



# Embedding capabilities in energy policies for effective deployment of renewable technologies: IREK project policy intervention

*Kenya's Parliamentary Committee on Energy 2018 has been spearheading the review of the Kenyan Energy Bill 2017. The committee invited comments from the public and interested stakeholders on the draft. The IREK research team prepared a submission and subsequently was invited to present its recommendations on 15 March 2018 at the Parliament buildings. This note highlights key recommendations based on the submission.*

*Two main recommendations stand out:*

- Strategic capabilities building for enhanced up-take of renewable energy should be explicitly included in the Kenyan Energy Bill currently being finalised.
- The Government of Kenya should launch a range of renewable technology foresight studies to foster innovation and increased use of renewables in covering future electricity needs in Kenya.

One main aspect of the IREK research is to investigate the role of local policies and organisations in the process of renewable electrification in Kenya to ensure inclusiveness and poverty reduction. Anne Kingiri, Senior Research Fellow at African Centre for Technology Studies (ACTS) is leading the IREK project's interaction with policy makers and stakeholders. Following a submission made to Kenya's Parliamentary Committee on Energy 2018, Dr. Kingiri was invited to present the basis for the submission and implications for the proposed Bill to the Committee.

The IREK submission is informed by an empirical study on stakeholders' perceptions of the renewable energy field which was undertaken

between 2015 and 2017 by the project. The underlying survey included policy-makers, energy professionals and academics from across the renewable energy sector in Kenya. The study focused on the role of collaboration and capabilities in diffusion of technologies in solar PV and wind energy in Kenya. This was complimented by an analysis of existing energy policies.

## ***Findings from the study***

- The major relevant energy policies pay limited attention to renewable energy in particular with respect to building capabilities for enhanced up-take of renewables in Kenya.

- The policies do not translate to deliberate efforts to align the pro-investment policy changes to the country's strategic plans that allow for capabilities development, particularly at the local level.
- Policies do not define clearly the role of the diverse local and international collaborators in building the required capabilities.
- A renewed interest and motivation in renewable energies by local and international investors may enhance strategic efforts to build requisite local capabilities required, particularly within distribution, service and maintenance of these technologies. This should be built into the Energy Bill 2017 and other relevant policy documents as well as strategic plans and performance contracts.

***Recommendations presented for consideration by the Committee***

- The Government should ensure that the Energy Policy 2017 and requisite strategic plans reflect the need for capabilities building including technical expertise in the renewable energy subsector.
- The Government should support local training and education opportunities on renewable energy at colleges and universities through development of an evidence based localised training strategy linked to the Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET) at the counties level and a national education curriculum.
- The necessary infrastructure and technical capacity at the local level for developing the last mile distribution channel and providing after-sales service in the renewable energy subsector should be developed.
- A renewable technology foresight studies should be launched. It should take into consideration the need for generation of comprehensive information on capabilities for diffusion of green technologies in Kenya.

These recommendations informed the written submission that targeted specific clauses on the Bill that need revision to incorporate the capabilities policy goals. The presentation was made in the hope that the Committee would consider revising these clauses as a positive step towards securing widespread up-take of renewable energy technologies in Kenya. Enhanced up-take is more likely to take place if there is a conducive policy environment and specific plans that supports development of requisite capabilities to utilise those technologies.

*Besides the IREK project, other invited parties at the hearing were: Kenya private sector alliance (KEPSA), Kenya Oil and Gas Association (KOGA), Natural Justice and East African Wildlife Society (Conservation Alliance of Kenya).*

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Read more about the IREK project at  
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