



Outcome Report & Recommendations

5th Energy Access Investment Forum

Abidjan

13-14 March 2019

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Executive Summary

In partnership with the African Development Bank (AfDB) and GET.invest (formerly RECP) and thanks to the sponsors (*see annex 1*), the Alliance for Rural Electrification (ARE) organised its [5th ARE Energy Access Investment Forum \(EAIF\)](#), held this year for the first time in Africa in Abidjan, Ivory Coast on 13-14 March 2019.

The EAIF, supported by SEforALL and UNIDO as global Partners and by AIENR, AMDA, Club-ER and ECREEE as main regional Partners in Africa, attracted more than 260 participants from over 40 countries worldwide. More than 50% of participants came from Africa. Participants included the public and private sector, development organisations and NGOs, as well as project developers and financiers. Given their key role for positive future developments, it should be noted that the target audience was well represented to support the main objective, which is to boost clean energy access investments with a specific focus on Sub-Saharan Africa, where 588 million people still lack electricity.

To intensify the exchange with local players, ARE also held its Annual General Meeting in conjunction with the EAIF the day before. Also, English - French translations were provided during the conference.

Building on the success of the previous four editions, the EAIF offered again the opportunity to learn about upcoming political and de-risking initiatives, to discuss latest sector trends and innovations and to enter into concrete business partnerships. In total, 265 B2B matchmaking meetings were held between local, regional and international market players in addition to networking opportunities.

Highlights

- **Signature of MoU** between ECREEE and ARE to support SMEs and start-ups in order to upscale decentralised renewable energy and cross-sectoral collaborations in the ECOWAS region.
- **Interventions from high-level representatives** from African and European governments and multi-lateral institutions with a key role in the off-grid sector, including (mentioned in order of the conference program here):
 - **Sabati Cissé**, Directeur Général de l'Énergie, Ministère du Pétrole, de l'Énergie et des Énergies Renouvelables, Côte d'Ivoire
 - **Sediko Douka**, Commissioner for Energy and Mines, ECOWAS
 - **Robert van den Dool**, Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to Ivory Coast, Netherlands Embassy to Ivory Coast
 - **Sanusi Mohammed Ohiare**, Executive Director, Rural Electrification Fund (REF), Rural Electrification Agency, Nigeria
 - **Mahama Kappiah**, Executive Director, ECREEE
 - **Felice Zaccheo**, Head of Unit Sustainable Energy and Climate Change, DG International Cooperation and Development - European Commission
 - **Marcus Wiemann**, ARE Executive Director
 - **Vivian Vendereinho**, re-elected ARE President (2019 - 2023)
 - **Rana Ghoneim**, Chief, Energy Systems & Infrastructure Division, UNIDO
 - **Daniel Schroth**, Acting Director for Renewable Energy, AfDB & Chair, Mini-Grid Partnership
- Presentation of **existing and upcoming new country-level and international financing initiatives** in the off-grid sector, including:
 - **Ivory Coast Rural Electrification Plan**, aiming for full electrification of the country by 2025 as mandated directly by the President (currently access stands at 28%).

- **Nigeria Rural Electrification Plan (NEP)** and the **Rural Electrification Fund (REF)**, which helps finance rural electrification expansion in Nigeria with strong support from the World Bank (USD 150 million for mini-grids).
- **Togo Rural Electrification Plan (CIZO)** launched in June 2018, aiming for 100% energy access for all Togolese people by 2030 based on three windows of intervention (grid connection of 900,000 households + generation of additional capacity of 108 MW; construction of 315 solar mini-grids for 55,000 households; distribution of individual solar kits for 555,000 households).
- **Facility for Energy Inclusion** initiative's **Off-Grid Energy Access Debt Fund (OGEF)**, a USD 100 million fund supporting debt capital markets for energy access across Africa by the African Development Bank as part of the "New Deal for Africa".
- The **Regional Off Grid Electrification Project (ROGEP)**, a USD 200 million initiative of ECREEE with funding support from the World Bank Group, covering 15 ECOWAS and four Sahelian countries. Project Preparatory Advance (PPA) commenced in 2017 with implementation expected to start in September 2019. ROGEP has two components: "Developing a Regional Market" and "Access to Finance for Stand-Alone Solar System Businesses".
- Launch of the **EUR 10 million ElectriFI window for Ivory Coast**. The ticket sizes envisioned are EUR 2-3 million (minimum EUR 0.5 million) and the strategy for Ivory Coast follows two main trends: focus on the electrification of remote areas and preference for equity and equity-like instruments. The ElectriFI window for Ivory Coast is accompanied by the launch of the Nigeria country window in April 2019 and windows in Benin and Zambia.
- **GET.invest**, a European programme that aims to **mobilise investments in decentralised renewable energy projects**, launched in early 2019 and showcased at the EAIF. Building on its predecessor, RECP, GET.invest has two main pillars: "private sector mobilisation" (by stimulating partnerships and new investments) and "pipeline development" (Finance Catalyst that provides advisory support on renewable energy project development, project structuring and accessing finance through a team of dedicated experts).
- **ARE Member, CrossBoundary Energy Access (CBEA) financing facility for mini-grids**, with funding commitments from The Rockefeller Foundation and CeniARTH. CrossBoundary Energy Access will initially invest **USD 16 million into mini-grids** serving 170,000 people, providing first-time power to homes and businesses. Crossboundary offers a shared vehicle where different types of financing are blended in an integrated finance solution.

