
POWER FOR ALL PERSPECTIVE:

Status of Universal Electricity Access

POWER FOR ALL

1.06 billion

PEOPLE WORLDWIDE
WITHOUT ELECTRICITY ACCESS

60 million

PEOPLE IN AFRICA SERVED
BY OFF-GRID RENEWABLES

49%

PERCENTAGE OF LOW ENERGY
ACCESS COUNTRIES THAT ARE
ALSO LOW-INCOME

Two new World Bank reports look into how the global community is doing in its efforts to achieve Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 7—universal access to clean, modern energy services by 2030.

The [Global Tracking Framework 2017](#) (GTF) evaluates SDG 7 progress, while the [Regulatory Indicators for Sustainable Energy \(RISE\)](#) is a scorecard that complements the GTF by evaluating country-level energy policy frameworks.

The Energy Access Gap: At current electrification rates we are not on track to reach SDG 7. The GTF finds that the absolute number of unelectrified people globally is unchanged, and more concerted action is needed to close the access gap and achieve universal electricity access.

- » 1.06 billion people lacked access to electricity in 2014, an improvement of only 2 million over 2012. Although 86.5 million people gained electricity access each year, this was offset by population growth of 85.5 million per year. (35)
- » The energy access gap is decreasing everywhere except sub-Saharan Africa, where, over 2012-2014, energy access growth of 19 million people per year was outpaced by population growth of 25 million people per year. (37) In sub-Saharan Africa, 600 million people lack access to electricity.
- » Based on IEA World Energy Outlook projections, with the current trajectory 784 million people will continue to lack access to electricity in 2030. (96)
- » Over 80% of unelectrified people live in rural areas, increasing the complexity of delivering modern energy services. (5)

The Policy Map: Where is further action most critically needed?

Are policymakers around the world truly rising to the challenge posed by the new sustainable energy agenda? RISE finds that energy access is limited more by financially unsound utilities than by unaffordable tariffs.

- » Although 56% of low energy access countries have an official electrification plan, only a small subset adopt a sufficient scope. (73, 75)
- » 49% of countries lack policies to encourage off-grid solar home systems. (83) Utilities are not creditworthy in 80% of countries, and are thus unable to make necessary investments to expand energy access. (XVIII)
- » In 73% of countries evaluated, tariffs are affordable to the poorest quintile of the population. (88)

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By the Numbers:

>80%

UNELECTRIFIED PEOPLE
LIVING IN RURAL AREAS

44%

COUNTRIES LACKING AN
OFFICIAL ELECTRIFICATION
PLAN

The Solution: Decentralized renewable energy (DRE) is a cost-effective option to rapidly increase rural electrification.

- » Decentralized solutions such as mini-grids and solar home systems are increasingly considered a more affordable option than grid extension for communities living far from the electricity grid. (115)
- » For instance, off-grid rural electrification with solar PV enabled Afghanistan to increase its electrification rate by an extraordinary 10.2 percentage points per year over 2012-2014. (41)
- » In 2015, 717 MW of off-grid renewable energy in Africa provided electricity access to 60 million people, or about 10% of the total off-grid population. (41)

Share the Message

GTF and RISE provide a snapshot on the status of global efforts to deliver universal energy access. The conclusion is clear: We will not reach the SDG 7 goal of universal energy access by 2030 based on current efforts. Global leaders are moving far too slow, particularly in regard to policy and finance action needed to accelerate DRE, a key part of the solution to rapidly and cost-effectively increase electricity access to those with the highest access gap: the rural poor.

There is optimism on how to fast-track efforts. Power for All's recent report, [Decentralized Renewables: From Promise to Progress](#), calls upon national energy and finance leaders to take three actions that are proven pathways to accelerate DRE market growth:

- » **Set the Target:** Include DRE in National Policies and Rural Electrification Plans
- » **Close the Implementation Gap:** Integrate DRE into Energy Planning & Delivery Mechanisms
- » **Collaborative Policy Design:** Work with private sector, civil society and others to develop policy

It can be done. The opportunity is now to take action and fast-track access, but only with the deliberate integration of DRE into national policy.

Sources & Notes:

1. Global Tracking Framework (2017). Progress toward Sustainable Energy
2. RISE (2016). Regulatory Indicators for Sustainable Energy: A Global Scorecard for Policy Makers
3. Page numbers under the GTF and RISE topic sentences refer to page references from the GTF 2017 and RISE 2016 respectively.
4. The GTF is co-led by the World Bank/ESMAP and the International Energy Agency. RISE is co-led by the World Bank/ESMAP and Sustainable Energy for All.
5. The current SDG7 indicator for energy access only indicates a binary yes/no for whether a household is connected to the grid. The Multi-Tier Framework, expected to launch in 2018, will evaluate energy access according to different tiers, to better capture whether electricity is affordable, reliable, and modern. (32)