WORLD BANK GROUP

ECREEE

TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE ENERGY

REGIONAL OFF-GRID ELECTRIFICATION PROJECT

Off-Grid Solar Market Assessment & Private Sector Support Facility Design

MAURITANIA REPORT

JULY 2019

GreenMax Capital Advisors

Energio Verda
Renewable Energy for Development

ASD

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ABBREVIATIONS & ACRONYMS

ABM	Attijari Bank Mauritanie
ADER	Agence de Développement de l'Électrification Rurale (Rural Electrification Development Agency)
AFD	Agence Française de Développement (French Development Agency)
AfDB	African Development Bank
AFESD	Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development
AGIPCO	Agence Immobilière de la Petite Côte (Real Estate Agency of the Petite Côte)
APAUS	Agence de Promotion de l'Accès Universel aux Services (Agency for Universal Access to Services)
ARM	Autorité de Régulation Multisectorielle (Multi-Sectoral Regulatory Authority)
ASD	African Solar Designs
ASP	Authorized Service Providers
ATERSA	Aplicaciones Técnicas de la Energía (Technical Energy Applications)
BAMIS	Banque Al Wava Mauritanienne Islamique
BCM	Banque Centrale de Mauritanie (Central Bank of Mauritania)
BOAD	Banque Ouest-Africaine de Développement (West African Development Bank)
CAPEC	Caisses Populaires d'Epargne et de Crédit (Savings and credit unions)
C&I	Commercial and Industrial
CAPEX	Capital Expenditure
CAR	Capital Adequacy Ratio
CCGT	Combined Cycle Gas Turbine
CFA	Communauté Financière Africaine (African Financial Community)
COD	Cash-on-Delivery
DfID	Department for International Development
DFI	Development Finance Institution
EBID	ECOWAS Bank for Investment and Development
ECA	Export Credit Agency
ECCAS	Economic Community of Central African States
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
ECOWREX	ECOWAS Observatory for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency
ECREEE	ECOWAS Center for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency
EIB	European Investment Bank
ERUDI	Électrification rurale décentralisée interrégionale en Mauritanie (Interregional Decentralized Rural Electrification in Mauritania)
ESCO	Energy Service Company
ESMAP	Energy Sector Management Assistance Program
EU	European Union
EUEI PDF	European Union Energy Initiative Partnership Dialogue Facility
EUR	Euro
EVA	Energio Verda Africa
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FAUS	Fonds d'Accès Universel (Fund for Universal Access to Services)
FEI	Facility for Energy Inclusion
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FI	Financial Institution
FX	Foreign Exchange
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEF	Global Environment Facility

GIS	Geographic Information Systems
GIZ	Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (Society for International Cooperation)
GNI	Gross National Income
GOGLA	Global Off-Grid Lighting Association
GoM	Government of Mauritania
GSMA	Groupe Spéciale Mobile Association (Global System for Mobile Communications)
HC	Health Center
HDI	Human Development Index
HFO	Heavy Fuel Oil
HH	Household
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IEA	International Energy Agency
IEC	International Electrotechnical Commission
IFC	International Finance Corporation
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IPP	Independent Power Producer
IRENA	International Renewable Energy Agency
IsDB	Islamic Development Bank
kW	Kilowatt
kWh	Kilowatt-hour
LTO	Lease-to-Own
MAED	Ministry of Economic Affairs and Development
MCC	Millennium Challenge Corporation
MFI	Microfinance Institution
MPEM	Ministry of Petroleum, Energy and Mining
MRO	Mauritanian ouguiya (currency)
MTF	Multi-Tier Energy Access Framework
MW	Megawatt
NAMA	Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Action
NDC	Nationally Determined Contribution
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NPL	Non-Performing Loan
NREAP	National Renewable Energy Action Plan
O&M	Operation and Maintenance
OGS	Off-Grid Solar
OMVS	Organisation pour la Mise en Valeur du Fleuve Sénégal (Senegal River Basin Development Organization)
PAYG	Pay-As-You-Go
PPA	Power Purchase Agreement
PPP	Public Private Partnership
PRS	Programme Régional Solaire (Rural Solar Program)
PUE	Productive Use of Energy
PV	Photovoltaic
RE	Renewable Energy
RISE	Regulatory Indicators for Sustainable Energy
ROA	Return on Assets
ROE	Return on Equity
ROGEP	Regional Off-Grid Electrification Project

SCAPP	Strategie de Croissance Acceleree et Prosperite Partagée (Strategy for Accelerated Growth and Shared Prosperity)
SEFA	Sustainable Energy Fund for Africa
SEforALL	Sustainable Energy for All
SHS	Solar Home System
SME	Small and Medium Enterprise
SNMF	Stratégie Nationale de la Microfinance (National Microfinance Strategy)
SOMELEC	Société Mauritanienne d'Électricité
SPV	Special Purpose Vehicle
SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa
TA	Technical Assistance
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USD	United States Dollar
VAT	Value Added Tax
WAPP	West African Power Pool
WB	World Bank
Wh	Watt-hour
Wp	Watt peak

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The consortium of GreenMax Capital Advisors (GreenMax), African Solar Designs (ASD) and Energio Verda Africa (EVA) would like to thank the ECOWAS Center for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (ECREEE), including Mahama Kappiah, Executive Director, ECREEE; Festus William Lartey Amoyaw, ROGEP Project Coordinator; and the entire ROGEP Expert and Technical Specialist team: Hamadou Tchiemogo, Kwabena Adom-Opare, Nouhou Amadou Seini, Daniel Paco, Ermelinda Tavares Lima, Sire Abdoul Diallo and Collins Osae for their leadership and guidance. We would also like to thank Nicola Bugatti and Yuri Handem for their support.

In addition, we would like to acknowledge the following individuals and organizations in Mauritania for their assistance:

The Ministry of Petroleum, Energy and Mining (MPEM); The Authority of Multi-sectorial Regulation (ARM); The Rural Electrification Development Agency (ADER); The Agency for Universal Public Access to Regulated Services (APAUS); The Mauritanian Company of Electricity (SOMELEC); private operators COGER, CDS Eau & énergie and GRET; and all focus group and survey participants in the country. This report would not have been possible without their support.

We would especially like to thank Ahmed Hamadi for his significant contributions to this research effort.

NOTE: The findings, analysis, conclusions and recommendations expressed in this report are those of the authors – they do not necessarily represent the views of ECREEE, the World Bank, or any of the individuals and organizations that contributed to this study.

KEY DEFINITIONS

ELECTRICITY ACCESS

For the purpose of this analysis, figures on national, urban and rural electrification rates are from the International Energy Agency (IEA) Energy Access Outlook Report, 2017.[1] Although local government authorities (energy ministries, rural electrification agencies, utilities etc.) may have different or more up-to-date electrification data, one single, uniformly-accepted source was necessary as a baseline to assess electricity access figures across all 19 of the countries analyzed under this regional market assessment.

There is no single internationally-accepted and internationally-adopted definition of modern energy access. The IEA defines energy access as "a household having reliable and affordable access to both clean cooking facilities and to electricity, which is enough to supply a basic bundle of energy services initially, and then an increasing level of electricity over time to reach the regional average."[2] A "basic bundle of energy services" means, at a minimum, several lightbulbs, task lighting (such as a flashlight or lantern), phone charging and a radio. This definition of energy access serves as a benchmark to measure progress towards UN Sustainable Development Goal 7.[3] The IEA electricity access statistics presented in this report include household connections, either from a grid connection or from a renewable energy-based off-grid source; the approach excludes illegal connections. The data is sourced wherever possible from governments, supplemented by data from multilateral development banks, various international organizations and other publicly available statistics.

The Multi-Tier Energy Access Framework (MTF) is also used as a key reference throughout this report. Rather than measuring electricity access as a household connection to an electricity grid, the MTF views electricity access along a continuum of service levels (tiers) and according to a series of indicators, including capacity, availability/duration of supply, reliability, quality, affordability, legality and health/safety.[4]

OFF-GRID / STAND-ALONE SOLAR

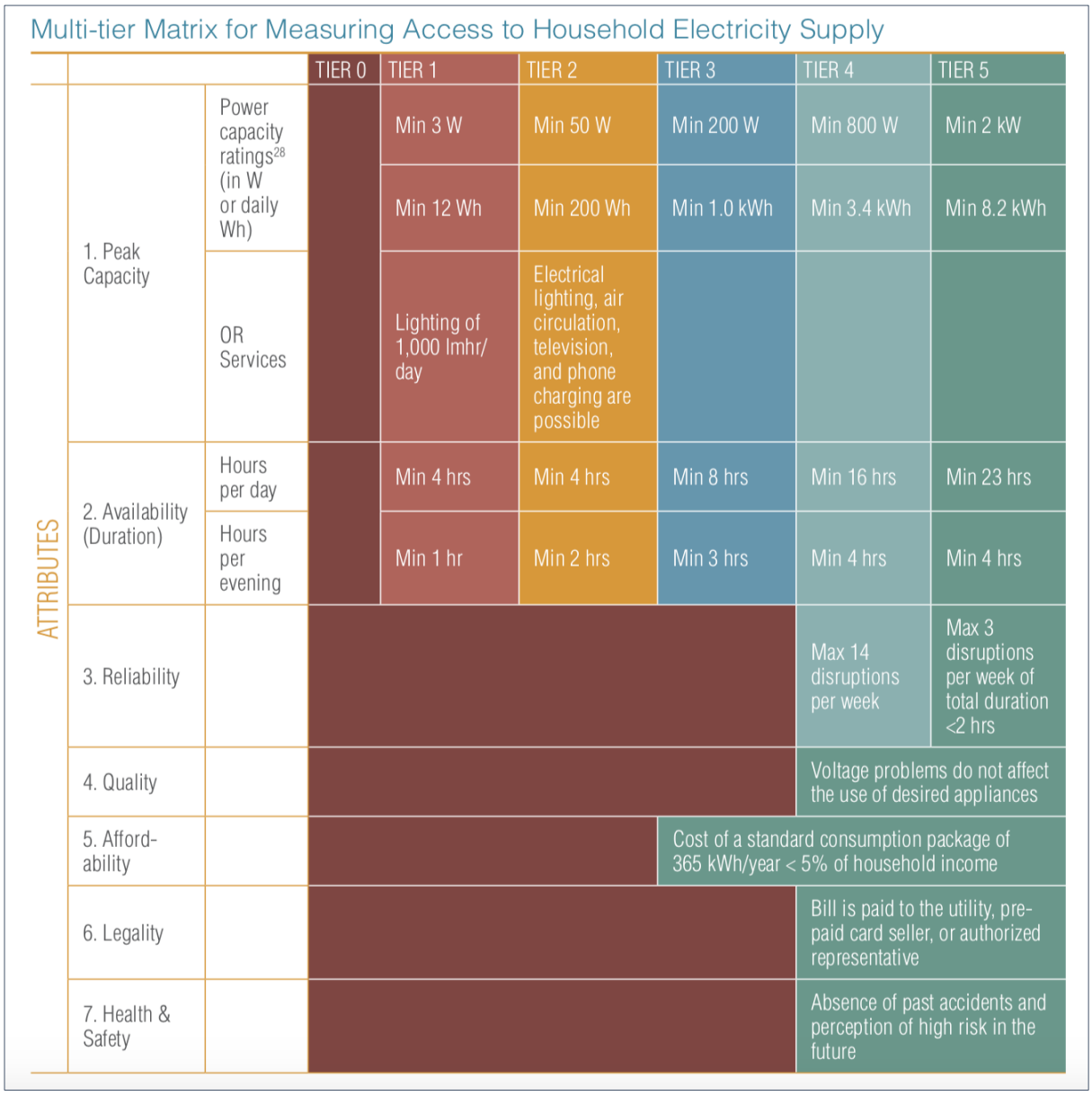
The term "off-grid" as it is widely used throughout this report (e.g. "off-grid sector") refers to both mini-grids and stand-alone systems. When "off-grid solar" or its acronym "OGS" are used, this refers *only* to stand-alone solar systems and does not include mini-grids. The main focus of this market assessment is the stand-alone solar sector. While micro/mini-grids typically provide a small community with electricity, stand-alone solar systems are not connected to an electricity distribution system and typically include a battery, but may also be used in conjunction with a diesel generator, wind turbine etc. Stand-alone solar technology broadly includes the following:

- Pico solar/solar lanterns[5]
- Single module solar systems (DC)[6]
- Multiple module solar systems (AC)[7]

[1] https://www.iea.org/publications/freepublications/publication/WEO2017SpecialReport_EnergyAccessOutlook.pdf
[2] https://www.iea.org/energyaccess/methodology/
[3] https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg7
[4] "Multi-Tier Framework for Measuring Energy Access," World Bank ESMAP: https://www.esmap.org/node/55526
[5] Typically less than 10 Wp; all-in-one lighting and/or phone charging; enables partial or full Tier 1 electricity access
[6] Typically 11-100 Wp; capable of powering a few appliances (lights, mobile phone charging, TV, radio, fan etc.); often referred to as a "plug-and-play" solar home system when components are sold as a set; enables full Tier 1 or higher electricity access
[7] Typically 101-500 Wp; capable of powering multiple appliances; requires small inverter

- Large solar systems (AC)[8]

In addition to providing electricity access, stand-alone solar products/systems also support a wide range of productive applications (e.g. solar water pumping, agricultural processing, milling equipment, refrigeration etc.).



Source: World Bank Energy Sector Management Assistance Program (ESMAP)

[8] Typically greater than 500 Wp; most often used to power a large home; requires large inverter

WEST AFRICA AND THE SAHEL

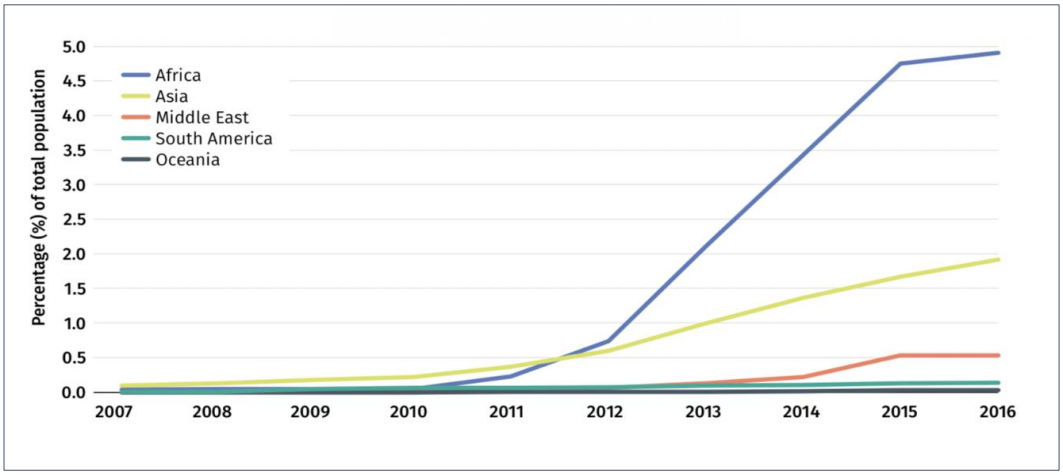
The term "West Africa and the Sahel" as it is used to throughout this report refers to the 19 countries covered by the first phase of the Regional Off-Grid Electrification Project (ROGEP). The countries include the 15 member states of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) – Benin, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Senegal and Togo – plus Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad and Mauritania.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

I. INTRODUCTION

Access to electricity in Sub-Saharan Africa has improved significantly over the past decade. The number of people without access to electricity in the region stopped increasing for the first time in 2013 and has since declined.[9] Although grid connections continue to be the primary method of electrification, access to electricity through off-grid renewable energy systems has grown considerably. The use of off-grid solar (OGS) power is notably on the rise, with African countries accounting for most of the sector's growth over the last decade (**Figure ES-1**). The pace of solar electrification has accelerated more rapidly in Sub-Saharan Africa than anywhere in the world.[10] In order to achieve universal electrification by 2030, the International Energy Agency (IEA) estimates that Sub-Saharan Africa will need more than half of new electricity access connections between 2017 and 2030 to be made through decentralized systems (mini-grids and stand-alone systems), with solar technologies representing nearly 60% of these connections.[11]

Figure ES-1: Off-Grid Solar Access Rate by Region



Tier 1 access and above

Source: International Renewable Energy Agency

Despite this progress, government efforts to increase electricity access in Africa have struggled to keep pace with rapid population growth and increasing demand. Many countries across the region must navigate the interrelated challenges of energy poverty, energy security and climate change (among other sociopolitical, economic and development challenges), which collectively slow the adoption of renewable energy and the pace of off-grid market growth. Rates of energy access remain particularly low in rural areas, where the electrification rate is less than 25% across Sub-Saharan Africa.[12] In part, this is due to the gap between the power sector's infrastructure needs and the availability of necessary resources to expand grid electrification. Extending the grid to rural areas can be challenging due to significant transmission distances and low population densities.

[9] "Energy Access Outlook, 2017: From Poverty to Prosperity," International Energy Agency, (2017): https://www.iea.org/publications/freepublications/publication/WEO2017SpecialReport_EnergyAccessOutlook.pdf
[10] "Tracking SDG7 – The Energy Access Report 2018," The World Bank, IEA, IRENA, UN Statistics Division and the WHO, (2018): https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/29812
[11] Tracking SDG7 – The Energy Access Report, 2018.
[12] IEA Energy Access Outlook, 2017.

As of 2016, over 200 million people in West Africa and the Sahel – more than half of the region's population – lacked access to electricity. This figure represents nearly one-third of Africa's total unelectrified population. Rates of urban and rural electrification vary widely across the region, with the average rate of access nearly three times higher in urban areas.[13]

Despite these access deficits, the region is generously endowed with renewable energy resources – including hydropower, solar, wind and bioenergy. These resources are largely untapped, however, as investments in the power sector remain high-risk due to market instability, as well as a variety of political and regulatory risks. Other energy sector challenges include *inter alia* limited institutional capacity, poor utility financial performance, a shortage of local technical expertise and a lack of support from local financial institutions (FIs).

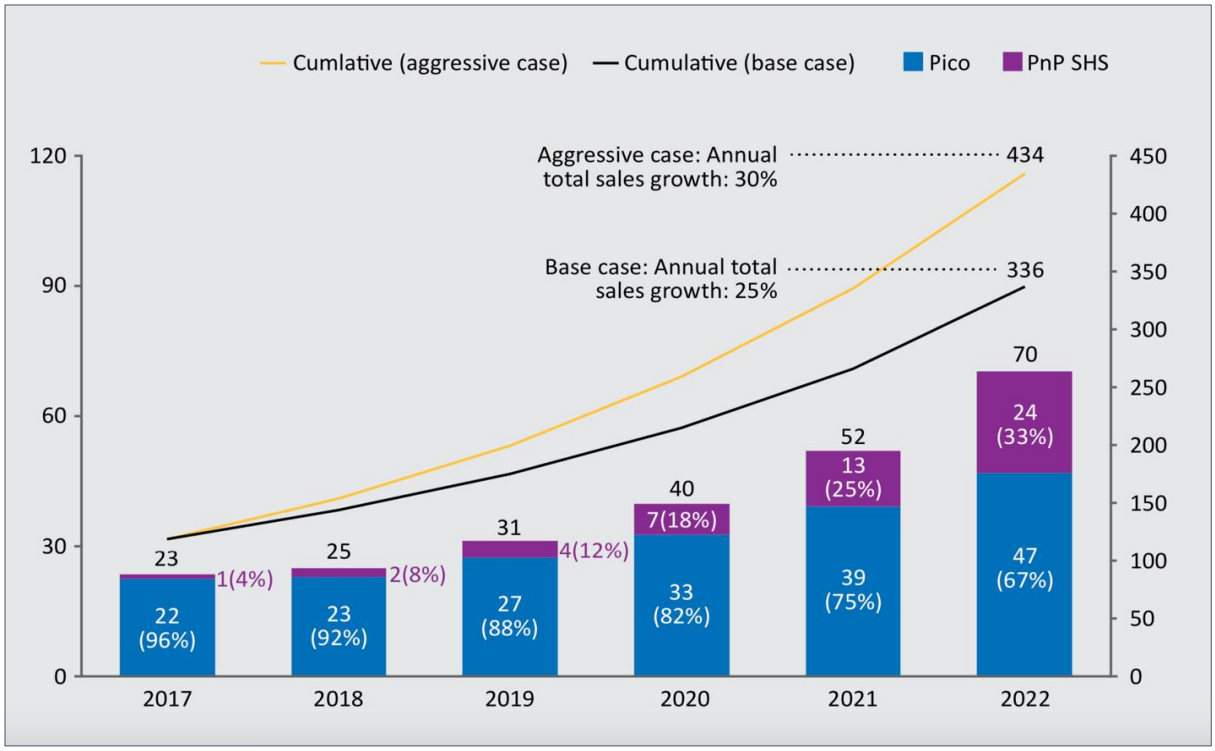
Until recently, diesel generators largely served as the expensive alternative both for rural electrification and for urban and peri-urban "bad grid" areas, where electricity was unreliable or only available for part of the day. However, the advent of decentralized renewable energy technologies, particularly stand-alone solar and mini-grid systems, offers opportunities to deliver clean and cost-effective off-grid solutions. Accordingly, policymakers are increasingly utilizing these options in electrification planning as they offer a reliable, flexible and relatively affordable complement to grid extension initiatives.

Solar energy is the most promising technology in the off-grid space, with three key trends converging to drive the industry's growth: first, continued reductions in hardware and balance of system costs (solar modules, batteries, inverters, appliances etc.); second, a digital revolution, with mobile communication technology facilitating payments and monitoring; and third, innovation in private sector business models, such as pay-as-you go (PAYG) and third-party ownership of solar home systems (SHS), which offer energy as a service and remove previously prohibitive up-front costs for households.[14] As a result of these developments, the off-grid solar market is rapidly evolving and expanding.

In 2016, the OGS market reported global revenues of approximately USD 1 billion. This figure is expected to increase to USD 8 billion by 2022, with SHS representing the majority of this revenue growth and an increasing share of unit sales **(Figure ES-2)**. Investments in the off-grid solar sector doubled annually between 2012 and 2016, increasing by 98% over this period. Between 2013 and 2017, East Africa represented 86% of the global PAYG market in terms of cumulative unit sales, followed by West Africa at 12% and Asia at 2%.[15] As the East African market becomes more crowded and solar companies expand their operations into West Africa, the region will account for a larger geographic share of the burgeoning global OGS market. Although the sector's investment trends remain volatile, there is some preliminary evidence to suggest that this transition is already underway: in 2016, West Africa accounted for 34% of total funds raised, up from 9% in 2015, while East Africa's share of funding decreased from 77% to 47% over the same period.[16]

[13] IEA Energy Access Outlook, 2017.
[14] "Derisking Renewable Energy Investment: Off-Grid Electrification," United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and ETH Zurich, (December 2018):
https://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/Environment%20and%20Energy/Climate%20Strategies/DREI%20Off-Grid%20Electrification%20-%20Full%20Report%20(20181210).pdf
[15] "Off-Grid Solar Market Trends Report 2018," Dahlberg Advisors, Lighting Global, GOGLA and World Bank ESMAP, (January 2018):
https://www.lightingafrica.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/2018_Off_Grid_Solar_Market_Trends_Report_Full.pdf
[16] Ibid.

Figure ES-2: Global Off-Grid Solar Market Forecast (million units sold)



NOTE: Left axis = annual sales volume; Right axis = cumulative sales volume; PnP SHS = Plug-and-Play Solar Home System

Source: Dahlberg Advisors, Lighting Global, GOGLA and World Bank ESMAP

Many international off-grid solar companies, including most of the industry's leading players – BBOXX, Greenlight Planet, Azuri, d.light, Off-Grid Electric, M-KOPA Solar, Fenix International, and French utilities EDF and Engie among others – have recently entered markets in West Africa, joining international pioneers such as PEG and Lumos, which launched originally in Ghana and Nigeria, respectively, and both expanded into Côte d'Ivoire and Togo.[17] While these large international companies are well capitalized, there is a dearth of financing for smaller, early-stage companies that operate in nascent markets across West Africa and the Sahel. In fact, the top 10 global off-grid solar companies have received nearly 90% of investment capital since 2012, while early-stage companies often struggle to raise the necessary capital to accelerate growth.[18]

In order to scale off-grid electrification, OGS companies will need to access large volumes of commercial debt financing. In the longer term, partnerships with local commercial banks and microfinance institutions (MFIs) will also be necessary in order to develop domestic, local-currency sources of financing and reduce foreign exchange risk.[19] Partnerships with local FIs, whose understanding of the credit risk of local populations, may also reduce financing costs more rapidly compared to other methods (e.g. using debt from securitized receivables).[20] Although most financing currently comes from non-commercial sources (i.e. the

[17] Bavier, J., "Off-grid power pioneers pour into West Africa," Reuters, (February 20, 2018): https://www.reuters.com/article/us-africa-power-insight/off-grid-power-pioneers-pour-into-west-africa-idUSKCN1G41PE
[18] "Accelerating Energy Access: The Role of Patient Capital," Acumen, (2018): https://acumen.org/wp-content/uploads/Accelerating-Access-Role-of-Patient-Capital-Report.pdf
[19] UNDP and ETH Zurich, 2018.
[20] "How can Pay-As-You-Go Solar Be Financed?" Bloomberg New Energy Finance, (7 October 2016): https://www.bbhub.io/bnef/sites/4/2016/10/BNEF_WP_2016_10_07-Pay-as-you-go-solar.pdf

international development community), global capital markets have the size and depth necessary to meet this investment challenge. Nevertheless, small investment sizes and other early-stage market investment risks are currently holding back abundant and low-cost private capital flows to the off-grid sector.[21]

In order to mitigate risks and spur investment, the OGS sector requires substantial policy and regulatory support. It is therefore important that governments send a clear signal to the private sector by integrating off-grid technologies into national development programs, electrification plans and electricity access targets. Governments should also adopt favorable policies, laws and regulations to boost private sector participation, including procurement and tax incentives, grants and subsidies, concession schemes, streamlined licensing and permitting procedures, and quality standards for equipment. Additional measures include public awareness raising, encouraging inclusive gender participation, and building local capacity at all levels (e.g. solar PV vocational training and technical certification programs, training for FIs to address unfamiliarity of lenders with off-grid solar sector, corporate and consumer financing needs etc.).