To get in contact with any of the above-mentioned financing initiatives for the off-grid sector, contact the ARE Secretariat (*see annex 6*).

- **Five in-depth panel discussions** on different challenges for the deployment of off-grid renewable energy in emerging markets (e.g. regulations, financing, partnerships, business models).
- **Five side-events** to facilitate in-depth insights and stakeholder engagements into the new EUR 10 million ElectriFI Ivory Coast funding window, the electrification strategy of Togo, mobilising renewable energy investments via GET.invest, scaling up homegrown solutions for decentralised energy via UNIDO and into a new ARE-led initiative to develop consumer protection principles for mini-grids, funded by Swedfund (*for more details see annex 2*).
- **B2B Matchmaking** with 190 persons from 43 different countries participating in 265 B2B matchmaking meetings. The B2B Matchmaking is an ARE initiative supported by GET.invest, in order to realise the offered opportunity to meet potential business partners, and to thereby develop reliable relationships and/or to directly enter into co-developing common project proposals and business ideas during their face-to-face exchanges (*for more details see annex 3*).

- **Ten pitches** to showcase technological innovations and funding instruments available for off-grid renewables in Sub-Saharan Africa.

- **ARE Awards 2019 ceremony** to reward [seven winners](#) for their success stories:

- Category 1: Multilateral / Intern. Organisations): UNCDF Clean Start, Thailand



- Category 2: NGOs and Foundations: Guakia Ambiente, Dominican Republic



- Category 3: Private Sector Developed Countries: TESVOLT Australia + Germany



- Category 4: Private Sector in Developing Countries: Artgeo Foundation, Liberia



- Category 5: Government in Developing Country: Hemeva. S.A.S. & Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores de Colombia – MREC, Columbia



- Category 6: Best Off-Grid Project: Mytilineos S.A., Greece



- Category 7: Best Start-Up: LIFI-LED Liberia, Liberia



Key recommendations for meeting the energy access objectives for Africa by 2030

While finance for energy access start-ups and SMEs increased from USD 180 million in 2015 to USD 427 million in 2018,¹ and the increase in off-grid support and financing initiatives show positive market developments, **more access finance is still needed to achieve clean and affordable energy access for all by 2030**. This is especially the case in Sub-Saharan Africa, where 600 million will remain without access in 2030 at current rates of deployment.²

Based on two days of intensive discussions at the EAIF, ARE has **developed five key recommendations** to advance effective clean off-grid sector development to help achieve the energy access objectives for Sub-Saharan Africa by 2030.

Challenge 1: Lack of off-grid market information, data and transparency

While a large number of studies on off-grid renewable energies are available, sharing of the results is not often enough practiced and more importantly more data is still needed on the performance and costs of private sector operated mini-grids to increase investor confidence (e.g. through benchmarking studies on mini-grid deployment and costs). There is equally a need to pool knowledge on the role of different productive uses in business models.

Key recommendations:

- Joint industry initiative to **collect aggregated data from clean energy mini-grids** in selected countries to create a benchmark on mini-grid performance and costs.
- Industry initiative(s) to **collect and analyse business models and local entrepreneurship related to productive use of energy**.

