REPORT

Accelerated Partnership for Renewables in Africa - APRA

Strategic Pathways for a Renewables-Led Energy Transition and Green Industrialisation

Integrated Africa Power

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Executive Summary

The Accelerated Partnership for Renewables in Africa (APRA) is an Africa-led international initiative launched at the 2023 African Climate Summit to fast-track renewable energy deployment, strengthen green industrialisation, and improve access to affordable, reliable electricity. APRA consists of 10 African countries, including Djibouti, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Uganda and Zimbabwe, with support from Denmark, Germany, Japan, the United States, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), the Global Energy Alliance for People and Planet (GEAPP) and the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, Power Shift Africa, the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) and United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS). It combines political leadership, project facilitation, and investment mobilisation to drive a continent-wide clean energy transition. APRA's ambition is shaped by Africa's rising energy demand, climate vulnerabilities, and significant untapped renewable potential. Key targets include reaching 37 GW of renewables by 2030, tripling deployment rates, doubling energy-efficiency improvements, and modernising grids for variable generation. Achieving these goals requires harmonised planning, standardised policy frameworks, and coordinated investment—particularly in transmission infrastructure. The partnership fosters collaboration between governments, development finance institutions, private investors, and international organisations to mobilise capital, build local technical capacity and develop bankable project pipelines. Recent investment forums and partner initiatives demonstrate growing interest in blended finance mechanisms, public-private partnerships, and downstream industrial opportunities. APRA aligns with broader continental integration efforts, strengthening synergies with the African Single Electricity Market (AfSEM), regional power pools, and the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). These frameworks enable cross-border power trading, regulatory harmonisation, and the development of continent-wide supply chains. Supportive policy, regulatory, and institutional environments are critical to delivery. Clear incentives, transparent procurement, efficient permitting, and

capable regulatory agencies will help reduce risk and attract private investment. APRA is also set to leverage Africa's reserves of Critical Energy Transition Minerals (CETMs)—such as lithium, cobalt, and rare earth elements—to support clean-technology value chains. By promoting local processing and value addition, the initiative can anchor new industries, enhance competitiveness, and generate skilled employment. Ultimately, APRA will require targeted policy and regulatory measures aimed at overcoming existing barriers, simplifying processes, incentivizing investment, and harmonizing legal frameworks to enable seamless project execution; capacity building and knowledge sharing among stakeholders; and robust monitoring, evaluation, and adaptive strategies for accelerated implementation success.

1. APRA as a Collaborative Platform for Renewable Energy Acceleration

A. Background

The Accelerated Partnership for Renewables in Africa (APRA) is an Africa-led international platform that combines political leadership, project facilitation, and investment mobilisation to accelerate renewable energy deployment and green industrialisation. Rooted in the Nairobi Declaration on Climate Change and Call for Action, APRA was launched at COP 28 in Dubai on 02 December 2023. Currently, APRA's member countries have grown to include Djibouti, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Uganda and Zimbabwe. The partnership receives active support from Denmark, Germany, Japan, the United Arab Emirates, and the United States of America, the Global Energy Alliance for People and Planet (GEAPP) and the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, Power Shift Africa, with IRENA serving as its secretariat and a dedicated office under UNOPS established to support implementation[1]. As such the initiative reflects a collective commitment to sustainable energy transitions across the continent. APRA aims to accelerate energy transitions and enable clean industrial growth, drive renewables-based productivity and job creation, and enhance lives and livelihoods through affordable, reliable electricity access[2]. In doing so, it seeks to position renewables as the foundation of competitiveness in manufacturing, digital services, mobility, and climate-smart agriculture.

The timing of APRA's creation is significant given Africa's rapidly growing energy demand, mounting climate risks, and vast untapped renewable energy potential. In response, APRA's founding members have committed to deepening partnerships and leveraging innovative strategies to accelerate deployment.[3] While each member country faces distinct energy challenges, they share a common objective: to transform Africa's energy landscape and underpin inclusive industrial growth. The engagement of international partners including Denmark, Germany, Japan, the US, the UAE, IRENA and UNOPS, signals global recognition of the initiative and underscores the

importance of transnational cooperation in overcoming systemic barriers to clean energy transitions.

APRA's strategic vision is firmly rooted in addressing persistent energy access gaps while contributing to global decarbonisation efforts. Its mandate is anchored on key implementation targets of achieving 37 GW of renewable capacity by 2030, tripling renewable energy deployment, doubling energy-efficiency improvements, and modernise grids to integrate variable renewables.[4] These objectives align with broader continental frameworks such as the African Single Electricity Market (AfSEM), regional power pools, and the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). Together, these frameworks prioritise regional power system integration, cross-border electricity trade, and regulatory harmonisation as pathways to improved energy security and sustainable economic development. Meeting these targets will require harmonised planning, standardised policy frameworks, and coordinated investments in transmission infrastructure.

A core function of APRA is to catalyse investment in renewable energy through innovative financing models[5]. By engaging governments, development finance institutions, private investors, and international organisations, APRA seeks to mobilise the capital required to bridge Africa's renewable investment gap. For example, the African Development Bank (AfDB), in partnership with PowerGen and other partners, such as the Private Infrastructure Development Group (PIDG), the Danish Investment Fund for Developing Countries (IFU), and the EDFI Management Company, recently launched a renewable energy platform designed to provide clean electricity access to approximately 70,000 households demonstrating the potential of public-private partnerships to deliver tangible outcomes[6]. APRA intends to replicate and scale such models across member states[7].

Equally, APRA serves as a platform for coordination and knowledge exchange among governments and partners. By supporting the sharing of best practices, emerging technologies, and policy innovations, the platform strengthens national capabilities to deploy renewable energy at scale. This collaborative mechanism is critical for overcoming persistent bottlenecks, including

inadequate grid infrastructure, regulatory delays, limited technical capacity, and high project development costs.