In addition, solar companies increasingly rely on mobile money platforms to scale their business, as mobile payments allow them to offer low-income customers new ways to access and pay for electricity through innovative business models such as PAYG. Mobile money services, however, are only just beginning to be deployed in West Africa and the Sahel. Solar companies are therefore limited by low levels of penetration and in some cases by country-specific regulatory restrictions.[22] Governments can take action to foster linkages between the off-grid solar, telecommunications and mobile money sectors to expedite the uptake of market-transforming technology platforms and business models.

Governments across West Africa and the Sahel have implemented a range of policies and approaches to support off-grid market development, including private concessions, Public Private Partnerships (PPPs), Rural Electrification Agencies (REAs) and Rural Electrification Funds (REFs), among other measures. Some countries like Senegal and Mali have adopted private concessions to scale up mini-grids in rural areas, while others, such as Nigeria and Ghana, have improved rural electrification largely through public investment.

To support these initiatives, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) adopted the ECOWAS Renewable Energy Policy (EREP) in 2013, which intends to achieve universal electricity access in the region by 2030. The EREP also aims to increase the share of the region's rural population served by decentralized renewable energy services (mini-grids and stand-alone systems) to 25% by 2030. The ECOWAS Center for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (ECREEE) is working with member states to develop and implement national policies and strategies with electrification targets through 2030 in line with the EREP, including Sustainable Energy for All (SEforALL) Action Agendas and National Renewable Energy Action Plans (NREAP), among other programs in support of renewable energy and off-grid market development.[23]

[21] UNDP and ETH Zurich, 2018.
[22] "Scaling Access to Energy in Africa: 20 Million Off-Grid Connections by 2030," Scaling Off-Grid Energy: A Grand Challenge for Development, USAID, UK DFID, Shell Foundation, (2018): https://static.globalinnovationexchange.org/s3fs-public/asset/document/SOGE%20YIR_FINAL.pdf?uwUDTyB3ghxOrV2gqvsO_r0L5OhWPZZb
[23] ECOWAS Renewable Energy Policy, 2013: http://www.ecreee.org/sites/default/files/documents/ecowas_renewable_energy_policy.pdf

II. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT OF THE ASSIGNMENT

In this context, with funding from the World Bank, ECREEE launched the Regional Off-Grid Electrification Project (ROGEP) in 19 countries in West Africa and the Sahel. The project aims to enhance shared capacity, institutions and knowledge in order to increase electricity access of households, businesses and public institutions using modern stand-alone solar systems through a harmonized regional approach. ROGEP has two main components/objectives:

- ✓ **Component 1: Accelerate development of a regional off-grid solar market:**

  (1A) Foster regional collaboration and promote a supportive enabling environment for the OGS sector;
  (1B) Provide entrepreneurship technical support to OGS companies at various stages of development (training to accelerate business growth and/or facilitate market entry);
  (1C) Provide entrepreneurship financial support to OGS companies at various stages of development (matching grants);
  (1D) Provide financing to remove barriers in challenging markets (market entry grants and performance grants to OGS companies operating in challenging markets)

- ✓ **Component 2: Facilitate access to financing for off-grid solar businesses:**

  (2A) Provide line of credit for OGS businesses via the West African Development Bank (Banque Ouest Africaine de Développement, BOAD) to be extended to local FIs for on-lending to local entrepreneurs (working capital for companies to finance equipment imports, receivables from PAYG schemes etc.)
  (**2B**) Implement contingent grant facility via BOAD to share risks with local FIs and encourage lending to OGS businesses.

In addition, the project intends to support a range of capacity building activities targeting public and private sector stakeholders to address existing policy, regulatory, institutional, financial, economic, business, technology and capacity related barriers. ECREEE will also assist each country with development and implementation of national programs and initiatives in the areas of renewable energy, rural electrification and energy access in line with the regional focus of the assignment.

Under the first phase of the project, an initial assessment of the off-grid solar market was undertaken in each of the 19 countries. The study focused exclusively on the stand-alone solar PV market and did not assess mini-grids (see **Key Definitions**). The scope of work was broadly divided into the following tasks:

(1) Review the current enabling policy and market environment for the off-grid solar sector
(2) Analyze the market for off-grid solar products and systems, including an estimate of demand from the household, institutional and productive use market segments and analysis of the supply chain;
(3) Assess the willingness and capacity of national and regional financial institutions to provide commercial and/or consumer financing to the off-grid solar sector; and
(4) Propose models to incentivize the private sector and financial institutions to support off-grid solar market development and to harmonize a regional market to achieve universal access.

Available geographic information system (GIS) data for each country supported the Task 1 and Task 2 analyses. A least-cost electrification analysis was undertaken utilizing geospatial mapping to assess the potential development of electricity access and grid coverage in each country through 2023 and 2030. The study estimated the total number of potential settlements, people and households electrified by on-grid, mini-grid or off-grid stand-alone solutions under each timeframe based on a series of indicators, including national electricity grid proximity, population density and nodes of economic growth. The assessment was

also performed for health facilities and education centers (although the analysis was limited by the availability and/or quality of GIS data for these market segments). The results of the analysis were used to estimate the share of the population suitable for off-grid stand-alone solar solutions over the analyzed periods and to assess corresponding potential demand from the household sector under the Task 2 market sizing.

Within the context of this assignment, a gender-focused analysis was also implemented in order to assess the level of female participation in each country's off-grid energy sector. Each stage of the market study therefore analyzed inclusive participation and gender implications. A comprehensive gender profile is presented in **Annex 4**, including a summary of findings, as well as recommendations to improve gender equality and enhance women's engagement in development of the off-grid sector.

To carry out these tasks, the project team utilized a combination of desk research, input from local country experts and feedback from engagement with a wide range of stakeholders at the country and regional levels. Interviews were conducted with policymakers, industry experts, and representatives from solar companies and financial institutions. Focus group discussions were also held in each country with key stakeholders from the four market segments analyzed under Task 2 (household, institutional, productive use and supplier). Focus group participants included representatives from government, the donor community, NGOs, solar companies, business and industry associations, academia, community groups, and women's groups. In addition to the focus group meetings, surveys were administered in order to collect additional Task 2 market data, including (i) a survey of international solar companies to gauge their level of interest in the region; (ii) a survey of local solar companies and retail suppliers in each country to inform the supply chain analysis; and (iii) an assessment of an off-grid village in each country to better understand how solar is being utilized for productive uses. Under Task 3, a survey was administered to local and regional FIs to determine their level of capacity and interest in lending to the off-grid solar sector. A detailed description of the methodology used to carry out these tasks is presented in **Annexes 1-3**.

This report is organized into three sections that correspond to Tasks 1-3 described in the scope of work above (Task 4 was prepared in a separate report). **Section 1** covers the enabling policy and market environment for the OGS sector. This includes an overview of the status of the on-grid and off-grid markets, an analysis of off-grid energy policy and regulation and gaps in the existing framework, and a summary of off-grid development initiatives. The results of the least-cost electrification analysis are also included in this section.

Section 2 estimates the potential market for off-grid solar products and systems by assessing potential demand from the household, institutional and productive use market segments (**Figure ES-3**), followed by an analysis of the supply chain. The household market sizing utilizes results from the least-cost electrification analysis, along with data on household income and energy expenditure, in order to estimate potential demand based on the number of households able to afford various OGS systems. Both the cash and financed market potential were estimated for 2018, 2023 and 2030.

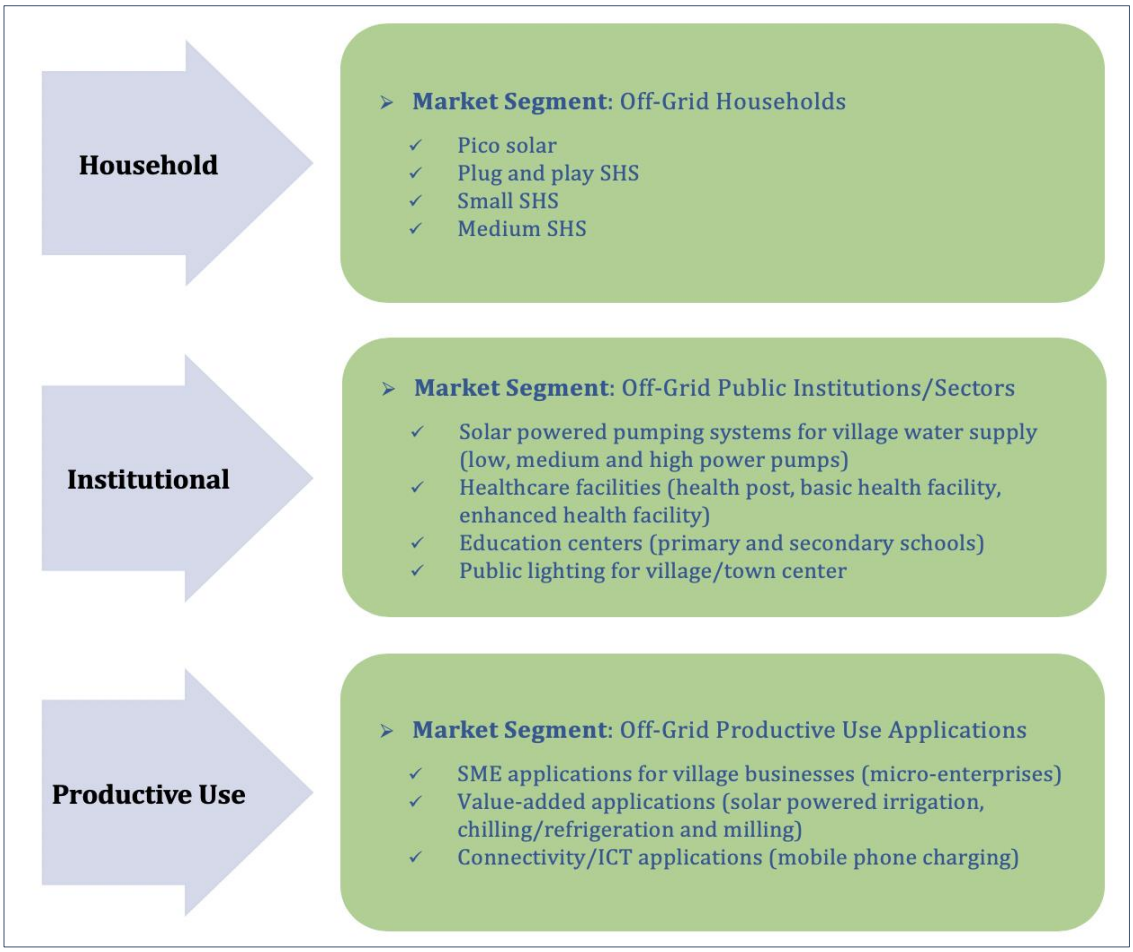
The institutional sector analysis combines available GIS data with secondary research to estimate potential demand based on assumptions about the electricity needs, usage patterns and associated costs of solar electrification of four public/institutional markets – water supply for off-grid communities, healthcare facilities, education centers (primary and secondary schools) and public lighting. Where GIS data was unavailable, per capita comparisons were made using data from similar countries to estimate off-grid solar demand by market segment (see **Annex 2** for country categorization). The productive use of energy (PUE) market sizing estimates potential off-grid solar demand for SME, value-added and connectivity applications. Feedback from stakeholder interviews and focus group discussions informed the analysis and

helped characterize each market segment's consumer perceptions, interest, awareness, ability to pay and access to finance.

The Task 2 supply chain analysis presents an overview of key market actors, solar products and services, sales figures and business models, and includes a discussion of the role of informal market players and the impact of uncertified products. The analysis also addresses the capacity needs of the supply chain and describes specific areas of support where technical assistance is needed to accelerate market growth.

Section 3 assesses the willingness and capability of national and regional financial institutions (FIs) to provide commercial and/or consumer financing to the off-grid solar sector in each country. This section includes a summary of financial products for the off-grid sector, a comprehensive overview of each country's financial market and commercial lending environment (including analysis of commercial banks, microfinance institutions and other non-bank financial institutions) and any programs supporting off-grid solar lending. This section also examines the scope of financial inclusion in each country and the impact of digital financial services and mobile money on access to finance. It concludes with the results of surveys that were administered to financial institutions in each country across the region.

Figure ES-3: Analyzed Off-Grid Market Segments



NOTE: SHS = Solar Home System; ICT = Information Communication Technology

III. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Over the last decade, the Mauritanian economy has experienced strong economic growth and significant poverty reduction. Growth has been driven by extractive industries, especially gold and ore mining, which contribute to about 25% of GDP and 80% of exports.[24] Newly discovered offshore natural gas fields are another promising development. Mauritania's reliance on extractive and mineral resources leaves the economy susceptible to volatility in commodity prices. The country's macroeconomic gains have not translated into improvements for the majority of the population, as poverty is widespread, particularly in rural areas where a significant share of the population lives.

Access to electricity remains an ongoing challenge. In 2016, approximately 70% of the population – an estimated three million people – did not have access to electricity, with a significant disparity in rates of access between urban (47%) and rural (2%) areas.[25] Even where grid connections exist, power supply is often unreliable, with fewer than one-fifth of firms reporting reliable access to electricity when surveyed.[26] Off-grid electrification is a policy priority for the Government of Mauritania (GoM). In the 2016-2030 National Strategy for Accelerated Growth and Shared Prosperity (Stratégie de Croissance Accélérée et Prospérité Partagée, SCAPP), the Government has committed to achieving a national electrification rate to 70%, including 95% in urban areas and 40% in rural areas, by 2030.[27] To date, the Government's efforts to establish a supportive policy and regulatory framework for the off-grid sector are progressing slowly, as evidenced by the country's relatively low energy access score in the World Bank Regulatory Indicators for Sustainable Energy (RISE) evaluation. Despite a slight improvement in its score from 2015, Mauritania ranked ahead of only Liberia, Central African Republic and Chad in West Africa and the Sahel and was among the lowest scoring access-deficit countries in the world in the 2017 RISE evaluation.[28]

The Rural Electrification Development Agency (Agence de Développement de l'Électrification Rurale, ADER) promotes access to electricity in rural areas. The Agency for Universal Public Access to Regulated Services (Agence de Promotion de l'Accès Universel aux Services APAUS) also supported rural electrification initiatives in the country until it was dissolved in late 2018. In the 1990s and 2000s, the GoM promoted the use of solar systems through the Regional Solar Program (RSP1 1990-1998 and RSP2 2001-2007), which contributed to the distribution of solar systems in more than 200 rural localities. In 2015, ADER installed 12,000 solar kits across the country that included solar for lighting, refrigeration, and water pumping.[29] More recently, the GoM has prioritized grid connections and renewable energy mini-grids in rural and peri-urban areas.

Off-grid development in Mauritania is important not only for providing electricity to the population but is also critical for the country's vast and dispersed mining centers that utilize off-grid electricity for their operations. The national mining company, Société Nationale Industrielle et Minière (SNIM), has developed more than 3 MW of off-grid solar power in Zouérat in the northern part of the country.

[24] "Mauritania Economic Outlook," African Development Bank, (2017): https://www.afdb.org/en/countries/north-africa/mauritania/mauritania-economic-outlook/
[25] IEA Energy Access Outlook, 2017.
[26] Blimpo, M., and Cosgrove-Davies, M., "Electricity Access in Sub-Saharan Africa: Uptake, Reliability, and Complementary Factors for Economic Impact," AFD and World Bank, Africa Development Forum, (2019): https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/31333/9781464813610.pdf?sequence=6&isAllowed=y
[27] "Islamic Republic of Mauritania: Strategy for Accelerated Growth and Shared Prosperity," International Monetary Fund, (May 2018): https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/CR/Issues/2018/06/01/Islamic-Republic-of-Mauritania-Economic-Development-Documents-45918
[28] "Policy Matters: Regulatory Indicators for Sustainable Energy," World Bank ESMAP, (2018): http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/553071544206394642/pdf/132782-replacement-PUBLIC-RiseReport-HighRes.pdf
[29] "Mauritania Renewables Readiness Assessment,'' IRENA, (2015): https://www.irena.org/-/media/Files/IRENA/RRA/Country-Report/IRENA_RRA_Mauritania_EN_2015.pdf

This report assesses the market opportunity for off-grid solar products and systems by estimating demand from the household, institutional, and productive use sectors in Mauritania (**Figure ES-4**). According to the assessment, there is a significant OGS market opportunity, with the annualized cash market potential in 2018 estimated to be USD 44.8 million. The productive use sector (USD 26.6M) makes up the majority of estimated demand, followed by the household (USD 15.3M) and institutional (USD 2.9M) sectors.

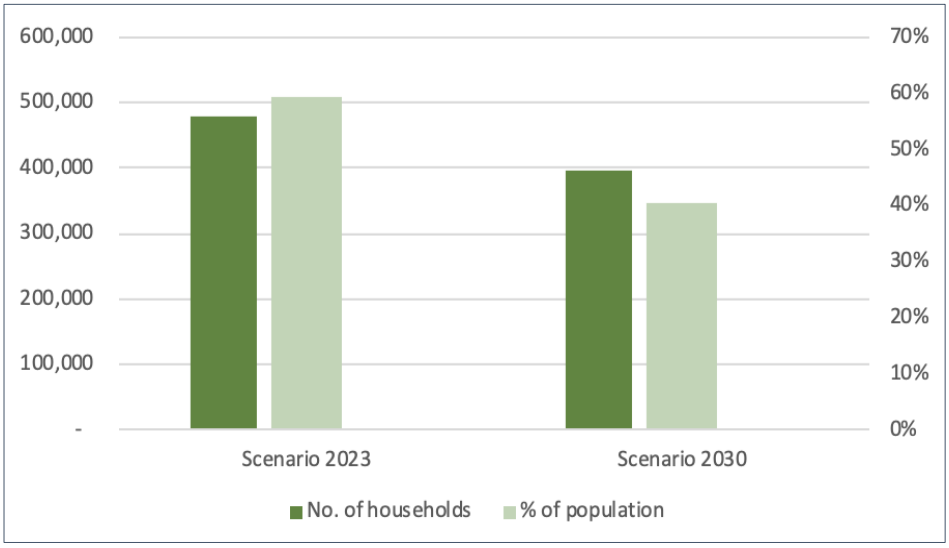
Figure ES-4: Indicative Total Cash Market Potential for Off-Grid Solar Products in Mauritania, 2018

Source: African Solar Designs analysis

The least-cost electrification analysis found that by 2023, 181 settlements across Mauritania (286,381 households) will be connected to the main grid, representing 35.5% of the population. By 2030, this figure will increase to 675 settlements (555,484 households), equivalent to 57.1% of the population. These estimates are based on the assumption that all planned grid extensions will be completed by 2030.

In the off-grid sector, the analysis identified 1,353 settlements (478,792 households), representing 59.3% of the population in 2023, as suitable for stand-alone systems, decreasing to 934 settlements (395,042 households) and 40.6% of the population in 2030 (**Figure ES-5**). While the total size of the OGS market for households will decrease over time, it will also become more concentrated in certain southern regions such as Assaba. This trend has implications for long-term business models of the solar product market, which will need to consider broader distribution areas as the total number of off-grid households declines and becomes concentrated in areas far from urban centers.

Figure ES-5: Estimated Number of Households and Share of Population Suitable for OGS Systems in Mauritania, 2023 and 2030



Source: Energio Verda Africa GIS analysis

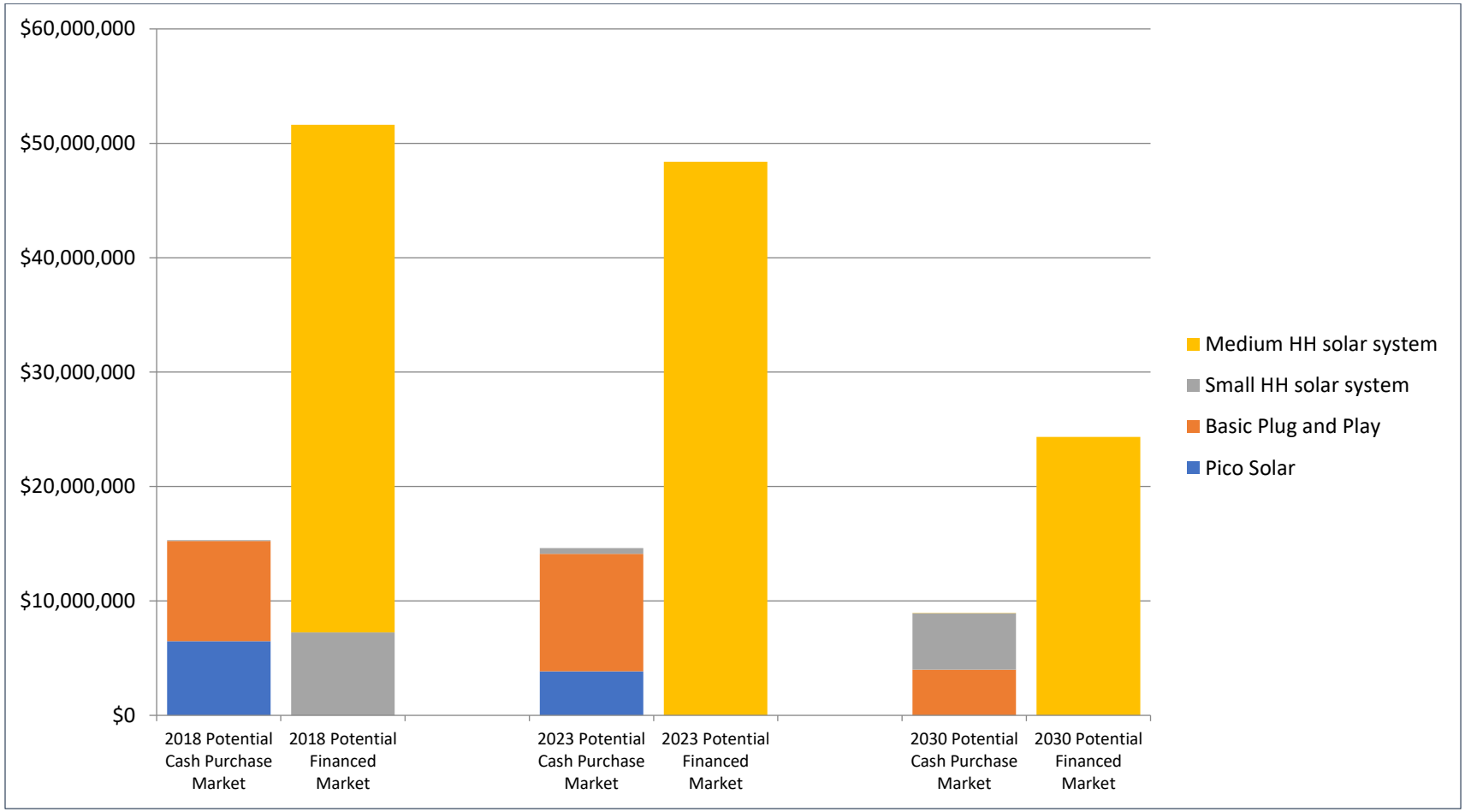
According to the analysis, the annualized off-grid solar cash market potential for the household sector in 2018 is USD 15.3 million, with the estimated market value more than tripling in size to USD 51.6 million with the addition of consumer financing (**Figure ES-6**). Consumer financing allows the poorest households to enter the market and those already in the market to afford larger systems.

According to the assessment, the most common types of systems the market can afford on a cash basis are pico solar and small plug and play systems; however, this changes significantly with the introduction of financing (**Figure ES-7**). While affordability improves over time, households in the lowest income quintiles cannot afford any off-grid solar products without financing. Consumer financing will thus prove critical for accelerating off-grid solar market growth and meeting electrification targets through 2030.

