

Press Release

Brussels, 25 June 2021

SEFEA Demonstrates Decentralised Renewables Will Remain a Cornerstone to Achieve East Africa's Energy Targets

25 June 2021 - Organised by the East African Centre of Excellence for Renewable Energy and Efficiency (EACREEE) and the Alliance for Rural Electrification (ARE), the 2nd edition of the Sustainable Energy Forum for East Africa ([SEFEA](#)) took place virtually from 22 to 24 June 2021. The event was supported by GET.invest, a European programme supported by the European Union, Germany, Sweden, the Netherlands, and Austria; and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO). It was held in English and French with simultaneous translations.

More than 1,150 participants from 90 countries joined this major event. Over 50 experts brought deep insights into the role of decentralised renewable energies (DRE) in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the East African Community (EAC) region.

Caroline Adriaensen, Head of Cooperation at the Delegation of the European Union to Uganda underlined that: *“Bridging the access gap by 2030 requires an approach that is commensurate with the size of the problem. In Uganda, the overnight investment cost of a universal electrification programme by 2030 has been roughly estimated at between USD 5.22 and USD 4.45 billion, according to the most recent electrification plans in the National Electrification Strategy. Attracting the volume of investment that will be necessary during the 2021-2030 decade will not be possible without ambitious reforms in the distribution sector both on and off-grid. This will also require a convincing business plan for the next decade with innovative financing models that allow de-risking and guaranteeing the private investment while keeping affordable tariffs for households, businesses and industries.”*

The massive deployment of DRE promises to deliver vast socio-economic benefits in the EAC region, creating jobs, mitigating climate change, improving healthcare and education, as well as boosting energy security. To achieve this, major public and private sector investments are required. A high-level panel, featuring UNIDO, Ministries of Energy of Uganda and Kenya, the Austrian Development Cooperation, the African Development Bank and PowerGen, discussed current challenges on how to scale such investments in the EAC, and shared public and private sector perspectives on how to solve these issues.

Eng. Dr. Mackay Okure, Interim Executive Director of EACREEE stated that: *“EACREEE makes a pivotal contribution at SEFEA to the EAC's energy security agenda by sharing information on the challenges, opportunities and best practices in the region. Drawing on the support of international partners including ARE, GET.invest and UNIDO, SEFEA signifies the crucial role of global and local actors in catalysing expansion of modern energy markets that will speed up the socio-economic development of the region and aid in recovery from effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.”*

The event featured presentations from the public sector, corporate and civil society stakeholders interactive topical discussions on energy efficient lighting & appliances, innovative financing of productive uses of energy & cold chain and clean cooking in the EAC region as well as pitches from private sector companies and start-ups offering innovative DRE solutions and business models. Over 300 virtual 1:1 meetings already took place during the GET.invest Matchmaking, which will last until 30 June. In addition, ARE, for the first-time, highlighted DRE in Burundi by hosting a dedicated deep-dive workshop.

David Lecoque, CEO of ARE said: *“At ARE, we are honoured to be the co-organiser of the second SEFEA and to collaborate with EACREEE, GET.invest and UNIDO on concretely advancing the electrification in East Africa and supporting domestic businesses, national associations and governments in their efforts to achieve SDGs by 2030. We must build on the fruitful discussions and ignite massive and rapid deployment of decentralised renewables across East Africa.”*

SEFEA showed that DRE technologies will remain the cornerstone in harnessing the region’s vast renewable energy and energy efficiency potentials and achieving the vision of the EAC for a prosperous regional sustainable energy market.

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Note to the editor

The Alliance for Rural Electrification ([ARE](#)) is an international business association with the aim to promote a sustainable decentralised renewable energy industry for the 21st century, activating markets for affordable energy services, and creating local jobs and inclusive economies. ARE enables improved energy access through business development support for more than 175 Members along the whole value chain for off-grid technologies.

The East African Centre of Excellence for Renewable Energy and Efficiency ([EACREEE](#)) plays a key role in promoting renewable energies and energy efficiency in the East African Community (EAC) region. Through its activities in the areas of policy, capacity development, knowledge management, and awareness raising, as well as business and investment promotion, EACREEE aims to create an enabling environment by mitigating existing barriers and in promoting a competitive sustainable energy market, as well as economies of scale in the EAC region. EACREEE will continue to execute regional projects programmes and activities in the above areas and in addition showing leadership in the coordination and harmonization of donor activities and acting as a regional hub for the SEforALL initiative.

[GET.invest](#) is a European programme which supports investments in decentralised renewable energy. The programme targets private sector business and project developers, financiers and regulators to build sustainable energy markets in developing countries. Services include market information, a funding database, matchmaking events and access-to-finance advisory. The programme is supported by the European Union, Germany, Sweden, the Netherlands, and Austria, and works closely with initiatives and business associations in the energy sector.

[UNIDO](#) is the specialized agency of the United Nations that promotes industrial development for poverty reduction, inclusive globalization and environmental sustainability. The mission of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), as described in the Lima Declaration adopted at the fifteenth session of the UNIDO General Conference in 2013, as well as the Abu Dhabi Declaration adopted at the eighteenth session of the UNIDO General Conference in 2019, is to promote and accelerate inclusive and sustainable industrial development (ISID) in Member States.

