

Seventeenth meeting of the Council
Abu Dhabi, 25-26 June 2019

Preliminary Framework for the Work Programme and Budget 2020-2021

I. Introduction

1. The present document sets out the preliminary programmatic framework for 2020-2021, pursuant to the Assembly decision on the *IRENA Programmatic and Budgetary Cycle* of 14 January 2013 (A/3/DC/12). This decision requests the Director-General to “consult with Members to elicit their views on the IRENA work programming to be taken into consideration in the development of the biennium work programme and budget, within the overall Medium-term Strategy”. Pursuant to the same decision, the Director-General invited Members to provide input to the upcoming Work Programme on 7 February 2019. In response, 23 Members provided detailed and welcome contributions that supported the development of the Work Programme and Budget Framework for 2020-2021. The Secretariat also sought input from the members of the IRENA’s Coalition for Action, resulting in 28 submissions from the private sector and civil society institutions¹. In addition to the feedback received, the Framework benefited from the experience in programmatic implementation to date.
2. The Work Programme and Budget Framework is rooted in the Medium-term Strategy (MTS), which guides programmatic implementation for the years 2018 to 2022. As requested by Members, the Framework follows the MTS structure to facilitate consistency in the implementation of the successive programmatic cycles.
3. Following the 17th meeting of the Council, this Framework will be elaborated into a draft Work Programme and Budget for 2020-2021 for consideration by the Council at its 18th meeting.

II. Strategic Direction

4. IRENA’s mission for the current strategic period is “*to play a leading role in the ongoing transformation of the global energy systems as a centre of excellence for knowledge and innovation, a global voice of renewable energy, a network hub for all stakeholders and a source of advice and support for countries*”. This mission is reflected in four strategic objectives that provide orientation to programmatic cycles, guiding the Agency’s action across its areas of competence:

¹ Contributions from both IRENA Members and the Coalition for Action can be found on IRENA’s Member-only website, REmember.

- Empower effective policy and decision-making by providing authoritative knowledge and analysis on renewables-based energy transformation at global, national and sectoral levels;
 - Shape the global discourse on energy transformation by providing relevant timely, high-quality information and access to data on renewable energy;
 - Provide an inclusive platform for all stakeholders to foster action, convergence of efforts and knowledge sharing for impact on the ground; and
 - Support country-level decision-making to accelerate the renewables-based transformation of their energy systems, advance strategies to decrease global emissions and achieve sustainable development.
5. The MTS outlines several strategic considerations that provide programmatic orientation and consistency of outputs. Among these, the MTS highlights IRENA's global membership as a major asset to be used to access the wealth of knowledge, experience and expertise that exists among its Members. It calls for IRENA to act as an effective platform for collaboration among Members, as well as other stakeholders who must participate in the energy transition. The MTS notes that the current five-year period will be decisive for the advancement of global development and climate agreements. Given the significant role renewable energy must play in this context, the MTS further emphasises IRENA's analytical, advisory and convening abilities in shepherding the ongoing energy transition. It also highlights the need for renewable energy to be considered in a broader context to assist countries in meeting a range of economic, social, environmental and climate objectives.
 6. Given rapid changes within the energy sector, the MTS stresses the importance for the Agency to stay abreast of the latest developments, assist Members in anticipating and realising change, and convene diverse stakeholders to accelerate progress. The speed and scale of this progress hinge upon the ability to attract investment and mobilise the necessary finance. The MTS therefore places special focus on enabling policy, regulatory and technical frameworks, and business models and financing instruments, and calls on IRENA to undertake work that would help facilitate private investment and support key actors in channelling finance toward renewables.
 7. Member's feedback on the priorities for the coming programmatic period reaffirmed the strategic considerations and guidance of the MTS outlined above. This feedback shows that energy transition is driven by a diverse set of objectives, including development imperatives, sustainable growth, climate change, energy security, energy poverty, and local pollution considerations. The change the energy system is currently undergoing is unprecedented due to its scale and the profound impact on the established socio-economic, technological and geopolitical order around the world. This underlines the need for collaboration on the near-term priorities and a common understanding of the long-term vision of the transition. Progress towards these objectives requires the latest knowledge, targeted policies, continuous innovation, large volumes of investment and inclusive multi-stakeholder cooperation. Member feedback validates that all countries, regardless of the level of development, place great importance on international collaboration on these issues.
 8. After eight years of its existence, IRENA has a recognised leading role in the promotion of renewable energy solutions worldwide. The upcoming programmatic cycle is a strategic opportunity for further sharpening programmatic focus and delivery, while staying aligned with the Members' vision outlined in the MTS and the priorities identified during the on-going consultative process.