Figure ES-6: Estimated Off-Grid Solar Cash and Financed Market Potential for Household Sector

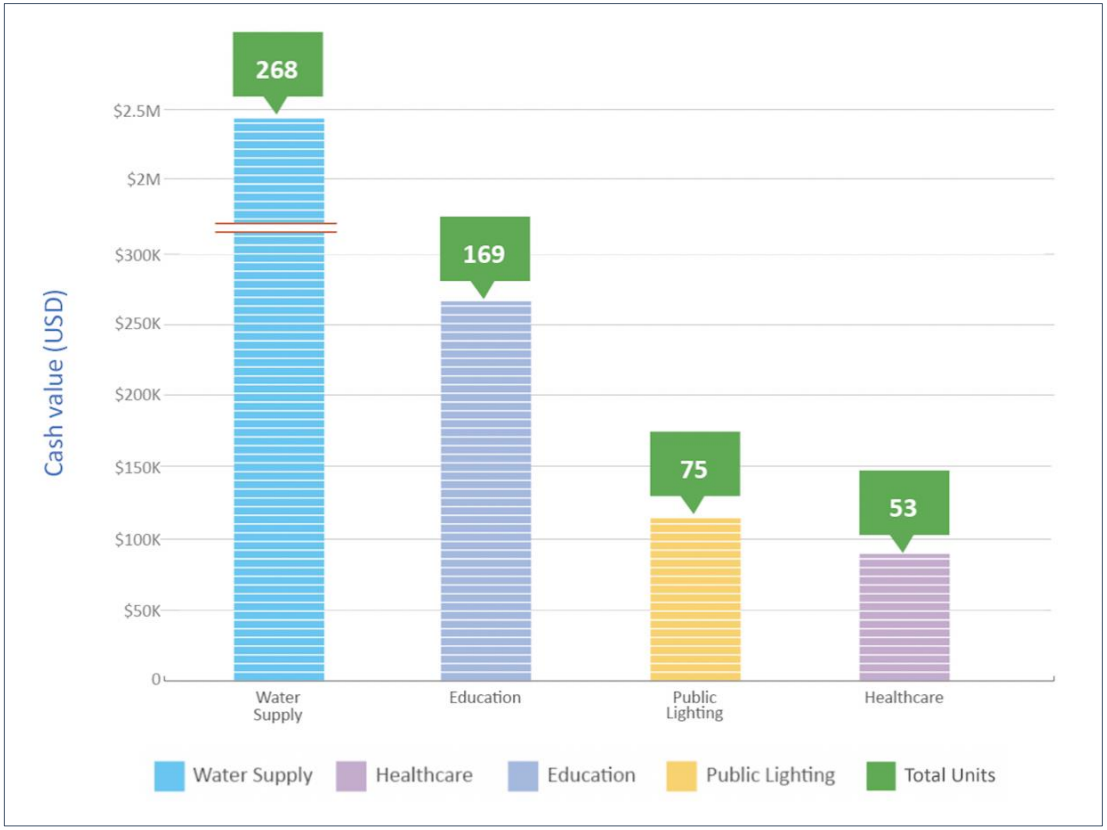
Source: African Solar Designs analysis

Figure ES-7: Estimated Off-Grid Solar Cash and Financed Market Potential for Household Sector by System Type



Source: African Solar Designs analysis

Figure ES-8: Estimated Off-Grid Solar Cash Market Potential for Institutional Sector

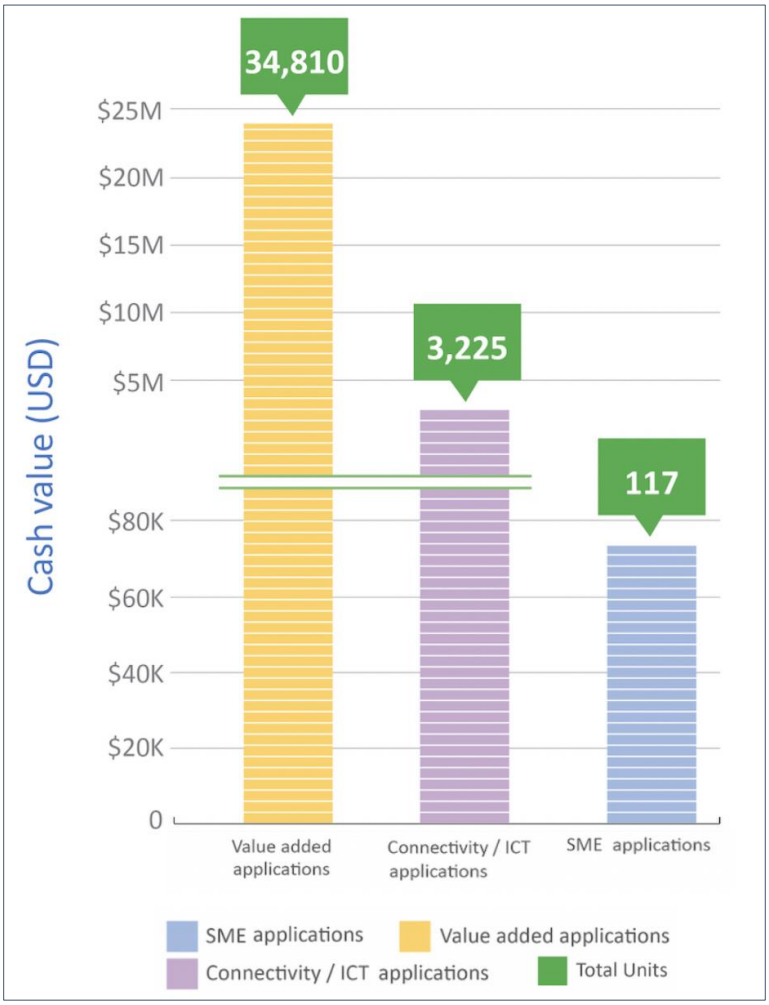


Source: African Solar Designs analysis

The estimated annualized cash market potential for Mauritania's public/institutional sector in 2018 is USD 2.9 million (**Figure ES-8**). The institutional market segment with the largest potential is water supply (USD 2.4M), followed by education (USD 266K), public lighting (USD 113K) and healthcare (USD 87K). The water supply sector analysis identified off-grid water points such as boreholes and wells that could benefit from solar technology for water pumping. The healthcare sector analysis identified off-grid health facilities categorized by their size (from basic clinics to enhanced health facilities) that could be electrified by stand-alone systems. The education sector analysis identified primary and secondary schools that could be electrified by stand-alone systems. The public lighting analysis assessed the lighting needs for off-grid villages and market centers (excluding street lighting).

According to the analysis, the annualized off-grid solar cash market potential for the productive use sector in 2018 is USD 26.6 million (**Figure ES-9**). The estimated demand from value-added applications represents most of the PUE market potential (USD 23.8M), followed by applications for connectivity (USD 2.7M) and SMEs (USD 73K).

Figure ES-9: Estimated Off-Grid Solar Cash Market Potential for Productive Use Sector



Source: African Solar Designs analysis

The value-added applications that were analyzed include solar pumping for agricultural irrigation, solar powered milling and solar powered refrigeration. The assessment utilized a series of inputs, including data from the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization on national agricultural production, as well as applicable solar technologies to support income generation for small shareholder farmers (i.e. solar pumps, mills, and refrigeration systems). Access to energy for agriculture is critical for the country's economic development, particularly given the sector's importance to GDP.

Off-grid solar power supports a wide range of connectivity applications, including mobile phone charging, wi-fi servers, banks, mobile money kiosks, and telecommunications towers. Mobile phone and internet connectivity are also necessary pre-cursors to mobile money and PAYG solutions in the off-grid solar sector. The market sizing examined mobile phone network coverage as well as rates of mobile phone

ownership and mobile internet penetration to estimate the market potential for mobile phone charging enterprises (stations/kiosks).

The calculation of the estimated off-grid solar market for SMEs focused only on barbering and tailoring appliances, which comprises a small portion of overall SME sector demand. These two microenterprises are indicative of the service-based SME off-grid solar market, as they benefit significantly from extended working hours and the use of modern appliances/machinery. The estimated demand for this market segment is therefore intended to provide a baseline for future research, as a more robust analysis would be necessary to assess realistic demand from all SMEs.

It should be noted that the Task 2 market sizing assesses the total *potential* demand for off-grid solar, as well as variables that affect demand, such as changes in population density, household income, expansion of national grids and access to finance, among other factors. This data will support policymakers and practitioners as they assess market potential over time. However, the quantitative demand estimate has not been revised to reflect *realistic* market potential. Many other factors and market failures will prevent the full realization of this total market potential, and these will vary by market segment.

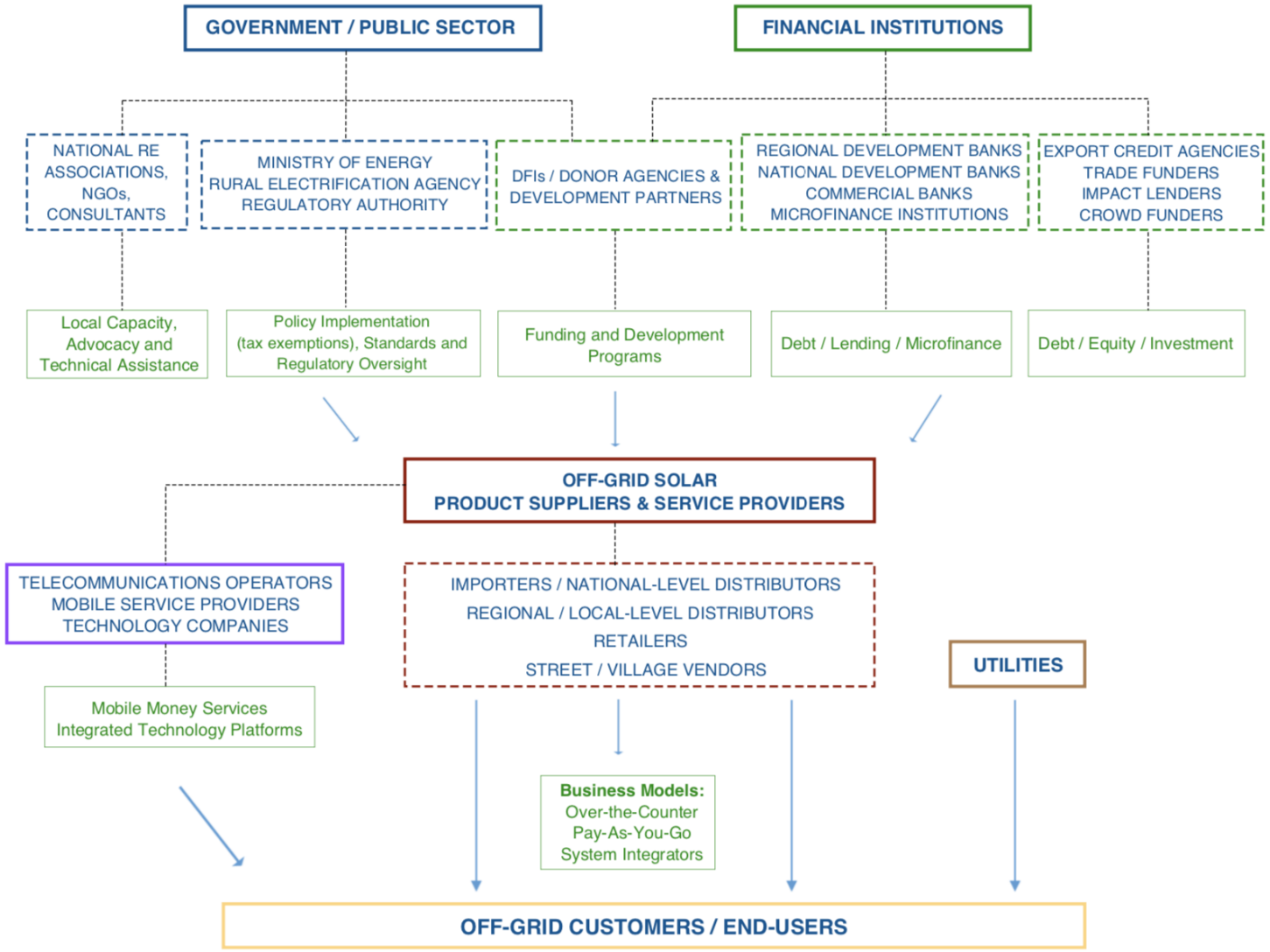
For household demand, the off-grid solar market is already tangible. Still, many factors will affect household demand for solar products, such as distribution realties, consumer education, competing economic priorities for households, financial shocks, etc. The institutional market will be affected largely by government and donor budget allocations along with the potential for community-based finance. The productive use market is perhaps the least concrete. Considered a relatively new market segment for the off-grid solar industry, productive use market dynamics are not yet well understood. The ability to realize potential productive use market demand will also be affected by many of the factors that commonly determine enterprise prospects in the country, including infrastructure, rural distribution, marketing, access to finance, insecurity, regulation, etc. The data presented in this report is intended to provide a baseline for future research.

Following the estimates of market demand, this report analyzes the supply chain for off-grid solar products and services in Mauritania, which includes a wide range of stakeholders, including importers, distributors, wholesalers, retailers and end-users (**Figure ES-10**). The solar supply chain is made up of both formal and informal companies that offer a variety of solar products and systems and deploy several business models. Rural households make up the main market for OGS products in the country, as the demand for lighting products and household electrical appliances is growing. Nevertheless, urban households, both electrified and non-electrified, are also a key consumer market, as they may have greater ability to afford solar products and systems.

The off-grid solar supply chain faces several barriers, including competition from the informal market. The widespread sale of low-quality, uncertified products undermines consumer confidence in solar equipment, undercuts the prices of sellers of quality-verified products and hinders overall OGS market growth. There are also a number of interrelated challenges and capacity building needs of the supply chain, including financial, capacity, awareness and regulatory challenges.

Mauritania's nascent solar market is poised to grow if requisite technical assistance is provided to the supply chain. To operate effectively, companies need a significant amount of both local and international technical and financial expertise, as well as an ability to make practical decisions about their operations. Companies must manage a number of technical competency requirements, including the selection of business models, importation and distribution channels, solar PV technologies, as well as the design and implementation of associated marketing instruments and related initiatives.

Figure ES-10: Off-Grid Solar Market and Supply Chain Overview



Source: GreenMax Capital Advisors

Local industry and supply-chain stakeholders who participated in the Task 2 focus group discussions and surveys identified the following key barriers to and drivers of OGS market growth in Mauritania:

Key Barriers to Off-Grid Solar Market Growth
• Low consumer purchasing power and lack of consumer financing options
• Low levels of consumer awareness of solar solutions, particularly in rural areas
• Lack of financing for solar companies
• Informal sector competition and market spoilage
• Lack of local capacity/qualified technicians to maintain systems
• High transaction costs associated with equipment inventory, distribution, importation, taxation etc.
• Insufficient or fragmented market data on consumer electricity needs, usage or experience
Key Drivers of Off-Grid Solar Market Growth
• Strong off-grid electricity demand
• Government policy and action is supportive of the industry, which helps attract investment to the market
• Growing penetration of mobile money services allows OGS companies to increasingly utilize integrated technology platforms and innovative business models to offer PAYG consumer financing solutions to the market
• Private sector engagement in development of the off-grid sector, with companies adopting new business models and strategies to attract external investment and expand their operations
• Strong donor presence and support from the international development community provides confidence that the market will continue to receive financial, policy and technical support necessary to develop

Source: Focus Group Discussions; Stakeholder interviews; African Solar Designs analysis

Access to financing is critical for off-grid solar market growth. Solar companies need financing for working capital needs, while off-grid solar consumers need financing for the purchase of systems. This report analyzes the willingness and capacity of national and regional financial institutions to provide financing to businesses and consumers in Mauritania and throughout the region to support development of the OGS sector.

With 17 commercial banks active in the country, the number of institutions relative to the population is extremely low. Moreover, commercial banks operate mainly in urban areas, leaving many rural and low-income people and businesses with limited access to financial services. While microfinance institutions help fill this void, informal sources of financing also serve a significant portion of the population.

Rates of access to financial services for the population are gradually improving. In 2017, 21% of the country's adult population had an account at a financial institution or with a mobile money service provider, up from 17% in 2011 but still well below the regional average in West Africa and the Sahel. Despite the country's overall improvement, there is still a significant gender gap in financial inclusion, as women in Mauritania are 11% less likely than men to have an account at a financial institution or with a mobile money service provider.[30]

Another challenge is the limited availability of digital financial services in the country. As of 2017, only 3% of adult men and 2% of women had a mobile money account, well below the regional average. The mobile money market appears to have significant growth potential given the country's high mobile phone penetration rate and increasing usage of mobile internet services,[31] suggesting the market could improve

[30] Demirguc-Kunt, A., Klapper, L., Singer, D., Ansar, S., and Hess, J., "The Global Findex Database 2017: Measuring Financial Inclusion and the Fintech Revolution," World Bank, (2017): http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/332881525873182837/pdf/126033-PUB-PUBLIC-pubdate-4-19-2018.pdf

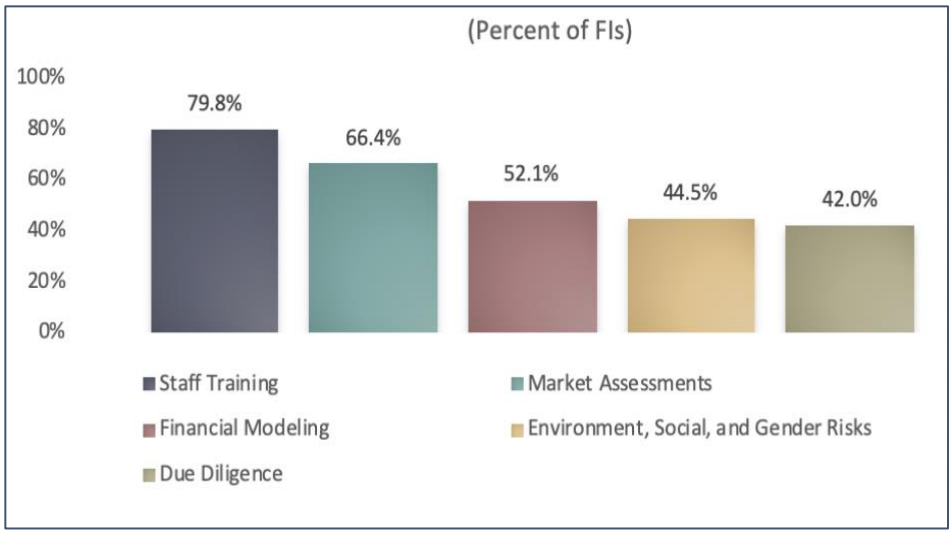
[31] "The Mobile Economy: Middle East and North Africa," GSMA Intelligence (2016): https://www.gsmaintelligence.com/research/?file=9246bbe14813f73dd85b97a90738c860&download

significantly with supportive policies and targeted programs.[32] Expanding digital financial services, especially mobile money, can create new opportunities to better serve women, the lower-income population, and other groups that are traditionally excluded from the formal financial system. Moreover, mobile money technology also plays a critical role in the application of off-grid solar solutions, particularly for PAYG systems that rely on the interoperability between digital financial services and stand-alone solar devices.

While there are several Government and donor-funded programs and initiatives that provide financing to support development of the off-grid sector, these funds have not been channeled through local commercial banks or MFIs. ROGEP is therefore a pioneering initiative in the country, as it endeavors to boost OGS lending via engagement with local financial partners. Local FIs are increasingly becoming more aware of the opportunities in the off-grid space, and interviews FIs revealed a willingness to participate in providing financing to the sector.

According to the Task 3 survey of financial institutions in Mauritania and across the region,[33] there is strong interest to provide financing to the off-grid solar sector. Respondents identified loan guarantees and credit lines as the most important measures to reduce market entry risks for lenders and stimulate FI engagement in the sector. Surveyed FIs also identified several areas of internal capacity that require improvement in order to lend (or increase lending) to the OGS sector (**Figure ES-11**). The most common need among FIs was training for bank staff, which includes *inter alia* assistance to originate deals and appropriately assess the credit risk of off-grid solar firms and projects, due diligence support to qualify products and approve vendors, and targeted support for new lenders to the sector with product structuring and development as well as building deal-flow. Technical assistance for solar enterprises (as is envisioned under Component 1B of ROGEP) will also be necessary, as entrepreneurs often do not have proper financial management and accounting systems in place, are unable to present quality financial models and lack the expertise required to structure their companies to take on debt obligations.

Figure ES-11: Financial Institution Needs to Increase Off-Grid Solar Lending



Source: Financial Institution survey; Stakeholder interviews; GreenMax Capital Advisors analysis

[32] "Country Partnership Framework for the Islamic Republic of Mauritania for the Period FY18-FY23," World Bank, (13 June 2018): http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/288231531625439579/pdf/MAURITANIA-CPF-NEW-06192018.pdf

[33] The results are based on feedback from a total of 121 FIs (including commercial banks, microfinance institutions and other non-bank FIs) that were interviewed across the 19 countries.

Gender inclusiveness is also a key component of this market assessment, and the key findings of the gender analysis are presented throughout this report. Given that the off-grid market is only beginning to emerge in Mauritania, women are not yet highly engaged in the sector. The overall lack of inclusive participation in the off-grid space is attributable to a wide range of factors. A 2018 survey conducted by IRENA found that nearly three-quarters of respondents cited cultural and social norms as the most common barrier to women's participation in expanding energy access, which reflects the need for gender mainstreaming (**Figure ES-12**). More than half of the women surveyed in Africa identified a lack of skills and training as the most critical barrier, compared to just one-third of respondents globally.[34]

The same survey found that access to necessary technical, business or leadership skills development programs was the single most important measure that could be taken to improve women's engagement in energy access. Over half of survey respondents also highlighted the need to integrate gender perspectives in energy access programs, mainstream gender in energy policies and to enhance access to financing for women (**Figure ES-13**).[35]

[34] "Renewable Energy: A Gender Perspective," International Renewable Energy Agency, (2019): https://irena.org/-/media/Files/IRENA/Agency/Publication/2019/Jan/IRENA_Gender_perspective_2019.pdf
[35] Ibid.

Figure ES-12: Key Barriers to Women's Participation in Energy Access

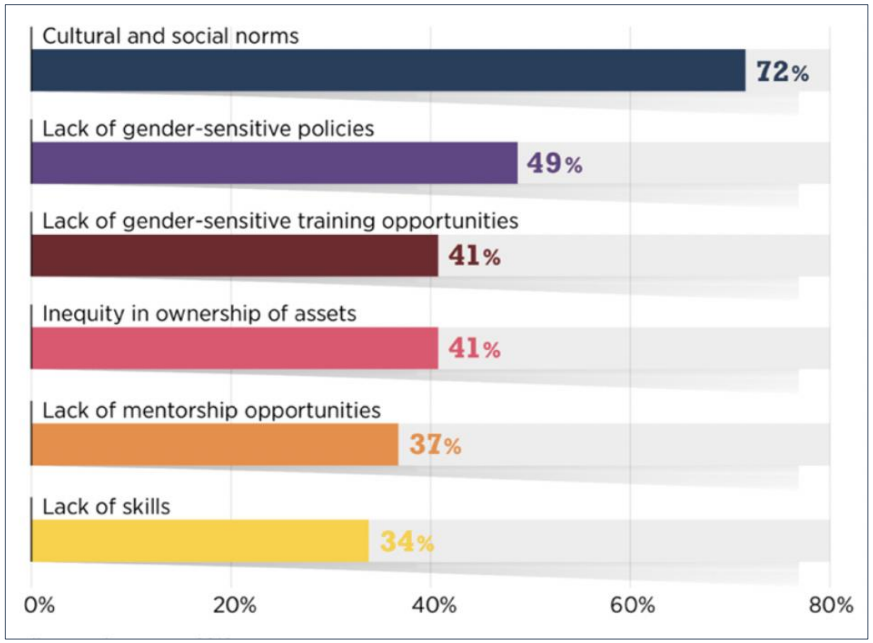
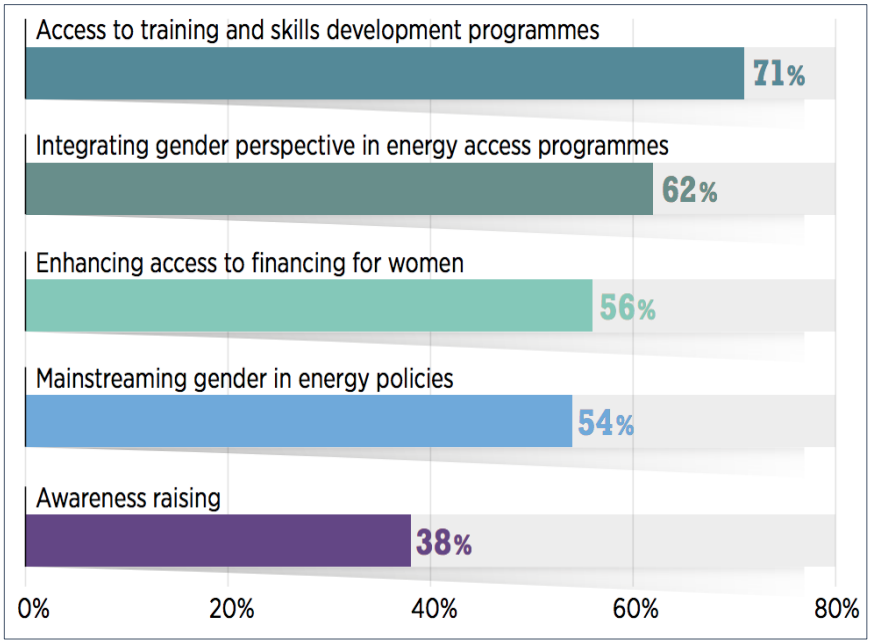


Figure ES-13: Measures to Improve Women's Engagement in Energy Access



Source: International Renewable Energy Agency

The gender analysis undertaken in Mauritania corroborated many of these findings and revealed several interrelated challenges that women face in the off-grid sector, including lack of access to skills development, technical capacity building, and education/training; lack of access to capital, asset ownership, collateral and credit (e.g. to start a business); and low rates of financial literacy due to a lack of education and information available to women on access to financial resources.

