



# ECOWAS Sustainable Energy Forum 2019 Concludes in Accra

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (ECREEE) convened its third annual **ECOWAS Sustainable Energy Forum** (ESEF) on 22-24 October, held at the Kempinski Hotel in Accra, Ghana.

With over 300 experts from energy and related sectors in attendance, this year's event showcased the progress made by the region while highlighting the remaining challenges faced by stakeholders when achieving regional targets in renewable energy and energy efficiency.

At the opening session, welcome remarks were given by a number of luminaries including Mr. **Daniel Moore**, Mission Director for USAID/West Africa; Mr. **Sediko Douka**, ECOWAS Commissioner for Mines and Energy for the ECOWAS; **Fakhruddin Azizi**, Country Representative, UNIDO; **Her Excellency Diana Acconcia**, EU Ambassador to Ghana, and **Her Excellency Alicia Rico Pérez del Pulgar**, Spanish Ambassador to Ghana. ECREEE Executive Director **Mahama Kappiah** gave opening remarks. Finally, Ghanaian **Vice President His Excellency Mahamudu Bawumia**, officially declared the forum open before proceeding to cutting the ribbon for the exhibition.

Since its inception in 2017, ESEF has brought together West Africa's top officials, policymakers, industry leaders and other individuals committed to moving forward the region's sustainable energy agenda. Geared toward facilitating business deals and promoting renewed investment in the area, ESEF aims to impact sustainable change and empower regional leaders from inception through execution and toward long term results; in this sense, ESEF2019 was no different.

*“For the last ten years, ECREEE has been instrumental in creating the necessary environment for addressing the region's energy issues by putting in place landmark policies in renewable energy and energy efficiency. In order to ensure the policy and regulatory work undertaken bears dividends right away, ESEF was established as platform to convene top experts and stakeholders from West Africa and beyond for collaboration. At ECREEE, we believe this is only way to bring about sustainable solutions to the region's most pressing development issues,”* says

Mahama Kappiah, ECREEE Executive Director. *“While tremendous strides have been made in the region, more work remains to be done. We’re committed to working with various partners dedicated to bringing greater energy efficiency and access to the people of the region.”*

This year’s forum was co-organised by the [Alliance for Rural Electrification](#) (ARE), the 130 Member, off-grid industry association delivering innovative clean energy solutions throughout Africa and [GET.invest](#), a European programme that mobilises renewable energy investments with the support of the European Union, Germany, Sweden, the Netherlands, and Austria.

*“Pursuant to the MoU signed with ECREEE at the fifth ARE Energy Access Investment Forum in Abidjan this year and our strong collaboration with GET.invest, we are pleased to kickstart our cooperation by partnering with ECREEE and GET.invest to co-organise ESEF,”* says Marcus Wiemann, Executive Director of ARE. *“Supporting ESEF is part of ARE’s strategy to increasingly work on a regional and national level across sub-Saharan Africa and showcase private sector leadership in the off-grid space.”*

This year, ESEF also featured GET.invest business-to-business matchmaking sessions. There, participants had the opportunity to connect with potential business partners, investors and relevant experts to advance projects during face-to-face interactions in 127 on-site meetings.

*“We hear a lot of talk about there being a lack of financing for decentralised energy. Rather, we believe there is a lack of bankable propositions, including in the West African region,”* says Jan Cloin, GET.invest Deputy Team Leader. *“At ESEF, business developers and financiers took the opportunity of our GET.invest B2B sessions to come together in more than 120 matchmaking meetings. We are confident the results will contribute to more partnerships and therefore better solutions that will in turn lead to further market development of renewable energy.”*

Participants also had a chance to join the industry consultation during a special panel, “Consumer Protection Principles for Clean Energy Mini-Grids.” The Swedfund-driven initiative led by ARE, with the support of the Africa Minigrid Developers Association (AMDA) and Smart Power India (SPI), aims to safeguard consumer rights by defining key roles, tasks and responsibilities of market participants in the mini-grid sector. The consultation gathered 30 participants including mini-grid companies and officials from the public sector to discuss and give feedback to the draft Consumer Protection Principles and the best ways to implement them. Mini-grid companies are invited to commit and/or endorse the principles as embodied in the [Call for Action](#).

The event also featured a vibrant exhibition hall with an array of industry leaders including Universal Energy (Gold Sponsor), Greenlight Planet, JA Solar, SPS Energy (Gold Sponsor), AMMP Technologies, ARE and many more.

The three-day forum concluded with an award ceremony for recipients of the Third ECOWAS Rural Electrification Facility (EREF 3), funded by USAID. Thus, winners of the highly competitive funding (EREF) from following seven countries (Nigeria, Togo, Cabo Verde, Mali, The Gambia, Ghana and Sierra Leone) received checks from the Executive Director of ECREEE and other dignitaries.

Several organisations from the public and private sectors were recognised for their work in the following categories:

**Best in Renewable Energy:** Senelec and Meridiam

**Best in Energy Efficiency:** Energy Commission of Ghana and Akilee

**Best in Energy Access:** PEG, GET.invest and Solar Sisters

**Best in Gender Mainstreaming in Energy:** AMADER, ANOMENA Ventures

**Best in Rural Electrification:** AMADER

**Best in Distributed Energy:** Energy Commission of Ghana

**Best in Innovative Financing:** Acumen

Additionally, the Government of Cabo Verde received a special award for hosting the ECREEE Secretariat and all of its efforts in advancing access to sustainable energy.

The 2019 **ECOWAS Sustainable Energy Forum** was made possible thanks to the support of its event partners and sponsors: European Union, GIZ, UNIDO, Austrian Development Cooperation, Spanish Cooperation, African Development Bank, The World Bank Group, ARE, GET.invest, private sector sponsors such as Universal Energy and SPS.

In his closing speech, Mr. Mahama Kappiah, Executive Director of ECREEE, thanked the Ghanaian government for its support as well as ECREEE's key sponsors. He also reiterated ECREEE's willingness to collaborate with ARE and GET.invest for ESEF2020 in Abuja.

For more information on the ECOWAS Sustainable Energy Forum 2019, please visit: [ecef2019.org](http://ecef2019.org).

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### **About ECOWAS Regional Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency**

ECOWAS Regional Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (ECREEE) was established by the ECOWAS Commission in 2008 during the 61<sup>st</sup> Session of ECOWAS Council

of Ministers. ECREEE is a specialised ECOWAS agency based in Praia, Cabo Verde, with a public mandate to promote renewable energy and energy efficiency markets. It acts as an independent body but within the legal, administrative and financial framework of ECOWAS rules and regulations. The overall mandate of ECREEE is to contribute to the sustainable economic, social and environmental development of West Africa by improving access to modern, reliable and affordable energy services, energy security and reduction of energy related externalities (GHG, local pollution). Since its inception, ECREEE has been working diligently to create favourable conditions for regional RE & EE markets by supporting activities directed to mitigate existing technology, financial, economic, business, legal, policy, institutional, knowledge and capacity related barriers.

### **About GET.invest**

GET.invest is a European programme that mobilises private sector investments in decentralised renewable energy projects. Supported by the European Union, Germany, Sweden, the Netherlands, and Austria, it builds a bridge between business and project developers, financiers and regulators. Find out more at <https://www.get-invest.eu/>

### **About the Alliance for Rural Electrification (ARE)**

ARE is an international business association that promotes a sustainable decentralised renewable energy industry for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, activating markets for affordable energy services, and creating local jobs and inclusive economies. We enable improved energy access through business development support for more than 130 Members along the whole value chain for off-grid technologies.

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