B. Governance and implementation structure of APRA

APRA is structured not as a formal institution but as a country-led partnership, firmly anchored in African leadership and ambition in energy transition and green industrialization. Its primary objective is to accelerate renewable energy deployment across the continent through a model that prioritizes national ownership, implementation readiness, and private sector mobilization. Governance and strategic direction within APRA are determined by its member countries, rather than by development partners or donors. This principle is operationalized through country-defined Action Plans, which articulate national priorities, policy reforms, and implementation pathways for renewable energy deployment. APRA's Africa-led transition philosophy explicitly discourages externally imposed agendas, reinforcing the premise that African countries are best positioned to define their own transition ambitions and development trajectories.

APRA membership is demand-driven and non-automatic. Countries seeking to join the partnership must submit a formal request and meet established eligibility criteria. This approach reinforces national commitment and ownership while safeguarding the partnership's strategic coherence. Upon acceptance, a APRA undertakes a country-led consultation process to define its renewable energy transition challenges and priorities. APRA's role in this phase is however strictly facilitative—supporting dialogue, mobilizing expertise, and aligning partners—rather than prescriptive or decision-making. This ensures that national interests and leadership remain central throughout the process.

The result of the consultation process is the development of the Country Action Plan, which becomes the central operational instrument of APRA and serves as the foundation for implementation at the country level. The Action Plans are treated as living documents, regularly updated to reflect evolving national contexts and implementation realities in the countries.

Investors and development partners use these Action Plans as templates for aligning technical and financial support.

C. APRA Thematic Pillars

APRA's operational approach is structured around three interlinked thematic pillars that collectively address the key constraints to scaling renewable energy deployment in African countries. These pillars are designed to move beyond policy formulation and focus explicitly on implementation, investment readiness, and market creation. By integrating private sector engagement, financial mobilization, and targeted technical assistance, APRA seeks to translate national energy transition ambitions into concrete, bankable, and implementable renewable energy projects.

1. Private sector mobilization

The first pillar, private sector mobilization, reflects APRA's recognition that large-scale renewable energy deployment in Africa cannot be achieved without strong and sustained private sector participation. Under this pillar, APRA supports member countries in publishing Calls for Projects that are directly aligned with nationally defined priorities and articulated through country Action Plans. These calls provide clarity and predictability to developers and investors regarding government intent, project pipelines, and sectoral focus. In parallel, APRA actively communicates bankable investment opportunities to domestic, regional, and international private sector actors, helping to reduce information asymmetries and improve market transparency. Capacity-building initiatives targeting project developers, independent power producers, and investors further strengthen the quality of project preparation and enhance the ability of private actors to engage effectively with national regulatory and financing frameworks.

2. Mobilization of finance

The second pillar focuses on the mobilization of finance, addressing one of the most persistent barriers to renewable energy development in Africa. APRA plays

a facilitative role in connecting projects emerging from country Action Plans with a broad range of financiers, including commercial banks, development finance institutions, and institutional investors. In addition, APRA engages with insurers and guarantee providers to help mitigate risks that commonly deter private investment, such as policy uncertainty, currency exposure, and off-taker creditworthiness. Through investment facilitation activities, including structured engagements and investment forums, APRA supports the deployment of de-risking instruments and blended finance approaches that improve the bankability of projects and crowd in private capital.

3. Technical assistance and capacity building

The third pillar, technical assistance and capacity building, underpins both private sector mobilization and financial engagement by strengthening the enabling environment for renewable energy deployment. APRA provides support in areas such as policy design, regulatory reform, and institutional coordination, ensuring that national frameworks are aligned with implementation needs and investor expectations. At the same time, targeted capacity-building initiatives aim to enhance domestic technical and administrative capabilities, including within ministries, regulators, utilities, and project development institutions. This focus on strengthening local capacity is essential for sustaining long-term implementation and reducing reliance on external expertise.

To achieve these objectives, APRA operates across three interconnected levels, enabling alignment between national priorities and international support mechanisms. At Country Level member countries provide strategic leadership, implement their Action Plans, and coordinate national stakeholders, including ministries, regulators, utilities, and the private sector. At Partner Level, bilateral agencies, philanthropic organizations, and development institutions contribute financial resources, technical assistance, and implementation support aligned with country priorities. Lastly, IRENA, at the Secretariat level, facilitates coordination, knowledge sharing, partner engagement, and monitoring across countries and thematic areas. This multi-level framework ensures coherence between country-driven priorities and partner-supported implementation.

D. Role of Global Alliances in Strengthening APRA

APRA represents a pivotal initiative for advancing renewable energy development across the African continent. By leveraging international alliances and aligning its objectives with global climate commitments, it has established itself as a dynamic platform for accelerating renewable deployment. APRA's engagement with global fora demonstrates its commitment to mobilising international support and advancing actionable strategies for sustainable energy transitions in Africa. APRA's role as a collaborative platform is reflected in its ability to convene diverse stakeholders to address the interconnected challenges of energy access, security, and green growth. At COP28 held in Dubai in December 2023, African leaders showcased APRA as a strategic response to the continent's energy priorities, reinforcing the importance of partnerships in overcoming financial, technical, and policy constraints. Their collective commitment underscored the urgency of aligning national ambitions with broader international frameworks, including the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 7, which targets universal access to sustainable, reliable, and affordable energy[8,9]. These kinds of international platforms are central to advancing APRA's objectives. They provide platforms for African countries to present progress, share best practices, and secure global commitments. Since 2024, APRA has also convened dedicated investment forums and worked with partners to develop project pipelines, standardise tools, and attract blended finance for renewable energy and downstream industrial opportunities. Recent forums emphasise practical project facilitation and targeted investor matchmaking.[10]

A key driver of APRA's momentum is its ability to foster global partnerships. Strategic alliances like the Africa-EU Strategic Partnership could provide technical expertise, financing, and institutional support necessary to scale renewable energy solutions[11]. By aligning with international frameworks, APRA strengthens investor confidence and underscores the interconnectedness of Africa's energy transition with global climate objectives. These partnerships reinforce the mutual benefits of securing clean, affordable, and reliable energy on both continents. Similarly, regional cooperation, in form of regional power pools and cross-border integration, present significant opportunities and is usefully embedded in APRA's strategy given the diversity of Africa's energy resources and uneven

infrastructure development. APRA supports harmonised policies and regulatory frameworks to create a conducive environment for investment and market integration. This approach not only enhances energy security and affordability but also strengthens the continent's capacity to meet climate commitments, enabling more efficient utilisation of abundant solar, wind, and hydropower resources.

