



Drivers for uptake of renewable electrification in Kenya

The first IREK stakeholder workshop took place in Mombasa on 27th February 2015. It brought together different actors in the Kenyan energy sector to share their perspectives about innovation and renewable electrification in the Kenyan context. The IREK research team asked stakeholders to give recommendations on how IREK research could inform the uptake of renewable energy technologies in Kenya.

The need for stakeholder engagement

The IREK project provides for stakeholder dialogue throughout the project since this is paramount towards ensuring that the project activities and outputs are relevant to users, producers, governmental bodies, donors and other stakeholders in renewable electrification and that the researchers are asking the right questions. Representatives from the Ministry of Energy, Kenya Climate Innovation Centre, Stockholm Environmental Institute, Kenya Power and Sollatek participated in the first IREK stakeholder workshop.

Stakeholders were introduced to the IREK project and asked to provide critical reflections and comments. The following are some key highlights and questions emanating from the workshop.

About policies and regulations in renewable energy

- Policies to support renewable energy in Kenya exist but it is a challenge to enforce

them. Perhaps policy champions may add value to the enforcement process.

- How can policies and standards support renewable energy initiatives?
- What are the dynamics around policies and decision making in the renewable energy subsector?
- Based on experiences from other countries, regulating the energy sector has proved very important.

About capabilities in renewable energy

- There has been an accumulation of knowledge and capabilities in renewable energy over time supported largely by foreign actors.

Overview of factors contributing to slow adoption rate

- There are questions regarding why Kenyans are not taking up renewable energies to a larger extent. Several factors that may

contribute to this include: low or inadequate competences, business models, financing and enabling environment in terms of policies and regulations.

- Kenya is planning to expand fossil energy sources like coal at a time where these are increasingly being phased out in other parts of the world. There is need to counter this move by exploring the drivers to uptake of renewable energy.
- The Kenyan government is already putting measures in place to encourage the private sector to invest in renewables. The aspect of power generation by private entities should be explored which may inform successful business models.
- There are questions about why solar entrepreneurs have not moved to larger scale units and grid connection.
- Articulation of inclusiveness aspect with respect to jobs creation is important.
- There is a need to explore why renewable energy is a better source of electricity than fossil energy.

- It should be explored whether and why people are accessing renewable energy. What are the motivations or driving factors?
- Is the public concerned about the source of energy, whether green or fossil?

Concluding remarks and acknowledgment

Direct interaction with relevant policy makers and stakeholders is an important element of the overall goal of the IREK research project. It provides for a better foundation for selecting and deploying available technologies in a way that increases inclusiveness. It also provides a better understanding of concrete and efficient ways to combine efforts of electrification with management of international interactive learning between producers, suppliers and users of the technologies.

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A detailed internal workshop report is available upon request.

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Read more about the IREK project at
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