

ProSPER

PROMOTING A SUSTAINABLE MARKET FOR PHOTOVOLTAIC SYSTEMS IN THE ECOWAS REGION

The International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) is an intergovernmental organisation dedicated to renewable energy. In accordance with its Statute, IRENA's objective is to "promote the widespread and increased adoption and the sustainable use of all forms of renewable energy". This concerns all forms of energy produced from renewable sources in a sustainable manner and includes bioenergy, geothermal energy, hydropower, ocean, solar and wind energy.

As of 19 December 2012, the membership of IRENA comprises 160 States and the European Union (EU), out of which 103 States and the EU have ratified the Statute.

In the frame of its regional work, IRENA aims to support members of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in their aspirations to tap the huge renewable energy resources in the region, thereby increasing access to energy, improving livelihoods, generating economic opportunities, and improving energy security and sustainability of supply.

To this effect, IRENA has partnered with the ECOWAS Regional Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (ECREEE) for the development and implementation of the ProSPER initiative.

Why was this Initiative developed?

IRENA seeks to support the ECOWAS Member countries in realising their great and underutilised renewable energy resources thus making a contribution to achieving their aspirations towards increasing access to electricity, security and sustainability of energy supply, and advancing socio-economic development.

What is the Objective of the Initiative?

This initiative is geared to strengthen and develop local capacities of policymakers, regulators and utilities, branch managers of financial institutions, trainers from educational or research institutions, and renewable energy entrepreneurs and technicians, to accelerate renewable energy and particularly solar photovoltaic (PV) systems' deployment.

The initiative is designed to achieve the following objectives:

- Strengthen consideration of renewable energies in planning
- Promote development, adoption and implementation of renewable energy policies
- Enhance the understanding of incentive systems
- Increase the confidence of finance institutions into renewable energy technologies
- Update and strengthen training on renewable energy technologies and businesses
- Improve sustainability of renewable energy projects and investments

Why the Focus on Solar Photovoltaic Systems?

Amongst the renewable energy resources that the ECOWAS region is endowed with, solar energy is the most widely available resource. The cost for solar PV-generated electricity decreased rapidly in recent years due to fast-paced technological development. PV technologies are now mature, robust and scalable.

Moreover, a regional assessment carried out by reputed universities from the region under the guidance of ECREEE found that solar PV technologies will be of strategic importance for rural electrification in the ECOWAS Member countries and are feasible throughout the region.

Which Countries are targeted by the Initiative?

ProSPER targets all ECOWAS Member countries: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo.

What has been achieved so far?

A workshop on renewable energy planning has been held in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, in December 2012 for energy planners and electricity utility companies from the region.

The ECOWAS renewable energy policy was recently adopted by the region's energy ministers and within its framework, ECREEE is supporting the development of national renewable action plans (NREAP). During this workshop the ECOWAS Renewable Energy Planning Tool (EREP) model was presented, as a least cost power sector investment model developed for each country in the region, and to be used as a support tool for the NREAP. Participants of this workshop requested IRENA to continue supporting power sector planning for the region through provision of data, refinement of the tool and assistance in developing an effective and efficient energy planning framework for the region, with ECREEE being the central partner.

How is the Initiative financed?

ProSPER is implemented with generous support from the governments of Germany and the United Arab Emirates. Further funding stems from ECREEE and IRENA.

How can my organisation partner with this Initiative?

The success of ProSPER relies on strong ties with the countries in which it is implemented, and support from those organisations that are active within the region and seek to support similar objectives such as the sustainable and accelerated deployment of renewable energies.

Organisations from the region and beyond are welcome to partner and contribute to ProSPER through, for example, supply of expertise, sharing of experiences, case studies and best practices, and development of materials for training, etc.

Further Information

For further information on IRENA and its activities in ECOWAS and other regions, please refer to: www.irena.org.