Challenge 2: Unsupportive or non-existing policy frameworks

Policies for off-grid renewables play a vital role in enabling private sector engagement. While policy has in some cases spurred private sector participation to the benefit of rural populations (e.g. in the case of Nigeria as presented at the EAIF), other markets have yet to develop specific off-grid regulations, which can catalyse private sector investments.

Key recommendations:

- Organise **policy dialogue stakeholder meetings** (stand-alone or in combination with private sector business delegation) to sensitise policy makers, discuss rural electrification strategies and inform about the added value of off-grid solutions to provide reliable electricity supply and spur rural socio-economic development.
- Develop a **regulatory toolkit** with sector-wide input on policy best practices and lessons learnt to reach 100% electrification in target countries.
- Implement **trainings for policymakers and REA's** to improve the skills of and build institutional capacity for the public sector.

Challenge 3: Lack of interaction between market players inside & outside of local markets

Local SMEs and start-ups that often have profound knowledge about last-mile customers and local distribution chains have limited capacity in accessing and meeting international financiers, donors, technology providers and suppliers.

¹ BNEF, Powering the Last Billion, 2019: page 26

² IEA, [Energy Access Outlook](#), 2017: page 3

Key recommendations:

- Organise **Off-grid Investment Fora and Workshops uniting international and local stakeholders** to enable synergies and fast-track off-grid projects on the ground.
- Set-up **local help desks** in selected markets to **increase interaction and knowledge transfer** between local and international players.

Challenge 4: Lack of debt finance (both in terms of volume and design)

The off-grid sector (and especially mini-grid sector) is still struggling to attract substantial debt financing to achieve scale. Capital is rarely 'patient' and investments are perceived by investors as risky, leading to high interest rates on loans. Moreover, existing funds often have high minimum investment amounts, which exclude small-scale developers and small(er) projects from accessing funds.

Key recommendations:

- Develop **schemes that reward strong results and track records** (e.g. results-based finance and climate finance).
- Organise **roundtable discussions** to coordinate and discuss interlinkages and blending of instruments from different financiers and donors in the sector.

Challenge 5: Lack of capacity among market players (local associations, project developers and entrepreneurs)

As a nascent industry, the off-grid sector is permeated by a lack of capacity in the whole value-chain, including experts in management, financing, regulation and technical skills. This is especially the case on the local level.

Key recommendations:

- Develop **twinning programmes** between international and local business associations, to facilitate the exchange of knowledge and experience, conduct management trainings, organise secondments and joint activities.
- Support **youth and women entrepreneurship programmes** to empower the pioneers of the future decentralised energy sector and to stimulate demand generation in rural villages.
- Implement **training programmes for project developers and entrepreneurs** to improve the quality and structuring of project proposals, help attain bankability and stimulate demand for off-grid renewables in rural villages.

The ARE Service Lines approach to tackle identified challenges from industry's perspective

Building on its unique position as the leading global voice for the off-grid sector and **to address and to resolve the above-mentioned key challenges** hindering massive deployment of clean energy solutions, **ARE has established three service lines to empower its Members and the wider off-grid sector including Partners and interested stakeholders.**

These service lines support the political call for universal clean, affordable and sustainable energy access, as well as ARE's mission to build a sustainable decentralised renewable energy industry for the 21st century, activating markets for affordable energy services, and creating local jobs and inclusive economies.

In more developed markets where policies already allow for it, ARE mainly aims to empower its Members with direct networking and B2B opportunities via service line 1 (market intelligence & business services).

In markets where policies for off-grid renewables are not yet in place, ARE primarily works to advise and to influence on the development of appropriate policies via service line 2 (policy & advocacy).

Lastly, in order to support its individual Member's business development, ARE offers ad-hoc marketing and business opportunities via service line 3.

Service Line 1: Market Intelligence & Business Services

- **Market intelligence:** latest information about the sector, publications on key topics in the sector such as benchmarking and business models.
- **On-the-ground business services:** networking opportunities in key markets, B2B fora & B2B matchmaking, in-country workshops.
- **Online business opportunities:** online networking opportunities, weekly alerts with procurements, business and partnership opportunities.
- **Visibility measures:** bi-monthly newsletters, ARE website, ARE case studies, videos, etc.

