

Outcome of the 1st ECOWAS Renewable Energy Planning (EREP) training workshop

Date: 10-12 December 2012

Venue: Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire

Experts indicated the need for improved renewable power planning based on a structured formal iterative process of gradual refinements and dialogue with policy makers and other stakeholders.

EREP is a tool that can play a useful role for energy planning in the ECOWAS region.

Availability of EREP is timely, as ECOWAS countries are developing national renewable deployment plans following the adoption of the regional level ECOWAS Renewable Strategy and some of the ECOWAS countries are committed to Sustainable Energy for All (SE4ALL) initiatives. Moreover, ECOWAS energy ministers adopted in October 2012 the ECOWAS RE Policy developed by ECREEE with the technical validation of the member states. Within the framework of this regional policy, National RE Action Plans (NREAP) will start to be developed in the next two years. EREP model is seen as an appropriate tool to support the NREAP.

Country experts expressed interest to use the tool for national planning.

IRENA expertise and knowledge in the renewable field can provide valuable inputs for the planning process in order to maximizing the benefit from renewable power technologies.

IRENA and ECREEE will collaborate closely to improve resource potential data, and facilitate the ECOWAS countries in accessing such information. ECREEE is playing coordinating and leading role between IRENA and the member states. There is a need to continue capacity building for energy planning. Experts request that IRENA continues to support power sector planning for the region through provision of data, refinement of the energy planning toolbox and assistance in organizing effective and efficient energy planning framework for the region. ECREEE should play a central role in energy planning for ECOWAS countries. This includes hiring of a dedicated energy planning expert, energy planning support desk and energy planning capacity building activities. The specific outcome is the elaboration of National Renewable Energy Action Plans in all interested ECOWAS member states.

There is a need to improve resource potential data and scenarios, especially for bioenergy. National energy planning national requirements/singularities are still to be addressed as well as other options for decentralized technologies. The role of mini-grids and off-grid solutions needs to be assessed in more detail.

For policy relevance of the analysis, it is imperative to improve the representation of energy taxes and subsidies at the national level.

National experts need to develop their own scenarios and develop strategies. Countries want to validate the ECOWAS energy planning strategy on a national level through EREP analysis. The main partners at the national level will be the Ministries of Energy and the utilities but subsequently it will have to be enlarged to other entities like national regulators or rural electrification institutions. However, it might be also necessary to organize national energy planning workshop: to assess the weaknesses and strengths in a country basis as well as to adapt to their current planning tools. And it finally comes up to tailored training according to the situation and role of institution, for example,

universities can include this tools and exercise as part of their degrees. IAEA has offered to support the ECOWAS countries through its existing energy planning training and support programme.

The countries will formulate precise requests for support through their focal points in the coming weeks in the form of a letter or an intervention at the Assembly in Abu Dhabi 13-14 January 2013.

Depending on the level of energy planning support that is requested there may be a need to obtain additional resources. IRENA and ECREEE will explore funding opportunities with development partners.

Next steps

Participants:

- e-learning module and use IAEA on-line support to better know the MESSAGE software
- run the model, understand and analyse the results

ECREEE:

- in-depth learning about the tool and the model to fully exploit the potentials of the model
- conduct regional and country analysis in collaboration with member states
- provide first-hand support to member states in case of help needed to work with the model
- for complex support, IRENA and IAEA can provide the support

ECREEE-IRENA:

- look for the financial support to conduct the energy planning mid-term capacity building activities
- improve EREP model after assessment of the limitations and the best adapted options to the ECOWAS context