

**INTERNATIONAL RENEWABLE ENERGY AGENCY**

Third meeting of the Assembly

Abu Dhabi, 13 – 14 January 2013

**Note on Renewables Readiness Assessment**

**I. Introduction**

1. During the inaugural Assembly of IRENA, more than 50 Ministers and senior dignitaries from across the globe took part in a high-level segment discussion. They addressed several issues, including national initiatives for the deployment of renewable energy, energy access and energy security, and climate change. IRENA was urged to lead the global transition to renewable energy by fulfilling its mandate to promote the global development and deployment of all forms of renewable energy.
2. In response to this guidance, IRENA developed a Renewables Readiness Assessment (RRA) framework that would enable countries to better understand the opportunities and constraints for the deployment of renewable energy technologies. The RRA initiative by countries is a collaborative process, which provides rapid and objective assessments of the status of renewable energy opportunities, and identifies pathways to address gaps.
3. By the end of 2012, eleven countries from Africa, the Middle East, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Pacific Islands Regions were engaged in the process of Renewables Readiness Assessments. The process and outcomes of these RRAs have generated significant interest from countries and, in 2013, IRENA will scale-up the initiative by engaging additional Members, upon request. The engagement with countries during the process of the RRAs and expert workshops has also led to the continuous refinement of the RRA methodology based on the experience gained and feedback received.

*Defining RRA* - An RRA is ‘a comprehensive assessment of key conditions for renewable energy deployment in a country, and the targeted actions necessary to further improve these conditions with relevant partners’.

4. **For participating countries**, RRAs assist in the up-scaling of renewable energy through the targeted actions needed to improve readiness, identify organisations and partners for project implementation, and facilitate focused discussions with bilateral and multilateral partners.
5. **For IRENA**, RRAs will allow the identification and provision of country-specific support and advice.
6. **More broadly**, RRAs are valuable for collecting and sharing information, and for the exchanging of best practices in renewable energy deployment between countries.

### II. Key Attributes of the Renewables Readiness Assessment

7. The RRA has been designed with four critical attributes, which need to be embraced by each participating country:
  - a. **Country-led:** The most important attribute of RRAs is that they are initiated and conducted by national governments themselves with IRENA as the facilitator.
  - b. **Process-oriented:** The focus is to build processes that can be utilised effectively for initiating changes in legislation, regulation and policy frameworks, and to develop fora for discussing their impact. The RRA follows a transparent approach, and the actions and background materials are discussed openly by a wide range of stakeholders.
  - c. **Builds consensus:** The RRA incorporates the expert viewpoints of different sets of actors: officials from ministries, organisations dealing with rural electrification, industry, multilateral and bilateral funding agencies, civil society and academia. This allows various perspectives to be incorporated while finalising actions and achieving consensus.

- d. **Lays the foundation for future collaboration:** The RRA, while assessing the current situation, also provides a forward-looking framework of actions. It facilitates a coordinated approach and a setting of priorities, which can inform discussion with funding agencies regarding implementation of actions and initiatives emerging out of the RRA. It also lays the foundation for broader private sector participation.

