

Burundi

Introduction

This note was developed by GONGLA with the support of the World Bank Group Lighting Global Program, the Energy Sector Management Assistance Program (ESMAP), the Shell Foundation, USAID, Power Africa, The Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO), Sustainable Energy for All (SEforAll) and Burundi Renewable Energy Association (BUREA). It is part of a series of briefing notes that provide a high-level overview of the status of countries' off-grid solar markets, as well as relevant policies and programs¹.

Key statistics²

Demographics

Total Population	11,890,781
Population Density per km ²	463
GDP per Capita	USD 274
GDP Growth	-2,7%

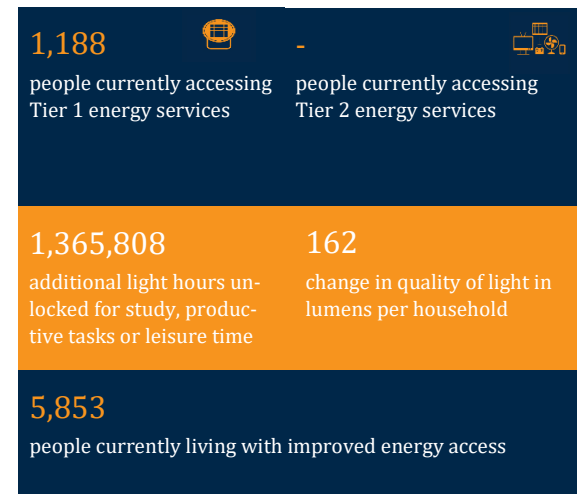
Energy Access Deficit³

National Electrification Rate ⁴	11%
Urban Electrification Rate	63%
Rural Electrification Rate	3%
Number of people without access to electricity ⁵	10,254,745

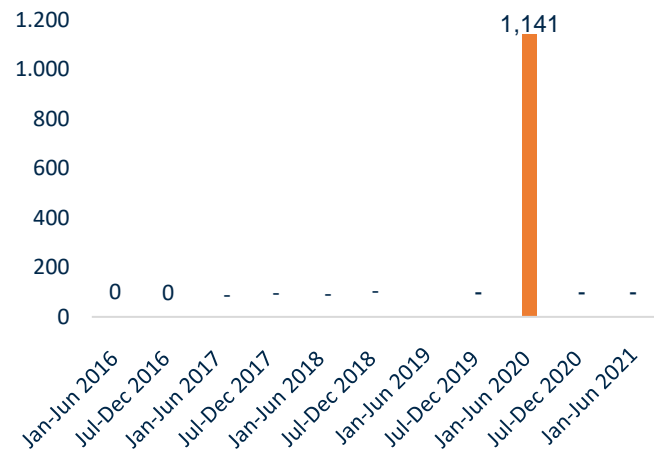
Electrification Planning

Electrification Targets ⁶	Electrification rate of 30% by 2030
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Impact⁷



Sales⁸



Sales of Portable Lanterns, Multi-light Systems and Solar Home Systems

¹ The information and views expressed in this brief are GONGLA's alone and are based on our current understanding of the policy situation in this country. We welcome any updates, revisions or clarifications at info@gogla.org.

² The data here are for the year of 2020 - <https://data.worldbank.org/>

³ The data here are for the year of 2019 - <https://trackingsdg7.esmap.org>

⁴ No recent data on the national electrification rate has been published by the government of Burundi. The initial national electrification rate as projected by [The Energy Progress Report](#) in 2019 is 19%

⁵ <https://trackingsdg7.esmap.org/>

⁶ <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/729191565283179350/pdf/Concept-Project-Information-Document-PID-Burundi-Access-to-Sustainable-Energy-P164435.pdf>

⁷ Impact numbers have been estimated on the basis of the [Standardized Impact Metrics for the Off-Grid Solar Energy Sector](#). The reported estimates differ from the previous edition of the country briefings due a change in the calculation approach. Note that while the numbers shown represent the aggregate impact of key players in the off-grid solar sector, these estimates do not present the full global impact of off-grid solar lighting products sold.

⁸ All sales data included in this briefing is derived from the "Global Off-Grid Solar Market Report Database", result of a joint primary data collection effort carried out by GONGLA in partnership with IFC Lighting Global and the Efficiency for Access Coalition. The public version of the resulting report of the effort is available [here](#).

