

Summary Report

Africa-EU Renewable Energy Research and Innovation Symposium (RERIS) 2018

23-26 January 2018 - Maseru, Lesotho



Background

With more than 600 million Africans living without access to electricity and over 730 million relying on dangerous, inefficient forms of cooking, fast but sustainable development of African renewable energy markets is needed. Applied research and innovative business roll-outs play a key role in boosting this development, helping to secure energy supply in both rural and urban areas, increasing generation capacities and energy system resilience. While an increasing number of academic institutions in Africa are dedicated to work on renewable energy, the transition from research into practice remains a challenge.

To address this challenge, the Africa-EU Renewable Energy Cooperation Programme (RECP) and the National University of Lesotho (NUL) organized the second edition of the Africa-EU Renewable Energy Research and Innovation Symposium (RERIS 2018) in combination with the NUL International Science and Technology Innovation Conference and Expo (NULSITICE) in January 2018, in Maseru, Lesotho. Attended by 242 participants, the event was a big step towards better Africa-EU research cooperation and innovations for renewable energy.

Objectives

The primary focus of this research symposium was on translating science into practice. Specific objectives were to:

- Facilitate Africa-EU renewable energy research collaboration
- Increase public and private sector participation in renewable energy research
- Build capacities for applied research and promote university business spin-offs



Conference Summary

The panel discussion on **‘How to translate research into practice’** addressed a number of challenges that slow down this translation. While the communication between technology-developers with electricity distributors is generally on a good level, the needs of the consumers – especially those in rural communities without access to the grid – are not considered sufficiently. In the specific case of Lesotho, its National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP) formulates the aim to foster research – also to address the marginalized consumers – but its implementation remains a challenge. In this context, the panel furthermore stressed the importance for countries like Lesotho to invest in its own production of e.g. PV cells, rather than relying solely on imports.

The session on **EU-Africa joint programmes** addressed funding and cooperation opportunities for both researchers and private project developers. Horizon 2020 provides a total of EUR 30 billion, of which 5.9 billion are allocated to secure clean and efficient energy. Regarding international cooperation, the programme funds general openness. The opportunity to request support from the European Commission in strengthening capacities to write research proposal was emphasized. The EU delegation to Lesotho outlined the funding opportunities provided by the European Development Fund 11 (2014-2020) with a focus on water, energy and environment.

During various **thematic sessions and poster sessions**, invited speakers presented their research and innovative projects covering the areas of power generation, distribution and transmission; decentralised and household energy solutions; energy socio-economics; promotion of energy research, innovation, education and entrepreneurship; and energy resource mapping and planning. All abstracts and presentations are available at the [event’s Energypedia page](#).

In a **“cooperation pitch session”**, conference partners highlighted cooperation opportunities with the respective organisations related to the event’s focus. These included [NUL research & innovations](#), [RECP](#), [GIZ-Lesotho](#), [LCEDN](#), [UniPID](#), [Energypedia](#), [MicroEnergy International](#), [SACREEE](#), [PAUWES](#), [Enigma](#), [Tangerine](#), and [Econet Telecom Lesotho](#).

On the last day of the conference, MicroEnergy International organized a **workshop on “from energy research to bankable power practice”**. Energy research and practice often run in parallel, with little knowledge exchange and consideration of the other. Energy practitioners, for example, rarely refer to research outputs, even if peer reviewed and reputable. Energy researchers, on the other hand, rarely prioritise engaging in actual practice implementation, thereby generating research that lacks apparent practical relevance. The workshop triggered a change of perspective on both sides, resulting in the formulation of several business ideas based on research findings.

The conference was concluded with a **gala dinner**; His Majesty King Letsie III of Lesotho delivered the keynote address. At the gala dinner, NUL officially launched its Energy Research Center (ERC) and the Master’s programme in Sustainable Energy – both established with the support from the RECP. Furthermore, an MoU was signed between the NUL and the Management Center Innsbruck, and the best RERIS poster was awarded through the head of EU delegation to the Kingdom of Lesotho.



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2	Prof	Erik	Ahlgren	Chalmers University of Technology
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5	Dr	Komi Apélété	Amou	University of Lomé
6	Mr	Johannes	Banye	Technical University of Munich
7	Ing	Mohamed	Barbouche	Research and technologies center of energy CRTEn
8	Ms	Ranisha	Basnet	Energypedia
9	Dr	Hani	Beltagy	Université de Blida
10	Dr	Abongo	Bernard	Department of Biology, Faculty of Science and Technology, National University of Lesotho
11	Ms	Miriam	Beyers	Technical University of Munich
189	Mrs	Marina	Bizabani	LNDC
178	Mr	Mothabeng	Bohlokoa	NUL
12	Ms	Irene	Bonvissuto	European Commision
13	Mr	Mapeshoane	Botle	Department of Soil Science and Resource Conservation, National University of Lesotho
14	Dr	Ed	Brown	Loughborough University, United Kingdom
15	Mr	Angelo Ian	Buckley	Stellenbosch University
16	Dr	Albert	Butare	Former Minister of State Incharge of Energy, Communication and Water in the Republic of Rwanda
17	Prof	Mangaka	C Matoetoe	Cape Peninsula University of Technology, Department of Chemistry
18	Dr	Ben	Campbell	Durham University, United Kingdom
19	Dr	Ereck	Chakauya	University of Pretoria
207	Ref.	Josea	Chale	LCBC
161	Prof	Suresh	Chand Garg	NUL
20	Ms	Hajer Ben	Charrada	Technical University of Munich
21	Dr	Jon	Cloke	Loughborough University, United Kingdom
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190	Mr	Maphalala	DAVID	LNDC
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23	Mr	Sjaak	DeBoer	EU Delegation to Lesotho
24	Mr	Aristide	Dejean	International Institute for water and environment engineering
25	Prof	Riette	DeKock	University of Pretoria
195	Prof	Beatrice	Ekanjume-ilongo	NUL

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40	Mr	Myrin	Kazet Ymele	UNIVERSITY OF NGAOUNDERE
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154	His Majesty	King Letsie III.		His Majesty, the King of Lesotho

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