A number of initiatives exist that seek to address some of these challenges and help improve gender inclusion in the country's energy and off-grid sectors. For example, in 2018, ECREEE partnered with AfDB to launch a regional workshop to advance the participation of women in the renewable energy sector. The program intends to address the lack of female inclusion in the energy value chain, as women represent only 2% of energy sector entrepreneurs in West Africa. The joint initiative ultimately seeks to develop a pipeline of investment-ready, women-owned energy businesses across the region, including in Mauritania.[36]

[36] "Feasibility study promotes women's participation in energy transition," ESI Africa, (7 May 2018): https://www.esi-africa.com/feasibility-study-promotes-womens-participation-in-energy-transition/

I. STATE OF ENERGY ACCESS AND ENABLING MARKET ENVIRONMENT

This section begins with a brief introduction of key macroeconomic and social indicators in Mauritania (**Section 1.1**). This is followed by an overview of the country's existing energy sector (**Section 1.2**), with a focus on the status of energy access, including an assessment of both the on-grid and off-grid markets, a least-cost electrification analysis and a review of gender policies. **Section 1.3** examines national energy policy and regulation vis-à-vis the off-grid solar market, including detailed analysis of the existing framework for stand-alone systems[37] in Mauritania as well as gaps in the framework. **Section 1.4** is a summary of all relevant national and donor-funded development initiatives in the off-grid sector. **Annex 1** provides an overview of the Task 1 methodology.

1.1 Country Overview

Over the last decade, the Mauritanian economy has experienced strong economic growth and significant poverty reduction. Growth has been driven by extractive industries, especially gold and ore mining – on average, the sector contributed to 25% of GDP, 82% of exports, and 23% of domestic revenue between 2003 and 2013. Newly discovered offshore natural gas fields are another promising development. In 2017, the GDP growth rate was 3.6%, with growth expected to increase to 4.6% in 2018.[38] Mauritania's reliance on its extractive and mineral resources leaves the economy susceptible to volatility in commodity prices. The country's macroeconomic gains have not translated into improvements for the majority of the population, however, as poverty is widespread, particularly in rural areas where a significant share of the population lives.

Table 1: Macroeconomic and Social Indicators

Population	4.4 million[39]
Urban Population	60% of total
GDP	USD 5 billion
GDP growth rate	3.6%
GNI per capita*	USD 1,100
Unemployment rate	10.2%
Poverty rate	42% (2014)
Urban	20.8%
Rural	59.4%
Currency	Ouguiya (MRU)
Official language	French, Arabic
Natural resources	Agricultural (livestock, fisheries); hydrocarbons (oil); ores (iron ore, gold, copper)

* World Bank Atlas method (current USD)[40]
All figures from 2017 unless otherwise indicated
Source: AfDB, World Bank and UNDP[41]

[37] NOTE: The term "off-grid" as it is widely used throughout this report (e.g. "off-grid sector") refers to both mini-grids and stand-alone systems. When "off-grid solar" or its acronym "OGS" are used, this refers *only* to stand-alone systems and does not include mini-grids
[38] "Mauritania Economic Outlook," African Development Bank, (2017): https://www.afdb.org/en/countries/north-africa/mauritania/mauritania-economic-outlook/
[39] 50.32% male/49.68% female
[40] "World Bank Open Data: Mauritania," World Bank (2017): https://data.worldbank.org/country/mauritania
[41] "HDI Mauritania," United Nations Development Programme, (2016): http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/MRT

1.2 Energy Market

1.2.1 Energy Sector Overview

SOMELEC (Société Mauritanienne d'Électricité) is the state-owned electricity utility of the Government of Mauritania (GoM or "the Government").[42] Established in 2001, SOMELEC has a monopoly over the generation, transmission, distribution, purchase, and sale of electricity in urban and peri-urban areas. The Rural Electrification Development Agency (Agence de Développement de l'Électrification Rurale, ADER) is engaged in promoting access to electricity services in rural areas. The Fund for Universal Access to Services (FAUS) aims to gradually consolidate most of the resources used for expanding and operating regulated services. The Agency for Universal Public Access to Regulated Services (Agence de Promotion de l'Accès Universel aux Services APAUS) also supported rural electrification initiatives in the country until it was dissolved in late 2018. Privately run Authorized Service Providers (ASPs) support development and expansion of the country's off-grid market.

Table 2: Institutional and Market Actors in the Energy Sector

Institution / Company	Role in the Energy Sector
Ministry of Petroleum, Energy, and Mining (MPEM)	Ministry responsible for development, implementation, and monitoring of policies, strategies and programs in the field of electricity, based on 2011 Electricity Code.
Mauritanian Company of Electricity (Société Mauritanienne d'Électricité, SOMELEC)	State-owned utility responsible for generation, transmission, distribution, purchase and sale of electricity in urban and peri-urban areas of Mauritania.
Rural Electrification Development Agency (Agence de Développement de l'Électrification Rurale, ADER)	Non-governmental agency that carries out rural electrification initiatives under the supervision of MPEM. ADER is tasked with the following responsibilities: (i) promote rural electrification, (ii) seek private and public financing for investments in decentralized rural electrification (iii) identify/train partners and actors in rural electrification, (iv) put in place systems and structures for private management of rural electricity, (v) promote research and experimentation in the field of rural electrification
Agency for Universal Public Access to Regulated Services (Agence de Promotion de l'Accès Universel aux Services APAUS), under the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Development (MAED)	Agency responsible for promoting universal access to regulated services, constructing networks, installation of thermal power plants, and maintenance of power stations. APAUS also develops mechanisms, through PPPs for the provision of basic energy services, especially in rural areas via the ASPs. APAUS was dissolved in late 2018 and its missions entrusted to MPEM/ADER.
Multi-Sectoral Regulatory Authority (Autorité de Régulation Multisectorielle, ARM)	Regulatory authority responsible for enforcing the Electricity Code, tendering processes, outlining the specifications for electricity generation and determining the amount of compensation due to ASPs; lacks broader authority to regulate SOMELEC or to set tariffs
Company of Electricity Production from Gas (Société de Production d'Électricité à partir du Gaz, SPEG)	Established in 2012 to develop, finance and operate power projects, with a focus on supporting development of the Banda off-shore natural gas field
Independent Power Producers	SNIM, MCM, TML

Source: ECOWAS Center for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency

1.2.2 Electricity Access: *Grid and Off-Grid*

Mauritania is a vast but sparsely populated country. According to the 2013 census, there are 8,100 settlements in the country, of which only 840 have more than 500 inhabitants accounting for 72% of the population. For the 294 localities with more than 1,000 inhabitants, only 95 are electrified. Energy access is therefore a significant challenge for Mauritania, particularly in rural areas. In 2016, approximately 70% of the population – about three million people – did not have access to electricity, with a significant disparity

[42] "Mauritania Renewables Readiness Assessment," IRENA, (2015): https://www.irena.org/-/media/Files/IRENA/RRA/Country-Report/IRENA_RRA_Mauritania_EN_2015.pdf

in rates of access between urban (47%) and rural (2%) areas.[43] According to the 2016-2030 National Strategy for Accelerated Growth and Shared Prosperity (Stratégie de Croissance Accélérée et Prospérité Partagée, SCAPP), the GoM aims to achieve a 70% national access rate, including 95% in urban areas and 40% in rural areas by 2030.[44]

The country's electrification options include (some combination of):

- Interconnection of the urban and cross-border network (OMVS)
- Grouping of production centers and interconnections in medium voltage
- Electrification by Renewable Energy Systems of small isolated sites
- Isolated networks powered by diesel generators and a solar or wind-powered renewable energy system
- Electrification by mini solar power plants and solar kits for rural localities

1.2.2.1 Off-Grid Market Overview

Off-grid development in Mauritania is important not only for providing electricity to the population but is also critical for the country's vast and dispersed mining centers that utilize off-grid electricity for their operations. Although the mining industry is interested in developing off-grid solar to support their isolated electricity generation, to date, only the national mining company, Société Nationale Industrielle et Minière (SNIM), has developed renewable energy projects (4.4 MW wind project in Nouadhibou and 3 MW solar PV project in Zouérat). Many other mining companies active in the country are considering similar measures to reduce costs. Much like the mining sector, the telecommunications industry has also adopted renewable energy initiatives to generate electricity through solar PV for mobile phone towers.[45]

In the 1990s and 2000s, the GoM promoted the use of solar systems through the Regional Solar Program (RSP1 1990-1998 and RSP2 2001-2007), which contributed to the distribution solar systems to 210 localities.[46] This program initially aimed to supply drinking water systems and was later expanded to supply community solar systems (lighting and refrigeration kits). Developing solar off-grid systems is now part of ADER's electrification mandate. In 2015, ADER installed 12,000 solar kits across the country (309 kWp), while APAUS supported the implementation of multifunctional solar platforms alongside the French NGO, GRET. Recently, the GoM has given priority to grid connection and renewable mini-grids in peri-urban and rural areas. The Government recently contracted ADER to (i) provide electricity to all localities that have less than 1,000 inhabitants (167 localities), (ii) connect existing isolated grids within 120 km to the national grid, (iii) carry out the hybridization and grouping of autonomous off-grid systems for production sites and (iv) promote the use of RE and alternative technologies for localities between 500 and 1,500 inhabitants.

Several private international and local solar companies are active in Mauritania's off-grid sector, offering mainly SHS and pico solar products (see **Section 2.4** for more details on the supply chain).

[43] "Energy Access Outlook, 2017: From Poverty to Prosperity," International Energy Agency, (2017): https://www.iea.org/publications/freepublications/publication/WEO2017SpecialReport_EnergyAccessOutlook.pdf
[44] "Islamic Republic of Mauritania: Strategy for Accelerated Growth and Shared Prosperity," International Monetary Fund, (May 2018): https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/CR/Issues/2018/06/01/Islamic-Republic-of-Mauritania-Economic-Development-Documents-45918
[45] "Promoting Sustainable Mini-Grids Mauritanian Provinces through Hybrid Technologies," UNDP, (2016): https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/project_documents/11-11-15_Project_Document_PADpdf_0.pdf
[46] "Mauritania Renewables Readiness Assessment,'' IRENA, (2015): https://www.irena.org/-/media/Files/IRENA/RRA/Country-Report/IRENA_RRA_Mauritania_EN_2015.pdf

1.2.2.2 Demand and Supply/Generation Mix

Table 3: Electricity Sector Indicators, 2018[47]

Installed Capacity	500 MW
Thermal	362 MW
Hydropower (imported)	18 MW
Renewable (non-hydro)	120 MW
National electrification rate (2016) Urban electrification rate Rural electrification rate	31% 47% 2%
Population without access	3 million
Households without access	500,000
Electrification target	70% access by 2030

Source: MPEM, UNECA, IEA and World Bank

In 2018, Mauritania had an installed electricity capacity of 500 MW, with SOMELEC generating about 80% of the power for the two main cities, Nouakchott and Nouadhibou.[48] Approximately 75% of installed capacity comes from Heavy Fuel Oil (HFO), natural gas, and hybrid HFO/gas sources.[49] The balance comes from solar and wind plants as well as hydroelectric power imported through the Senegal River Basin Development Organization (Organization pour la Mise en Valeur du fleuve Sénégal, OMVS).[50] Installed capacity excludes electricity produced by mining operators in remote areas, who produce nearly 200 MW of their own electricity.[51]

Mauritania possesses significant solar potential and has been gradually increasing the share of solar in its installed capacity. In 2016, Masdar, the state-run alternative energy firm of the United Arab Emirates, installed eight new solar plants across Mauritania totaling about 16 MW of installed capacity.[52] With the inauguration of the 50 MW solar PV plant at Toujounine in late 2017,[53] Mauritania increased its installed solar capacity to 86 MW, which ranked in the top 10 among African countries.[54] In 2015, the first wind farm was commissioned by SOMELEC, providing 30 MW of power to Nouakchott.[55] The 100 MW Boulenouar wind power project is under development, with construction scheduled to be completed by the end of 2019.[56]

Electricity demand is increasing sharply, at a rate of about 9% per year. An analysis of electricity demand growth undertaken by the MPEM estimates that total electricity demand (the grid and the mining industry) is expected to increase to between 840 MW and 1,400 MW by 2025 (under weak-growth and strong- growth

[47] See **Section 2.1** for more details on households/population without access to electricity.
[48] "Mauritania Country Profile," United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, (2016): https://www.uneca.org/sites/default/files/uploaded-documents/CountryProfiles/2017/mauritania_cp_en.pdf
[49] "Mauritania Power Fact Sheet," USAID, (2018): https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1860/MauritaniaPACFSDEC2017.pdf
[50] The country's hydropower currently comes from two plants – Manantali and Félou – from which Mauritania receives about 15% AND 30% of each plant's electricity, respectively. A new hydropower plant (Gouina) with a capacity of 140 MW is due to be commissioned in 2019; Mauritania's share of its output will be 30%.
[51] "Le secteur de l'électricité en Mauritanie," Ministère du Pétrole, de l'Energie et des Mines, (2016) : http://www.petrole.gov.mr/IMG/pdf/session_6_s2_ousmane_tall_somelec.pdf
[52] "New solar plants boost clean energy supply in Mauritania," The Economist, (November 29, 2016): http://country.eiu.com/article.aspx?articleid=834863667&Country=Mauritania&topic=Economy&subtopic=Forecast&subsubtopic=Economic+growth
[53] "Mauritania: 50-MW solar energy plant unveiled," African Bulletin, (November 24, 2017): http://www.african-bulletin.com/9809-mauritania-50-mw-solar-energy-plant-unveiled.html
[54] "Solarize Market Report: Africa," Becquerel Institute and BSW-Solar, (May 2019): https://sun-connect-news.org/fileadmin/DATEIEN/Dateien/New/Intersolar-Solarize-Africa-Market-Report_2019.pdf
[55] SOMELEC: https://aera-group.fr/gallery/somelec/
[56] "Mauritanie: la deuxième centrale éolienne de 100 MW de capacité sera implantée par Elecnor," Agence Ecofin, (18 juillet 2018): https://www.agenceecofin.com/eolien/1807-58714-mauritanie-la-deuxieme-centrale-eolienne-de-100-mw-de-capacite-sera-implantee-par-elecnor

scenarios, respectively, for the mining industry).[57] The GoM has planned to increase installed capacity to 752 MW by 2030 (**Table 4**).[58] To meet this target, the Government plans to add CCGT to the thermal mix, increase hydropower generation from the OMVS import network, and add multiple large-scale solar grid-connected projects to grow the mix of renewables in the power mix.

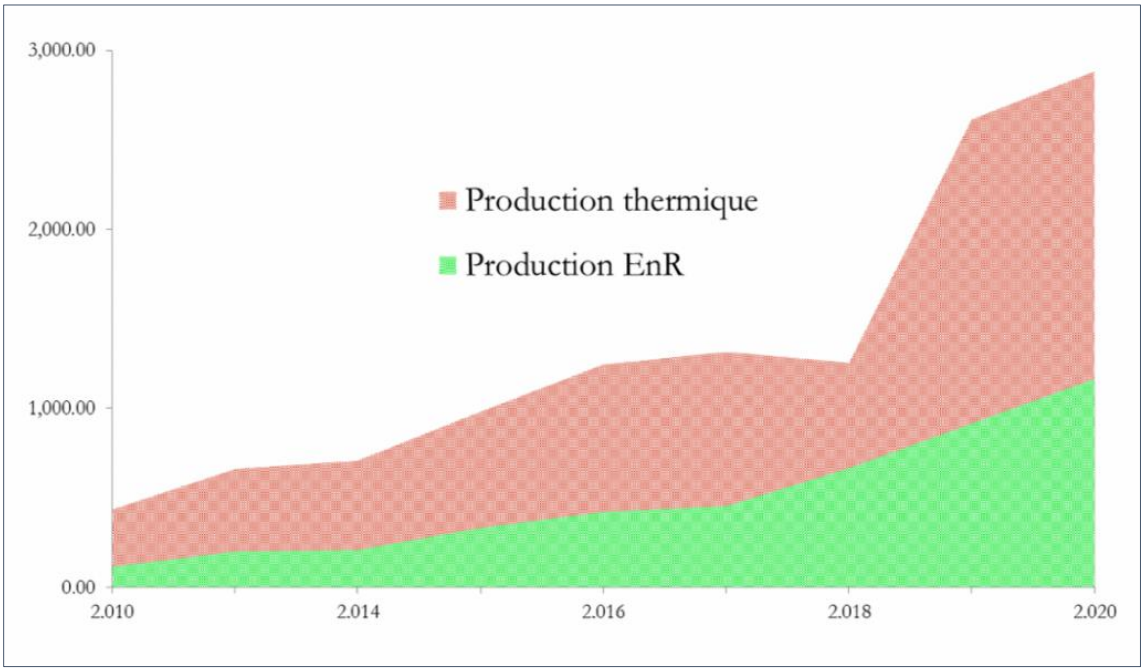
Table 4: Current and Planned Installed Capacity

Installed Capacity (MW)	2018	2030 (planned)
Thermal	362	460
Hydro (imported)	18	217
Solar	86	45
Wind	34	30
Total Installed Capacity (MW)	**500**	**752**
Total thermal	362	460
Total renewable energy	138	292

Source: International Renewable Energy Agency, MPEM and UNECA

Over the past decade, Mauritania has been one of the leading countries in Africa in increasing its renewable energy generation capacity (at a rate of about 13% per year). The share of electricity produced from renewables has been steadily increasing since 2010 (**Figure 1**).[59]

Figure 1: Share of Renewable Energy in Energy Mix



Source: Ministry of Petroleum, Energy and Mines

[57] "Mauritania Country Profile," United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, (2016): https://www.uneca.org/sites/default/files/uploaded-documents/CountryProfiles/2017/mauritania_cp_en.pdf
[58] "Mauritania Renewables Readiness Assessment,'' IRENA, (2015): https://www.irena.org/-/media/Files/IRENA/RRA/Country-Report/IRENA_RRA_Mauritania_EN_2015.pdf
[59] "Le secteur de l'électricité en Mauritanie," Ministère du Pétrole, de l'Energie et des Mines, (2016) : http://www.petrole.gov.mr/IMG/pdf/session_6_s2_ousmane_tall_somelec.pdf

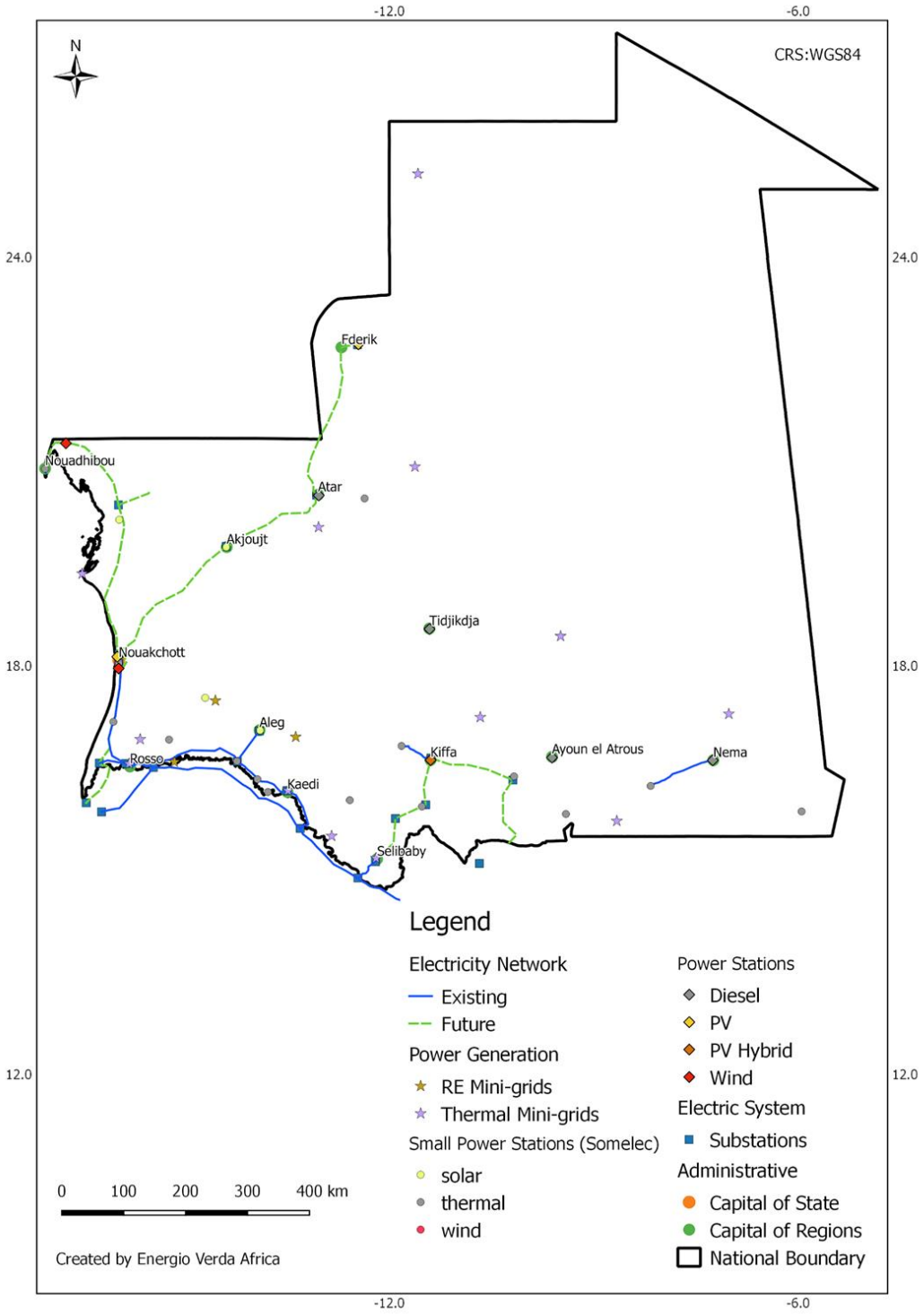
1.2.2.3 Transmission and Distribution Network

SOMELEC owns and operates the country's transmission and distribution network (**Figure 2**). The network is mainly limited to Nouakchott and a few localities close to the southern border (Rosso, Boghé Kaédi and Sélibasi) where demand is highest. The distribution network is operated by independent auto-producers in the northeast and in the north of the country: Société Nationale Industrielle et Minière (SNIM), Mauritanian Copper Mines (MCM), Taziast and mini-grid operators. While MCM mine (Guelb Moghrein) is located 250 km northeast of Nouakchott, near the town of Akjout, SNIM mining site is located in the north, close to the city of Zouérat. While Nouakchott, Nouadhibou, and cities in the South are connected to the network, many other sites of production are not, as the network is limited due to the large size of Mauritania's territory, its low-density population, scattered cities, and high cost to connect isolated power plants to the grid. In addition to locations connected to the grid, Mauritania also had eight autonomous productive networks in 2016: Atar, Tidjikja, Echram, Kiffa, Aioun, Djiguenni, Néma and Abel Bagrou.[60]

Overall, a significant gap exists between the infrastructure needs of the power sector and the availability of resources to invest in grid maintenance and extension to rural areas. As a result, the country's electricity network is overloaded and unreliable (**Figure 3**). Several transmission projects are underway that aim to upgrade the network and improve electricity coverage and reliability.