E. Role of International Support in Strengthening APRA

International support, particularly from organizations and countries such as IRENA, UAE, Denmark, and Germany, has been instrumental in driving Africa's renewable energy agenda. These partnerships facilitate technology transfer, capacity building, and financial assistance, addressing critical gaps in infrastructure and expertise. Furthermore, they underscore the importance of collaboration in overcoming challenges related to policy, regulation, and institutional capacity. APRA, by serving as a unifying platform, can harness these collaborative efforts to accelerate the continent's energy transition.

IRENA, as a leading global entity, has played a pivotal role in accelerating renewable energy adoption across 16 countries by providing technical assistance, capacity-building programs, and policy frameworks that enable sustainable energy transitions. Through its Clean Energy Corridor initiative, IRENA has encouraged regional cooperation and cross-border electricity trade, fostering integration among power pools and enabling the efficient utilization of renewable energy resources.[12] This initiative aligns seamlessly with APRA's goal of promoting interconnected energy systems and facilitating cross-border partnerships for renewable energy development. Germany has established itself as a steadfast supporter of Africa's energy transition through various bilateral and multilateral initiatives. German development agencies, such as the German Development Organization (GIZ), have been actively involved in providing technical assistance, financial support, and policy advisory services to African governments. Germany's partnerships often emphasize the importance of regulatory frameworks and institutional capacity building, which are crucial for the successful deployment and scaling of renewable energy projects. Such

efforts complement APRA's objectives by addressing policy and regulatory enablers that facilitate the growth of renewable energy across the continent. The UAE, through its flagship renewable energy company Masdar, has emerged as a key player in advancing the renewable energy sector. Masdar's agreements with Angola, Uganda, and Zambia to develop renewable energy projects with a combined capacity of up to 5GW demonstrate the UAE's commitment to supporting energy transformation in Africa[13]. Denmark, renowned for its expertise in wind energy and sustainable solutions, has similarly contributed to Africa's renewable energy landscape. By leveraging their expertise in energy-efficient technologies and wind power systems, Denmark has supported African nations in harnessing their vast wind energy potential. Danish collaborations have often focus on capacity building, knowledge transfer, and technical assistance to ensure the successful implementation of renewable energy projects[14]. These contributions are instrumental in enhancing APRA's role as a collaborative platform, facilitating the integration of advanced technologies and sustainable practices.

In addition to these partners, Japan, the United States, and UNOPS are emerging as increasingly influential supporters of Africa's renewable energy transition and APRA's implementation agenda. Japan has provided concessional finance, high-efficiency renewable technologies, and grid-stability expertise through agencies such as the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and the Japanese Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI), supporting both utility-scale deployment and energy-efficient industrial development in Africa[15]. Although momentum has slowed down under Trump administration, the United States, through initiatives such as Power Africa, the Development Finance Corporation (DFC), and U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), has mobilised private capital, offered political-risk mitigation instruments, and supported legal and regulatory reform to improve investment climates in several African countries[16]. Meanwhile, UNOPS contributes critical implementation capacity by delivering project management support, procurement transparency, and infrastructure oversight across complex, multi-country programmes[17]

Further, the Global Energy Alliance for People and Planet (GEAPP), the Rockefeller Brothers Fund (RBF), and Power Shift Africa are relatively new APRA

entries and increasingly shaping Africa's renewable energy landscape and supporting APRA's implementation agenda. GEAPP leverages blended finance and philanthropic capital to de-risk clean energy investments, accelerating distributed renewables, strengthening grid infrastructure, and expanding energy access in underserved regions across the continent[18]. By convening public, private, and development partners, it mobilises large-scale capital flows and technical assistance to scale commercially viable clean-power solutions[19]. Complementing this, the Rockefeller Brothers Fund is channelling mission-aligned financing and grant support into Africa's energy transition, backing programmes that promote equitable policy frameworks and community-centred decarbonisation pathways[20]. Through the support of Power Shift Africa, a Nairobi-based climate and development organisation, APRA will benefit from enhanced regional capacity for just-transition advocacy, regulatory reform, and evidence-based policymaking[21]. Together, these actors reinforce the enabling environment for renewable deployment by improving investment readiness, supporting climate governance, and advancing socially inclusive transition strategies across multiple African jurisdictions.

F. Investment facilitation, Financing Models, and Partnerships under APRA

APRA does not operate as a direct financing mechanism or standalone funding vehicle. Instead, it functions as a project facilitation and investment acceleration platform, leveraging partner resources to crowd in both public and private capital. This design reflects a deliberate strategic choice to focus on reducing structural and transactional barriers to investment rather than duplicating the role of existing financing institutions. APRA's core value proposition lies in its ability to reduce transaction costs and shorten investment cycle times by standardizing procurement tools, aggregating project pipelines across participating countries, and deploying high-level political engagement to address regulatory bottlenecks and expedite approvals.

By aggregating demand and project pipelines across multiple jurisdictions, APRA enables economies of scale that are often unattainable in fragmented national markets. At the same time, its political and institutional engagement helps improve policy predictability and regulatory coherence, which are critical

determinants of investor confidence. Through these mechanisms, APRA supports the development of replicable project models that can be adapted across countries, thereby strengthening the overall investability of Africa's renewable energy markets.

