

Lessons learned and impact achieved of the Off-Grid Task Force work in Zambia

Photo: Jason Mulikita for BGFA



Recommendations

The Zambian national Off-Grid Task Force (OGTF) was conceived and established during the implementation of the Beyond the Grid Fund for Zambia (BGFZ), an innovative funding programme initiated by the Swedish Embassy in Lusaka and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) in 2016. At that time, the off-grid market was practically non-existent in East and Southern Africa. The BGFZ programme was implemented by REEEP.

The OGTF in Zambia is a multi-stakeholder platform led by the Government of Zambia through the Department of Energy. It includes other government departments, donors, the private sector, and investors. As a scale-up, Nefco – the Nordic Green Bank – established the Beyond the Grid Fund for Africa (BGFA) programme on Sweden's initiative in 2019 with continued OGTF activities. BGFA is currently a EUR 126 million multi-donor facility implemented in Burkina Faso, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Liberia, Mozambique, Uganda, and Zambia.

To utilise and replicate the findings of the OGTF in Zambia in other countries, the following crucial steps are important to take into consideration:

- Develop a strategy that is adapted to local contexts, recognising that each country has its own unique energy landscape, policy framework, and socio-economic context.
- In doing so, collaboration and consultation with a broad group of off-grid stakeholders are crucial for gaining buy-in, ensuring relevance, and fostering sustainability.
- The OGTF model needs to align with existing energy policies and frameworks in the target countries.
- Capacity building and financial support should be facilitated to assist local institutions and organisations in participating in the dialogue on off-grid electrification efforts.
- Last but not least, dissemination of best practices from Zambia to other countries should be facilitated. This could be done through promoting partnerships and organising knowledge platforms to share lessons learned.

The OGTF's journey in Zambia illuminates a path forward for transformative coordination and collaboration, demonstrating the potential to lay the groundwork for sustainable and inclusive off-grid energy solutions in other African countries.

Following are some recommendations to develop the OGTF work further:

1. **Replication of the OGTF model:** Encourage other BGFA countries to adopt and adapt the OGTF model, leveraging its success to foster effective coordination in their off-grid energy sectors.
2. **Capacity building:** Emphasise sustained efforts in capacity building, empowering both government institutions and private sector stakeholders to navigate the dynamic off-grid energy landscape effectively.
3. **Stakeholder engagement:** Foster deeper engagement with stakeholders to proactively address emerging challenges and capitalise on evolving opportunities within the off-grid energy sector.
4. **Regular evaluation:** Institute periodic evaluations to assess the OGTF's effectiveness, identify areas for improvement, and ensure its adaptive evolution to meet the sector's changing needs.
5. **Regional dissemination of best practices:** Facilitate the sharing of OGTF success stories and best practices in other countries in Africa, contributing to a broader understanding of effective mechanisms for advancing off-grid energy access.

Access the full report at www.beyondthegrid.africa

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