

## Enhancing Participation of Consumers in Regulatory Reforms in the Electricity Sub-sector through Capacity Building: A Case of Kenya and Tanzania

[An Initiative to Empower Consumers for Inclusive Governance]

### Background and Context

Electricity sub-sector regulation, including tariff-setting procedures, affects all electricity consumers in profound ways. From the average household consumer, small and medium enterprises, agro-businesses to industrial manufacturing units, electricity regulation has a substantial impact on individual livelihoods as well as the economic development of the country as a whole. Significant regulatory reforms have been undertaken in the electricity sub-sector in Kenya and Tanzania since the early 1990s. However, active participation in the policy formulation and regulatory decision-making process by consumers and other non-state actors is critical to ensure pro-consumer regulatory decision-making and the operationalization and protection of consumer rights. Nevertheless, the majority of consumers groups and consumer representatives in the two countries lack the capacity to work on issues related to electricity regulation.

### Goal and Objectives

The overall goal of this project is to facilitate effective consumer representation in policy formulation and regulatory process in Kenya and Tanzania to effect pro-consumer changes in the electricity regulatory/policy processes. Thereby, the project objectives are, firstly, to strengthen the capacity of civil society to take up action research and advocacy on regulatory/policy issues in the electricity sector. Secondly, the project seeks to promote dialogue and linkage between grass root consumer groups, the private sector and policy makers on regulatory reforms. Thirdly, the project

is designed to identify and address consumer challenges in the electricity sub-sector in Kenya and Tanzania. Lastly, the project is to bring together all the stakeholders in regulatory decision-making in the electricity sectors of the two countries to discuss relevant regulatory challenges and to develop recommendations for addressing those challenges.

### Activities and Outputs

The REKETA project will be implemented through the research, advocacy and networking (RAN) model. The project is comprised of three components: a research component; a capacity building component and an advocacy and networking component. The implementation activities in the *research component* include primary field data collection and secondary data analysis. The outputs expected from these activities are country base papers and country research reports as well as policy briefs with evidence-driven policy recommendations for Tanzania and Kenya, respectively. The research report will highlight consumer challenges in the electricity sub-sector as well as consumer experiences with complaints redressal procedures and participation in regulatory processes in the sub-sector.

The *capacity building component* will include 24 face-to-face capacity building workshops including four Territorial Capacity Building Workshops and eight Grassroots Interface meetings in



each project country, in which Civil Society Organizations, consumer representatives and grassroots consumers will be trained on advocacy strategies and issues pertaining to electricity sub-sector regulation and policy. The expected outputs related to the capacity building activities include communication materials such as handouts and information materials as well as workshop reports for each engagement with the project beneficiaries.

As part of the *advocacy and networking component* of the project, the above-mentioned workshops will provide a platform to connect policy makers, regulators and civil society representatives to facilitate direct discussion among the different electricity sub-sector stakeholders. In addition, a Project Launch meeting to engage policy makers, sector regulators and civil society from the start of the project and a National Policy Round Table event will take place to discuss and disseminate research findings and policy recommendations with key stakeholders. Furthermore, there will be three National Reference Group Meetings throughout project implementation period to consistently maintain the advocacy network. The expected outputs of the advocacy activities are advocacy meeting reports as well as periodical newsletter articles for advocacy.

## Expected Outcomes

The project is expected to result in enhanced awareness and understanding among consumers/civil society on how to engage in policy processes (advocacy strategies) aimed at

electricity reforms. In addition, the project is to build Civil Society Organizations' comprehension of policy issues pertaining to electricity reforms. On the flip side, the project is expected to improve electricity sub-sector policy makers' and regulators' understanding of consumer needs, demands and rights. Lastly, the project is expected to establish a mechanism of communication between consumer organizations, policy makers/government representatives, regulators and distribution companies to discuss issues pertaining to electricity reforms

## Current Project Status

The REKETA project was successfully launched in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam with a wide range of stakeholders attending the respective National Launch Meetings and first National Reference Group Meetings. The secondary research based Country Base Papers on the state of electricity reforms and consumer rights in the sub-sector have been discussed among the countries' electricity regulatory agencies, consumer protection civil society organizations, and other key stakeholders during the meeting. The second phase of the project, which comprises of field data collection and analysis as well as country research report and policy brief development are expected to be completed by the end of August. Thereafter, the project team will commence the third phase of the project implementation strategy, namely the capacity building and stakeholder interaction meetings on the territorial and grassroots level. The second national Reference Group Meeting to endorse the country research findings are planned to take place in mid-September.