A central instrument supporting APRA's investment acceleration role is the Energy Transition Acceleration Platform, which APRA utilizes as part of its project facilitation toolkit. Although the platform was not originally developed specifically for APRA, it has been effectively integrated into its operational framework and is supported by GET.invest, a German-led European programme implemented by GIZ that provides project preparation and investment facilitation support to mobilize private capital for renewable energy projects.. The platform assists governments and project developers in structuring, refining, and preparing renewable energy projects to meet investor requirements. By improving technical design, financial structuring, and documentation quality, the platform helps bridge the gap between early-stage project concepts and bankable investment opportunities.

Complementing project preparation tools, APRA deploys a range of investment facilitation mechanisms designed to connect projects emerging from country Action Plans with potential financiers. Notably, APRA Investment Forums provide structured platforms where governments and developers present project "showcards" to domestic, regional, and international investors. These forums enhance transparency, facilitate direct engagement between project sponsors and financiers, and allow investors to assess opportunities within a clearly articulated policy and regulatory context. Beyond formal investment forums, APRA also supports targeted bilateral engagement with financial institutions to match specific projects with suitable financing instruments and partners.

APRA's engagement with financial institutions further strengthens its investment facilitation function. By highlighting country-specific energy sector potential and reform priorities articulated in national Action Plans, APRA improves the quality and granularity of market information available to financiers. In parallel, APRA facilitates access to insurance and risk-mitigation instruments, which are essential for addressing investor concerns related to political risk, currency volatility, and off-taker creditworthiness. These

interventions play a critical role in enhancing investor confidence and lowering the cost of capital for renewable energy projects.

APRA's documentation and investment forum outputs indicate a diversified mix of financing approaches aimed at mobilizing capital at scale and de-risking renewable energy investments across multiple jurisdictions. One core approach is the use of blended finance structures, which combine concessional capital, grants, and commercial investment to improve internal rates of return, particularly for early-stage or first-of-a-kind projects. By reducing technology, market, and sovereign risk, these structures help crowd in private capital that would otherwise remain on the sidelines.

Another important financing model supported under APRA is the application of public–private partnerships (PPPs) to renewable generation assets and associated industrial offtake, including green hydrogen, battery manufacturing, and mineral processing. PPP frameworks provide long-term revenue certainty through structured offtake arrangements, while allowing governments to leverage private sector efficiency, innovation, and operational expertise. These arrangements also align renewable energy deployment with broader green industrialization objectives.

In addition, APRA-supported projects increasingly rely on guarantees and political risk insurance offered by multilateral development banks and specialized agencies, modelled on instruments such as those provided by the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA). These instruments are particularly relevant for cross-border infrastructure, regional transmission projects, and long-term procurement agreements, as they help mitigate currency, regulatory, and counterparty risks that are prevalent in multi-jurisdictional investments.

Finally, project preparatory facilities (PPFs) play a critical role in APRA's investment ecosystem by financing early-stage technical, legal, financial, and environmental studies. By supporting feasibility assessments and standardized documentation, PPFs accelerate project bankability, shorten time-to-financial close, and significantly expand the pool of investable projects. This upstream support is essential for ensuring that national renewable energy ambitions are translated into a robust pipeline of projects capable of attracting sustained private investment.

G. Role of the Private Sector in APRA's Implementation Framework

The private sector occupies a central and indispensable role in APRA's theory of change and implementation model. APRA is founded on the explicit recognition that large-scale and sustained deployment of renewable energy across Africa cannot be achieved through public resources alone. Instead, private sector actors—including project developers, independent power producers, financiers, equipment manufacturers, and service providers—are viewed as the primary drivers of investment, innovation, and execution required to meet ambitious national energy transition targets.

APRA supports private sector participation primarily by structuring and communicating a credible pipeline of investment-ready opportunities through country-led Action Plans. These Action Plans translate national energy transition ambitions into clearly articulated priorities, policy reforms, and project pipelines, thereby reducing uncertainty for investors and developers. By anchoring private investment opportunities within nationally validated strategies, APRA enhances market predictability and aligns private capital deployment with public policy objectives.

A further contribution of APRA lies in its role in reducing information asymmetries that frequently constrain private sector engagement in African energy markets. Through systematic communication of national priorities, regulatory frameworks, and implementation timelines, APRA improves transparency and lowers entry barriers for domestic, regional, and international investors. This clarity is particularly important in emerging and reforming markets, where limited access to reliable information often increases perceived risk and the cost of capital.

In addition, APRA provides targeted capacity-building support aimed at strengthening the ability of private sector actors to participate effectively in renewable energy markets. These initiatives focus on enhancing project development capabilities, improving understanding of regulatory and procurement processes, and strengthening engagement with financiers and public institutions. By building capacity among local and regional private

actors, APRA contributes to the development of more inclusive and resilient renewable energy value chains.

While governance within APRA remains firmly country-led, private sector actors are deeply engaged across the financing, project development, and implementation stages. This engagement ensures that policy commitments and reform agendas are translated into tangible, on-the-ground outcomes. By embedding private sector participation within a framework of national ownership and coordinated partner support, APRA helps bridge the gap between public policy ambition and practical delivery, thereby accelerating renewable energy deployment across the continent.

2. Policy, Regulatory, and Institutional Enablers for APRA

A. Integration with AfSEM and Regional Power Pools

APRA operates within a complex policy, regulatory, and institutional landscape, aiming to integrate the African Single Electricity Market (AfSEM) and regional power pools to establish a unified energy market. This endeavor is critical for enhancing cross-border energy collaboration, facilitating renewable energy deployment, and advancing the continent's energy transition agenda. The establishment and expansion of these frameworks reflect a concerted effort to address Africa's growing energy demand while leveraging renewable resources and fostering sustainable economic growth.

The African Single Electricity Market (AfSEM), initiated in 2020, serves as the centerpiece of regional energy integration efforts. Its primary objective is to unify the continent's fragmented energy markets, creating a robust platform for cross-border electricity trade[22]. Key milestones highlight its progressive development, including enhanced regional integration by 2023 and the ongoing development of institutional frameworks in 2025, which aim to strengthen regulatory and institutional support for energy collaboration[23]. This trajectory aligns with APRA's broader mission of accelerating renewable energy deployment across Africa and underscores the critical role of policy harmonization and institutional capacity-building in achieving energy market unification.