Current Status

Access to electricity is a major challenge for the country. While 63% of the urban population have access to electricity, in rural areas only 3% have electricity access. The government, in a bid to boost electrification efforts has integrated into its Plan National de Développement (PND) 2018-2027⁹, an energy strategy with 3 objectives: ensuring sustainable and inclusive growth for economic resilience and sustainable development, developing appropriate infrastructure for energy production, and the promotion of alternative energy sources.

Policy, Regulation and Sector Planning

The Electricity Law of 2015¹⁰, governs the electricity sector in the country. The Régie de Production et de Distribution de l'Eau et de l'Électricité (REGIDESO)¹¹ is the only public service that manages all levels of the electricity supply chain.

The Agence Burundaise de l'Électrification Rurale (ABER)¹² is the agency responsible for the distribution of electricity. It owns and manages mini-grids and other forms of rural electrification. However, there is currently no implementation plan for off-grid solar sector. The 2015 law remains limited in terms of specific legal framework for the development of renewable energies, but nevertheless the law presents a favorable framework for public-private partnerships and allows various production schemes.¹³

Currently, Burundi's policies are more focused on expanding and improving the grid. Sectoral development plans are being drawn up in order to make the PND operationally sound and designate a specific role to off-grid energy technologies.¹⁴

Taxation

Equipment used in the generation of solar energy such as solar PV modules are exempted from VAT (Value Added Tax) and import duty in Burundi. However, some solar accessories and appliances such as some components of solar home systems are subject to 18% VAT and import duty between 10% and 35%.

⁹ <http://www.presidence.gov.bi/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/PND-Burundi-2018-2027-Version-Finale.pdf>

¹⁰ <http://www.presidence.gov.bi/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/loi-013-2015.pdf>

¹¹ <https://regideso.bi>

¹² <http://aber.bi>

¹³ <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/729191565283179350/pdf/Concept-Project-Information-Documents-PID-Burundi-Access-to-Sustainable-Energy-P164435.pdf>

¹⁴ <https://www.lightingafrica.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Burundi-Évaluation-du-marché-des-technologies-solaires-et-des-foyers-améliorés-FR.pdf>

Investments

Investments in the off-grid solar sector in Burundi have been limited over the past few years due to political instability.

Yet the Electricity Law of 2015, which provides a favorable legal framework for investment in the energy sector - as well as the liberalization of this sector in compliance with the conditions of fair competition- it is expected that possible investments in the country for years to come. Additionally, the presence of Get.invest¹⁵ and other multilateral programs in the sector will support further investments.

Sector Support Programs

In 2020, the Solar Energy in Local Communities Project¹⁶, a World Bank supported project scheduled to end in 2026 was announced. Through the project, Burundi will receive funding worth US\$ 100 million to boost rural electrification efforts through mini-grids and standalone solar systems. The project has four components. The first will focus on energy services for schools and health centers; the second will focus on energy services for rural communities; the third will focus on energy services for poor households and vulnerable individuals. The final component will focus on providing technical assistance, capacity building and support for project implementation.

In 2020, the Ministry of Hydraulics, Energy and Mines, in partnership with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) announced as part of "Service Énergétique Ruraux pour la Résilience des populations du Burundi" SERR¹⁷, the UMUCO W'ITERAMBERE program, funded by the European Union worth approximately €12 million. This is a 3-year program which aims to set up infrastructures and tools for the supply of solar energy such as mini-grids or solar kits. UMUCO program will be implemented in 28 municipalities and 8 provinces of the country and will allow rural populations to benefit from access to sustainable, modern and above all efficient energy through

¹⁵ <https://www.get-invest.eu/get-invest-launches-burundi-country-window/>

¹⁶ <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/900491579614842478/pdf/Labor-Management-Procedures-Solar-Energy-in-Local-Communities-P164435.pdf>

¹⁷ <https://www.bi.undp.org/content/burundi/fr/home/presscenter/articles/2020/un-partenariat-strategique-pour-lacces-a-lenergie-solaire.html> & <http://lvia.it/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Dépliant-UMUCO-FINAL-02-1.pdf>

the electrification of health centers, schools and productive activities in areas that are far from the national electricity grid. The program will involve collaboration with other United Nations agencies and NGOs.