III. Priorities for the 2020-2021 Programmatic Cycle

9. Given the rapid changes in the energy sector, the scope of IRENA's contribution has grown exponentially. It is therefore of utmost importance that the programmatic priorities for the next biennium are carefully selected to reinforce IRENA's excellence and leadership in renewable energy, reflecting a balance of diverse needs and requests of the entire membership. With this in mind, the Agency's overall priorities for the upcoming biennium can be outlined along three key areas:
- Empowering action on the ground;
 - Strengthening partnerships and fostering dialogue; and
 - Ensuring institutional excellence.
10. **Empowering action on the ground.** The nature and pace of the energy transition differs between countries and regions as the needs and capacities are increasingly nuanced. Supported by rigorous analyses, objective information and timely data, IRENA will place considerable effort in translating its knowledge into targeted action on the ground. One of the common priorities highlighted by Members is the need to drive renewable energy investment to scale. IRENA will place special emphasis on its facilitating role in supporting countries in creating enabling frameworks to attract investment, providing them with the right tools to realise projects, and offering technical assistance to strengthen capacities where needed. To maximise impact while efficiently using its limited resources, IRENA will proactively work with groups of countries at sub-regional levels, or around issues of common interest. This will include facilitating peer-to-peer collaboration among Members to enable the exchange of knowledge and experience, and capturing of best practice. Stakeholders who can meaningfully contribute to such collaboration will also be engaged, including multilateral and financial institutions, private companies, investors and the public.
11. **Strengthening partnerships and fostering dialogue.** IRENA has a wide range of partners that have been critical for the effective delivery of programmatic activities. In the next biennium, IRENA will continue to work in the framework of partnerships already in place and remain open for establishing new ones. Special focus will be placed on forging strategic partnerships with the entities that can help advance the Agency's programmatic priorities and accelerate impact on the ground. In this regard, close collaboration with international and regional organisations will be essential to secure broad support for the deployment of renewable energy, leverage respective capabilities and promote synergies. This approach is linked to IRENA's role as a facilitator and an open platform for dialogue and collaboration among countries and relevant stakeholders, outlined above.
12. **Ensuring institutional excellence.** Over the past eight years, IRENA has made great strides in a dual effort of establishing a new institution while securing its place in the global energy landscape. Moving forward, the Agency must ensure that it strengthens the institutional focus and capacity to deliver on its important mandate. The quality of staff will determine the success of the Agency, since it cannot succeed unless it attracts and retains the right people to carry out the tasks entrusted to it. To retain the best professionals and enhance its own capacities, IRENA will continue to prioritise high standards of ethics, fairness, transparency and accountability, as well as the culture of continuous learning, high performance and managerial excellence. This approach to human capital will promote institutional excellence in the challenging, dynamic environment that constitutes work at the energy frontier and ensure that the Agency is well-prepared to meet the expectations of its membership.

IV. Work Programme Framework for 2020-2021

13. In the feedback received on programmatic priorities, Members stressed the need to streamline programmatic output to focus on fewer, but more targeted products where IRENA has a clear comparative advantage or can build upon established areas of excellence. Members also called for a close alignment between analyses-focused areas and downstream country support and partnerships, and a more targeted action on the ground. One of the key traits that has defined IRENA to date has been its ability to adapt and respond to changing priorities, and global, regional and national agendas. The energy sector remains dynamic, and Members asked that this ability to adapt remains at the heart of the Agency's work.
14. IRENA will continue to provide leadership in the global agenda-setting on energy transformation engaging in various international fora, especially in the context of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, SDG7 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as a whole. Members' continuous engagement in, and strong ownership of programmatic activities remains a vital prerequisite for all facets of IRENA's work. The Framework seeks to rebalance programmatic focus to better respond to current and new priorities, while ensuring a sound knowledge and analytical base and the necessary agility to respond to change.

a. Centre of Excellence for Energy Transformation

Objective: Empower effective policy and decision-making by providing authoritative knowledge and analysis on renewables-based energy transformation at global, national and sectoral levels.