Regional power pools, including the Southern African Power Pool (SAPP), the West African Power Pool (WAPP), and the Eastern Africa Power Pool (EAPP), are integral to the success of AfSEM and APRA. These power pools facilitate regional electricity trade, leveraging shared infrastructure and policy frameworks to optimize energy resource utilization. For instance, the construction of a 1,303-kilometer, 225-kilovolt transmission line connecting Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone (CLSG) under the WAPP framework serves as an example of successful regional collaboration in energy infrastructure

development[24]. SAPP has benefited from technical assistance under the RETRADE SAPP project, supported by the World Bank[25]. This initiative aims to expand the regional electricity market and increase cross-border trade within the SAPP network, thereby boosting access to affordable and sustainable energy across Southern Africa[26]. Similarly, the EAPP has announced plans to launch a centralized day-ahead market by 2025, a move expected to enhance energy trade efficiency and benefit over 620 million people by integrating shared infrastructure and promoting low-cost renewable energy trade[27]. These developments demonstrate the growing emphasis on regional collaboration and the pivotal role of power pools in advancing Africa's energy transition.

A critical enabler for APRA's integration with AfSEM and regional power pools lies in the harmonization of policy, regulatory, and institutional frameworks across member states. Divergent energy policies and regulations have historically hindered cross-border energy trade and the full utilization of regional power pools. APRA addresses this challenge by fostering alignment among national energy policies and supporting the development of standardized regulatory mechanisms. This process involves capacity-building initiatives, stakeholder engagement, and knowledge sharing to ensure that member states can effectively implement harmonized frameworks. Additionally, the integration of AfSEM with regional power pools requires the establishment of comprehensive institutional arrangements, which are essential for managing cross-border energy flows, resolving disputes, and promoting equitable resource distribution.

The role of AfSEM in the energy transition is further underscored by its commitment to scaling up renewable energy technologies. Renewable energy sources, such as solar, wind, and hydropower, offer significant potential to address Africa's energy deficit while mitigating the environmental impacts of fossil fuel dependency. APRA serves as a collaborative platform to mobilize investments, financing models, and partnerships that support renewable energy projects across the continent. By leveraging the regulatory and institutional mechanisms established under AfSEM and regional power pools, APRA can facilitate the integration of renewables into the energy mix, ensuring their accessibility and affordability for all African nations.

B. Harmonisation of Policies under AfCFTA and AU Energy Strategies

APRA aims to foster renewable energy adoption across the continent by addressing policy, regulatory, and institutional challenges. A critical aspect of achieving this goal lies in the harmonization of policies under the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and African Union (AU) energy strategies. These frameworks collectively emphasize reducing trade barriers, streamlining energy trade regulations, promoting renewable energy technologies, and aligning national and continental energy objectives, providing a robust foundation for regional energy integration[28].

The AU Energy Division, as part of its broader mandate, is tasked with facilitating the implementation of energy development strategies aimed at increasing energy access, improving livelihoods, and ensuring environmental sustainability[29]. These efforts are aligned with APRA's focus on renewable energy acceleration and provide institutional backing for policy harmonization initiatives. By fostering collaboration between regional power pools, national governments, and private sector stakeholders, APRA can leverage the existing frameworks to create a conducive environment for renewable energy investments. Regional power pools, such as the Southern African Power Pool (SAPP) and the West African Power Pool (WAPP), serve as critical platforms for cross-border energy trade and infrastructure development, enabling countries to share resources and balance energy demand and supply.

The AfCFTA, established to create a single continental market for goods, services, and labor, plays an integral role in facilitating cross-border trade within Africa. By removing tariff and non-tariff barriers, it encourages regional economic integration, which is vital for the development and distribution of renewable energy infrastructure and technologies[30]. This focus on reducing cross-border trade barriers is complemented by the AU's energy strategies, which prioritize the harmonization of energy trade regulations to improve efficiency and promote energy trade across member states[31]. The alignment of these two frameworks provides an enabling environment for APRA to act as a collaborative platform, integrating renewable energy goals into the broader

agenda of regional economic development.

The integration of AfCFTA's trade facilitation mechanisms with AU energy strategies can significantly enhance the potential for renewable energy adoption in Africa. For instance, AfCFTA's focus on reducing trade barriers provides an opportunity for smoother cross-border transactions of renewable energy equipment, technologies, and services. This, coupled with the AU's efforts to streamline energy regulations, ensures that these transactions occur within a standardized regulatory framework, minimizing delays and inconsistencies. The promotion of renewable energy technologies under the AU energy strategies further complements AfCFTA's emphasis on regional integration, creating synergies that can accelerate the implementation of renewable energy projects across the continent.

C. Unlocking Africa's Renewable Energy Technology Manufacturing

Renewable Energy Technology Manufacturing (RETM) will play a pivotal role in advancing the objectives of APRA. As Africa seeks to harness its abundant renewable energy resources to achieve sustainable energy development, Critical Energy Transition Minerals (CETMs) will be essential for enabling the continent's energy transition. Acquiring renewable energy technologies are integral to APRA's objectives, as they encompass technologies required to generate, store, and distribute renewable energy effectively. These technologies include solar panels, wind turbines, battery storage systems, and other advanced energy solutions that are essential for transitioning to a low-carbon energy system. By facilitating the development of CETMs within Africa, APRA can help reduce dependency on imported technologies, enhance energy security, and create new economic opportunities for local industries.