In 2021, the Ministry of Hydraulics, Energy and Mines and the European Union launched two programs in Burundi¹⁸: the Development Finance Institution Electrification – the Electrification Financing Initiative (EDFI ElectriFI) Program and the Get Invest Program in Burundi. EDFI ElectriFI is a financing mechanism, that finances companies and private projects in the start-up phase. EDFI ElectriFI focuses on new or improved electrical connections as well as on the production capacity from energy sources sustainable in emerging markets. Get Invest supports the mobilization of investments for the renewable energy sector.

EDFI ElectriFI and Get Invest aim to encourage private investments in the Burundi renewable energy sector in a bid to boost electrification efforts in the country. The two programs will be implemented by EDFI Management Company (EDFI MC) and the GIZ. They will receive funding worth €10.6 million.

Promoting Quality & E-Waste Management

The penetration of quality-verified off-grid solar products remain low to date. This demonstrates one of the main challenges facing the market in Burundi - the unaffordable cost of quality-verified products for low-income households. These consumers subsequently turn towards non-qualified products as a more affordable option in the short term. The country has no mandatory standards in place.¹⁹

Nationally, Burundi does not have a specific legal instrument for the management of electrical and electronic waste. However, there are general laws which indirectly address the management of this e-waste.²⁰

Regionally, the East Africa Community (EAC) Tanzania, Rwanda, Uganda, Burundi, Kenya and South Sudan adopted their Regional E-waste Management Strategy in July 2017²¹.

This regional strategy gives priority to strengthening the political, legal and regulatory framework for sustainable financing of e-waste management. It also

promotes the establishment of an appropriate infrastructure for the e-waste management and encourages the establishment of mechanisms for a global and sustainable mobilization. The strategy also seeks stronger coordination structures at the national and regional level to boost research and innovation in the sector.

Industry Association

The Burundi Renewable Energy Association (BUREA) is an NGO with more than 160 members and a network of over 100 technicians from all 18 provinces of the country, who are responsible for the installation and maintenance of renewable energy equipment. The association provides a platform for technicians to share their experiences and help each other. However, its capacity to support the off-grid solar sector needs to be enhanced and strengthened.

Opportunities and Barriers²²

The off-grid solar sector faces many challenges, including high foreign currency risk and low-quality products, which make consumers reluctant to use off-grid renewable energy products. Moreover, customs and VAT charges on products make products inaccessible to low-income households. Additionally, off-grid solar companies in the country are struggling to obtain working capital loans and foreign currency to place orders abroad.

PAYGo is emerging in the country but has faced challenges, such as the management of working capital and risk of non-payment by customers. Mobile payment is also struggling to develop in rural areas where communities remain resistant to new, digital means of payment.

Finally, although the government has expressed an interest in supporting the off-grid solar sector, this interest has not yet fully materialized, and a favorable enabling environment still needs to be established to allow the sector to grow.

¹⁸ https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/tanzania/105187/lancement-officiel-des-programmes-edfi-electrifi-et-getinvest-au-burundi_he & <https://www.ruralelec.org/news-from-are/getinvest-are-member-edfi-electrifi-land-eu106-million-develop-renewable-energy>

¹⁹ <https://www.lightingafrica.org/country/burundi/>

²⁰ http://www.eaco.int/admin/docs/reports/BUR-01_Rapport_déchets_électriques_et_électroniques.pdf

²¹ https://collections.unu.edu/eserv/UNU:7819/GEM_2020_French_final_pages.pdf

²² <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/729191565283179350/pdf/Concept-Project-Information-Documents-PID-Burundi-Access-to-Sustainable-Energy-P164435.pdf>

Further Information

- [Burundi: Évaluation du marché des technologies solaires hors réseau et des foyers améliorés pour les ménages](#)
- [Catalyzing a nascent off-grid market to shrink the electricity gap](#)
- [Burundi to improve Access to Services and Opportunities for the Poor in Rural Areas](#)
- [Regional E-Waste Management Strategy](#)
- [Rapport final de l'étude préparatoire pour le projet de promotion de l'énergie propre en utilisant le système solaire photovoltaïque en République de Burundi](#)
- [Opportunités dans le secteur des énergies renouvelables au Burundi](#)