[60] "Le secteur de l'électricité en Mauritanie," Ministère du Pétrole, de l'Energie et des Mines, (2016) : http://www.petrole.gov.mr/IMG/pdf/session_6_s2_ousmane_tall_somelec.pdf

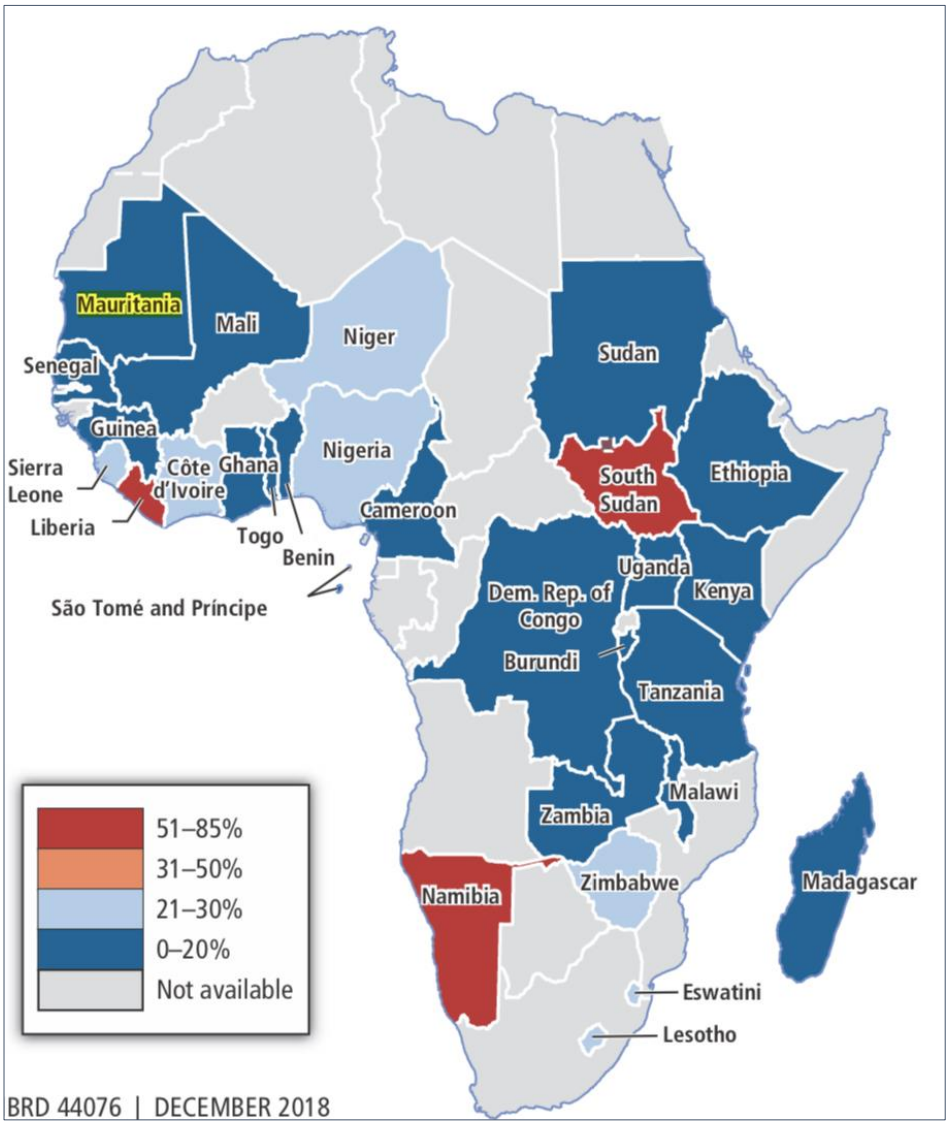
Figure 2: Electricity Transmission and Distribution Network[61]



Source: Energio Verda Africa GIS analysis

[61] Displaying identified mini-grids and power stations with GPS coordinates only; see **Annex 1** for more details, including sources.

Figure 3: Access to Reliable Electricity by Firms in Africa[62]



Source: World Bank Enterprise Surveys, 2013-2017

The map in **Figure 3** illustrates the share of firms reporting access to a reliable supply of electricity. In Mauritania, fewer than 20% of surveyed firms reported having reliable access to electricity.

[62] Blimpo, M., and Cosgrove-Davies, M., "Electricity Access in Sub-Saharan Africa: Uptake, Reliability, and Complementary Factors for Economic Impact," AFD and World Bank, Africa Development Forum, (2019): https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/31333/9781464813610.pdf?sequence=6&isAllowed=y

1.2.2.4 Least-Cost Electrification Analysis

A least-cost electrification analysis has been performed to assess the potential development of electricity access in Mauritania through 2023 and through 2030 ("Scenario 2023" and "Scenario 2030").[63] The analysis helped identify the scale of market opportunities for off-grid stand-alone solar electrification. A brief summary of the approach and methods used, main assumptions and key results of the analysis in Mauritania are outlined below. Additional geographic information system (GIS) information, including categorizations, key definitions, and datasets are included in **Annex 1**.

- **Methodology**

This analysis used geospatial techniques to determine the least-cost electrification options for settlements across Mauritania based on their proximity to electrical infrastructure, population density or nodes of economic growth.

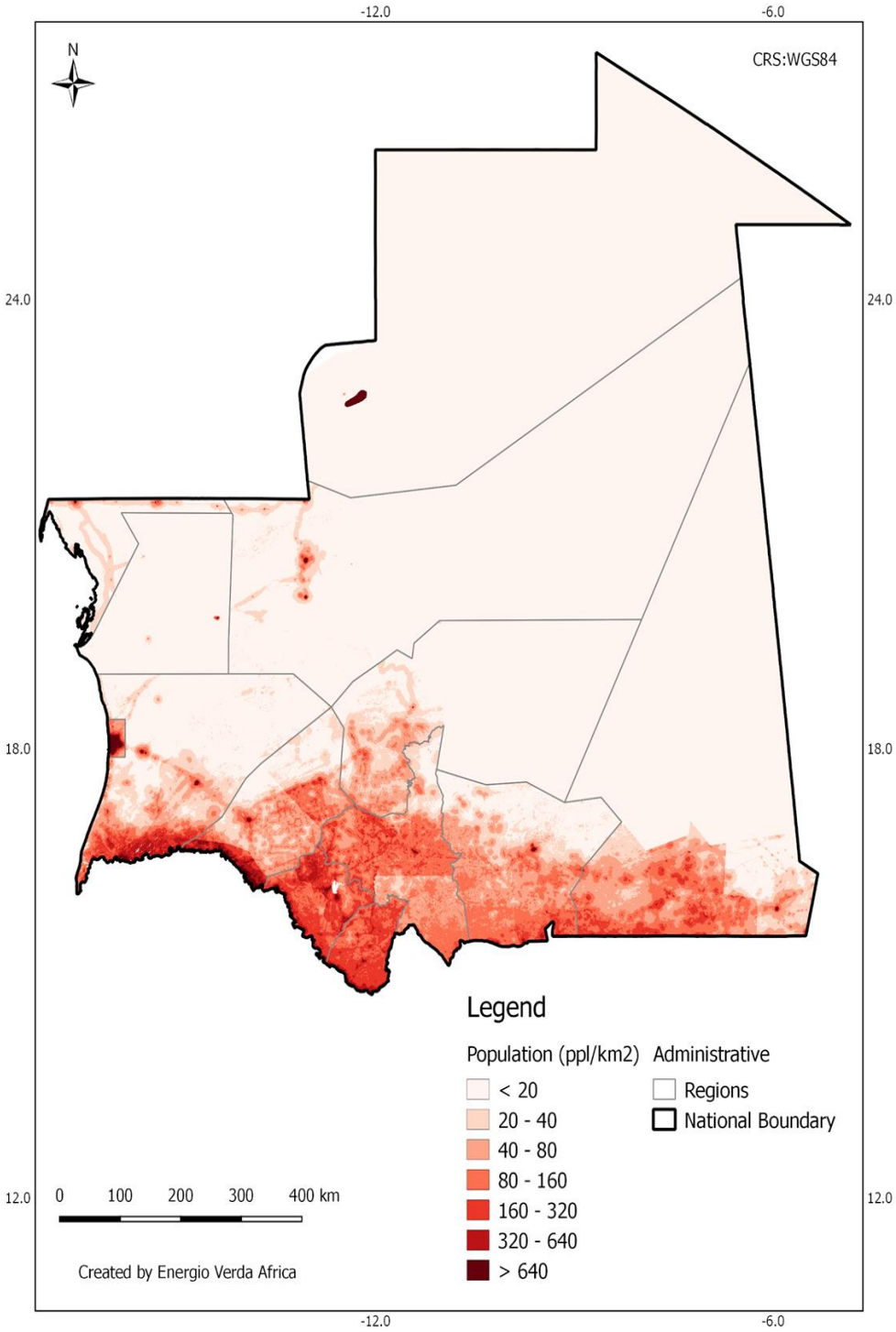
For the scenario 2023 analysis, it was assumed that widespread densification of the existing electrical grid will enable settlements within 4 km of existing grid lines and Power Stations (supplier of mines and Power Stations operated by SOMELEC)[64] to connect to the grid (according to SOMELEC in a personal interview).[65] Beyond this area, the likely candidates for electrification by mini-grid systems are settlements that are relatively dense (above 350 people/km^2) and have active local economies, evidenced by the presence of social facilities and by their proximity to other settlements already with electricity access (i.e. within 15 km of night-lights areas). All remaining settlements – those in areas of lower population density (below 350 people/km^2) or far from the national grid – are considered as candidates for off-grid stand-alone systems.

For the scenario 2030 analysis, it is assumed that the grid and the reach of grid densification efforts will extend far beyond the existing network. Hence, settlements that are within 10 km of current lines and 4 km of current Power Stations (according to SOMELEC) and 4 km of future planned line extensions are assumed to be connected. For mini-grids, future economic development – which will allow new settlements to grow sufficiently to become candidates for mini-grids – is assumed to occur in settlements within 1 km of mini-grid settlements (average distance of mini-grid coverage of different developers) identified in the five-year analysis, as well as within 15 km of economic growth centers – airports, mines and urban areas. All other settlements are considered as candidates for off-grid stand-alone systems.

Given the lack of low voltage distribution line data, it is necessary to approximate areas where un-electrified settlements in close proximity to the grid exist. The analysis therefore focuses on settlements that are within 4 km of the high and medium voltage network, but that are located beyond 15 km of areas with night-time light emissions (indicative of electrification). Settlements in areas of low population density (below 350 people/km^2) that met the above criteria are identified as both being currently un-electrified and unlikely to be electrified within scenario 2023.[66] In order to identify the population within each settlement, additional analysis was undertaken to estimate these figures. The current annual national population growth rate of 2.7%[67] was applied to the geospatial analysis to project population figures for the scenario 2023 and 2030 analyses.[68] **Figure 4** shows population density across the country, which served as the basis for this analysis.

[63] NOTE: Rather than presenting a 10-year projection through 2028, the analysis conforms to GoM electrification targets for 2030
[64] Generators with a capacity of less than 400kW were considered as mini-grids.
[65] NOTE: Low-voltage distribution lines were not considered in this analysis (data was unavailable)
[66] Note that this analysis was performed for scenario 2023 but not for the scenario 2030 due to uncertainties regarding population densities being too high over such a long timeframe
[67] The World Bank: https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.GROW?locations=MR
[68] See **Annex 1** for the results of this analysis as well as more details on the approach and methods used

Figure 4: Population Density, 2015[69]



Source: Energio Verda Africa GIS analysis

[69] See **Annex 1** for more details, including data sources.

- **Results**

Table 5 summarizes the results of the least cost electrification analysis. **Figure 5** and **Figure 6** illustrate the distribution of settlements according to least-cost electrification options under scenarios 2023 and 2030, respectively. The number of households was estimated by using the average household size for the country (6.1 persons/household).[70]

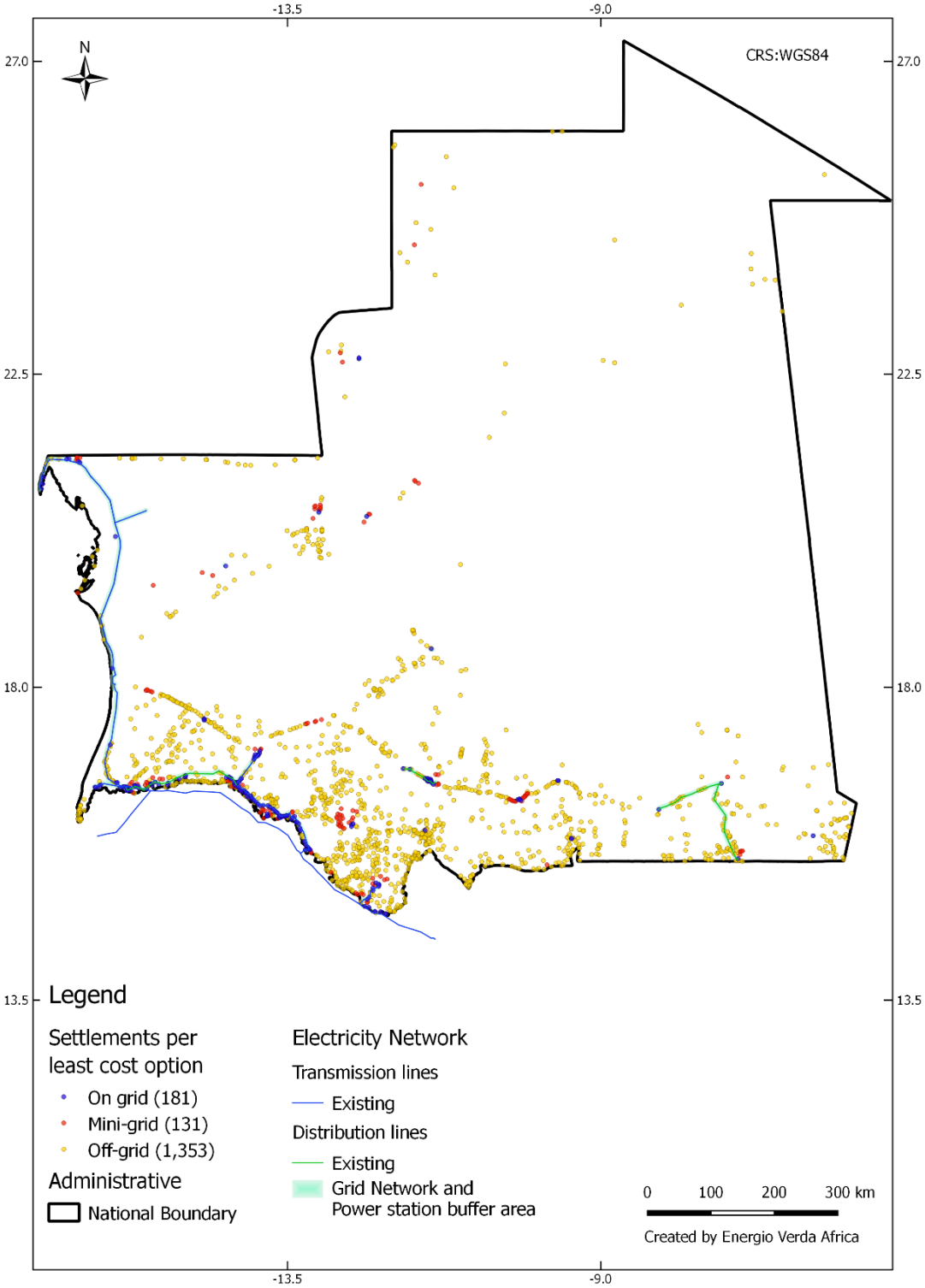
Table 5: Results of Least-Cost Electrification Analysis

Scenario	Indicator	Least-Cost Electrification Option			Grid Vicinity		
		Grid extension	Mini-grid	Off-grid stand-alone systems	Under-grid un-served	Total under-grid	Total outside grid vicinity
Scenario 2023	Number of settlements	181	131	1,353	98	279	1,386
	% of settlements	10.9%	7.9%	81.3%	35.1%	16.8%	83.2%
	Total population	1,746,923	257,211	2,920,628	192,909	1,939,833	2,984,929
	% of population	35.5%	5.2%	59.3%	9.9%	39.4%	60.6%
	Number of households	286,381	42,166	478,792	31,625	318,005	489,333
Scenario 2030	Number of settlements	675	56	934	Not calculated	675	990
	% of settlements	40.5%	3.4%	56.1%	Not calculated	40.5%	59.5%
	Total population	3,388,455	136,212	2,409,754	Not calculated	3,388,455	2,545,966
	% of population	57.1%	2.3%	40.6%	Not calculated	57.1%	42.9%
	Number of households	555,484	22,330	395,042	Not calculated	555,484	417,372

Source: Energio Verda Africa GIS analysis

[70] "Household Size and Composition Around the World," United Nations, (2017): http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/publications/pdf/ageing/household_size_and_composition_around_the_world_2017_data_booklet.pdf

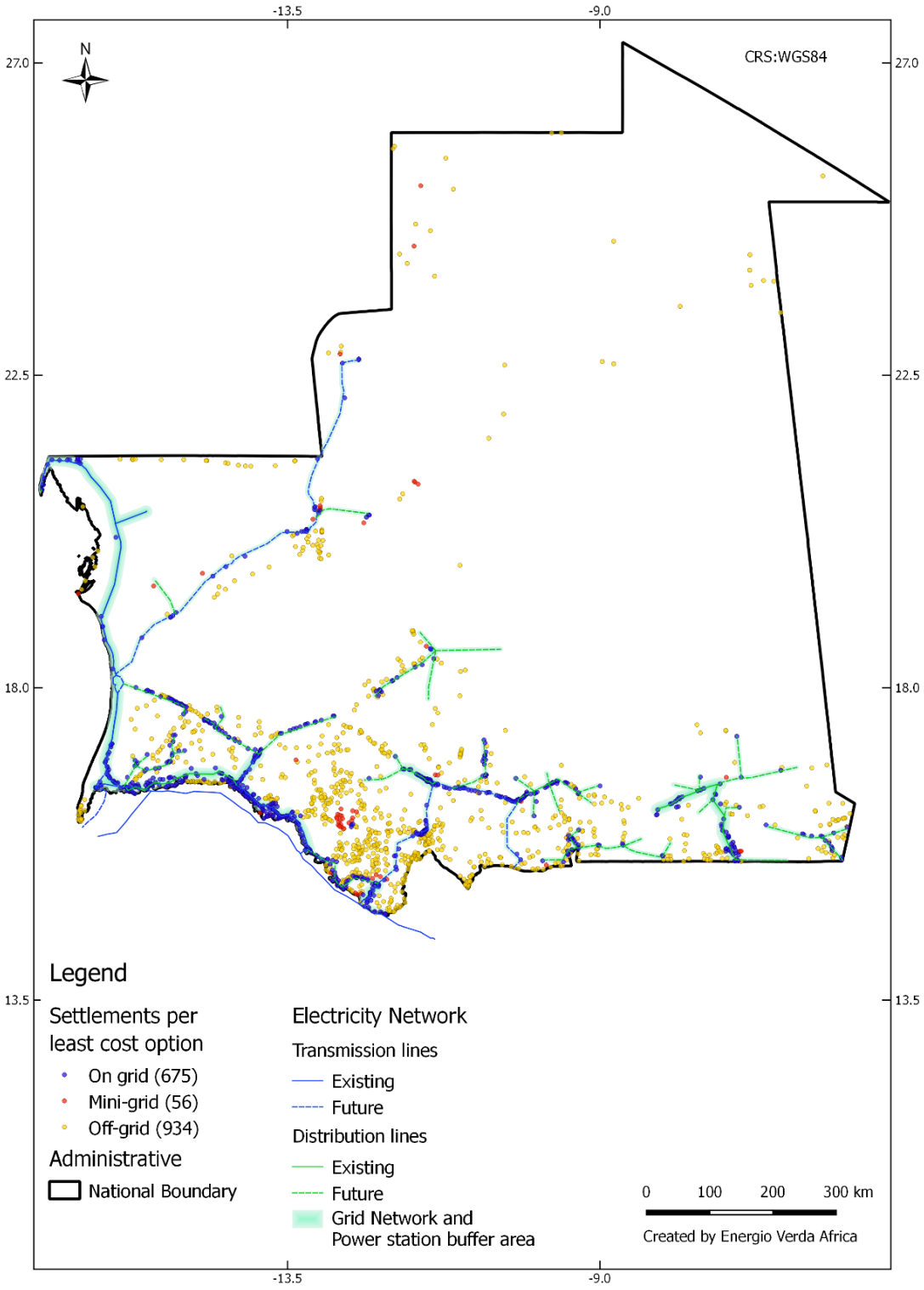
Figure 5: Distribution of Settlements by Least-Cost Electrification option, 2023[71]



Source: Energio Verda Africa GIS analysis

[71] Displaying identified settlements with known location (given coordinates) only; see **Annex 1** for more details, including data sources.

Figure 6: Distribution of Settlements by Least-Cost Electrification option, 2030[72]



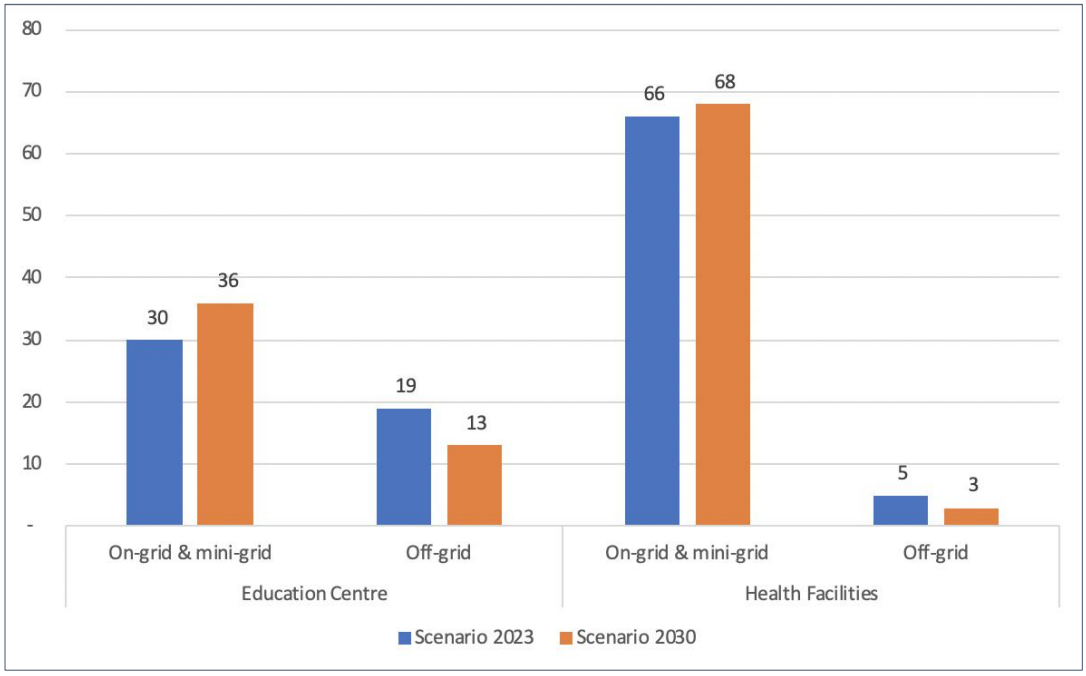
Source: Energio Verda Africa GIS analysis

[72] Displaying identified settlements with known location (given coordinates) only; see **Annex 1** for more details, including data sources.

The analysis also covered the education centers and health facilities that could remain off-grid during the analyzed timeframes. The number of education centers and health facilities that were analyzed cannot be seen as comprehensive as not all were available for the geospatial analysis (institutions with known coordinates).

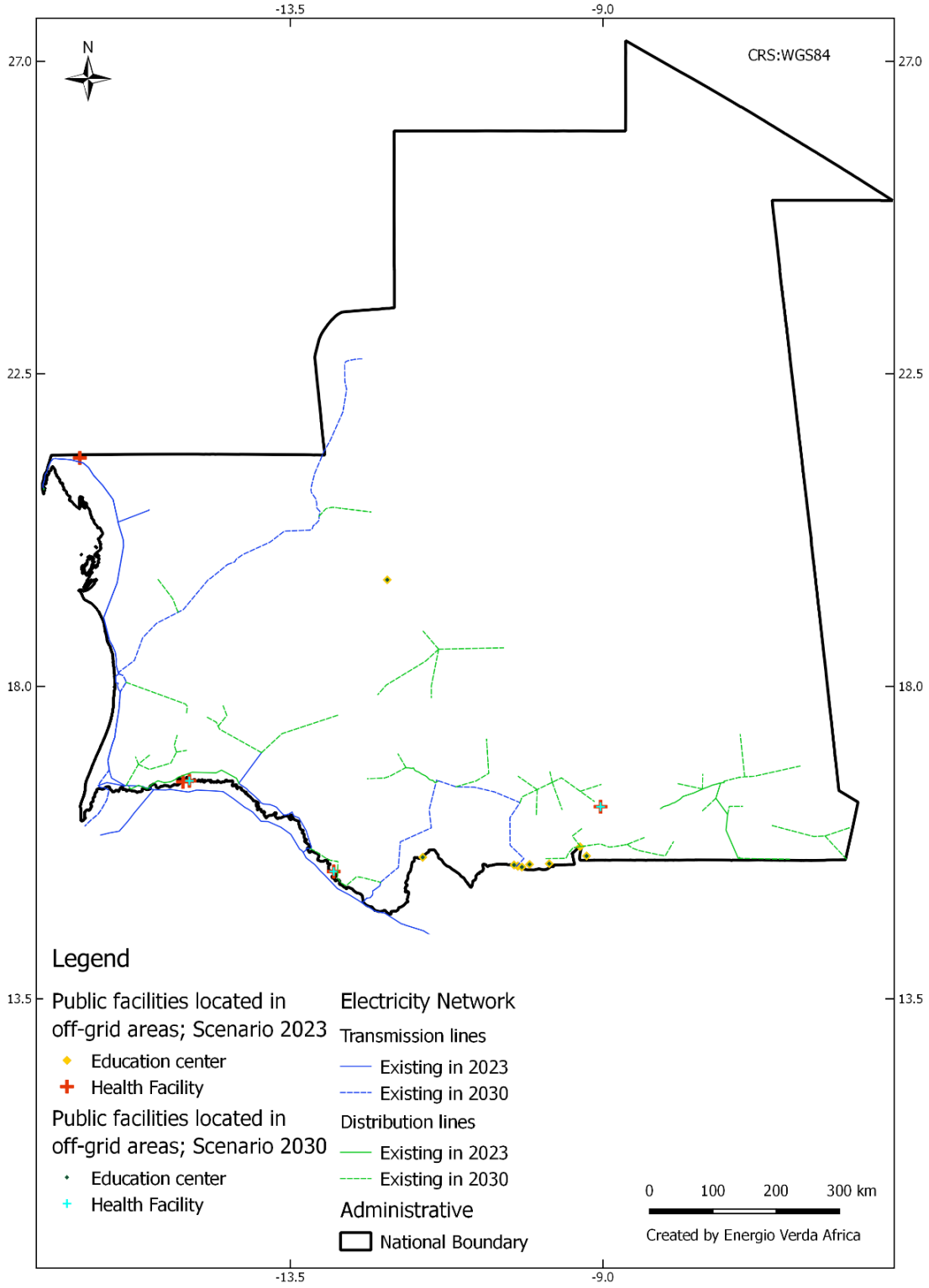
Figure 7 summarizes the number of education centers and health facilities that may be electrified (on-grid and mini-grid) or suitable for off-grid stand-alone solutions in scenarios 2023 and 2030. **Figure 8** illustrates the distribution of potential off-grid facilities across the country under the two scenarios.