A key enabler for RETM in Africa lies in the continent's wealth of critical energy transition minerals, such as cobalt, lithium, and rare earth elements. These minerals are vital components in the production of batteries, solar panels, and other renewable energy technologies. Africa is endowed with significant

reserves of these resources, with countries like the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and South Africa being major global suppliers of cobalt and platinum, respectively[32]. Unlocking the potential of CETMs within Africa requires coordinated efforts to enhance exploration, extraction, and processing capabilities while ensuring that these activities are conducted sustainably and equitably. Industrial linkages play a transformative role in connecting the development of CETMs and RETM to broader economic and energy sector advancements. By fostering value chain integration, industrial linkages can enable African countries to move beyond raw material extraction and into higher-value activities such as refining, manufacturing, and exporting finished products. For instance, establishing regional hubs for critical energy transition minerals processing and clean energy technology manufacturing can create jobs, stimulate local economies, and position Africa as a global leader in renewable energy technologies. This aligns with APRA's vision of accelerating renewable energy adoption while promoting regional economic integration.

The development of industrial linkages also necessitates strong collaboration among African nations, facilitated by AfCFTA and regional power pools. AfCFTA provides a platform for reducing trade barriers and fostering economic cooperation, which is crucial for the seamless movement of CETMs and related technologies across borders. Similarly, regional power pools, including the SAPP, WAPP, and EAPP, will enable cross-border energy trade and integration, ensuring that renewable energy generated in one country can be efficiently distributed to neighboring nations. By leveraging these frameworks, APRA can bolster the regional supply chain for CETMs and promote more cohesive energy sector development. The impact of CETMs and industrial linkages on Africa's energy transition extends beyond the renewable energy sector. By integrating CETMs into local industries, African countries can stimulate innovation, enhance technical expertise, and diversify their economies. For example, the establishment of research and development (R&D) centers focused on clean energy technologies can foster innovation and drive competitiveness in global markets. Moreover, industrial linkages can support the development of ancillary industries, such as transportation and logistics, which are essential for the efficient movement of CETMs and manufactured products across the continent.

Policy, regulatory, and institutional enablers are essential for supporting CETM development and industrial linkages under APRA. Governments must prioritize the creation of conducive environments for investment in clean energy technologies, including the establishment of clear and transparent regulatory frameworks. Incentives such as tax breaks, subsidies, and public-private partnerships can attract both domestic and international investors to the renewable energy sector. Additionally, institutional mechanisms must be strengthened to ensure effective coordination among stakeholders, including governments, private companies, research institutions, and civil society organizations. The African Union (AU) has recognized the importance of promoting sustainable energy development as part of its broader energy strategies. For instance, AU Commissioner for Infrastructure and Energy, Dr. Amani Abou-Zeid, has emphasized the need to support Africa's sustainable and climate-resilient energy trajectory[33]. Such high-level advocacy underscores the urgency of aligning policy frameworks and institutional efforts to achieve the continent's renewable energy ambitions. APRA, as a collaborative platform, can play a vital role in facilitating these alignments and driving the implementation of strategic energy initiatives.

Unlocking Africa's RETM potential also requires addressing environmental and social considerations. The extraction and processing of CETMs must be guided by sustainable practices that minimize ecological degradation and prioritize the well-being of local communities. This entails implementing stringent environmental regulations, promoting responsible mining practices, and ensuring that local populations benefit from the economic opportunities generated by CETM-related industries. By adopting such practices, Africa can position itself as a global leader in sustainable energy development. In addition to environmental and social considerations, gender inclusivity is a critical aspect of CETM and industrial linkage development. Women often play a central role in community energy initiatives and are disproportionately affected by energy poverty. Therefore, ensuring their active participation in the renewable energy sector is essential for achieving equitable and sustainable outcomes. Programs that promote women's involvement in clean energy technology manufacturing and related industries can contribute to gender equality while enhancing the sector's overall resilience and productivity.

D. Other Innovative Financing Models and Private Sector Engagement Strategies

Innovative financing models and private sector engagement play pivotal roles in advancing renewable energy projects under APRA. As Africa seeks to address its energy deficit and transition towards sustainable energy systems, mobilizing investments and fostering partnerships between public, private, and multilateral entities has become increasingly critical.

Green bonds have emerged as a powerful financing model dedicated to funding renewable energy projects. These debt instruments attract institutional investors by offering a lower cost of capital compared to traditional financing methods. Green bonds not only provide a steady flow of capital but also align with global sustainability goals, thereby increasing their appeal to environmentally-conscious investors. By facilitating access to large-scale funding, green bonds are instrumental in scaling up renewable energy projects under APRA and can serve as a cornerstone for private sector engagement in Africa's energy transition.

Crowdfunding represents a more grassroots approach to financing renewable energy initiatives. By pooling small-scale investments from individuals through online platforms, crowdfunding enables broader community participation and ownership in renewable energy projects. This model enhances community engagement, fosters trust, and diversifies funding sources. It is particularly well-suited to decentralized energy solutions, such as mini-grids and off-grid solar installations, which are essential for improving energy access in remote and underserved areas. The Africa Energy Market Place (AEMP), a collaborative investment platform developed by the African Development Bank, has underscored the importance of such inclusive financing models in enabling private investment and driving sustainable energy development in Africa.[34]

In addition to financing models, fostering effective partnerships is critical for the success of renewable energy projects under APRA. Strategic alliances among governments, private entities, multilateral organizations, and local communities can facilitate knowledge sharing, technological transfer, and capacity building. The collaborative nature of platforms like AEMP

demonstrates the value of such partnerships in mobilizing investments and enhancing coordination across stakeholders[35]. By bringing together governments, private investors, and development partners, APRA can create an enabling environment for renewable energy acceleration.

