



Editorial

By Professor Ignacio Pérez-Arriaga, ASR Interim Director

Welcome to our third newsletter, which covers the progress made in the establishment of the ASR during the second quarter of 2023 in three dimensions: institutional development, implementation of capacity-building activities and the gradual build-up of human resources.

In the area of institutional development, the ASR Parties have taken decisive steps to select and validate the host institution and to establish a network of implementing partner organisations. The search for a Director has started. Contacts with relevant institutions in the energy sector have continued.

With still limited human resources and in cooperation with supporting organisations, the ASR has implemented several capacity building activities - virtual monographic conferences, “ASR talks” and webinars, which have been well received with high participation. ASR staff have taken part in several international events in Africa.

The ASR is gradually increasing its staff following a rigorous selection process. A further research assistant (in addition to the three already based at the Florence School of Regulation) and an ICT expert will join the ASR team on September 1st.

The ASR is making good progress towards our goal of having a host institution, a director and a 5-year action plan with a sound financial perspective by the end of 2023.

Details of all this can be found in this newsletter.



ACBF and ASR teams at the ACBF office, Accra, Ghana

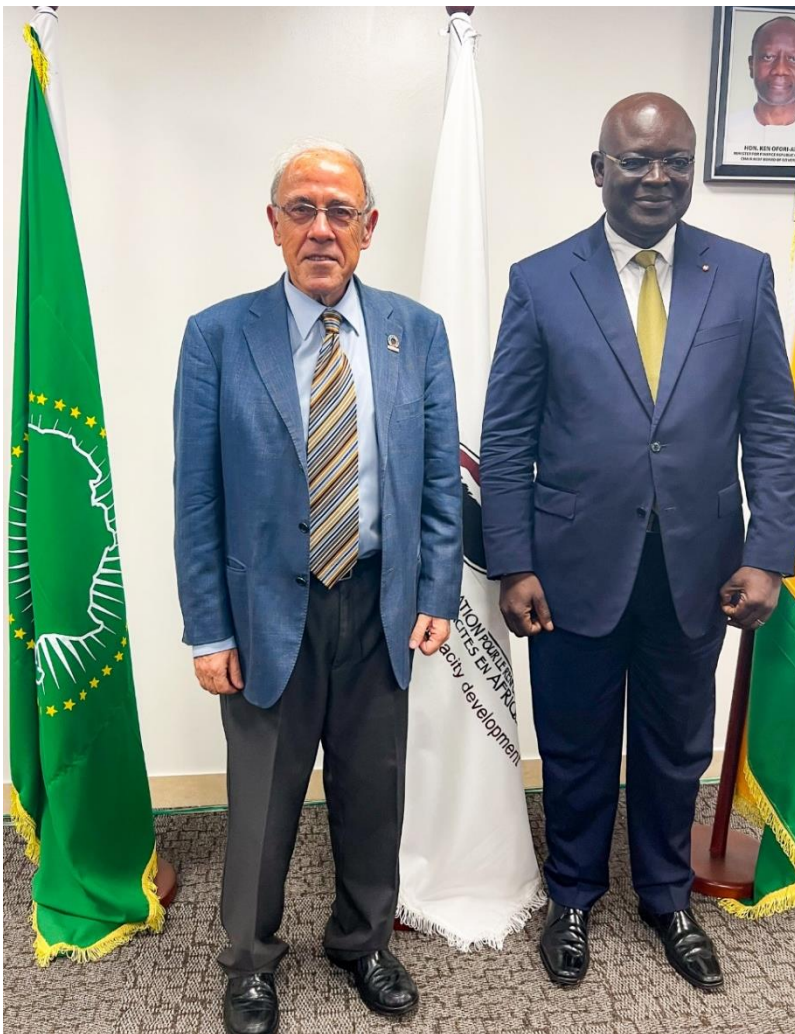
Institutional development

The ASR finds a Hosting Organisation

Important progress has been made in the search for an African organisation to host the ASR, as reported in the previous newsletter. Following a thorough evaluation process of the proposals received to host the ASR, the ASR Parties have decided to enter into negotiations with the African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF, <https://www.acbf-pact.org>) to become the ASR host organisation and to locate the ASR headquarters at the ACBF offices in Accra, Ghana. A Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) between the European University Institute (EUI, which hosts the Florence School of Regulation), representing the ASR Parties, and the ACBF was signed in July 2023. The MoA formally confirms the willingness of both organisations to work on the preparation of a Hosting Agreement and sets out high level guidelines for its content.

Taking advantage of an international conference and training course organised by the School of Transnational Governance of the EUI which were held in Accra during the first week of July, in the presence of the President of the EUI and with the participation of some members of the ASR, including its Interim Director, several important institutional meetings were held: i) with the Executive Secretary and other members of the management of the ACBF; ii) with the Rector and other professors of the Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration (GIMPA) to explore the possibility of partnering with the ASR in the implementation of capacity building activities; and iii) with members of the European Union Delegation to Ghana.