15. Energy transformation requires change on several fronts to build the system that meets the needs of modern societies. Among those, accelerated progress is needed in increasing the share of renewables in the energy mix, progressing toward universal access to energy, minimising energy-related emissions, and possessing a combination of technologies, infrastructure, innovative business and financing models, policies and practices for efficient use. In its latest study on the global energy transformation, IRENA estimates that renewable energy supply, energy efficiency and increased electrification of end-use sectors can deliver over 90 per cent of energy-related emission reductions. The analysis highlights that the socio-economic footprint of such a pathway would boost global GDP by 2.5 per cent, along with the additional employment, health and environmental benefits. It finds however that such benefits will be achieved only if policies to promote just, fair and inclusive transition are in place.
16. Being a Centre of Excellence for Energy Transformation requires excellence in all facets of the Agency's work. Internally, this excellence must be reflected in human resources management, policies and practices. Attracting and retaining highly-skilled professionals, ensuring diversity of personnel to reflect its global membership, and improving gender balance including at the senior levels will be priorities for the coming years. Externally, IRENA will strengthen collaboration with those who can contribute to the excellence of its work, including through exchange of personnel. Special effort will be made to engage academic and research institutions worldwide to secure current and diverse input into IRENA's work. Effective use of the Coalition for Action to enhance the engagement of the private sector and other stakeholders will also play a major role in this regard.
17. In the next programmatic cycle, the work under the Centre of Excellence for Energy Transformation will streamline programmatic output to focus on fewer, but more targeted products where IRENA has a clear comparative advantage, selecting products with the potential

to shape the global energy discourse and offer timely information and analytical evidence to drive progress. IRENA's Global Renewable Energy Roadmap – REmap will provide a medium and long-term vision, aligned with global development and climate objectives. This vision will be accompanied by the work on innovation, including on technology, policy and finance, to stay abreast of the latest developments and anticipate change. The analyses of the socio-economic footprint, rooted in the imperative of a just and fair transition, will provide an increasingly nuanced view of different pathways. Progress in the energy transition will be observed through multiple lenses including IRENA's annual statistics, costs, jobs reviews and technology indicators. This work will continue to feed into the tracking of SDG7 on energy and the Agenda 2030 on sustainable development.

b. Global Voice of Renewables

Objective: Shape the global discourse on energy transformation by providing relevant, timely, high-quality information and access to data on renewable energy.

18. The multidimensional nature of the energy transition reflects the need to achieve simultaneous progress on many fronts. Energy systems across countries are unique to local circumstances, economic structures and socio-economic priorities, which highlight the multiple pathways to pursue an effective energy transition. IRENA will continue to provide timely yet streamlined analyses and information on different aspects of the energy transition, targeting the issues of high relevance to Members and the global community. The focus will continue to be placed on the integration of variable renewables in the power system, given that many countries are increasing the shares of solar and wind in their systems. Analyses of renewables in end-use sectors, including transport, heating and cooling will also be prioritised, including at the local level, given the delayed progress in these areas. Both power and end-use sectors will be considered from multiple angles to address technology solutions, power market and policy design, regulatory frameworks and business and financing solutions, as well as the impact of renewables on non-energy sectors. To facilitate and encourage technical analyses and debate, IRENA will introduce a working papers series.
19. IRENA will also continue its analysis of regional markets to capture the wealth of knowledge and experience in a region and identify emerging renewable energy trends and themes at the intersection of public policy and market development. The studies include broader economic and energy sector trends, renewable energy investment, finance and policy developments - including in the access context, as well as energy transition-related socio-economic impacts. Building on the work to date and based on Member feedback, specific topics including environmental impacts and life-cycle assessments, geopolitics, industrial development and domestic supply chains, gender, quality infrastructure, corporate sourcing, Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and climate adaptation and resilience, will be analysed.
20. IRENA will step-up proactive communication and outreach as an underpinning of its role as the Global Voice of Renewables. The focus will be placed on strategic leadership to define and disseminate key messages and knowledge products. IRENA will cooperate with communications and social media actors who can help to amplify reach and better target audiences for more significant impact. In this regard, multilingualism will be used as a tool to disseminate knowledge and enable greater participation in programmatic activities.

c. Network Hub

Objective: Provide an inclusive platform for all stakeholders to foster action, the convergence of efforts and knowledge sharing for impact on the ground.

21. New forms of collaboration that cross traditional boundaries including national, public-private and cross-industry will be required to tackle the challenges ahead. IRENA has made a concerted effort to date to catalyse regional action, engage diverse stakeholders and create frameworks that encourage collaboration around issues of common interest. These activities will continue across all regions aligned with the clean energy corridors and action agendas already in place, with a refined approach for a greater impact. Such an approach will increasingly include the work at the sub-regional level to provide targeted support and engage a wider range of stakeholders who can drive investment to scale. In this regard, collaboration with multilateral institutions will be expanded to promote collective efforts on the energy transition and provide expert support to others who can contribute to the deployment of renewables. In response to Member feedback, IRENA will also facilitate peer-to-peer collaboration among countries with shared interests and concerns.
22. IRENA will continue to provide a platform for engagement of diverse stakeholders. This will include the flagship climate initiatives SIDS Lighthouses and Global Geothermal Alliance, as well as the collaboration on off-grid renewable energy deployment through the IOREC platform. The Agency will seek to effectively engage stakeholders who need to play a role in energy transition including innovators, legislators, entrepreneurs, youth and citizens. It will seek to work catalyse change in the context of Sustainable Development Agenda by promoting renewable energy solutions for food security, gender, healthcare, and humanitarian responses among others. IRENA will also actively contribute to the efforts of others, such as the Africa Renewable Energy Initiative (AREI), Clean Energy Ministerial (CEM), Global Climate Action, Island Renewable Energy Initiative (IREI), International Solar Alliance (ISA), Mission Innovation, and NDC Partnership.