Furthermore, attracting private investment, integral to the success of APRA, requires addressing several challenges, including regulatory barriers, market instability, and perceived risks. Policy and institutional enablers play a crucial role in mitigating these obstacles and creating a conducive environment for investment. Harmonized policies across national and regional levels, aligned with frameworks such as the AfSEM and the AfCFTA, can enhance cross-border integration and market access for renewable energy projects. Clear regulatory guidelines, transparent procurement processes, and incentives such as tax breaks or subsidies are essential for fostering investor confidence. Risk mitigation is another key aspect of attracting private investment under APRA. Renewable energy projects, especially in developing regions, often face risks related to political instability, currency fluctuations, and technical challenges. Addressing these risks requires the adoption of instruments such as guarantees, insurance schemes, and risk-sharing mechanisms. For example, credit guarantees can enhance the bankability of projects by reducing the likelihood of default, while insurance schemes can provide coverage against unforeseen events that may disrupt project implementation.

The declining costs of renewable energy technologies further strengthen the business case for private sector participation in APRA initiatives. Renewable energy systems are becoming increasingly cost-effective and accessible, making them a viable alternative to traditional energy sources such as diesel generators[36]. The combination of lower technology costs and innovative financing models creates a compelling opportunity for private investors to engage in Africa's renewable energy sector.

3. Practical Recommendations for Accelerating APRA's Implementation

As APRA approaches the conclusion of its first phase (2023–2026) and transitions toward a second phase, it is entering a period focused on consolidation and strategic strengthening. Going forward, APRA aims to expand its membership while maintaining rigorous entry criteria, mobilize additional partners, donors, and funders, deepen implementation effectiveness, and institutionalize lessons learned from the first phase. Growing interest from other African countries indicates the partnership's strong perceived value and relevance. These future objectives can be further reinforced through a set of practical recommendations designed to enhance APRA's implementation and long-term impact.

A. Policy and Regulatory Measures to Drive Renewable Energy Adoption

Accelerating APRA requires targeted policy and regulatory measures aimed at fostering renewable energy adoption across the continent. Such measures are essential to overcoming existing barriers, simplifying processes, incentivizing investment, and harmonizing legal frameworks to enable seamless project execution.

I. Streamlining administrative processes

To achieve APRA's mission of driving renewable energy development in Africa, policy reforms must prioritize the streamlining of administrative processes related to project approvals. Complex and protracted approval procedures often discourage investment and impede the timely delivery of renewable energy projects. Simplifying regulatory frameworks and establishing clear guidelines for project developers can significantly reduce project timelines and administrative costs, thereby enhancing efficiency. These reforms should

include the creation of centralized one-stop shops for permits, licenses, and compliance requirements, coupled with digital platforms to facilitate transparent and accessible processes. Such measures have been proven effective in other contexts, as demonstrated by the South African government's Energy Action Plan, which emphasizes the importance of streamlined processes for expediting renewable energy initiatives.[37]

II. Investment incentives

Investment incentives play a pivotal role in driving private-sector participation in renewable energy projects. Governments across Africa should adopt measures to attract domestic and international investment, including tax breaks, subsidies, and concessional financing for renewable energy developers. These incentives not only reduce the financial burden for investors but also stimulate innovation and technological advancements in the renewable energy sector. Lessons can be drawn from successful programs such as the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), which increased funding for clean renewable energy bonds to $2.4 billion, thereby enabling significant growth in renewable energy capacity[38]. Similarly, Africa could benefit from scaling up funding mechanisms and leveraging international financial instruments to support large-scale renewable energy projects.

III. Addressing legal barriers

Addressing legal barriers that hinder renewable energy development is another critical component of effective policy reform. Outdated laws and regulatory frameworks often fail to accommodate the unique needs of renewable energy technologies, creating obstacles for project implementation. Governments must amend restrictive legal provisions to ensure alignment with modern energy transition goals. For instance, laws governing land acquisition, grid access, and power purchase agreements should be revised to provide clearer pathways for renewable energy projects. Additionally, harmonizing legal frameworks across borders can facilitate cross-border trade in electricity, enabling greater integration of renewable energy into regional and continental power pools, such as the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and the African Single Electricity Market (AfSEM).

IV. Addressing grid integration challenges

The integration of renewable energy into grids remains a technical challenge that must be addressed through supportive policies and regulations. As renewable energy sources such as solar and wind are inherently variable, grid operators must develop mechanisms to manage fluctuations and ensure reliability. Policies should encourage the adoption of advanced grid technologies, including energy storage systems and smart grid solutions, to enhance grid flexibility and resilience. Governments can also incentivize research and development in cutting-edge energy technologies (CETMs) to optimize grid integration and expand renewable energy capacity. Collaboration with regional power pools (the SAPP, WAPP and EAPP) can further strengthen technical capabilities and promote knowledge sharing.

V. Creating enabling conditions for regional electricity markets

In addition to grid integration, cross-border electricity trade presents a significant opportunity for accelerating renewable energy deployment. Policy reforms should focus on creating enabling conditions for regional electricity markets, including standardized regulations, competitive pricing mechanisms, and robust transmission infrastructure. By facilitating the exchange of renewable energy across borders, countries can optimize their energy resources, reduce costs, and enhance energy security. This aligns with the objectives of AfCFTA and AfSEM, which aim to foster economic integration and cooperation within Africa. The establishment of common standards and protocols for cross-border electricity trade is essential for ensuring the seamless operation of interconnected grids.

VI. Cross-stakeholder engagement and partnerships

To ensure the successful implementation of policy and regulatory reforms, governments must engage stakeholders across the public and private sectors. This includes fostering partnerships with international organizations, development finance institutions, and technology providers to mobilize resources and expertise. Capacity-building initiatives aimed at strengthening institutional capabilities and technical competencies are equally critical. Policymakers should also prioritize community engagement to build public

support for renewable energy projects and address potential social and environmental concerns.

B. Capacity Building and Knowledge Sharing Across Stakeholders

Capacity building and knowledge sharing among stakeholders are critical components in advancing the objectives of the Accelerated Partnership for Renewables in Africa (APRA). A well-structured approach to capacity enhancement ensures that stakeholders across the renewable energy value chain are equipped with the necessary skills, expertise, and collaborative mechanisms to drive implementation effectively.

