

Press Release

Lisbon, 23 March 2017

Major institutions agree to join efforts to reach 2030 energy access objectives

Lisbon, 23 March 2017 – In a joint effort to mobilise key stakeholders to invest in off-grid renewables in developing and emerging markets, the Alliance for Rural Electrification (ARE) together with Energias de Portugal (EDP) and the Africa-EU Renewable Energy Cooperation Programme (RECP) organised a two-day investment forum in Lisbon, Portugal on 22-23 March 2017. The forum was attended by over 300 representatives from the international public and private sector, including high-level institutions, financiers, technical support and solution providers as well as project developers.

The **ARE Energy Access Investment Summit on 22 March 2017** was a chance for participants to deepen their understanding of current policy frameworks, financial trends and technical support tools available and how to best use them. In support of the European Commission's recent initiative to promote women entrepreneurship, the Summit highlighted the importance of empowering women in the sustainable energy sector as key change agents to achieve SEforAll objectives. ARE has, therefore, launched a [position paper](#) identifying three key recommendations on the policy and regulatory level to address women's needs, constraints and opportunities.

António Mexia, CEO, EDP: "The ARE Energy Access Investment Forum in Lisbon was an excellent opportunity to discuss the major market opportunities and challenges, to promote effective one-to-one matchmaking and to support the decision-makers to go deeper into rural electrification through off-grid renewable energy solutions. EDP is a company committed to sustainability, and one of our goals is to fight energy poverty. We develop Access to Energy Programmes for corporate social responsibility purposes and we seek for viable opportunities in this market, by developing and implementing business cases that are commercially sustainable."

Ernesto Macias, President, ARE: "ARE has evolved tremendously in the last 11 years. Investment opportunities are available and the interest and commitment from public institutions, the private sector and civil society is there. As highlighted by Rachel Kyte (CEO of SEforALL), one of the steps to scaling up energy access is to strengthen coordination amongst major institutions. If we can close this gap, we are one step closer to lightening up the lives of the remaining 1.1 billion people without electricity."

The forum also gave recognition to companies and organisations, which have made special contributions to advance the rural electrification sector. In its second year running, this year's ARE Awards were discerned to:

- GIZ (Multilateral / International Organisations)
- Kopernik (NGOs and Foundations)
- Daily Life Renewable Energy Pte Ltd (Private Sector in Developed Countries)
- Solarkiosk AG (Private Sector in Developing Countries)
- Tanzania (Government in Developing Country) and
- Solar Sister (Best Off-grid Project)

On that same occasion, the forum also paid tribute to inspiring young leaders advocating and working to improve access to clean energy services in Africa. The Young Leaders in Energy Access Awards is an initiative of the Energy Access work stream under the Africa-EU Energy Partnership. The winners of the Awards were:

- Abdirahman Abdilahi (Ethiopia), Energy Technical Advisor, Ministry of Energy and Minerals, Somaliland
- Astria Fataki (France), Founder & President, Energy Generation
- Dina Ramaromandray (Madagascar), Ministry of Energy & Hydrocarbons, Madagascar
- Sayouba Guira (Burkina Faso), General Director, Nafa Naana
- Simon Kiragu (Kenya), Project Officer, wPOWERHUB
- Marta Pascual Santodomingo (Spain), Community Development Coordinator, Trama TecnoAmbiental, S.L

Building upon the strong foundation created by discussions and announcements during the Summit, the **B2B Off-grid Matchmaking** on **23 March 2017** featured presentations on off-grid markets in Nigeria, Rwanda, Zambia and Senegal, as well as a presentation of key initiatives from the African Development Bank. This was followed by structured B2B matchmaking sessions where participants could network and identify potential business partners and financiers. About 230 parties engaged in more than 600 direct meetings.

Michael Franz, Team Leader, RECP: "We have come a very long way with the off-grid sector, as the record attendance in this forum shows. Off-grid markets are front and centre stage, and we are now seeing viable and scalable business models emerge. Particularly encouraging was to see the young leader awards showing a bright future ahead!"

Finally, in parallel with the B2B matchmaking session, 35 Vlerick Business School students offered free consulting services on business challenges presented by six companies, focusing on investment analysis, business model formulation and financial modeling.

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Note to the editor

The [Alliance for Rural Electrification](#) (ARE) is an international business association representing the decentralised energy sector working towards the integration of renewables into rural electrification markets in developing and emerging countries. We enable improved energy access through business development support for more than 100 members along the whole value chain for off-grid technologies.

[Energias de Portugal](#) (EDP) is the largest generator, distributor and supplier of electricity in Portugal and has significant operations in electricity and gas in Spain. EDP is one of the major electricity generation companies and one of the largest distributors of gas in the Iberian Peninsula. It has wind energy parks in the Iberian Peninsula, United States, Canada, Brazil, France, Belgium, Italy, Poland, Romania and Mexico, and is developing new projects in the United Kingdom. Additionally, EDP produces photovoltaic solar energy in Portugal, Romania and in the United States. In Brazil, EDP is the fifth largest private generator of electric energy, with two concessions for electricity distribution, and is the third biggest private supplier in the liberalised market. Nowadays, EDP has a strong presence in the energy market worldwide, operating in 14 countries, with more than 10 million electricity customers, 1.4 million gas supply points and more than 12,000 employees all over the world. As a reference power utility pursuing a policy of openness to the world, the EDP Group is committed to promote Access to Energy (A2E) in developing countries, focusing on remote rural regions and areas which have no connection to the main power grid, contributing in this way to break their cycle of poverty.

The [Africa-EU Renewable Energy Cooperation Programme](#) (RECP) is a multi-donor platform for promoting

renewable energy market development and investment in Africa. It thereby contributes to growth and development in both continents, and to addressing national and global energy access as well as climate change objectives (AEEP / SE4All / SDG / COP targets and objectives). Focusing on small- and medium scale renewable energy markets, it provides a set of support services to private sector and policymakers, including policy advisory, market information and match-making, access-to-finance advisory as well as support to skills development and innovation. The RECP is supported by the European Commission, the Netherlands, Germany, Austria and Finland.