Service Line 2: Policy & Advocacy

- **Policy dialogues and conferences:** international policy fora, in-country policy dialogues with key public sector stakeholders.
- **Initiatives to support the wider off-grid sector:** initiatives to support the development of the sector, such as 'Consumer Protection Principles for Clean Energy Mini-Grids' and 'Young Leaders Programme'.
- **Association twinning:** support capacity building, advocacy and policy efforts on the national level by working with national renewable energy associations.
- **Media and public relations:** bringing wider support for the off-grid sector by liaising with media and public sector stakeholders.

Service Line 3: Individual Member Support

- **Speaking and marketing opportunities:** ad-hoc speaking opportunities for Members at events.
- **Event and exhibition discounts:** discounts at various events and exhibitions for Members.
- **Connections:** ad-hoc business delegations to target markets, connections to financiers, donors and other stakeholders in the sector.
- **Individual business support:** CfPs to support financing of projects, entrepreneurship, technical and project financing trainings, local Africa and Asia desks to support individual Member requests.

Annex 1: Organisers, Sponsors and Supporting Partners of EAIF 2019

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Annex 2: Side-events at EAIF

Launch of the EUR 10 million ElectriFI Côte d'Ivoire funding window

Date: 13th March (14.00 – 15.15)

Objective: Launch and presentation of the EUR 10 million Côte d'Ivoire Funding Window of the Electrification Finance Initiative (ElectriFi). ElectriFi is an EU funded innovative financing instrument for renewable energy investments in developing countries.

Organiser: ElectriFI

Contact person: [Dominiek Deconinck](#)

The rural electrification strategy of Togo: Developing PPP's for the construction of solar mini-grids (*Stratégie d'électrification du Togo: développer des PPP pour la construction de mini-réseaux solaires*)

Date: 13th March (15.45 – 17.00)

Objective: The side-event (held in French) envisaged to establish contact between mini-grid developers, banks, financiers in the energy sector and other private sector players in Togo. Information was provided to the participants on the development of mini-grids in Togo, PPP's in Togo, the regulatory framework and upcoming tenders/CfPs.

Organiser: AT2ER, GIZ Togo

Contact person: [Florian Paffenholz](#)

GET.invest: Mobilising Renewable Energy Investments

Date: 14th March (10.15 – 11.30)

Objective: To inform about GET.invest, the new European instrument for mobilising renewable energy investments in developing countries. The session introduced GET.invest in the context of the wider EU support framework for sustainable energy and provided an overview on the services and products of GET.invest.

Organiser: GET.invest

Contact person: [Jan Cloin](#)

Scaling up homegrown solutions for decentralised energy

Date: 14th March (11.30 – 12.45)

Objective: Discussing approaches for de-risking investments to accelerate business-led decentralised energy solutions and achieve economic development and energy access goals by linking up issues related to innovation/startups and deployment.

Organiser: UNIDO

Contact person: [Rana Ghoneim](#)

Consumer protection principles for clean energy mini-grids

Date: 14th March (13.50 – 15.00)

Objective: Kick-off of new initiative by ARE, AMDA, SmartPower India and Swedfund to debate consumer protection principles for clean energy mini-grids.

Organiser: Swedfund, ARE

Contact person: [Caroline Nijland](#)

Annex 3: B2B Matchmaking at EAIF – Summary Report

Four B2B Matchmaking sessions in the afternoon of 13 March 2019 and during the 14 March 2019 gave participants the opportunity to meet other participants, panelists and speakers to discuss specific business issues in face-to-face meetings. Via the online matchmaking platform, participants were able to view the business profiles of other participants and schedule meetings with potential future business partners. During the B2B Matchmaking sessions themselves, participants had the possibility to discuss individual topics of interest, identify their business opportunities and initiate possible cooperation.

In total, **190 persons from 43 countries participated in the B2B Matchmaking**. A clear majority of them came from Africa, particularly from Côte d'Ivoire and Nigeria.

The B2B sessions allowed up to 16 bilateral meetings of 20 minutes each per participant. **265 matches were arranged in total**. Numerous further contacts were initiated by the messaging function of the B2B platform.

Two weeks after the Forum an event evaluation including a questionnaire on the B2B Matchmaking was conducted.