I. Multi-level training programs

To address the challenges of renewable energy deployment in Africa, capacity-building initiatives must prioritize inclusive, multi-level training programs tailored to the diverse needs of stakeholders. These programs should involve government agencies, private sector entities, non-governmental organizations, and local communities. By equipping these groups with technical, financial, and policy-related knowledge, Africa's renewable energy landscape can benefit from a well-informed and empowered ecosystem. For instance, programs such as Mission 300, launched by the World Bank Group and the African Development Bank, exemplify the transformative power of targeted capacity-building efforts. Mission 300 aims to provide electricity to 300 million Africans by 2030, building upon years of groundwork laid by the energy sector[39]. Such initiatives demonstrate the importance of integrating capacity development into broader renewable energy strategies.

II. Stakeholder dialogue and knowledge exchange

Effective engagement requires platforms that encourage dialogue, knowledge exchange, and collaboration among stakeholders with varying levels of expertise and influence. Workshops, forums, and cross-sectoral meetings are essential tools for fostering understanding and partnerships. For example, the capacity-building workshop hosted by the United Nations Development

Programme (UNDP) and AfriCatalyst in Tanzania addressed African nations' challenges in securing fairer credit ratings, underscoring the need for favorable financing terms to achieve sustainable development goals[40]. By providing opportunities for stakeholder interaction and targeted training, such workshops help bridge gaps in knowledge and align efforts toward shared objectives.

III. Integration into formal education

Education plays a fundamental role in promoting renewable energy adoption and fostering long-term capacity development. Integrating renewable energy topics into academic curricula at all levels, from primary education to higher learning institutions, can nurture a generation of professionals equipped to tackle Africa's energy challenges. Furthermore, vocational training and certification programs should be expanded to enhance the technical skills required for renewable energy system installation, maintenance, and operation. Partnerships with international organizations and academic institutions can facilitate knowledge transfer and introduce best practices that are tailored to Africa's unique energy context. These educational initiatives contribute not only to technical capacity building but also to raising public awareness and acceptance of renewable energy technologies.

IV. Technical capacity trainings

Technical capacity in the development and deployment of Clean Energy Transition Mechanisms (CETMs) must be a priority within APRA's implementation strategy. CETMs encompass technologies such as solar photovoltaic systems, wind turbines, and energy storage solutions, which are pivotal to achieving Africa's renewable energy goals. Training programs designed to improve expertise in CETM-related areas, such as system design, installation, and maintenance, will ensure the reliability and efficiency of renewable energy projects. Furthermore, these programs should address the integration of CETMs into existing energy grids, focusing on grid stability, smart metering, and demand response systems. Such technical knowledge will not only enhance the operational capacity of renewable energy systems but also foster cross-border electricity trade by ensuring compatibility and reliability.

V. Knowledge networks and collaborative database

Knowledge sharing mechanisms, such as digital platforms, research networks, and collaborative databases, can further strengthen APRA's capacity-building efforts. Digital platforms that centralize renewable energy data, case studies, and best practices can serve as valuable resources for stakeholders seeking to expand their understanding of renewable energy technologies and implementation strategies. Research networks that connect African universities, research institutions, and international partners can facilitate the exchange of innovative ideas and solutions tailored to local contexts. Collaborative databases that track renewable energy projects, performance metrics, and capacity-building outcomes can provide insights into progress and areas for improvement, enabling stakeholders to make data-driven decisions.

C. Monitoring, Evaluation, and Adaptive Strategies for Implementation Success

Effective implementation of APRA necessitates robust monitoring, evaluation, and adaptive strategies. These components are critical for ensuring that renewable energy projects align with APRA's overarching goals, while also addressing challenges and optimizing opportunities inherent in the dynamic socio-economic and environmental context of Africa. Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) are integral to the successful deployment of renewable energy projects under APRA. They provide a structured framework for assessing progress, identifying risks, and implementing corrective actions in a timely manner. Monitoring involves continuous data collection and analysis to ensure that projects are progressing according to established plans and objectives, while evaluation determines the impact and effectiveness of these initiatives. The importance of regular monitoring and evaluation cannot be overstated, especially in regions characterized by political and economic instability, as well as fluctuating regulatory environments. These challenges necessitate a proactive approach to risk management, ensuring all stakeholders, including lenders, insurers, and equity holders, remain informed of pertinent developments and their implications for project outcomes.

I. Performance tracking and data collection

To further accelerate APRA's implementation, it is critical to adopt best practices for performance tracking and data collection. Establishing standardized indicators and methodologies for measuring project outcomes is essential to ensure consistency and comparability across different initiatives. These indicators should encompass technical, economic, environmental, and social dimensions, providing a comprehensive assessment of project performance. For example, metrics such as energy generation capacity, grid reliability, greenhouse gas emission reductions, and community engagement can offer valuable insights into the effectiveness of renewable energy projects. Leveraging digital technologies, such as remote sensing, smart meters, and advanced analytics, can enhance the accuracy and efficiency of data collection and analysis processes, enabling stakeholders to make more informed decisions.

II. Iterative improvements and adaptive measures

Another key element in accelerating APRA's implementation is fostering adaptive strategies. The dynamic nature of renewable energy projects, coupled with the complex socio-political and environmental landscape in Africa, necessitates a flexible and iterative approach to project management. Adaptive strategies involve the continuous refinement of project plans and processes based on real-time data, stakeholder feedback, and evolving circumstances. This approach aligns closely with the principles of climate change adaptation, which emphasize the importance of building resilience and responding to changing conditions in an informed and proactive manner[41]. By integrating clean energy innovation with adaptive strategies, APRA can achieve a synergistic effect, where renewable energy projects not only mitigate climate change but also contribute to broader socio-economic development goals.

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About IAP

Integrated Africa Power (IAP) is a multi-unit enterprise specialized in energy and infrastructure development on the African continent. We seek to solve Africa's energy deficits, through integrated systems solutions, resource pooling and cross-border cooperation. Our approach is based on our philosophies of tailored suitability, cost-effectiveness, sustainability and energy-development linkages.

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