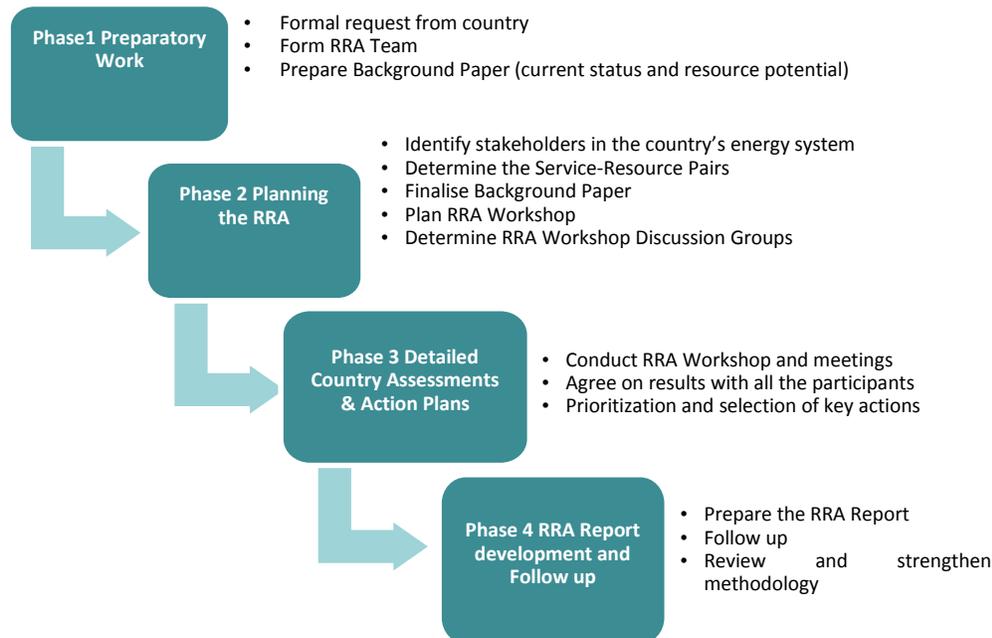
#### **The RRA advantage**

- Aims to assist countries in the deployment of RE in the short to medium term by developing concrete action-oriented plans.
- Focuses on combination of Service – Resource relevant to the country (defined in Section 3).
- A holistic approach with analysis on: Policy & Strategy; Resources, Technologies and Infrastructure; Institutional, Regulatory & Market Structure; Human Capacity and Business Models.
- Can be used within national and/or sub-national context

8. In facilitating this process, IRENA effectively leverages its comparative advantage as a unique intergovernmental agency dedicated to the promotion of renewable energy by offering countries access to a global network with the capacity to follow-up on actions and share best practices.

### **III. What does an RRA involve?**

9. The RRA process consists of four phases: the first two focus on preparation and planning, the third on the core assessment, and the fourth on delivery of the RRA report, including follow-up of the identified targeted actions. The stages are represented in the figure that follows.



10. The RRA methodology strives to ensure complementarity to existing initiatives by identifying gaps and striving to fill them with pertinent knowledge. Key to the RRA process is the identification, selection and prioritisation of Service-Resource pairs, which are priority pairings of energy services (electricity, motive power, and thermal) with relevant renewable energy resources (wind, solar, hydro, biomass, geothermal, marine).

11. The assessments are completed using pre-designed templates describing current status, issues to be resolved, actions, and capacity-building needs. Six to eight key actions are prioritised – each to be implemented in the short to medium term. The final product is a country RRA report that includes detailed information and findings in a standard format, allowing easy comparison between countries.

#### IV. Early outcomes and key lessons of the RRA process

12. Strong political commitment to renewable energy enabled the first two RRAs to be piloted in Senegal and Mozambique. In Senegal, the RRA process led to the enactments of two decrees, passed under their Renewable Energy Law, enriching the national Renewable Energy Strategy and helping build a local renewable energy network. In Mozambique, a small hydro power policy is being initiated to promote its development.

### Countries engaged in RRA

- Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)- Senegal, Ghana, Niger and The Gambia
- Southern African Development Community (SADC): Mozambique, Zambia and Swaziland
- Latin America and Caribbean (LAC): Grenada and Peru
- Pacific – Kiribati
- Middle East - Oman

13. In Grenada, the RRA has led the utility company, GRENLEC, to propose a 2 MW solar plant. The RRA in Kiribati identified the need to set up clear medium-term targets for fuel import reduction, which in turn would be achieved by a larger share of renewables in the energy mix. Targets have since been identified and are awaiting approval from the Cabinet. In Swaziland, the government has decided that the key actions identified during the RRA would form the basis of their national RE roadmap, which is being put in place as a follow-up of their commitment to the regional renewable energy strategy and action plan (RESAP). The RRA findings and report are also being actively used by governments to garner support from development agencies for the actions identified therein. The RRA is starting to shape the dialogue between the governments and the donor community by providing an opportunity to fund and support actions that have strong ownership of the government.

### V. Next Steps

14. The process and outcomes of the RRAs have generated significant interest from countries, and the experience from this extensive process of engagement with countries has contributed positively towards strengthening the methodology. Partnership with regional organisations such as the ECOWAS and SADC in Africa, Latin American Energy Organisation (OLADE) and Caribbean Community (CARICOM) will enable the RRAs to enrich the regional plans for RE deployment and assist in its implementation.

15. IRENA will initiate the development of advisory services as a follow up to the RRAs. These will initially include: capacity needs assessment, resource assessment, technology roadmaps, local content and finance. These advisory services will be offered to countries where RRAs have been conducted and upon request. In addition to the repertoire of advisory services, IRENA will facilitate the interaction with supporting entities, including international funding agencies and private sector in order to further the implementation of action plans formulated by countries as a result of the RRAs.