

## Kigali renewable electricity

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Energy is a key component of the economy. It is thus recognised that the current inadequate and expensive energy supply constitutes a limiting factor to sustainable development. Rwanda's Vision 2020 emphasizes the need for economic growth, private investment and economic transformation supported by a reliable and affordable energy supply as a key factor for the development process. To achieve this transformation, the country will need to increase energy production and diversify into alternative energy sources.

The Vision 2020 energy target is to have at least 35 per cent of the population connected to electricity (up from the current 6 per cent) and to reduce the rate of wood use in national energy consumption from the current 94 to 50 per cent (ROR 2000). Additionally, the PRSP aims to ensure a energy consumption growth rate of nearly 10 per cent per year, and a rural electrification rate of 30 per cent giving electricity access to 35 per cent of the population by 2020 (ROR 2007).

The major part of the energy consumed in Rwanda today still comes from wood (80.4 per cent). Yet studies carried out as far back as 1981/82 and 1989/90 already showed a gap of 3,000,000 m<sup>3</sup> of wood for energy needs only (Privatisation Secretariat undated). As a result, there is massive deforestation across the country with consequent effects on the environment. Deforestation is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 6: Forests and Protected Areas.

The installed electricity generation capacity is extremely low at 72.445 MW from all categories (MININFRA 2009a). Only 2 per cent of the population has access to electricity, and there is a gap in national production of electricity of more than 50 per cent which is filled by electricity imported from the Democratic Republic of Congo and Uganda (Privatisation Secretariat undated). Figure 1 shows the energy demand by sector, while table 1 shows the current electricity generating capacity in the country.

Biomass is used in the form of firewood, charcoal or agricultural residues mainly for cooking purposes in Rwandan households, and also in some industries (MININFRA 2008a). In the rural areas, biomass meets up to 94 per cent of national needs; with the balance being met by other options such as kerosene, diesel, dry cells, grid and non-grid electricity, biogas, solar, wind and other renewable energies. Biomass is already in short supply with the country facing a biomass deficit of over 4 million m<sup>3</sup> per year.

Although fuel wood consumption is expected to increase in the short-term, the long-term strategy of the

EDPRS is to reduce fuel wood consumption from 94 to 50 per cent by the end of 2020. Table 2 indicates an expected increase in consumption by 20 per cent between 2005 and 2010. Measures to address this include a plan to increase the area under forest from 20 to 23.5 per cent by 2012. This will be accompanied by a concurrent decrease in wood consumption from 8.9 to 6.2 million m<sup>3</sup>.

The continued lack of alternative energy sources such as LPG or electricity are leading to increased pressure on the available forest resources for firewood and charcoal. Charcoal is the preferred fuel for urban households and demand is pushing up the price. In 2003, the charcoal market had a turnover of US \$30 million (World Bank 2006). The current trend towards increased urbanization and the declining state of forest resources points to the need to design effective policies to address some of the pressing challenges in the energy sector.

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Web: <https://www.hollanddutch tours.nl/contact-us/>

Email: [energystorage2000@gmail.com](mailto:energystorage2000@gmail.com)

WhatsApp: 8613816583346

