



AFRICAN
SCHOOL OF
REGULATION



INTERNATIONAL ONLINE CONFERENCE

Off-grid solar systems: Towards sustainable and scalable business models

September 26th, 27th and 28th; 3:00pm to 6:00pm, Central Africa Time and
Central European Summer Time



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The African School of Regulation (ASR), in collaboration with the African Development Bank (AfDB), the Africa Forum of Utility Regulators (AFUR), Africa Minigrid Developers Association (AMDA), the Global Energy Alliance for the People and the Planet (GEAPP), and the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), invites you to a high-level online conference on the necessary regulatory conditions, business model designs, and financial approaches that are necessary to attain a sustainable and scalable development of the minigrid industry.

A very large number of minigrids must be deployed in Africa to achieve the goal of universal electricity access in the continent by 2030, according to estimates by both the minigrid industry and well-known international organizations. Most of the large volume of capital that is needed must come from private investors, and this will only be possible if business models for minigrids can be defined that are financially viable and can maintain this condition permanently, i.e., if the business models are sustainable. In addition, it is necessary that these business models can be scaled up to the necessary dimension, both in terms of the required financing and the technical and managerial capability of the minigrid developers to install all the minigrids identified in the electrification plan.

Despite the favourable projections, minigrids have failed resoundingly in Africa and everywhere else over many years to have significant impact on electricity access. Minigrids cannot attain the relevance they should unless the sustainability of their business model is resolved and implemented through necessary regulatory measures. The conference will focus on the specification of the fundamental regulatory conditions, business model designs, and financial approaches that are necessary to attain sustainability – a necessary, but not sufficient condition for scalability – which will be also discussed.

Conference participants will debate to arrive at the definition of actionable regulatory and business models for minigrids that can attract investors, be deployed quickly, build all the minigrids included in a least cost electrification master plan to achieve SDG, and ensure permanence of reliable and affordable electricity supply. The applicability of lessons learned with minigrids to standalone solar systems will be also examined.

The Conference will bring a limited number of invited experienced participants – from minigrid developers, power pools, ministries, regulatory agencies, development financial institutions, think tanks, private companies, and academia – who will debate under a panel format virtually. The debates will be open free of charge to any interested registered participants, who will be able to send questions and to provide comments that will be conveniently used by the moderators of the panels and made available to all participants.

Preparatory reading material will be made available to all participants ahead of the dates of the Conference. Following the Conference, the ASR team will make public a brief with the summary of the key findings and takeaways, and will organize follow up events – interviews, podcasts, debates on specific aspects – to further examine the topics that had been discussed. This online expert-based debate-style Conference can prepare the ground for the larger presentational ESMAP-AMDA 7th Minigrid Action Learning Event (ALE) to be held in Nairobi from February 27 – March 3, 2023.

PANEL 6: Emerging topics in the OGS sector and how an integrated approach to electrification planning could help.



GRÉGOIRE JACQUOT
(Senior Specialist, Sustainable Energy for All, SEforALL).

Grégoire Jacquot serves as Senior Specialist on Energy Policy & Finance at Sustainable Energy for All (SEforALL).

Prior to this position, Grégoire was Chief Strategy Officer of Cameroon's leading pay-as-you-go solar company before transitioning to power sector reforms and the development of national electrification programs at MIT. He also served as a strategic analyst on energy access policy at the French Development Agency (AFD) and as advisor to the Head of the Incident & Emergency Center at the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). He later worked as an advisor to the French Government and researcher at the MIT Energy Initiative before moving to SEforALL.

Grégoire graduated from MIT and Ecole des Mines (Paris).



YANN TANVEZ
(Senior Investment Officer - Infrastructure, Africa. International Finance Corporation, IFC).

Yann is a Senior Investment Officer in the IFC Africa Infrastructure department based in Rabat, Morocco. In his current capacity, Yann works on early-stage projects development and financing across the infrastructure spectrum, with a focus on climate related investments. Yann is also the energy access lead for the Africa Region at IFC, focussing on scaling up decentralized renewable energy solutions.

Prior to joining IFC in 2018, Yann held various positions at the World Bank in Washington DC, respectively in the Climate Change, Urban Development and Energy Global Practices working on the World Bank's strategy in sustainable energy as well as working on landmark infrastructure transactions across emerging markets globally.

Yann started his career in the private sector, including within Schneider Electric strategy department and as international affairs advisor to Areva's CEO.

French national, Yann holds an LLB and an LLM from Lyon III University, a BA in Classic Philosophy from Paris I Sorbonne University, as well as a MA in International Affairs from the Institut d'Etudes Politiques of Paris - Sciences Po. He also holds an executive education certificate in Public-Private-Partnerships and Project Finance from Harvard University.

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ALBERT NGANGA

(Senior Licensing & Regulatory Officer,
CrossBoundary Energy).