Figure 7: Identified Social Facilities for On-Grid, Mini-Grid and Stand-alone Solutions, 2023 and 2030



Source: Energio Verda Africa GIS analysis

Figure 8: Distribution of Social Facilities in Off-Grid Areas, 2023 and 2030[73]



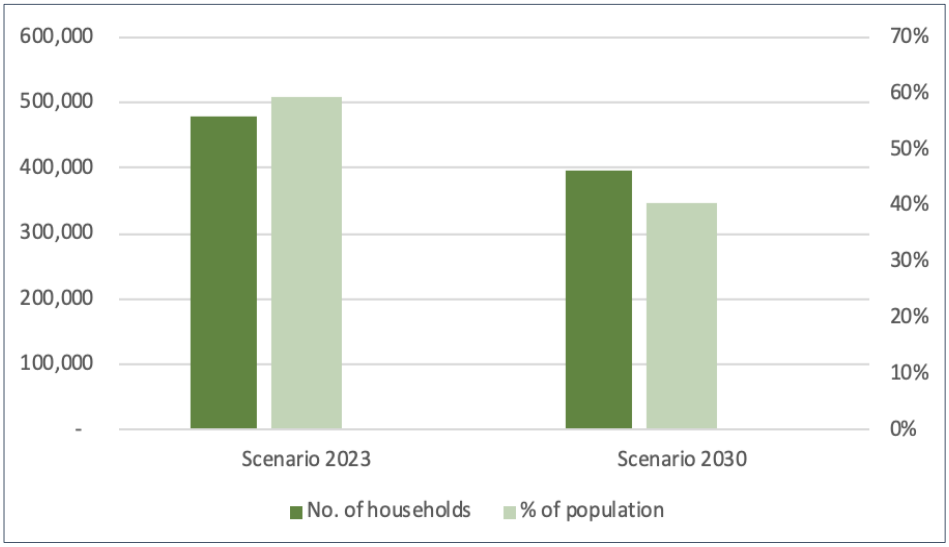
Source: Energio Verda Africa GIS analysis

[73] Displaying identified facilities with known location (given coordinates) only; see **Annex 1** for more details, including data sources.

According to the geospatial analysis (**Table 5)**, by 2023, 181 settlements across Mauritania (286,381 households) will be connected to the main grid, representing 35.5% of the population. By 2030, this figure will increase to 675 settlements (555,484 households), equivalent to 57.1% of the population. These estimates are based on the assumption that all planned grid extensions will be completed by 2030. Not all settlements in close proximity to electricity lines will connect to the main grid, largely due to the low density of these areas (dispersed settlements with a density below 350 people/km^2). By 2023, an estimated 98 settlements located under the grid will meet these criteria (or 35.1% of the settlements located within 4 km of the grid).

Outside of the main grid areas, settlements with higher economic growth potential and higher population density can optimally be electrified by mini-grids. By 2023, this represents an estimated 131 settlements (42,166 households), or 5.2% of the population, decreasing to 56 settlements (22,330 households), or 2.3% of the population by 2030. The remaining more dispersed settlements (further from centers of economic activity) can optimally be served by off-grid stand-alone systems. This comprises 1,353 settlements (478,792 households) and 59.3% of the population in 2023, decreasing to 934 settlements (395,042 households) and 40.6% of the population in 2030 (**Figure 9**).

Figure 9: Estimated Number of Households and Share of Population Suitable for OGS Systems, 2023 and 2030



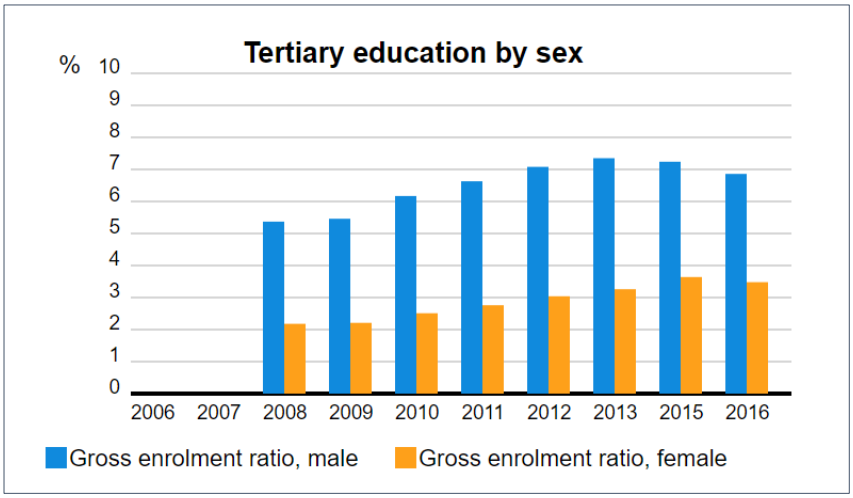
Source: Energio Verda Africa GIS analysis

The findings of the least-cost analysis suggest that the Government may need to consider increasing the utilization of off-grid solutions (especially stand-alone systems) in its electrification planning in order to achieve its energy access targets, particularly in the near-term until planned grid extensions are realized.

1.2.2.5 Inclusive Participation[74]

Inclusive participation in Mauritania remains an ongoing challenge. Gender inequality persists, as women are under-educated and generally have a lower socio-economic status, with inadequate access to basic social services and reduced economic opportunities compared to men. Mauritania performs poorly in the UNDP Gender Inequality Index, which measures several indicators to assess levels of gender inequality in the areas of health, access to education, economic status and empowerment.[75] Female participation in education, particularly higher education, remains disproportionately low (**Figure 10**).[76] While gender discrimination is widespread, these issues tend to be more pronounced in rural areas of the country.

Figure 10: Rates of Enrollment in Tertiary Education



Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics

In 1992, a State Secretariat for the Status of Women was established. In 2001, Mauritania ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women. In 2005, the country ratified the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa and adopted a National Strategy for the Advancement of Women. Women in Mauritania have equal voting rights with men and since 2006, electoral law has required that women must make up at least 20% of municipal council seats. Despite these measures, gender inequality persists in Mauritanian law, which is deeply discriminatory against women.

In the energy sector, a range of government, donor and NGO programs that have prioritized training for women in the off-grid sector, including in the use of solar technology, have had some success. Women's cooperatives have also been important local partners for these development initiatives.[77] On a national scale, gender mainstreaming in the country's energy policy requires capacity building of staff and the implementation of gender management systems at the institutional level to provide guidance on gender responsive leadership and decision-making.

[74] See **Annex 4** for more details
[75] "Gender Inequality Index," UNDP, (2015): http://hdr.undp.org/en/composite/GII
[76] "Mauritania Participation in Education," UNESCO Institute for Statistics, (2018): http://uis.unesco.org/en/country/bf?theme=education-and-literacy
[77] "Promoting Sustainable Mini-Grids in Mauritanian provinces through hybrid technologies," GEF/UNDP, (2016): https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/project_documents/11-11-15_Project_Document_PADpdf_0.pdf

1.2.3 Key Challenges

Some of the key energy sector challenges facing Mauritania include (but are not limited to) the following:

- **Lack of Investment in Grid Maintenance:** Electricity demand has been growing at a rate of 10% per year since 2011 and is slated to continue to grow until at least 2025. Increases in demand are putting pressure on power supply – a mismatch that will continue to burden the electricity transmission and distribution network that needs maintenance and investment to reduce losses and expand access.

- **Electricity Tariffs / Utility Financial Performance:** Due to the country's reliance on imported fuel for electricity production, average electricity tariffs in Mauritania are relatively high (USD 0.18/kWh).[78] Average electricity tariffs in Mauritania do not reflect the actual cost of production and do not generate enough money to make SOMELEC financially viable. A tiered system of tariffs is in place, with (i) tariffs set by SOMELEC for the 11 regional capitals with specific tariffs for low-income consumers, and (ii) maximum set tariffs for private ASPs for the off-grid sector. The tiered tariff system does not allow for cross-subsidization (e.g. between urban and rural consumers) and disproportionately benefits grid connected users compared to poorer rural citizens.[79]

- **Imbalanced Energy Mix**: The country's power sector is overly reliant upon thermal and large hydropower, technologies that are susceptible to price volatility and climatic conditions, respectively. The GoM appears to be shifting a significant portion of its installed capacity to renewable energy although the majority of this will still come from large hydropower.

- **Electricity Access**: Energy access is a huge challenge for Mauritania, particularly in rural areas where more than half of the population lives. The IEA estimates that some three million people did not have access to electricity nationwide in 2016.[80] The electric grid is limited to the country's southern region, where most of electricity demand is located, and extending the grid to other regions in the country has proven to be prohibitively expensive.[81] It is therefore a key policy priority for the GoM to harness off-grid solar solutions to increase electrification in rural areas.

- **Off-Grid Solar Development Model:** While a specific national program for the development of off-grid solar kits and systems has been in place since the 1990s, it is important to highlight that 30% of off-grid solar systems installed under program RSP1 (1990-1997) had to be rehabilitated under the second phase of the project RSP2 (2001-2007). A policy framework is therefore necessary to ensure equipment quality and long-term O&M through the training of local solar technicians to support the sustainability of the off-grid market.

- **Local Financial Institutions:**[82] Local financial institutions (FIs) and microfinance institutions (MFIs) lack sufficient internal capacity and credit appetite to invest in the renewable energy/off-grid sectors. This challenge is complicated as it arises mainly from the risk perceptions of FIs, which influence whether efforts should be made to develop strategies and customize financial products to target a nascent market, where there is often limited knowledge of technologies, market characteristics and historical data on portfolio credit performance. There are also likely misperceptions about the potential

[78] "Doing Business 2019, Training for Reform: Mauritania Country Profile," World Bank, (2019): http://www.doingbusiness.org/content/dam/doingBusiness/country/m/mauritania/MRT.pdf
[79] "OMVS – Transmission expansion project," World Bank, (2017): http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/923211494813685983/pdf/Senegal-PAD-04252017.pdf
[80] "Energy Access Outlook, 2017: From Poverty to Prosperity," International Energy Agency, (2017): https://www.iea.org/publications/freepublications/publication/WEO2017SpecialReport_EnergyAccessOutlook.pdf
[81] Ministère de l'Economie et des Finances, 2015.
[82] The role of FIs is examined in further detail in **Section 3.**

size of these markets as well as doubts about the profitability of offering financial products in rural off-grid areas, where the creditworthiness of potential clients may be an issue.

- **Other Challenges:** Successful development of the off-grid sector will require more than just a financial support mechanism – the Government and its supporting agencies will also need to develop and implement a range of measures to expedite growth of the market, including a robust technical assistance (TA) platform to supplement ROGEP's objectives. This platform should address *inter alia* (i) awareness raising, education and training for consumers, including organization of appropriate community management structures; (ii) solar PV system supply chain and operations and maintenance (O&M) services, including training of local technicians to ensure that the cost of maintenance is affordable and sustainable; and (iii) standards for equipment and service providers (i.e. installers, technicians) to guide customers to companies providing the best value for their money. These measures should be part of a national rural electrification sector strategy to inform decision-making of key stakeholders surrounding development and regulation of the country's stand-alone solar PV market.

1.3 National Policy and Regulation

1.3.1 National Electricity/Electrification Policy

The GoM has prioritized increasing access to electricity in the Strategy for Accelerated Growth and Shared Prosperity (SCAPP). The objective of the SCAPP is to generate conditions for robust, sustainable, and inclusive economic growth through structural transformation of the economy, which includes promoting access to electricity in rural areas.[83]

Mauritania's electricity sector is organized by the Water and Energy Sectors Policy Document (1998), which was adopted by the Minister of Economic Affairs and the Minister of Hydraulics and Energy. This document acknowledges the lack of a specific rural electrification policy and has not been revised in 20 years. Key policy documents are being drafted under MPEM's Three-Year Action Plan (2015-2017) but have not been implemented yet.[84]

In 2014, the Renewable Readiness Assessment, launched by UNDP and IRENA[85] provided Mauritania an evaluation of the conditions and potential of renewable energy (on-grid and off-grid), also identifying actions to overcome the main barriers to large-scale deployment of renewable energy in the country. It notably included recommendations on: (i) the development of a renewable energy strategy, (ii) an update of the electricity code and its related implementing decrees, (iii) the creation of an institutional and regulatory framework to facilitate the deployment of RE, (iv) the promotion of TA and capacity building, and (v) the development of a financial framework and a financial scheme.

1.3.2 Integrated National Electrification Plan

The GoM does not have an official integrated national electrification plan in place. However, in 2012, the Government adopted a master plan for the production and transmission of electricity up to 2030. Following the 2014 Renewable Readiness Assessment, a high-priority RE development program for 2015-2018 is now underway covering both grid-connected and off-grid areas. It includes the development of solar PV plants, a wind turbine, and 30 hybrid power plants and multi-functional platforms in various communities.[86]

A 2018 EU study made several important recommendations for the GoM to draft an integrated national electrification plan, and to make corresponding institutional reforms to support its implementation, including the creation of a Rural Electrification Agency to support implementation of an off-grid electrification scheme.[87]

1.3.3 Energy and Electricity Law

The Electricity Code (2001-19) governs the electricity sector. Following the Water and Energy Sectors Policy Document (1998), the 2001 Act established a framework to liberalize the electricity sector and guarantee its financial viability. The Master Plan for the Generation and Production of Electricity (2013)[88]

[83] "Islamic Republic of Mauritania: Economic Development Documents," IMF, (2018): https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/CR/Issues/2018/06/01/Islamic-Republic-of-Mauritania-Economic-Development-Documents-45918

[84] "Plan d'action triennal (2015-2017)," Ministère du Pétrole, de l'Energie et des Mines, (2015) : http://www.petrole.gov.mr/IMG/pdf/plan_triennal_mpemi_20152017_mpem1_final.pdf

[85] "Mauritania Renewables Readiness Assessment," IRENA, (2015): https://www.irena.org/-/media/Files/IRENA/RRA/Country-Report/IRENA_RRA_Mauritania_EN_2015.pdf

[86] "Country Profile: Mauritania," UNECA, (2016): https://www.uneca.org/sites/default/files/uploaded-documents/CountryProfiles/2017/mauritania_cp_en.pdf

[87] "EU-RIMDIR, Composante Énergie: Rapport Intermédiaire – Volet A : Diagnostic et Cadrage," EU, 2018.

[88] "Plan de production et de transport de l'énergie électrique en Mauritanie entre 2011 et 2030," Intec, 2013.

provides a long-term strategy for development of the sector. The legal framework, much like the policy framework, is outdated and needs to be revised, particularly given the limited success of market liberalization – SOMELEC remains predominant in the sector.[89] The existing code also lacks specific provisions development of off-grid electrification.

1.3.4 Framework for Stand-alone Systems

Figure 11 is an overview of the key national policies, programs, laws, and regulations pertaining to Mauritania's framework for stand-alone systems. The gaps in this framework are addressed in **Section 1.3.5**.

To date, the Government's efforts to establish a supportive policy and regulatory framework for the off-grid sector are progressing slowly, as evidenced by the country's relatively low energy access score in the World Bank Regulatory Indicators for Sustainable Energy (RISE) evaluation. Despite a slight improvement in its score from 2015, Mauritania ranked ahead of only Liberia, CAR and Chad in West Africa and the Sahel and was among the lowest scoring access-deficit countries in the world (**Figure 12**).

Figure 11: Policy and Regulatory Framework for Stand-alone Systems

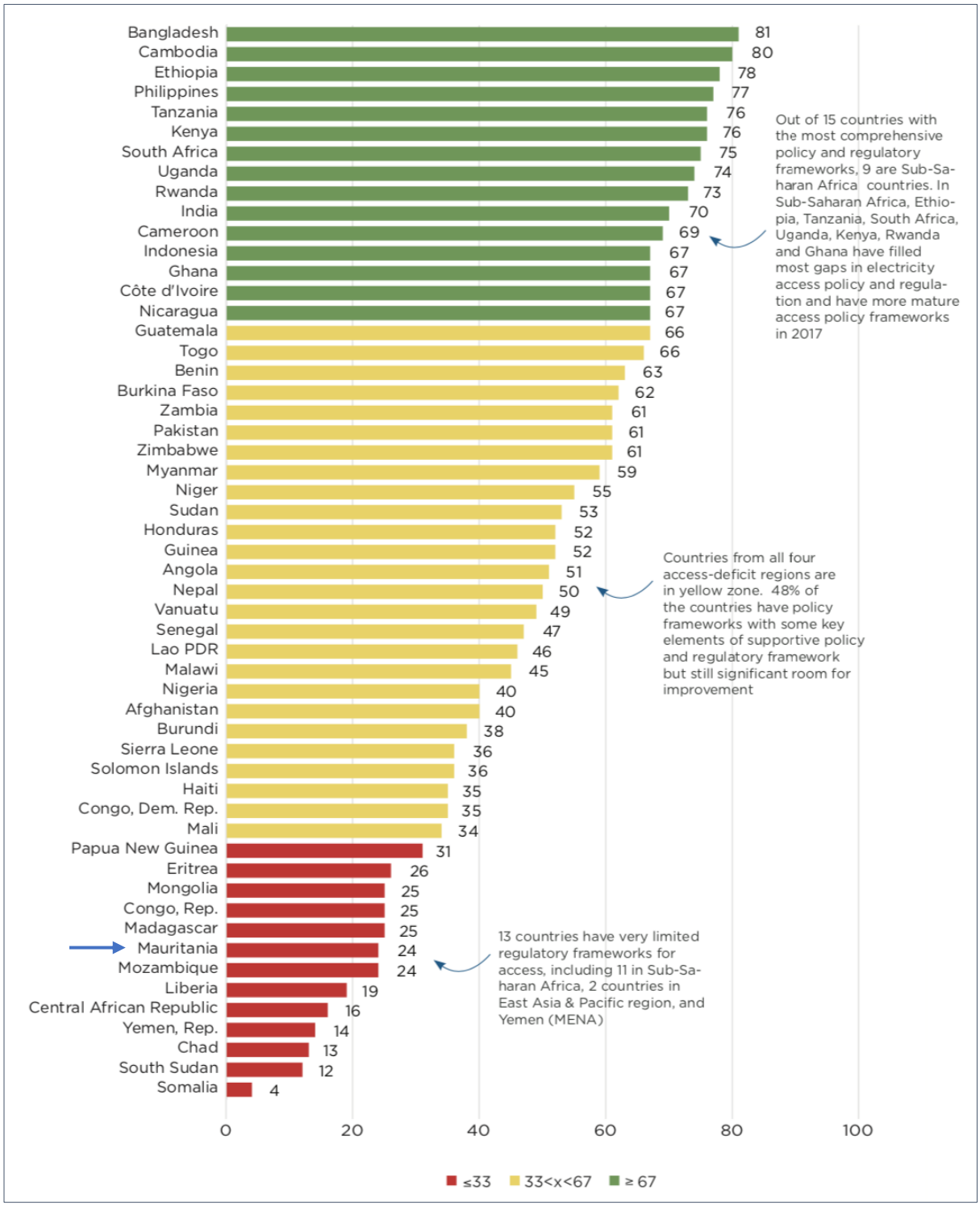
MAURITANIA			
	World Bank RISE 2017 Energy Access Score: 24 World Bank RISE 2015 Energy Access Score: 19	2017 ranking among West Africa and the Sahel (ROGEP) countries: 13th (out of 16)	
Policy/Regulatory Support and Financial Incentives	**Specific National Policies, Laws and Programs**		
	National electrification policy with off-grid provisions	x	
	Integrated national electrification plan	x	
	Energy/electricity law with off-grid provisions	x	
	National programs promoting off-grid market development	√	ADER
	Specific target for rural electrification	√	70% national access by 2020
	Financial Incentives		
	Subsidies, tax exemptions or related incentives for solar equipment/stand-alone systems	x	
	Standards and Quality		
	Government-adopted international quality standards for stand-alone systems	x	
	Government-certified program for solar equipment installers	x	
	Consumer awareness/education programs	x	
	Concession Contracts and Schemes	x	
	Business Model Regulation	x	

√ = existing/implemented provisions in the current regulatory framework
X = no existing provisions

Source: World Bank RISE, Stakeholder interviews and GreenMax Capital Advisors analysis

[89] "Mauritania Country Profile," United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, (2016): https://www.uneca.org/sites/default/files/uploaded-documents/CountryProfiles/2017/mauritania_cp_en.pdf

Figure 12: Distribution of RISE Electricity Access Scores in Access-Deficit Countries, 2017[90]



Source: World Bank Regulatory Indicators for Sustainable Energy

[90] "Policy Matters: Regulatory Indicators for Sustainable Energy," World Bank ESMAP, (2018): http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/553071544206394642/pdf/132782-replacement-PUBLIC-RiseReport-HighRes.pdf

1.3.4.1 Existence of Specific National Programs

Off-grid development has been pragmatic and project-based but there is currently no dedicated policy or program to support off-grid market development and no framework in place for sand-alone systems. The GoM supported the execution of two programs in the 1990s and 2000s to promote the use of solar systems through the Regional Solar Program (RSP1 and RSP2) covering Sahel countries. The development of a program to establish multifunctional platforms was nevertheless part of Government's Three-Year Action Plan 2015-2017.[91] APAUS, the program based on the GoM's 2005 Strategy for Universal Access (SNAU),[92] has resulted in the development of mini-grids managed by private operators, but also of multi-functional solar platforms and the deployment of individual solar kits (20Wc kits and 50Wc kits) by ADER and CDS. Under the regional solar program (PRS, 1990-2007), ADER installed solar in more than 200 rural localities. In 2015, ADER distributed 12,000 solar kits throughout the country (total capacity of 309 kWp). In addition, APAUS, in partnership with the EU and NGOs, contributed to the installation of 24 solar platforms (solar lighting, refrigeration kits, water pumping) across the country.

1.3.4.2 Financial Incentives

The universal energy access fund, FAUS (Fonds poyr l'accès universel aux services de base) grants funds to private authorized service providers (ASPs) operating in rural areas. It helps to finance the cost for connecting rural areas to the grid (covering operating loss). However, this multi-sector fund does not include specific financial incentives for the off-grid sector.

1.3.4.3 Standards and Quality

For the quality of off-grid solar products and systems to meet the expectations of end-users, a set of standards need to be in place to ensure equipment is reliable, adequately covered by warranties and post-sale O&M. There are currently no government-adopted quality standards for stand-alone systems in Mauritania. The results of off-grid solar development in the country (RSP1) demonstrate the need for quality standards as well as a framework to ensure O&M of equipment be in place.

1.3.4.4 Concession Contracts and Schemes

ADER is responsible for mobilizing private sector participation in electricity project management and operation (ASPs), as well as in the development of rural electrification infrastructure under a concession or licensing system.[93] The Multi-Sectoral Regulation Authority (ARM) is in charge of regulating the ASPs.

1.3.4.5 Specific Business Model Regulation

No specific business model regulations exist for the off-grid sector in Mauritania. As was demonstrated in East Africa in recent years, the proliferation of mobile money platforms can rapidly facilitate energy access. There is an opportunity for the Government to bring together key stakeholders (solar suppliers, technology providers, telecom companies etc.) to support development of PAYG business models in the off-grid sector by taking advantage of the country's gradually increasing usage of mobile internet services – in 2016, Mauritania had 2.6 million new mobile subscribers and a 64% penetration rate.[94]

[91] Ministère du Pétrole, de l'Energie et des Mines, 2015.
[92] "Stratégie d'accès universel aux services de base," Ministry of Economic Affairs and Development, (2005): http://acces.mr/images/doc/STRATEGIE-AU.pdf
[93] "Promoting Sustainable Mini-Grids Mauritanian Provinces through Hybrid Technologies," UNDP, (2016): https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/project_documents/11-11-15_Project_Document_PADpdf_0.pdf
[94] "The Mobile Economy: Middle East and North Africa," GSMA Intelligence (2016): https://www.gsmaintelligence.com/research/?file=9246bbe14813f73dd85b97a90738c860&download

1.3.5 Capacity Building and Technical Assistance

To overcome the challenges surrounding rural electrification, a range of technical and financial resources from both the public and private sector must come together. At the institutional level, MPEM, ADER and other Government agencies along with the electricity market regulator, ARM, will all play key roles in establishing a supportive policy and regulatory framework. Additional reforms to the power sector may be required to provide the incentives necessary to increase private sector participation. Local FIs and MFIs will need incentives and support to develop and implement new financial products and administrative procedures to lend to the off-grid sector. International and local solar companies will need policy and financial support. Local technical capacity of the solar sector will need to be developed to ensure long-term O&M services are available and sustainable. Above all, financing and TA will be critical for all market actors – government, financial institutions, end-users, suppliers and service providers – in order to accelerate growth. **Table 6** identifies some of the policy/regulatory challenges facing off-grid market development in Mauritania and the proposed mitigation measures/TA interventions to overcome these gaps.

