INTERNATIONAL SOLAR ALLIANCE

COP28UAE

UN CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE – UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

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THE SOLAR HUB

SCALING SOLAR MINI-GRIDS THROUGH SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS MODELS FOR UNIVERSAL ENERGY ACCESS

Thematic Arena 3, TA3-190, Opportunity District, Expo City, Dubai

11 DECEMBER, 2023 | 12:30 PM – 14:00 PM

Background & Rationale	Access to electricity remains one of the key primary indicators of global progress toward the SDG7 targets. The global share of the population without access to electricity was 9% in 2021 i.e., 675 million mostly in Sub-Saharan Africa. At the current growth rate, 660 million people may still not have access to electricity by 2030. The typical approach to electrification has been to extend the grid to all regions. However, such projects are often time consuming and expensive, and countries have been deploying stopgap electrification solutions. Solar mini-grids can help provide energy access and socio-economic benefits in rural and remote regions, but their deployment has typically been driven by grant support. Sustainable business models for mini-grids already exist but need to be scaled up, which will require private sector finance and right regulatory environment. Private sector involvement coupled with national government and intergovernmental organisation support can help tackle the energy access challenge. Although the technology solutions needed to achieve energy access are available, there are several challenges that need to be addressed to sustainably scale up their deployment: **Policies and Regulations:** The enormous volume of investments needed to deploy mini-grids in Africa is anticipated invariably from private sector investments in the region. The regulatory framework plays an essential role in attracting and ensuring the sustainability of the mini-grid markets in Africa beyond subsidy grants and/or reliance on donor aids/projects. Countries are recognising the need for enabling policies for energy access, but overall progress remains low. As a result, private sector participants and local entrepreneurs are reluctant to participate in energy access projects. Intergovernmental organisations can help access deficit countries in developing policy and regulatory frameworks to create an enabling environment for interventions. **Access to Affordable Finance:** Most of the energy access deficit population lies in underdeveloped regions, where consumers struggle to afford electricity. The high financial risks in such regions also increase project costs for developers, which widens the gap between consumer affordability and supplier viability. Risk mitigation measures and concessional financing can attract private sector investment to energy access projects to help them achieve scale and sustainability.

	Training and Capacity Building: Key stakeholders in energy access deficit countries often lack the technical and financial expertise to drive electrification initiatives, and require skill development activities, access to global best practices, and programs to support sectoral entrepreneurs. Training and capacity building, entrepreneurial support, and awareness creation in energy access deficit countries can drive long term progress. Panelists will discuss various business models, examples of favourable regulations, and other country investment motivations
Session objectives/ Potential Outcomes	Based on the recently launched report on "Roadmap of Solar Energy for Universal Energy Access" at G-20- 4th ETWG Meeting held in Goa, India. The objective of the event is to present latest developments, challenges and opportunities in scaling solar mini-grids to benefit the key stakeholders like policy makers, industrial associations, research organizations, private sector etc. This session will also highlight the significance and role of regulations in enabling private sector investments and promoting sustainable and scalable business models in mini-grid development. It will discuss the flexibility of regulations to accommodate diverse mini-grid models; and how regulations can enable quicker attainment of universal energy access.
Agenda	
12:30 - 12:35 PM	**Welcome Address** **Dr Ajay Mathur,** Director General, International Solar Alliance (ISA)
12:35 - 12:40 PM	**Inaugural Address** **Damilola Ogunbiyi,** CEO and Special Representative of the UN Secretary- General for Sustainable Energy for All (SEforALL) and Co-Chair of UN Energy
12:40 - 12:45 PM	**Special Address** Ministry of Power, Nigeria
12:45 - 12:50 PM	**Special Address** Ministry of Energy & Mineral Development, Uganda
12:50 - 12:55 PM	**Keynote Address** Ministry of New Renewable Energy, Govt. of India
12:55 - 13:05 PM	**Presentation** **Energy Access- Solar Mini-Grids** **Remesh Kumar K,** Chief of Unit, PPIC, ISA
13:05 - 13:55 PM	**Panel Discussion** **Moderator** **Matt Jordan,** Principal RMI **Panellists** ▪ **Nico Peterschmidt,** Co-Founder and CEO- INENSUS GmbH ▪ **Rohit Chandra,** Founder & CEO, OMC Power ▪ **William Brent,** Chief Marketing Officer, Husk Power ▪ **Manoj Kumar Gupta,** CEO, Tata Power Renewable Microgrid ▪ **Prof Ignacio Perez-Arriaga,** Interim Director, African School of Regulation ▪ **Rolake Akinkugbe-Filani –** Advisory Board Member, African Energy Chamber. ▪ **Kazaura,** Director of Infrastructure and Energy, African Union
13:55 - 14:00 PM	**Vote of Thanks and Closing Remarks** ISA