Albert is a member of CrossBoundary Energy’s regulatory affairs team based in the Nairobi office. Albert holds a Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Studies from William Paterson University. He has a deep appreciation of the multi-dimensional nature of the African continent. Albert’s career path across the banking and renewable energy sectors has been buoyed by his profound curiosity. He has successfully overseen multiple renewable energy project licensing functions across different countries in Africa. He is an advocate for policy development, collaborating with various regulators and policy makers to unlock investment. Prior to joining CrossBoundary Energy, Albert worked with various Independent Power Producers in Business Development and Project Origination roles. He has also worked with Natixis Real Estate Capital as a Commercial Mortgage Servicing Analyst.



CAROL OFAFA

(Research Associate, African School of
Regulation).

Carol Ofafa is a researcher at the African School of Regulation initiative currently situated at the Robert Schuman Research Centre, EUI. Carol was among 60 young African Energy leaders on the Open Power Africa Fellowship program of training on the Regulations for Universal access to energy by the Florence School of regulation. Previously Carol served for 9 years as an Electrical Engineer at the Kenya Electricity Transmission Company (KETRACO) where she was awarded the Head of State Commendation by H.E President Uhuru Kenyatta in December 2020. She holds a M.Sc. Electronic and Electrical Engineering and Management from the University of Glasgow and a Bachelor’s degree in Science Electrical and Electronic Engineering from the University of Nairobi.

PANEL 7: A call to action. What works, what can be improved and the need for a comprehensive and long-term vision.



RHODA LIMBANI MSHANA
(Chief Energy Sector Regulations
Specialist, AfDB)

Rhoda Limbani Mshana, is the Chief Energy Sector Regulations Specialist at the African Development Bank, providing support and programming to African counties to establish power sector policies, legislation and regulatory frameworks that ensure sustained commercial viability of the sector. She is a Development Economist with over 15 years work experience in both the public and private sectors in the areas of strategy, financial management, operations improvement and project finance across Africa. Responsible for driving the Bank’s regulatory support in the energy sector - she leads the development of the AfDB’s flagship report the “Electricity Regulatory Index (ERI) for Africa” and identification of opportunities for the implementation of its findings, including leveraging partnerships with relevant stakeholders such as government agencies, development partners and regional and pan-African institutions in the energy sector. She also co-authored the “Financing Power Projects Handbook” (2016) as a tool to inform governments and other stakeholders on key dimensions and considerations, including negotiations and investor engagement. Rhoda has a MSc in Economics (with reference to Africa) from the University of London, UK (2000).



KOEN PETERS
Executive Director GOGLA

Koen Peters is Executive Director at GOGLA, the association for the off-grid solar energy industry. Koen is a strong advocate of making market solutions work for public goals and believes the off-grid solar industry holds the key to the quickest, most cost-effective and overall best route towards universal energy access.

Koen is internationally oriented and throughout his 25+ yr career has been active in various private and public sector roles to support sustainable and green business development, with a specific interest in renewable energy.

He holds a MSc Degree of Environmental Engineering, from Wageningen Agricultural University and International Master of Business Administration (MBA), University Nyenrode and Kellogg School of Management (Northwestern Univ., USA)

PANEL 7: A call to action. What works, what can be improved and the need for a comprehensive and long-term vision.



GABRIELA ELIZONDO

(Practice Manager, Energy Sector Management Assistance Program, ESMAP, World Bank Group)

Gabriela Elizondo Azuela is Practice Manager of the Energy Sector Management Assistance Program (ESMAP) at the World Bank. In this role, she oversees a global portfolio of analytical and advisory activities in the energy sector, as well as the Bank's energy climate finance operations. Ms. Elizondo-Azuela, a Mexican national, joined the Bank in 2003.

Prior to assuming her current position at ESMAP, Ms. Elizondo-Azuela worked in the Latin America and Caribbean Energy Unit and other various Energy units across regional and global teams, contributing to a range of innovative operations in the areas of energy access, clean energy, climate change and became the Global Lead for Clean Energy for the Global Practice. As the Global Lead, she has championed the introduction of innovative initiatives, most recently in the areas of digitalization of energy sector infrastructure and utilities of the future. Ms. Elizondo-Azuela has more than 25 years of professional experience in the environmental and energy fields with specializations in power sector reform, regulatory design, private sector development, power sector planning, renewable energy, and climate change.

Before joining the Bank, she worked for private consulting firms and academia. Ms. Elizondo-Azuela is a graduate of the National Autonomous University of Mexico (MX) in Chemical Engineering, has a Master of Environmental/Water Resources Engineering degree from the University of Michigan (USA), a PhD of Energy Economics from Imperial College London (UK), and various postgraduate diplomas from Harvard University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (USA).

James Manda (Technical Manager, African Forum for Utility Regulators, AFUR).
