



# Findings on energy access in Togo

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As the world moves towards 2030, the deadline for achieving the targets of the Sustainable Energy for All (SE4ALL) Initiative, it is important to review the achievements of the past years and readjust our path to meet the goal. For this reason, Practical Action together with the Smart Villages Initiative held a one-day regional workshop on rural energy access planning on 20 February 2017 in Lomé, Togo. The workshop was coupled with the official launch of the French-language version of the 2016 Poor People's Energy Outlook (PPEO 2016). It gathered about 50 participants from various backgrounds, including policymakers, academia, representatives of the private sector, rural communities' leaders, the media, and civil society. The objective of the workshop was to analyse the potential for community-based approaches to strengthen national energy planning processes in West Africa.

This brief summarises the key findings and recommendations of the workshop for policymakers, development organisations, and other stakeholders as follows:

- 1. Energy access targets must go beyond electrical power supply and consider energy requirements for clean cooking.** From the research undertaken by Practical Action in Togo, it was evident that this is particularly relevant for women as they bear the burden of almost all the tasks of gathering and preparing fuel and cooking.
- 2. There is a need to ensure that energy providers enable energy access for a range of enterprises.** In Togo, even in villages where power is available, power utilisation for income generation is poor. This requires larger systems that can provide reliable electricity supplies at the level needed by productive enterprises.
- 3. To get the buy-in of communities, it is important that established institutions within the communities are engaged.** From the villages that participated in the Togo case study, it was evident that institutions, such as religious establishments, can provide a guiding role in the acceptance and utilisation of energy infrastructure.
- 4. It is important to understand the energy priorities of communities and design initiatives accordingly by giving communities decision-making powers.** The interviews with villagers showed that this is desired and, as such, this can ensure a greater project buy-in.
- 5. There is also a need to understand the different energy requirements for women and men as well as the younger members of a community and take these into account when making energy plans.** In Togo, the different groups have different requirements for utilising the power provided. Understanding these, can ensure that energy initiatives are designed more appropriately.
- 6. Energy access should extend to providing power to health-care centres and educational facilities.** The Togolese communities highlighted that providing energy access to health centres and educational facilities can bring benefits to the wider community, which are beyond the mandates of those facilities and often overlooked.
- 7. National plans need to consider a mix of clean fuels and biomass solutions even for rural communities which traditionally rely on biomass—there is vast untapped potential of renew-**

able energy sources in Togo such as biomass, solar, hydro, and wind.

- 8. New projects should make use of institutions and platforms that offer support to enable off-grid energy access.** For example, ECREEE offers the possibility to co-finance up to 50% of a sustainable energy project's total cost through its financing facility in the ECOWAS region.
- 9. There is a need for initiatives that provide confidence to the private sector through better legal, regulatory, and policy frameworks.** Also, accurate data should be developed and made available on the geographical distribution of renewable energy potential, and governments should prepare and publish national electricity grid expansion plans.
- 10. Subsidies should be well-targeted and time-limited.** Subsidising energy initiatives can lower the cost for poorer communities and help project developers to overcome the burden of high upfront capital. However, subsidies cannot be a sustainable solution and as such should be time-limited and targeted at properly assessed needs.

## Notes

### The Smart Villages Initiative

We aim to provide policymakers, donors, and development agencies concerned with rural energy access with new insights on the real barriers to energy access in villages in developing countries—technological, financial and political—and how they can be overcome. We have chosen to focus on remote off-grid villages, where local solutions (home- or institution-based systems and mini-grids) are both more realistic and cheaper than national grid extension. Our concern is to ensure that energy access results in development and the creation of 'smart villages' in which many of the benefits of life in modern societies are available to rural communities.

**Practical Action** is an international non-governmental organisation (NGO) that uses technology to challenge poverty in developing countries. We find out what people are doing and help them to do it better. Through technology we enable poor communities to build on their skills and knowledge to produce sustainable and practical solutions- transforming their lives forever and protecting the world around them.

Practical Action's projects are organised under four programme themes: Sustainable energy access; Food and agriculture; Urban water and waste; Disaster risk

reduction. Two cross-cutting themes are also present across our work: Climate change and Markets. We have a distinctive approach to fighting poverty, with technology justice at the heart of everything we do.

In West Africa, Practical Action works through its subsidiary Practical Action Consulting sharing over 40 years of international expertise; and providing independent and professional consulting in the use of technology for poverty reduction to governments, NGOs, aid agencies and the private sector.

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