

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

Background Note

Decentralised Renewables for Energy Access and Sustainable Development

1. Access to energy is a central building block of socio-economic development. It empowers people and communities to increase their income and productivity, enhances access to water, food, healthcare and education, and improves overall well-being. Without universal access to modern energy services, achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) will be nearly impossible.
2. With substantial cost reductions driven by technology innovations, off-grid renewable energy systems (both stand-alone and mini-grids) represent fast-deployable, reliable and affordable solutions to address energy access needs in rural areas and can play a crucial role by complementing grid extension. Additionally, decentralised renewable energy solutions are a crucial element in the nexus between energy and other socio-economic needs, including in the healthcare and agri-food sectors.
3. IRENA has been increasing its efforts to promote the deployment of renewable energy solutions to address basic needs and achieve multiple SDGs. Among other activities, IRENA (i) has developed knowledge products on the energy-water-food nexus; (ii) facilitates insight sharing for expanding geothermal heat use in the agri-food sector; (iii) is working with partners on the promotion of electrification of rural health centres building on the findings of last year's International Conference on Renewable Energy Solutions for Healthcare Facilities; (iv) is supporting the promotion of renewable energy entrepreneurship as well as regional certification of renewable energy skills in Africa; and (v) is partnering with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and other stakeholders to promote the use of decentralised renewable energy solutions in refugee settings.

Objective of the session

4. The session aims to highlight and discuss the role of decentralised renewable energy solutions to foster SDGs and address basic needs, such as healthcare, food and water security. The session will provide an opportunity to share lessons learned and good practices, to showcase recent and ongoing IRENA activities and partnerships, as well as to gather feedback and guidance from Members on future work.

Guiding questions

- What are the key lessons learned and good practices regarding cooperation between the energy and other sectors aiming to maximise the impact of energy access in delivering essential services and meeting basic development needs?
- How can governments support rural electrification through off-grid renewable energy solutions while strengthening the link between energy and other SDGs (including on water, agri-food, health, employment)?
- How can IRENA complement the efforts of governments and/or other regional or multilateral actors to promote renewable energy-based solutions to contribute to achieving multiple SDGs? How can IRENA's on-the-ground support to countries be scaled up in these areas?

Associated Publications

- [Off-grid renewable energy solutions to expand electricity access: An opportunity not to be missed](#)
- [Accelerating geothermal heat adoption in the agri-food sector: Key lessons and recommendations](#)
- [Off-grid Renewables Supply Life-Saving Power to Rural Health Centres](#)
- [Renewable Energy Benefits: Decentralised solutions in the agri-food chain](#)
- [Entrepreneurship Support Facility Webpage](#)