is increasingly seen as the biggest environmental challenge facing the world. And while the problem springs from industrialization to transport revolution, developing countries are among those most vulnerable to climate change the main risk being that in many of these countries the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) will soon become a receding target.

What can be done? Can initiatives like the UN’s Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) yield adequate results, and what contribution can we expect from the European Commission’s proposed ‘Global Climate Change Alliance (GCCA)’? What greater level of financial commitment is needed, with what timetable? How can we better integrate the climate change issue into our development policies?

This debate marks the launch of the Development Policy Forum (DPF) – a partnership between Friends of Europe, the World Bank, the UN, UK’s Department for International Development and France’s Agence Française de Développement. DPF roundtables will from February 2008 offer a regular meeting point for development policy specialists in Brussels, national capitals and further afield to debate Europe’s role in shaping new thinking on development policy issues.

[Please click here to download programme and registration form.](#)

**23-25 January 2007, In Marrakech, Morocco: “The International Conference on Rural Electrification” (CIER).**

Organizers: The Moroccan National Office for Electricity (ONE) and the National Federation for Electricity and Electronic (FENELEC).

Energy and Development are central to all international reflections. Security in energy supply, interaction with economic development, human dignity and environmental impact all place the dynamics of rural electrification within the framework of Sustainable Development.

Electrification has become a major stake for developing countries. Electricity is an indispensable pillar for human development, especially in rural areas. Yet millions of rural households throughout the world and particularly in Africa and Asia do not have access to electricity, thus missing a chance for a better life.

Being aware of these problems and deeming rural electrification as one of the essential components of any Sustainable Development, Morocco has taken up this large-scale challenge. The experience of the Global Rural Electrification Program (PERG) conducted by the ONE represents a great interest and includes several lessons.

In this context, the ONE and the FENELEC jointly organize the International Conference on Rural Electrification confirming further the will for sharing experiences. This event is an unseen initiative for rural electrification. The CIER is expecting to gather 500 participants from all over the world. The conference will allow them to debate of the existing opportunities and the partnership possibilities and will exchange on their own experiences.

[Read more.](#)