Table 6: Gaps in the Off-Grid Policy and Regulatory Framework[95]

Indicator	Policy/Regulatory/Market Gaps	Recommended TA Intervention
1. Specific National Policies, Laws and Programs	**A. Insufficient National Electricity / Electrification Policy**	
	a. No policy exists for rural electrification	a. Help Government establish a clear Rural Electrification Policy which encourages least cost, integrated planning for all options
	b. Main focus of policy is on national grid extension only	b. Help Government develop a comprehensive, fully integrated electrification plan with least cost planning to consider where extension is the most efficient and sustainable approach to increasing energy access vs. development of the off-grid sector – mini-grids and stand-alone systems powered by local renewable resources
	c. Government is subsidizing fossil fuel electricity production	c. Help Government analyze where fossil fuel subsidies serve as an impediment to development of safe, clean energy access alternatives
	B. Lack of Integrated National Electrification Plan	
	a. No integrated plan exists	a. Help Government develop a comprehensive, least cost, integrated plan for all rural electrification options (grid, mini-grid and off-grid) with clear and consistent targets and policies
	b. Insufficient focus on or understanding of framework to support private sector participation	b. Help Government (ADER) improve planning framework to encourage private participation in mini-grid and stand-alone solar system options, including *inter alia* preparation of guidelines to enhance collaboration between Government and private companies, industry associations, and other relevant stakeholders to coordinate development of effective policy that is flexible and responsive to the needs of the market

[95] "Government" as it is used throughout this table refers to the main public institutions, officials and policymakers responsible for planning, management and regulation of the energy sector in Mauritania (**Table 2**), including the Ministry of Petroleum, Energy and Mining (MPEM), the Rural Electrification Agency (ADER), the Regulatory Authority (ARM), and the state-owned utility, SOMELEC, among other national and local authorities.

	C. Lack of Energy and Electricity Law	
	a. No specific Energy or Electricity Law with off-grid provisions exists	a. Help Government develop new legal framework that is flexible and helps create appropriate incentives for private sector participation in off-grid market development (e.g. to either initiate or continue process of unbundling / electricity market liberalization)
	D. Lack of national policies, laws, programs and/or action plans targeting off-grid market development	
	a. No specific Off-Grid Policy, Law, or Action Plan in place	a. Help Government establish the medium-long term rural electrification strategy in the country through development and implementation of a rural electrification Master Plan
	b. Insufficient focus on or understanding of framework to support private sector participation	b. Help Government improve off-grid framework to create appropriate incentives for private sector participation to expedite off-grid solar market growth, including *inter alia* preparation of procurement schemes and financing mechanisms designed to encourage PPP engagement in the off-grid sector
2. Financial Incentives (import duties, taxes, etc.)	**A. Insufficiently supportive financial incentives / tax regime**	a. Help Government develop appropriate VAT and tariff policies covering the entire off-grid / stand-alone solar product supply chain (including batteries, inverters or other system components) that would provide necessary support to the industry b. Help Government establish a Special Task Force (within ADER) to (i) mitigate potential difficulties in customs clearance and import logistics, and (ii) oversee implementation of tax exemptions by coordinating with all relevant agencies and regulatory bodies involved (ARM) c. Help Government introduce appropriate grant and subsidy schemes which require private funding matches and are predictable and not overly bureaucratic d. Help Government) create PPP schemes to share high project development and market entry costs particularly with developers in remote areas (e.g. through FAUS, the rural electrification fund) e. Help Government analyze where subsidies or exemptions for non-renewable energy sources provide unfair advantage for fossil-fuels and impede development of clean energy
3. Standards and Quality	**A. Insufficient Market Data**	a. Help Government establish a Special Task Force (within MPEM/ADER) responsible for collaborating with the private sector to compile and regularly update a database of critical off-grid market data (including inter alia solar product imports, costs, sales volumes, resource potential etc., GIS data and other key demographic and socioeconomic indicators) that can be (i) utilized by policymakers to make informed electrification planning decisions based on accurate/updated market information, and (ii) made easily accessible to interested off-grid developers, investors and other key industry stakeholders
	B. Unclear / lack of quality standards	a. Help Government establish international quality standards for off-grid stand-alone solar products, including minimum technical standards (IEC Technical Specifications), warranties, required availability of and cost guidelines for post-sale services/O&M, etc.

		b. Help Government integrate standards with appropriate oversight agencies (ARM) to ensure quality-verification procedures are in place c. Help Government implement a legal framework that enables companies or public authorities to prosecute those caught distributing counterfeit or poor-quality products that are not up to promulgated standards
	C. Lack of capacity of local technical sector (solar PV technicians, installers, services providers etc.)	a. Support establishment of technical certification and vocational training programs (through government, private sector, academia) for installation and maintenance of stand-alone solar systems[96] b. Support development of database of best practices / information sharing services to ensure skills transfer from international, local and regional initiatives (e.g. through ADER)
	D. Insufficient attention of private companies to environmental/social standards and community engagement	a. Assist private sector and/or civil society organizations to ensure environmental/social standards are in place b. Assist in development of strategies encouraging inclusive gender participation c. Support with implementation of a repair and recycling framework for off-grid solar systems and equipment
	E. Insufficient public awareness	a. Support Government, trade associations and civic society organizations to develop and implement consumer awareness/marketing/education programs on the benefits of off-grid solar products and the existence of related national programs b. Support development and implementation of programs to educate consumers, retailers and distributors on the benefits of quality certified solar products vs. counterfeit products
4. Concession Contracts and Schemes	**A. Lack of clear and transparent licensing and permitting procedures**	
	a. Unclear procedures	a. Help Government develop clear licensing and permitting procedures
	b. Insufficient communication and streamlining	b. Help Government develop improved systems for sharing and disseminating information to project developers and key stakeholders, including establishment of a "one-stop-shop" for national level permits and approvals of local permits
	B. Lack of understanding of emerging concession and energy services schemes for off-grid providers	
	a. Need for understanding of different SHS concession schemes	a. Help Government understand all options and models for possibilities of granting geographic concessions to private operators of SHS[97]
	b. Need for understanding	b. Help Government understand and develop approaches to

[96] Ecodev, an NGO, is currently providing technical training on solar photovoltaic techniques

[97] Different models used to grant geographic concessions to SHS providers can yield wide-ranging results. Some observers have lauded the approaches being used in Rwanda, Nigeria, Togo and DRC as highly successful while, there has been criticism of the approach deployed in Senegal.

	of emerging models for 'Integrated Private Utilities' or 'Energy Companies of the Future' c. Public procurement or public finance/budget laws that hamper deployment of energy services models for public facilities d. Lack of standardized contracts for energy services provided by private system operators to public facilities e. Insufficient protection for stranded investments	facilitate pilots of 'Integrated Private Utility' or 'Energy Company of the Future' schemes.[98] c. Help Government develop procurement and public finance laws that will facilitate stand-alone solar system investment for public facilities (schools, health care facilities, etc.) d. Help Government, trade associations or civic society organizations develop model bilateral PPA and Energy Services Contracts for small scale IPPs and ESCOs to sell power or deliver energy services to public facilities (i.e. schools, health care facilities) or deliver solar street lighting services to municipalities e. Help Government develop proper procedures and guidelines to protect against stranded investments from competition among all on-grid and off-grid rural electrification approaches[99]
5. Business Model Regulation	**A. Lack of understanding about different pricing schemes and business models offered by stand-alone solar system developers**	a. Educate regulators, Government, and non-Government stakeholders about different pricing schemes[100] offered by stand-alone solar system providers to improve understanding and help avoid unnecessary interventions to regulate. b. Support Government and off-grid enterprises to collaborate specifically on developing pricing schemes for productive use market segment[101] c. Support off-grid entrepreneurs and telecom companies in building the capacity of and fostering linkages between telecom companies / mobile money providers and off-grid solar companies to help roll out technology platforms and PAYG business models

Source: Focus Group Discussions; Stakeholder interviews; GreenMax Capital Advisors analysis

[98] Innovative models are emerging for entire geographic areas to be concessioned to integrated private energy services operators who may offer an appropriate mix of solutions within their franchised area (i.e. a mix of SHS, rooftop solar, specialized systems for productive use, mini-grids and micro-grids). This is being piloted by the Shell Foundation in several countries.

[99] As the off-grid sector becomes populated by a variety of different approaches, all private operators are subject to potential stranded investments "when the grid arrives" and even SHS providers can have their assets and revenues threatened when the mini-grid arrives.

[100] The term "pricing schemes" used in this context refers to pricing options offered by standalone solar system providers for SHS, productive use, rooftop solar for public facilities, solar street lighting, etc. that are new, innovative and may be difficult for stakeholders to initially well understand. Whether these are PAYG, Lease to Own, electricity sales, commodity-based pricing, time of use or block pricing, the lack of understanding can often cause stakeholders to ask Government to intervene to "protect consumers" where such regulation of the market could in fact be misguided and unwarranted.

[101] The productive use segment is brand new with SHS providers, mini-grid operators and vendors specialized on a single type of SME or agricultural productive use (i.e. grain mills, water pumps, cocoa processing etc.) all grappling to arrive at attractive approaches to billing for energy services. This is an area where TA support is much needed to help all stakeholders sort out fair and practical approaches.

1.4 Development Initiatives

1.4.1 National Government Initiatives

While the GoM has yet to promote decentralized solar systems and kits, it has actively promoted the development of small-scale mini-grids for communities.[102] To foster rural electrification, the Government encouraged the development of large-scale mini-grids. The promotion of rural mini-grids began in the 1990s with the Alyzés wind program (supported by UNDP-GEF) and with development of multifunctional platforms through donor programs under the supervision of ADER.

1.4.2 DFI and Donor Programs

With support from Development Finance Institutions (DFIs) and the donor community, the GoM has been active in promoting off-grid solar electrification through the distribution of solar kits and the development of multi-functional solar platforms. The EU is a major donor financing the development of solar platforms (PERUB, ERUDI and a Milk Value Chain Development Project, "Progrès-Lait". The first two projects have been financed by APAUS and implemented by French NGO GRET and Mauritanian NGOs Tenmiya and Ecodev. The third and most recent project is a regional project (Mauritania and Senegal), implementing a rural entrepreneurship-based approach, by making available to grassroots actors, especially women, first energy platforms for milk conservation, with a Community based Public Private Partnership approach as a market development instrument in seven production basins in Senegal and Mauritania.

In 2018, the EU was still actively contributing to the elaboration of an Electrification Action Plan for four regions, also providing recommendations for National Electrification Scheme, through its EU-RIMDIR Project. The UNDP has also been active in the country, supporting the installation of multi-functional platforms through its two projects – "Conflict Prevention and Social Cohesion in Mauritania" and "Solar Platforms to Fight Against Poverty in Mauritania." DFI/donor programs and initiatives supporting development of the off-grid sector are summarized in **Table 7**.

[102] "Promoting Sustainable Mini-Grids Mauritanian Provinces through Hybrid Technologies," UNDP, (2016): https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/project_documents/11-11-15_Project_Document_PADpdf_0.pdf

Table 7: DFI and Donor-Funded Off-Grid Development Programs

Project/Program	Sponsor	Timeline	Market Segment(s)	Description
Conflict Prevention and Social Cohesion in Mauritania	UNDP[103]	2010-2011 (Phase 1)	Solar PV, rural electrification	• Installation of 11 solar platforms in Adwabas regions of Hodh el Gharbi and Hodh el Chargui
PERUB Project – Pilot Phase Project (EUR 3.5 million, of which EUR 1.6 million financed by the EU, 560,000 by the villages and the rest by APAUS)[104]	EU Energy Facility, APAUS, French NGO GRET, Mauritanian NGOs Tenmiya and Ecodev	2006-2011	Solar PV, rural electrification	• Installation of 24 solar platforms in 24 villages in the Brakna region of Mauritania. • Local productive use services: battery and cellphone charging, refrigeration, welding, handicraft, milling, and television.
ERUDI Project (EUR 4.8 million, of which EUR 3.4 million financed by the EU, EUR 1.37 million by GoM	EU, APAUS, GRET, Tenmiya and Ecodev	2011-16	Solar PV, rural electrification	• Installation of 100 additional solar platforms for 70,000 direct beneficiaries in the regions of Brakna, Gorgol, Assaba and Tagant.
Solar Platforms to Fight Against Poverty in Mauritania	USAID / UNDP / APAUS	2011-2013 (Phase 2)	Solar PV, off-grid energy, rural electrification	• Installation of 24 solar platforms: - 8 new solar platforms in the regions of Hodh el Gharbi and Gorgol (Phase 1) - 5 new multi-functional platforms in Hodh el Chargui region
EU-RIMDIR, Energy Component: Productive and Energy investment in rural areas (EUR 150,000)	EU, GRET-BURGEAP[105]	2018	Solar PV, rural electrification, solar home systems, stand-alone solar	• Recommendation on a National Electrification Scheme • Electricity Action Plan and Investment Plan for 4 regions: les Wilayas Hodh El Chargui, Hodh El Gharbi, Assaba and Guidimakha • Grid connection, hybrid PV/diesel mini-grid or solar kits in the aforementioned regions
Regional Program for Milk value chain development / "Projet Progrès Lait" (EUR 6,9 million total cost, EUR 873,622 for Mauritania and EU financing a total of EUR 5.2 million)	EU / ECODEV Mauritania	2017-2020	Standalone Solar PV for productive uses	• Installation of 20 large platforms powered by solar networks for the collection of milk • 100 mini-platforms powered by standalone solar photovoltaic systems • Target women entrepreneurs more specifically
Power Africa	USAID	2013-present	Pico solar	• Since 2013 in Mauritania, Power Africa has facilitated 8,436 connections in solar lanterns through partnerships with private off-grid companies. This assistance has supported the government's strategy of increasing rural access to electricity.
ACP-EU	European Union	2011 - present	Rural electrification	• In Mauritania, off-grid solar solutions were installed for isolated rural communities under the IPES RURAL Project (2011-2015) and under the ERUDI Project (2011-2016), which established a rural community solar platform

[103] "Promoting Sustainable Mini-Grids Mauritanian Provinces through Hybrid Technologies," UNDP, (2016): https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/project_documents/11-11-15_Project_Document_PADpdf_0.pdf

[104] "L'accès à l'énergie photovoltaïque dans les projets d'aide au développement: pertinence, exigence et alternatives, Agence Microprojets," Alcid, (2014): https://www.alcid.org/images/acce-s-e-nergie-photovoltaique-amp.pdf

[105] RIMDIR – Plan d'électrification de 4 Wilayas en Mauritanie, GRET, (2018): http://www.gret.org/projet/rimdir-plan-delectrification-de-4-wilayas-mauritanie/

1.4.3 Other Initiatives

Outside of the Government and DFI/donor initiatives mentioned above, there are also several non-governmental organization (NGO) programs and related initiatives in Mauritania's off-grid sector.

- **GRET (Professionals for Development):** The French NGO, GRET, has developed a model of solar platforms for rural electrification. GRET, with financing from APAUS and the EU, started to develop solar projects for rural electrification in the 2000s. From 2008-2011, 24 villages in the Brakna region were electrified through solar mini-grids under the PERUB project (EUR 1.6 million). A second project, ERUDI, was implemented between 2011-2015, targeting 100 villages in the regions of Brakna, Gorgol, Assaba and Hodh Gharbi, and included 100 multi-functional solar mini-grid platforms supporting a total of 70,000 beneficiaries. GRET led the program's implementation, working in partnership with two local NGOs, Tenmiya and Ecodev. The EU has also delegated GRET to help the GoM develop an electricity action plan for 2018, under the EU RIMDIR program for productive and energy investments in rural areas.[106]

- **Solidarités et Progrès (Solidarity and Progress):** In 2018, French NGO Solidarités et Progrès, in partnership with Natixis Energeco, plans to conduct a feasibility study for solar water pumping system projects in Sinthiou Boumaka village in southern Mauritania. The project intends to install an off-grid solar pumping system (one hybrid pump with 24 solar panels of 240 W each).[107]

- **Ecodev**: The Mauritanian NGO Ecodev was established in 2001[108] and has been very active in the country's off-grid sector. Ecodev is currently implementing the regional Program for Milk and Value Chain Development ("Progrès Lait"), totaling EUR 873K in Mauritania and financing by the EU.[109] The objective is to improve the milk value chain and empower local farmers though the development of decentralized solar PV milk collection and storage platforms. Previously, Ecodev worked on the abovementioned EU-funded PERUB and ERUDI solar projects in partnership with GRET and Tenmiya. Ecodev has developed over 20 multifunctional electricity platforms in the region of Assaba. Ecodev has also worked in the locations of Moughataa and M'bout to establish solar PV shops selling SHS, batteries and solar refrigeration equipment and providing training on solar PV techniques.

[106] RIMDIR – Plan d'électrification de 4 Wilayas en Mauritanie, GRET, (2018): http://www.gret.org/projet/rimdir-plan-delectrification-de-4-wilayas-mauritanie/
[107] "Mauritanie : électrification solaire de l'adduction d'eau potable pour un village isolée par l'ONG Solidarités et Progrès," Synergie Solaire, (2018): https://www.synergiesolaire.org/fr/projet/electrification-solaire-de-ladduction-deau-potable-aep-dun-village-isole/
[108] "Solaire pour le développement de l'Aftout (SODA)," Ecodev, (2014): http://www.ecodev.mr/index.php/en/soda
[109] "Mauritanie : deux ateliers de formation des éleveurs relais sur la production laitière et les bonnes pratiques d'hygiène à Timbedra, Progrès-Lait, " Progreslait, (2017).

II. OFF-GRID SOLAR PV MARKET ASSESSMENT

This section presents the overall market assessment for stand-alone off-grid solar (OGS) energy systems in Mauritania. **Section 2.1** provides an overview of the current household off-grid energy situation and estimates potential household market demand for solar energy systems. **Section 2.2** introduces institutional off-grid energy demand and the potential of solar to supply this market. **Section 2.3** evaluates the demand for off-grid solar to serve productive use applications in connectivity, SME and value-added applications. **Section 2.4** examines the existing off-grid solar product supply chain in the country. **Table 8** summarizes the overall total potential demand for solar equipment for different market segments. **Annex 2** provides an overview of the Task 2 methodology.

It should be noted that this market study assesses total *potential* demand for OGS based on population and household income. The study considers how demand may be affected by factors such as changes in population density, the expansion of national grids and access to finance. This data will be helpful to policymakers and practitioners as they assess market potential over time. However, the quantitative demand estimate has not been revised to reflect *realistic* market potential. Many other factors and market failures will prevent the full realization of this total market potential, and these will vary by customer segment.

For household demand, the OGS market is already tangible. Still, many factors will affect household demand for OGS products, such as distribution realties, consumer education, competing economic priorities for households, financial shocks, etc. The institutional market will be affected largely by government and donor budget allocations along with the potential for community-based finance. The productive use market is perhaps the least concrete. As a new segment for the OGS industry, its market dynamics are not yet well understood. The ability to realize potential productive use market demand will be affected by many of the factors that commonly determine enterprise prospects in the region – infrastructure, rural distribution, marketing, access to finance, insecurity, regulation, etc. The data presented here is meant to provide a baseline upon which further research can build.

Table 8: Indicative Total Cash Market Potential for Off-Grid Solar PV Products in Mauritania, 2018

Off-Grid Market Segment	Annualized Cash Demand (Units)	Annualized Cash Demand (kW)	Annualized Cash Market Value (USD)	Financed Market Value (USD)
Household				
Pico solar	144,199	433	$6,488,975	$0.00
Plug and play	70,047	700	$8,755,828	$0.00
Small SHS	290	14	$72,462	$7,246,203
Medium and Large SHS	0	0	$0.00	$44,382,995
Household Subtotal	**214,536**	**1,147**	**$15,317,265**	**$51,629,198**
Institutional				
Water supply	268	974	$2,435,438	-
Healthcare facilities	53	35	$87,838	-
Primary and secondary schools	169	90	$266,415	-
Public lighting	75	38	$113,025	-
Institutional Subtotal	**565**	**1,137**	**$2,902,716**	**-**
Productive Use				
SME applications for microenterprises	117	29	$73,125	-
Value-added applications	34,810	4,663	$23,809,918	-
Connectivity / ICT (phone charging)	3,225	1,290	$2,780,249	-
Productive Use Subtotal	**38,152**	**5,982**	**$26,663,292**	-
TOTAL	**253,253**	**8,266**	**$ 44,883,273**	

Source: African Solar Designs analysis

2.1 Demand – Households

This section analyzes the main characteristics of the household (HH) OGS demand in Mauritania. Sub-Section 2.1.1 provides an overview of the household market segment with a focus on government, business models and types of systems available for consumers. Sub-Section 2.1.2 analyzes current household ability to pay and willingness to pay for electricity services. At the end of the section, these numbers are translated into actual current cash demands for household solar systems. Sub-Section 2.1.3 assesses consumer perceptions, interest, and awareness on OGS. Sub-Section 2.1.4 evaluates access to finance and provides a second assessment of demand that is based on use of financial instruments to provide equipment. Sub-Section 2.1.5 summarizes the key barriers and drivers of market growth that can be utilized to accelerate the OGS sector.

2.1.1 Overview of Household Market Segment

According to the International Energy Agency (IEA), in 2016 there were 422,454 million households (2.6 million people) in Mauritania without access to electricity.[110] In that year, an estimated 41.7% of the population had access to electricity, with the rate of access at 81% in urban areas and 5% in rural areas.

This section gives an introduction to household consumer market segments, their characteristics and size (**Table 9**). It then discusses household sources of income and geographic distribution of off-grid households, both presently and projected over time. This provides context for the next section, 2.1.2, which sizes household segment potential market demand through a series of detailed analyses.

[110] See **Annex 2** for more details.

Table 9: Household (HH) Consumer Market Segments[111]

Income Quintile	% HH w/o access	# of HH w/o access	Avg. GDP per HH per year	Energy Tier	% HH w/o access	# of HH w/o access	Avg. GDP per HH per year	Energy Tier	% HH w/o access	# of HH w/o access	Avg. GDP per HH per year	Energy Tier	Geographic segments	Description
	2018 Scenario				2023 Scenario				2030 Scenario					
Highest 20%	1%	1,449	$16,003	Tier 3	1%	807	$17,759	Tier 3	0.1%	195	$18,877	Tier 3	High income rural	• Small portion of rural households using a petrol generator set • Has a demonstrated ability to pay for solar off-grid systems
													Mid to high income urban	• Professionals, business owners and salaried people are likely to be connected to the grid. • Small portion without grid access desire replacement to generator power[112]
Fourth 20%	55%	79,708	$9,156	Tier 3	7%	11,343	$10,161	Tier 3	0.2%	389	$10,800	Tier 3	Low income peri-urban / urban "under-grid"	• Low income urban population engaged in SME work or casual labor • Lives near grid but cannot afford or does not have access to connection
Third 20%	90%	130,432	$6,728	Tier 3	90%	145,321	$7,466	Tier 3	3.7%	7,261	$7,936	Tier 3		
Second 20%	99%	143,475	$4,936	Tier 3	99%	159,853	$5,478	Tier 3	99%	192,625	$5,823	Tier 2	Low income rural	• Engaged in farming, SME or mining support activities • Lives more than 15km from the nearest grid connection.
Lowest 20%	100%	144,924	$2,986	Tier 2	100%	161,468	$3,313	Tier 2	100%	194,571	$3,522	Tier 2		
Total households without electricity access		**499,988**			**Total**	**478,791**			**Total**	**395,042**				

Source: IEA and World Bank; African Solar Designs analysis

[111] See **Annex 1** and **Annex 2** for more details.

[112] This model does not consider connected on-grid households that would purchase OGS systems as a back-up power system due to poor grid quality and reliability. The "households without electricity access" estimates shown here include households without electricity connections, either from a grid connection or from a renewable energy-based off-grid source. This does include "under-grid" households, largely in the lower income quintiles, that live within grid vicinity but are currently not connected. 2023 and 2030 projections assume that under-grid households will become connected in those years.

- **Off-grid household characteristics**

As shown in **Table 10**, Mauritania has a low of extreme poverty (households living below USD 1.90 a day) as well as a low overall rate of low-income households.

Table 10: Poverty Headcount in Mauritania, 2014

Poverty headcount ratio	% of population
Lives at or below $1.90 a day*	6%
Lives at or below $3.20 a day*	24.1%
Lives at or below $5.50 a day*	58.8%

*2011 PPP

Source: World Bank

Households in Mauritania depend on agriculture, fisheries and extractive industries for their income. Recurrent droughts have pushed many rural households into urban areas. However, over half of the population continues to rely on farming and livestock raising. Households in some rural areas remain nomadic, with low population density across much of the country.