The results from the evaluation showed that the **B2B Matchmaking event was successful. It exceeded the expectations of most participants. 91% of the participants were satisfied or very satisfied** with the assistance before and during the B2B event as well as with the B2B online platform. Only 2% of the respondents were very dissatisfied with the B2B online platform and dissatisfied with the assistance during the B2B matchmaking event. **93% indicated that the quality of the other participant's profiles was satisfying or very satisfying**. The Matchmaking rooms were rated as satisfying or very satisfying by 76% of the respondents, 22% stated the locations were dissatisfying, 2% found them very dissatisfying.

Figure 1: Did the Matchmaking Event meet your expectations?

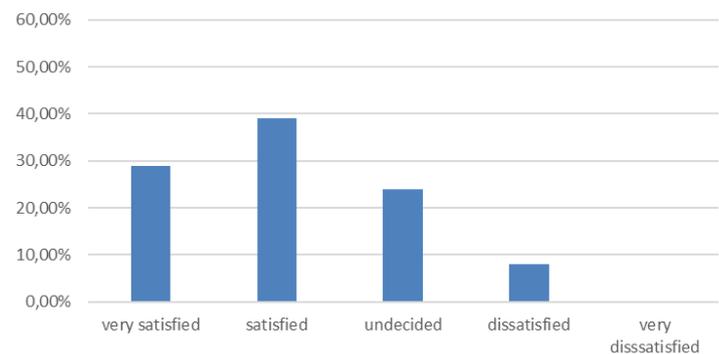
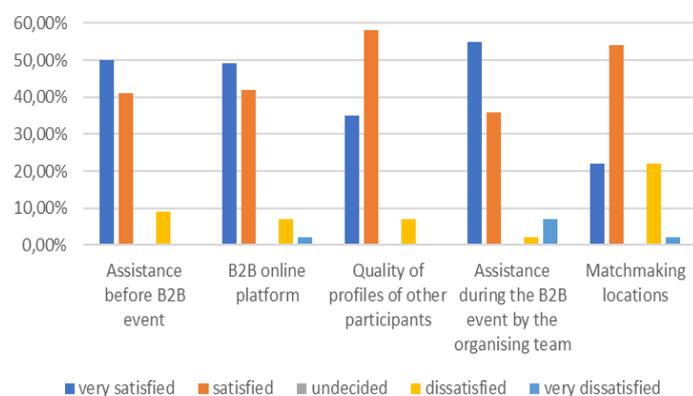


Figure 2: How do you rate the B2B Matchmaking organisation?