Forging partnerships and collaborations



ACBF Executive Secretary Mamadou Biteye and ASR Interim Director Ignacio Perez-Arriaga

In addition to GIMPA, discussions have been held with the Power Futures Lab at the University of Cape Town, Makerere University in Uganda, Strathmore University in Kenya, the University of Ibadan in Nigeria and the Policy Center for the New South (PCNS, associated with the Mohammed VI Polytechnic University) in Rabat, to define the network of ASR partnerships. Discussions are ongoing with the University of Rwanda, the African Energy Commission and other organisations that have submitted proposals to host the ASR to explore formats of collaboration.

The ASR has continued to explore collaborations with organisations relevant to capacity building in energy sector regulation in Africa. The ASR Interim Director met with staff from the EU Directorate-General for International Partnerships (DG INTPA) in Brussels to present the current situation of the ASR and to discuss the extension of the current cooperation and

longer-term perspectives. Initial contacts have been made with the Association of Power Utilities of Africa (APUA - ASEA in French) and the Association of African Rural Electrification Agencies (Club-ER). Regular meetings are held with AFUR and the GIZ group, with the presence of the African Europe Energy Partnership (AEEP). Work continues with ESMAP/WB, the Institute of Research in Technology and the Tony Blair Institute on the regulation of electricity trading in the West Africa Power Pool. There are ongoing meetings with SE4All to explore approaches to accelerate access to electricity in African countries. Contacts continue with the African Development Bank, the World Bank's ESMAP, and industry organisations such as the African Minigrids Developers Association (AMDA) and the Global Off-Grid Lighting Association (GOGLA), as well as some of those already mentioned, to co-organise and participate in various capacity building activities. Several MoUs are in the pipeline.

The ASR has also received a request to support The Oxford Policy Fellowship and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) to support in developing a course on the Energy Transition, specifically tailored for lawyers in sub-Saharan Africa.



Session of the Climate Finance Training Course at the ACBF Accra offices

Implementation of capacity-building activities

During the second quarter of 2023, the ASR continued to develop its 2023 programme of activities, focusing on current issues in energy regulation in Africa and inviting and facilitating interaction with African and global experts from policy makers, regulators, utilities, independent developers, academia and development partners to identify the key issues and how to address them. These activities lay the foundation for further activities and help to shape the training content and research objectives of the ASR.

Online conferences series

On 9, 10 and 11 May, the ASR held its third online conference, this time on '[Regional Power Pools in Africa: Advancing the Regional Agenda](#)'. The event attracted over 170 registrations and an average of 77 participants attended from 46 mostly African countries over the three days (and three hours per day) of the event.

The event was organised in partnership with the Africa-EU Energy Partnership ([AEEP](#)), the Tony Blair Institute for Global Change ([TBI](#)), [REN21](#), [GET.transform](#), the Institute for Research in Technology at Comillas ([IIT](#)), [RES4Africa](#), the Enel Foundation ([EF](#)), and the Florence School of Regulation ([FSR](#)), with support from the European Commission's Directorate-General for International Partnerships, and with strong presence from the ESMAP-World Bank Group, the African Development Bank and IRENA. The conference identified the key institutional and regulatory improvements needed to promote electricity trade, analysed how best international practices can be adapted to the African context and explored ways to implement them.

Discussions with GOGLA have continued in preparation for the next 3-day online conference on "Business and Regulatory Models for Stand-alone Systems" to be held in early autumn 2023.

ASR Talks and webinars

The series of ASR Talks with experts aims to promote policy dialogue and complement ASR's research and training activities on topical issues.

Following the [ASR Online Conference on Sustainable and Scalable Mini-grid Business Models](#) (January 2023) and the ESMAP 7th Mini-grids Action Learning Event (Nairobi, February 2023), there were some outstanding issues that we wanted to explore further. On 12 April, a live ASR Talk on "[A sustainable and scalable minigrid business model. The way forward](#)", explored the regulatory, business model and financial conditions necessary to deploy in a sustainable manner the estimated 200,000 minigrids that will need to be deployed in Africa to achieve the goal of universal electricity access on the continent by 2030. The vast majority of the required capital will have to come from private investors. This will only be possible if mini-grid business models can be defined that are financially viable and can remain so in the long term, i.e. if the business models are sustainable.

On 17 May, the ASR hosted another an ASR Talk on "[Private Investment in Africa's Energy Infrastructure: The Role of Regulation](#)". The talk focused on how to enhance the openness, attractiveness and readiness of African electricity markets for private sector participation through fit-for-purpose policy and regulatory reforms. The discussion focused on the key findings of RES4Africa and UNECA's regulatory reviews of electricity markets in 16 African countries, based on their Regulatory Openness, Attractiveness and Readiness (R.O.A.R.) analytical framework, and how this tool can be used to influence investment readiness in Africa.