d. Source of Advice and Support

Objective: Support country-level decision-making to accelerate the renewables-based transformation of their energy systems, advance strategies to decrease global emissions and achieve sustainable development.

23. Countries approach energy transition with different starting points and various structural, economic, social and institutional particularities. They therefore require concrete, objective and targeted advice and support and IRENA has filled an important gap in this regard. Building on the work to date and continuous analytical excellence, such advice and support will focus on maximising IRENA's value added, realising impact on the ground and promoting replicability. Assessments through Renewable Readiness Assessments (RRAs) and roadmaps will remain a part of IRENA's country engagement. Targeted technical advisory and capacity building support will be provided at country or sub-regional level on issues that can help maximise benefits and catalyse investment. This will include the strengthening of methodologies and data gathering for resource assessment, as well as quantification of the benefits and impacts of renewables. Advisory work will also include development and realisation of energy plans with cost-effective renewable solutions, including in the context of NDCs.
24. IRENA's sound understanding of and experience with renewables-based solutions, lessons and practices will be systematically collected, disseminated and translated into actionable guidelines. IRENA will also pursue work on special projects to pilot and demonstrate the impact of

renewables and inspire action. Given the growing importance of the local level, such projects will target impactful and replicable solutions, especially in the context of access.

25. The next programmatic cycle will include a significant increase in the work on realising renewable energy projects. In the previous programmatic cycles, IRENA has designed several tools and platforms to facilitate project development and access to finance. These include the IRENA/ADFD Project Facility, Global Atlas (platform and services), Project Navigator, Open Solar Contracts Initiative, Renewable Energy Power Purchase Agreement assessment tool, and the Sustainable Energy Marketplace. These platforms will refocus to implementation and practical application to increase their impact on real-life projects and the capacity of project developers. IRENA will also expand this work to support the entire project cycle, from initiation to realisation. In this regard, collaboration with multilateral and financing institutions, private companies, and investors, among others will be paramount. IRENA will complement its regional and sub-regional advisory work with convening activities aimed at linking project pipelines with public and private investors. Special effort will be made to support LDCs and SIDS in accessing sustainable finance.
26. IRENA will ensure that its internal structure facilitates effective delivery of advice and support. To streamline assistance to Members, provide the best technical input and create a feedback loop from engagement on the ground, IRENA will have a single point of entry for technical assistance and country support. With this adjustment, the Agency will promote greater dissemination and application of its upstream work. Importantly, this approach will facilitate a greater understanding of Member needs and help shape future programmatic activities.

V. Budgetary and Management Considerations

27. The Work Programme and Budget for 2020-2021 will include intensified efforts to diversify IRENA's resource base. Core budget remains the backbone of the Agency's financial stability, and its development for the next cycle will reflect the views expressed by Members in their feedback. A predictable flow of non-core contributions will be necessary to allow the expansion of programmatic activities and strengthen the quality and depth of the activities implemented with core resources. IRENA will thus continue to seek new and innovative ways to secure a stable and adequate resource base to deliver on the ambition set out in the MTS and the Framework for 2020-2021. The next Programme will also benefit from multi-year voluntary contributions already provided to the Agency or in the process of developing. Members' suggestions and ideas on further diversification of the resource base would be welcome.
28. Diversification of the Agency's resource base will, in great part, depend on Members' confidence in its effectiveness of programmatic delivery, soundness of management practices, accountability in the use of resources and transparency in reporting. The emphasis in the coming years will be on further strengthening internal coordination and programme delivery through effective planning, project design and implementation. This will include clarity on division of responsibilities and accountabilities, empowerment of managers to deliver, and monitoring and evaluation of programmatic output. IRENA will also pursue efficiency measures in all areas through business process improvement, staffing optimisation, and technology solutions and seek to improve the transparency of its reporting to Members. In this regard, the use and development of modern reliable, and secure information systems and tools will be vital to both facilitating knowledge dissemination and sharing, and improving processes and resources management.