

SMART ELECTRICITY PLANNING

Fast-tracking our transition to a healthy, modern, affordable electricity supply for all.

FACT FILE 1

ACCESS FOR ALL: HOW THE POOR BENEFIT FROM A GREENER GRID

Mapping out the country's electricity plan in a way that is in the best interests of the poor can have considerable positive economic, social and environmental spinoffs. It will also ensure the country and economy remain durable and resilient in the face of ongoing global change.

Access to electricity is critical to meeting the human development needs of every South African. This is a snapshot of how electricity can help improve the health, quality of life and educational opportunities, particularly for South Africa's poorest, while also helping to reduce biodiversity loss.



Health & Welfare

- Reduced air and water pollution.
- Access to refrigeration for storing perishable foods ensures safe, nutritious, diverse food options.
- Access to clean drinking, and hot water.

Women & Children

- Women manage household budgets, collect wood, buy fuel, and are responsible for cooking, cleaning, heating and childcare. These all have energy implications.
- Cooking indoors with wood and paraffin exposes people, particularly women and children, to respiratory disease. Indoor pollution is expected to result in the deaths of 1.8 million children and 1.7 million adult women in sub-Saharan Africa between 2000 and 2030.
- Access to electricity can free women up from the labour-intensive and unhealthy nature of cooking and heating homes with these fuels, allowing them to use their time more productively elsewhere, and relieving them of the burden of chronic ill health, lost earning potential and stunted development.

Access to Information

- Electric lighting means more time for reading, studying and working every day.
- Access to electricity means people can use computers, television, radios and other technology in their homes which allow them to access information and potentially become more productive participants in the economy. In 2011, only 8.6% of households could access the Internet from home, with over half of households (64.8%) having no access at all.

Keeping nature healthy

- Access to fuel-efficient cooking technology, such as solar cookers or solar water heaters, provides alternatives to using wood or charcoal as an energy source in homes.
- This prevents deforestation, linked with wood harvesting and charcoal making, as well as the associated loss of plant and animal life that is dependent on forests for survival.
- It preserves the critical environmental 'services' provided by forests, such as buffering against flooding, erosion, and loss of fertile soil.

Keeping electricity affordable

Even though the 2011 census shows that 84.7% of formal households in South Africa are connected to the grid and use electricity for lighting, the rising cost of electricity still marginalises the poorest in the country.

Eskom's electricity tariffs have increased on average by about 3.78 times between 2001 and 2011. But the average household income of black South Africans only increased by 2.7 times over the same period. The poorest households spend 47.7% on food and 32% on housing, water, electricity, gas and other fuels.

If electricity planning doesn't include ways to keep power affordable, the country will undermine its development goals.

The Smart Electricity Planning report is a civil society response, under the Electricity Governance Initiative, to the South African government's Integrated Resource Plan 2012-2030, which lays out a blueprint for how to meet the country's electricity needs in coming decades.

For more information, please find the full report at <http://irp2.wordpress.com/smart-electricity/>

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