On 24 May, as a sign of its intention to extend its activities to all African countries, the ASR held its first webinar in French on "[La Délégation de Service Public: Un outil pour déployer l'accès à l'électricité pour tous dans les pays Africains? Un regard sur l'Afrique francophone](#)". The webinar was held with simultaneous English translation (all previous events have been held with simultaneous French translation) and was well attended with over 100 registrations and more than 60 full participants from 33 mostly African countries.

This webinar provided an opportunity for a reduced group of highly qualified experts with extensive experience working on utility concessions in francophone African countries to share their experiences. Several utilities in francophone Africa - including Benin, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Morocco and Senegal - have adopted a concession model in its various forms, with varying results. The experts shared their unique country experiences and described ways in which the concession model could be improved, with a particular focus on the role of regulation in providing sustainable and scalable solutions to achieve universal electricity access. The ASR will continue to organise French-language webinars to ensure that the reach of its activities is extended to francophone countries on the African continent.





Instructors and attendees of the Climate Finance Training Course

Other activities by ASR

On 6th to 7th July 2023, members of the ASR staff - the Interim Director and Research Assistants Elias Zigah and Carol Ofafa - collaborated in the executive training on [Climate Financing for Sustainable Energy Transition in Africa](#) in Accra, Ghana. The event was organised by the EUI School of Transnational Governance in partnership with the [African Capacity Building Foundation \(ACBF\)](#) and the [University of Ghana's Institute of Statistical Social and Economic Research \(ISSER\)](#). The course was specifically designed to meet the needs of mid-career and senior professionals in West Africa. The primary objective of the course was to provide the latest insights, strategies and techniques related to financing sustainable energy transitions in African countries. Participants had the opportunity to expand their professional network by interacting with peers and industry experts. At the same time, they gained new ways of approaching issues related to Africa's energy needs, regulations and financing options for a sustainable energy transition.

The programmes, videos and written materials related to all these activities can be found on the ASR website <https://africanschoolregulation.org>.

A SUSTAINABLE ENERGY FOR AFRICA

A series of podcasts on the general theme of "A Sustainable Energy Future for Africa" will be launched in September, presenting the views of various experts on different issues of energy regulation in Africa. The podcast series will consist of 4 seasons, each consisting of several episodes with a common theme. The first season will focus on energy access, the biggest immediate challenge facing the energy sector in many African countries. Interviewees will include industry leaders, academics, experts, policy makers, environmental groups, consumer representatives and African youth. The first season, consisting of six episodes, is entitled "Is universal energy access still possible in Africa by 2030?"

The ASR Research Assistant Elias Zigah in addition attended the Youth Energy Summit, which took place in June 2023 alongside the Africa Energy Summit in Nairobi.

The ASR Interim Director Ignacio Pérez-Arriaga was in Madagascar in June 2023 invited by the GIZ Group to advise on the implementation of the Integrated Distribution Framework electrification approach in a region of the country.



ASR Action Plans 2023-2024

The ASR Parties have approved the main features of the 2023-2024 ASR Action Plan, which covers the completion of the process foreseen in the ASR Partnership Agreement to finalise the institutional establishment of the ASR. During this period, from now until the end of 2024, a two-pronged approach will be followed. On the one hand, the institutional development of the ASR must be completed, with the selection and transfer to a host organisation, the approval of the ASR Statute, the appointment of a Director and the design of a long-term (at least five years) action plan with a corresponding viable budget. Institutional development must also include a strategy for working with the network of implementing partners and with key African policy and regulatory institutions, including regulators and their associations, and other relevant organisations with an interest in energy regulatory capacity building in Africa, but also elsewhere, and willing to work with the ASR.

On the other hand, the ASR will continue to develop and implement capacity building activities - training, policy dialogue, applied research and knowledge dissemination - that meet the real needs of the African energy sector.

It is necessary to draw up a longer-term action plan - for the next five years - during which the ASR must grow steadily in all dimensions - the volume of technical activities carried out by the ASR and its partners, the human resources of the ASR, the people trained, the knowledge resources made available, the advice provided and the results of applied research achieved. The present level of performance of the Florence School of Regulation (twenty years after its creation) may serve as an indicative target for the five-year action plan for the ASR.

Human Resources

The ASR Parties are seeking expressions of interest from individuals for the position of Director of the ASR. Those interested in the job, and wishing to receive information on the requirements of the position and the selection process, should register at the following [link](#). This information will be treated confidentially and will be available only to the selection committee. The full call and job description can be found here: [ASR-Director-job-description.pdf](#)

A new research assistant (*electrical engineer from Ethiopia, alumnus of the FSR training courses*) has been recruited for the ASR among a long list of candidates, as well as an information and communication expert (*degree in International Business Banking and Finance, alumnae of the FSR training courses, from Nigeria*) following the EUI procedure in both cases. They will join the ASR in Florence by September 1st.

A 6-month extension of the three TAF external experts with a reduced dedication effort has been granted by EU DG-INTPA.

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