

# **A qualitative analysis of renewable sources of energy used and policies in Lesotho**

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## **Abstract**

African Union member states are confronted with a lot of challenges in their quest to implement the United Nations Sustainable Goals. One of the major challenges is lack of access to affordable and reliable energy. Power consumption per capita in sub-Saharan Africa is the lowest of all the continents. It is currently estimated at 181 Kilowatts per annum, piling significantly in comparison to 6,500 Kilowatts per annum in Europe and 13,000 Kilowatts per annum in United States<sup>1</sup>. Energy is a catalyst of development and at the core of modern life. Lack of access to modern energy services has adverse effects on social and economic developments. Socioeconomic factors such as high energy tariffs, unaffordable energy infrastructure and disperse population deny a majority of the continent population access to modern energy. Africa has a lot of energy resources including both fossil fuel and renewable resources. The latter offers unique opportunities to provide affordable and sustainable energy to a larger population.

This paper discusses energy socioeconomics impacts on communities with special attention to Lesotho. It evaluates how access to renewable energy is affected by economics factors. About 30.2% of household in Lesotho have access to electricity, concentrated mainly in urban areas. The government has set a goal of increasing the electrification rate to 35% of households by 2015 and 40% by 2020<sup>2</sup>. However the most stumbling block is the financial

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<sup>1</sup> African Development Bank (The new Deal on Energy for Africa) - 2017

<sup>2</sup> Lesotho Electricity and Water Authority 2012/2013 annual report

budget necessary to expand to disperse rural areas. While this can be mitigated by taking advantage of carbon credits, there is potential, and there are plans to establish wind farms and to expand the current hydropower capacity from 72 Megawatts generated by Muela Hydropower plant.

***Key words:*** Energy, renewable energy, Sustainability, socioeconomic impacts, policies