Annex 4: EAIF Media Coverage

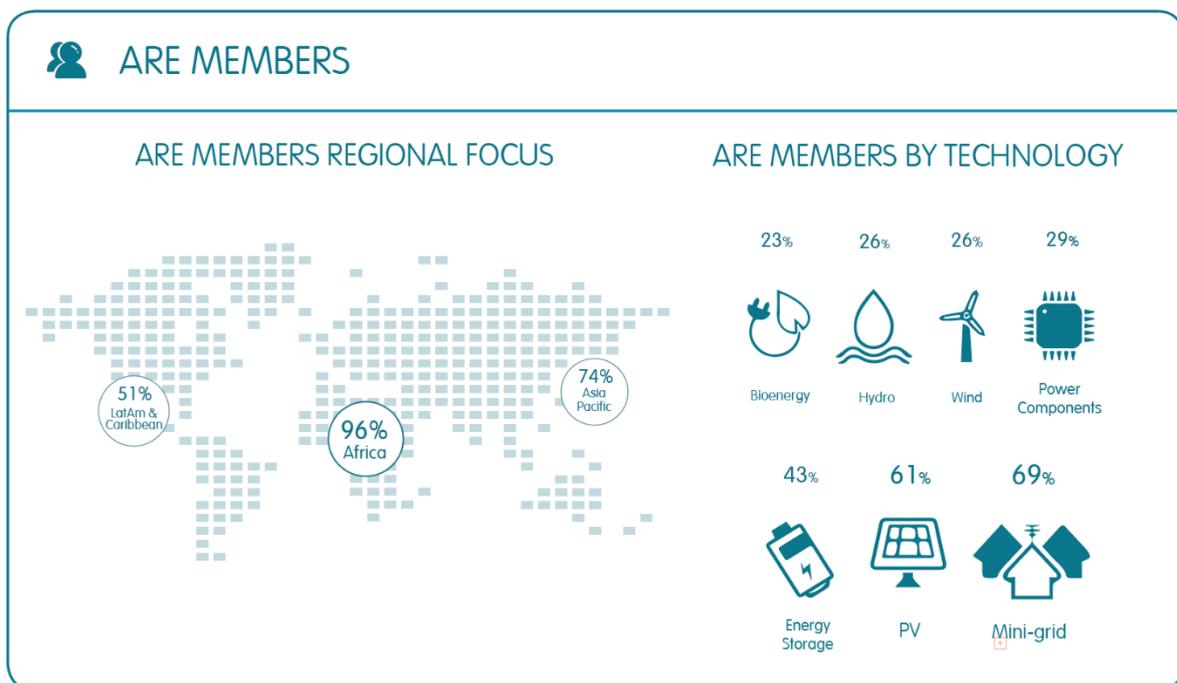
	Publication	Title	Date
1	News Ghana.com https://www.newsghana.com.gh/5th-energy-access-investment-forum-stakeholders-underscore-the-need-for-new-financing-mechanisms/	5th Energy Access Investment Forum: Stakeholders underscore the need for new financing mechanisms	23 Mar
2	Namibia Economist https://economist.com.na/42940/mining-energy/energy-stakeholders-call-for-new-financing-mechanisms-to-support-off-grid-and-mini-grid-connectivity-in-africa/	Energy Stakeholders Call for new financing mechanisms to support off-grid connectivity in Africa	26 Mar
3	DevDiscourse.com https://www.devdiscourse.com/article/headlines/453785-afdb-develops-financing-instruments-for-engaging-off-grid-sector-by-investing-in-fei	AfDB develops financing instruments for engaging off-grid sector by investing in FEI	24 Mar
4	La Tribune Afrique https://afrique.latribune.fr/entreprises/la-tribune-afrique-de-l-energie-by-enedis/2019-03-14/energy-access-investment-forum-faciliter-l-acces-a-l-energie-propre-810358.html	Energy Access Investment Forum : faciliter l'accès à l'énergie propre.	14 Mar
5	Ecofin Agency https://www.ecofinagency.com/finance/2303-39825-energy-stakeholders-call-for-new-financing-mechanisms-to-support-off-grid-and-mini-grid-connectivity-in-africa	Energy stakeholders call for new financing mechanisms to support off-grid and mini-grid connectivity in Africa	23 Mar
6	Public Finance International https://www.publicfinanceinternational.org/news/2019/03/financing-key-turning-power-africa	Financing is key to turning on the power in Africa	25 Mar
7	ESI Africa https://www.esi-africa.com/industry-sectors/renewable-energy/energy-players-call-for-renewable-finance-restructure/	Energy players call for renewable finance restructure	25 Mar
8	Afrique Green Side http://www.afriquegreenside.com/energie-electrifi-decaisse-10-millions-deuros-pour-accroitre-la-connexion-electrique-en-cote-divoire/	ÉNERGIE: ElectriFI décaisse 10 millions d'euros pour accroître la connexion électrique en Côte d'Ivoire	25 Mar
9	E Co. Ltd Group https://www.ecoltdgroup.com/thoughts-from-5th-are/	News: Scaling up investments – thoughts from 5th ARE Energy Access Investment Forum 2019	1 Apr

Annex 5: About the Alliance for Rural Electrification

The Alliance for Rural Electrification ([ARE](#)) is an international business association that promotes a sustainable decentralised renewable energy industry for the 21st century, activating markets for affordable energy services, and creating local jobs and inclusive economies.

ARE enables improved energy access through business development support for its Membership along the whole value chain for off-grid technologies.

As Proud Partner of SEforALL, ARE collaborates with SEforALL through specifically tailored interventions which lie on the critical path as identified by the Global Tracking Framework (2017). ARE mobilises and unites all private sector players and partners who are passionate and committed to improve regional socio-economic development and quality of life of individuals with the provision of electricity.



For more information about ARE Membership or to join ARE as a Member, see:

- ❖ [ARE Matchmaking Platform](#)
- ❖ [ARE Fact Sheet](#)
- ❖ [ARE Membership Form](#)

Annex 6: ARE Secretariat Contacts



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