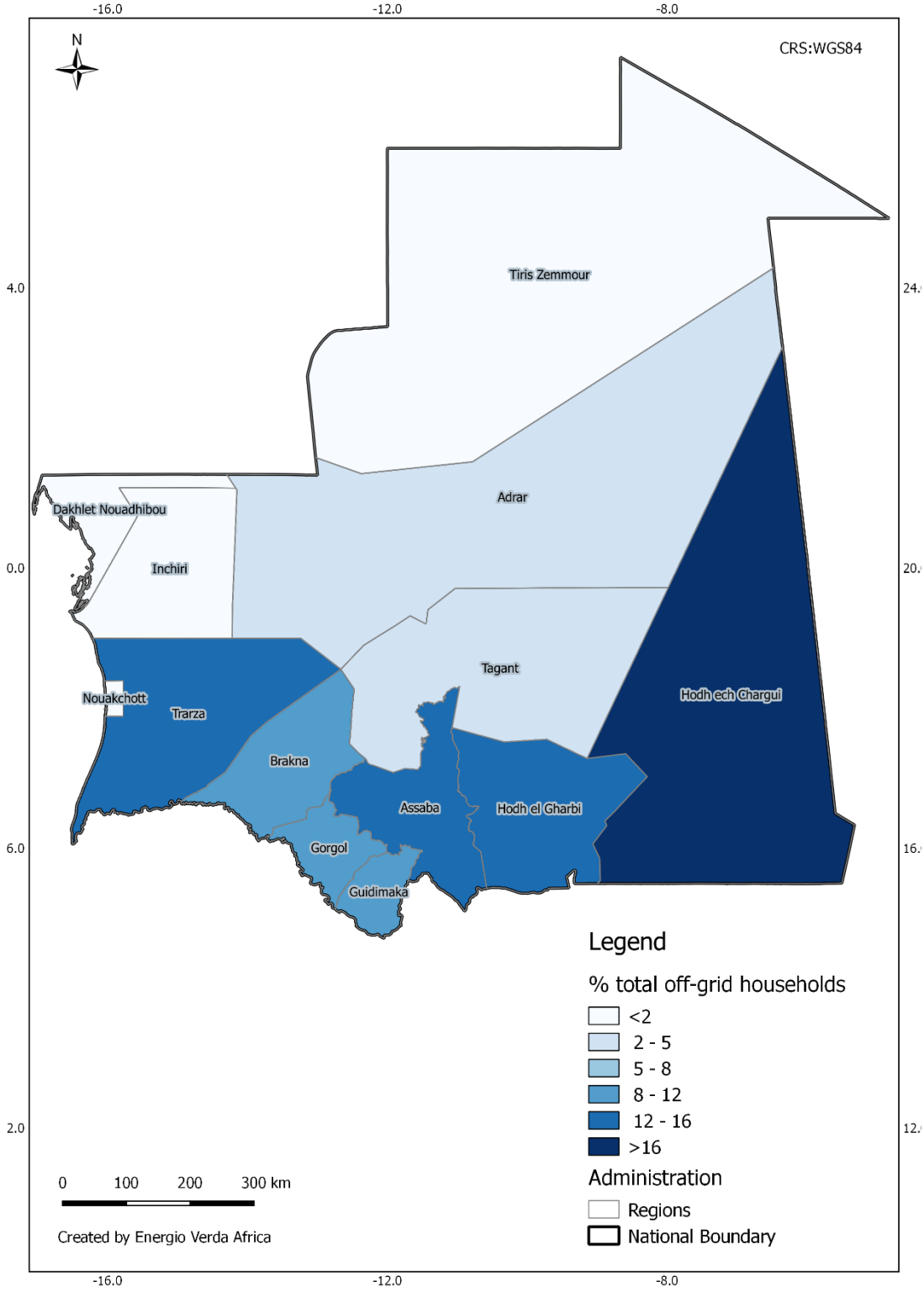
- **Geographic Components of the Solar Market**

To analyze the potential OGS market over time, GIS maps were prepared from demographic information to present potential market areas for OGS. GIS calculations consider drivers of off-grid household market change including grid extension around current urban and peri-urban centers, mini-grid development for more densely populated rural areas, and population growth. Sources of information for the maps presented below (**Figures 13-16)** can be found in **Annex 1**.

GIS maps shown here are for 2018-2023 and 2030. Data shown for 2018-2023 includes information on existing grid lines only. The data of planned "future lines" is not broken down in enough detail to show in which year future lines will be built, so an assumption was made that all future lines would be built after 2023 but prior to 2030.

As shown in the maps and chart summaries below **(Figures 13-16)**, the total size of the OGS market will increase slightly over time with population growth and in the absence of national grid expansion. Because of Mauritania's low population density, mini-grid development will also be limited, and off-grid solar products will remain important to meeting rural energy needs over time. The distribution of off-grid households across the country will only change slightly over time. This should be helpful for suppliers in building up consistent long-term distribution networks.

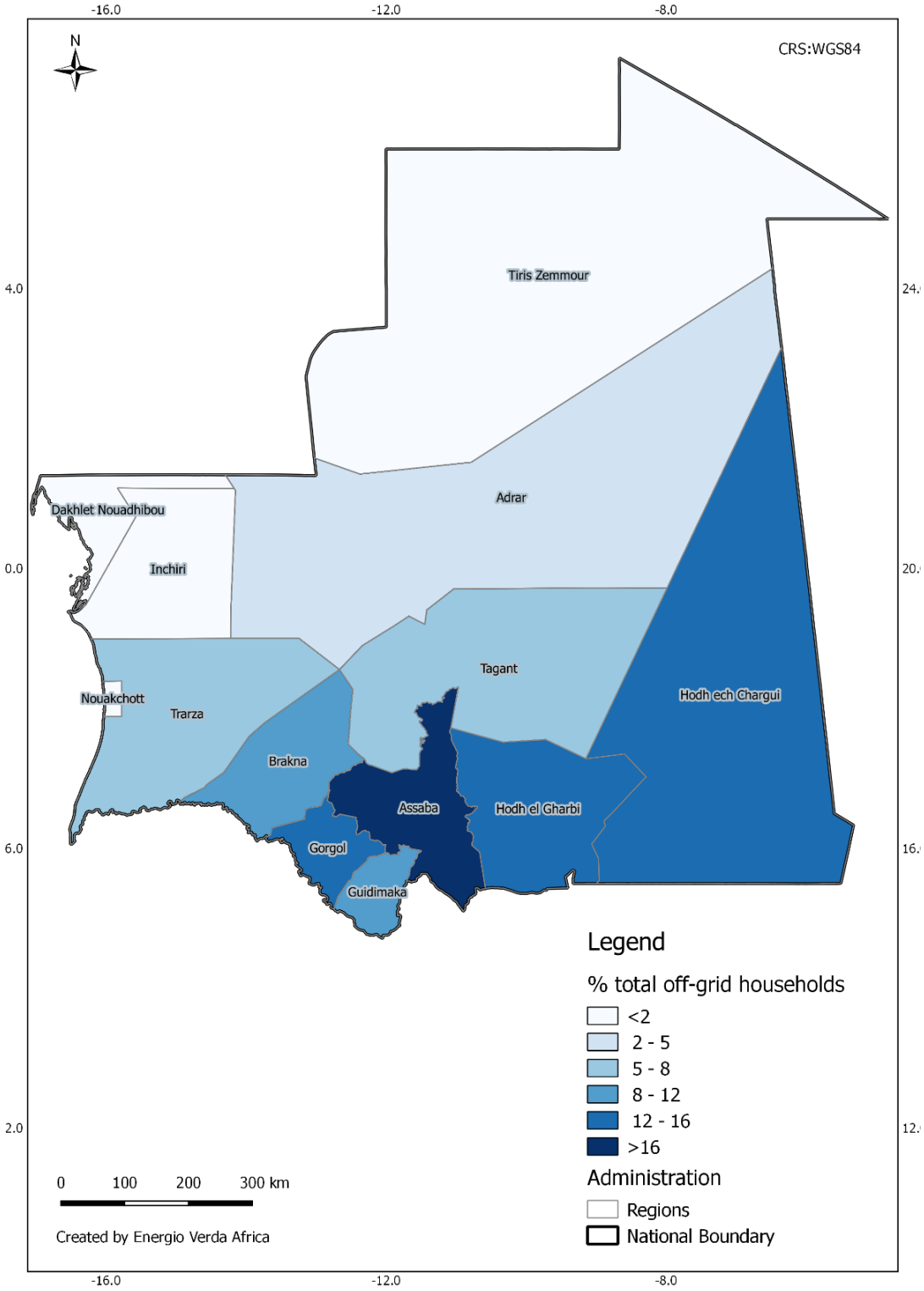
Figure 13: Distribution of Potential Off-Grid Households by Region, 2023[113]



Source: Energio Verda Africa GIS analysis

[113] See **Annex 1** for more details, including data sources.

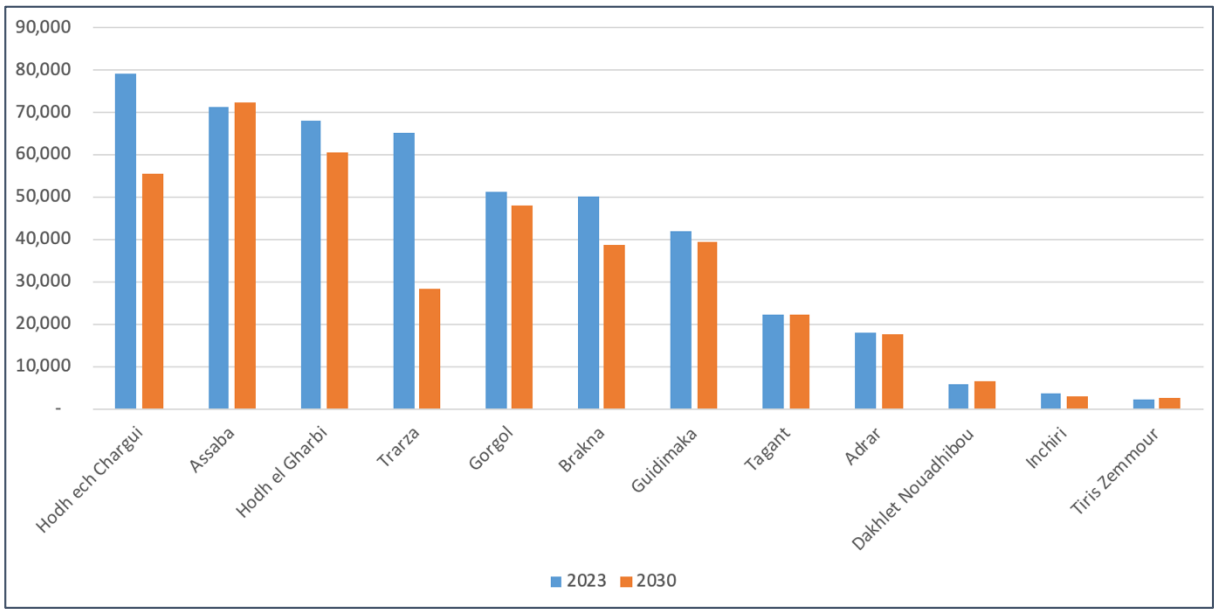
Figure 14: Distribution of Potential Off-Grid Households by Region, 2030[114]



Source: Energio Verda Africa GIS analysis

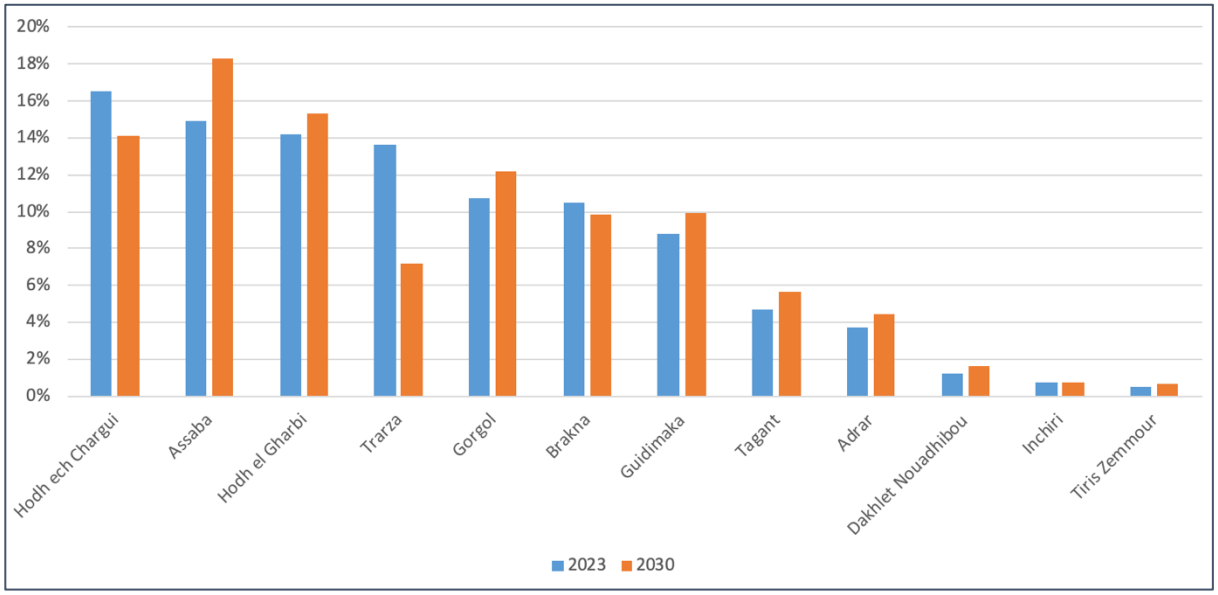
[114] See **Annex 1** for more details, including data sources.

Figure 15: Estimated Number of Off-Grid Households by Region, 2023 and 2030



Source: Energio Verda Africa GIS analysis

Figure 16: Estimated Percentage of Off-Grid Households by Region, 2023 and 2030



Source: Energio Verda Africa GIS analysis

2.1.2 Analysis of Household Market Segment Demand

In order to calculate total potential household demand for off-grid solar products for the national market, this section analyzes several things:

- Household usage and costs of typical rural energy fuels and devices (non-solar)
- How these rural energy technologies align with typical access to "energy tiers"
- Cost of off-grid solar products alternatives, by energy tier
- Household uptake of solar products thus far
- Potential household demand based on household income quintiles

From this data, the potential household market for off-grid solar products is then calculated at the end of this section for both cash purchases and financed purchases. Finally, the section discusses the availability of finance to off-grid households, and household consumer perceptions of solar products.

➢ **Consumption and expenditures on typical rural energy fuels and devices (non-solar)**

According to feedback from focus group discussion (FGD) participants, common sources of electricity used in off-grid rural households include:

- Primary sources (coal, wood, gas);
- Candles, storm lamps;
- Batteries, panels (Individual solar kits, single module SHS and multiple module solar system);
- Multifunctional platforms (PTFM); and
- Power generators

Overall national mean energy expenditure for rural HH is of USD 90. Feedback from the focus group discussions (FGDs) shows that off-grid households have a moderate capacity to pay for energy. Household ability to pay for common energy-related activities is shown below.

Table 11: Household Ability to Pay for Common Sources of Energy

Most appropriate services for each income group	Monthly capacity to pay (USD)
1 lamp, 1 mobile phone charger	<6
2 lamps or TV, mobile phone charger, radio	6 to 10
3-4 lamps, mobile phone charger, TV, radio	10 to 14
1 refrigeration/cooling, 4-5 lamps, mobile phone charger, TV	14 to 28
Large consumers, extended families, electricity resellers (several lamps and TVs)	More than 28

Data reported through the FGDs shows disparities in household income and capacity to pay for energy between regions: the estimated capacity to pay for the Guidimagha region is higher for other regions. The results need to be qualified, however, in relation to the larger household size. In Assaba and Hodh El Gharbi, more than 90% of the population say that they cannot spend more than USD 14 per month on electricity. In Guidimagha and in Hodh El Chargui, more than 90% of the population say they cannot spend more than USD 28 per month on electricity.

Table 12 shows the typical monthly cost of using common rural energy technologies. Household use of different types and amounts of energy technologies is associated with different energy access tiers, as defined in the Multi-Tier Energy Access Framework. For example, a household using one battery powered lantern and one charged cell phone would fall under the Tier 1 level of energy access. A household using two lanterns, one cell phone and a radio would be in Tier 1.5. These tiers are defined in **Table 13**.

Establishing an average monthly household expenditure for each energy tier using common rural technologies shows how household income level aligns with energy tiers. Secondly, it provides a basis to compare these costs to solar products that can offer an equivalent level of service by energy tier. This in turn reveals potential household savings by switching to solar products, as shown in **Figure 17** and **Table 14**.

It should be emphasized that even where households can be categorized into energy tiers by their income, few households actually pay full typical monthly costs because they do not have the available income. In reality, household income is highly variable throughout the year, and they simply do without service for portions of the month and year when cash is not available. This accounts for the difference between "typical monthly costs" (which are real) and "equivalent service costs" (which would be required to maintain the tier-level service). For example, very few households could actually run generators for the number of hours that would enable full tier 3 level services.

Table 12: Rural Energy Technology and Costs[115]

Technology	Description	Average Life (Years)	# of Units/ Month	Unit Operating Cost (USD)	Unit Capital Cost (USD)	Typical Monthly Cost (USD)	Unit Capital Cost (USD)	Typical Monthly Cost (USD)	Unit Capital Cost (USD)	Typical Monthly Cost (USD)
					2018 Scenario		2023 Scenario		2030 Scenario	
Torch lights/Electric Lanterns	Torch lights/electric lanterns powered by D-type, AA-type or AAA-type batteries	0.5	16	$0.16	$2.00	$2.56	$2.28	$2.91	$3.08	$3.94
Cell Phone Charging	Done at a charging station	-	8	$0.14	$0.00	$1.12	$0.00	$1.27	$0.00	$1.72
Smart Phone Charging	Done at a charging station	-	16	$0.14	$0.00	$2.24	$0.00	$2.55	$0.00	$3.45
Battery-powered DC Radio	Radio powered by dry cells replaced two times per month	-	8	$0.16	$0.00	$1.28	$0.00	$1.46	$0.00	$1.97
Lead Acid Battery-powered DC TV	DC TV powered by lead acid battery recharged once per week	2	4	$0.60	$50.00	$2.40	$56.89	$2.73	$76.91	$3.69
Small Petrol Generator	The most popular rural generator for basic use is 0.9kW generator (for phone charging, lighting, TV, fan and music system)	2	30	$1.12	$100.00	$33.60	$113.80	$38.23	$153.82	$51.68

Source: African Solar Designs analysis

[115] Data from FGDs, field surveys and various published data sources

Table 13: Typical Tier-Based Energy Costs

Device category and indicative energy supplied	Appliances and level of service	Non-solar devices used to power tier requirement	Typical Monthly Cost (USD) 2018	Typical Monthly Cost (USD) 2023	Typical Monthly Cost (USD) 2030
Tier 0 No electricity	• Characterized by complete lack of electricity services • Many cash-poor consumers are in this situation part of each month when they don't have money to buy dry cells or charge phones	• Rely solely on kerosene, wood and other fuel sources for cooking and lighting	• Subsistence level of energy • Absolute energy poverty	• Subsistence level of energy • Absolute energy poverty	• Subsistence level of energy • Absolute energy poverty
Tier 1 Range: 1 to 20 Wh/day	• Access to one torch powered by dry cell batteries • One cell phone powered by charging service	• One battery-powered light requires dry cell replacement on weekly basis • One cell phone charged 8 times per month	$3.68	$4.19	$5.66
Tier 1.5 Range: 20 to 100 Wh/day	• Access to one torch and one lantern each powered by dry cells • One cell phone powered by charging service • Radio powered by dry cells	• Two battery-powered light points require dry cell replacement on weekly basis • One cell phone charged 8 times per month • Radio dry cells replaced two times per month	$7.52	$8.56	$11.57
Tier 2 Range: 55 to 500 Wh/day	• One torch and two lanterns powered by dry cells • One cell phone and one smart phone powered by charge service • Radio • DC TV	• Three battery light points require dry cell replacement on weekly basis • One cell phone charged 8 times per month and one smart phone charged 16 times per month • TV/Radio powered by lead acid battery recharged once per week	$13.44	$15.29	$20.67
Tier 3 Range: 500 to 2500 Wh/day	• Five lighting points • Multiple cell/smart phones • AC radio and music system • AC TV	• Generator powers a set of appliances	$33.60	$38.23	$51.68

Source: African Solar Designs analysis

Per **Table 13**, it can be seen that, given the purchase price of dry cells and the cost of phone charging, the "ideal" electricity availability is extremely difficult to sustain. This is especially true where there is a high incidence of poverty in rural areas and lack of regular incomes. In reality, households often must reduce their energy consumption when cash is not available. This means that even a Tier 2 level family might drop to Tier 1 for a week each month when cash is not available to pay for phone charging or dry cell purchase.

- **Household Solar PV System Types**

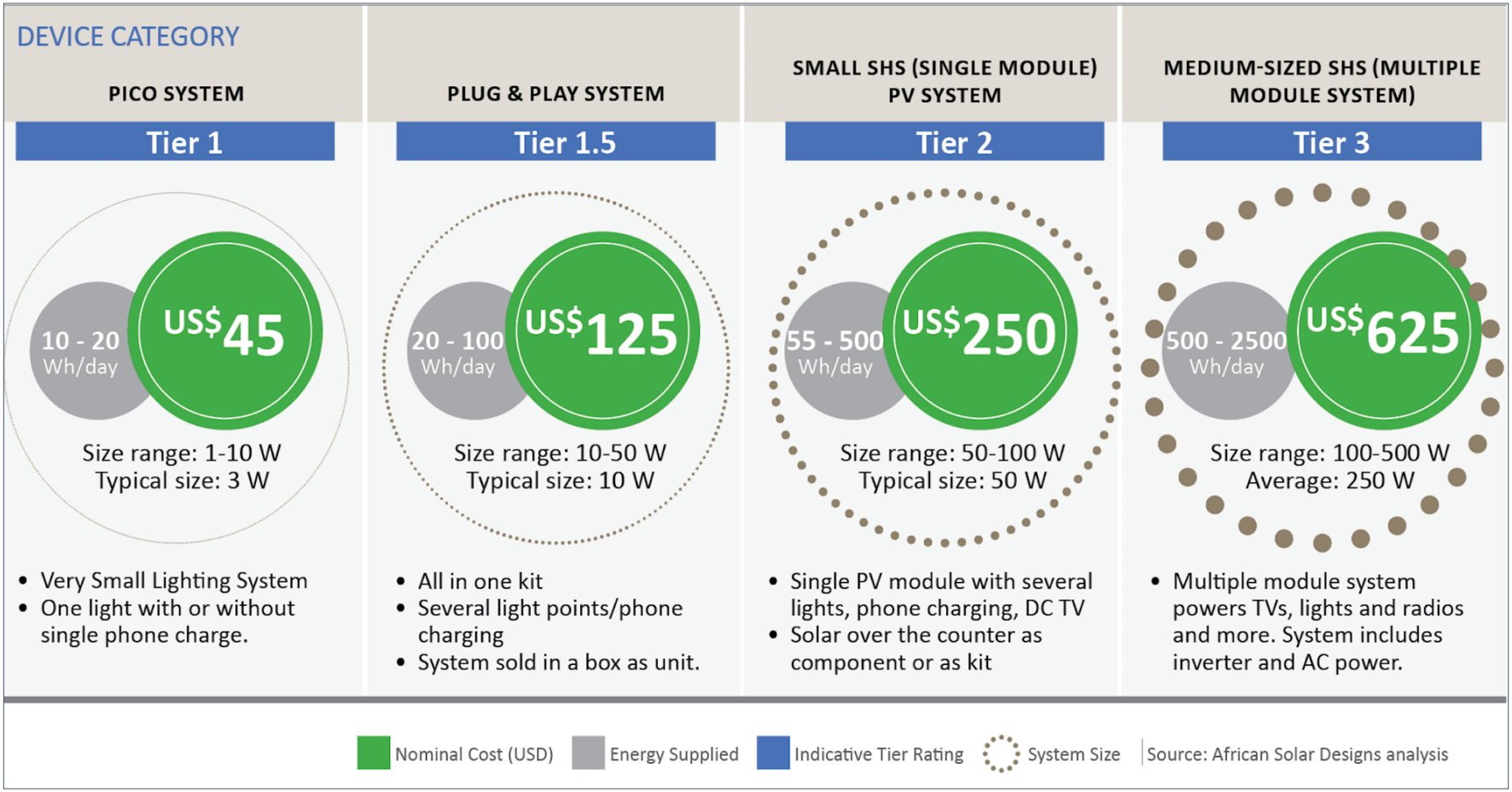
Solar PV systems can provide lower cost and higher levels of service than existing dry cell, phone charging and generator options. In order to model how solar systems can meet existing energy use categories, levels of service and ability to pay, four types of household solar systems are configured to match the tier-based demands of off-grid communities. The system descriptions, energy outputs, prices, tier ratings and target consumer groups are listed in **Figure 17**.

- **Current usage and procurement process for household solar products**

According to feedback from focus group participants, solar is widely used in off-grid areas of Trarza, Brakna, Adrar and Assaba regions, as part of large government, donor and NGO projects focusing on household use. A total of 15,000 solar kits have been distributed by ADER / APAUS and at least 120 multifunctional platforms (PTFM) were realized through the APAUS, TENMIYA and GRET programs.

The population using solar systems is mostly located in rural areas (an estimated 40% of the population). However, the geographic reach of suppliers in the off-grid rural areas remains limited. The most active sales areas are in Nouakchott and in Kaédi.

Figure 17: Household PV System Descriptions and Market Segments



Source: African Solar Designs analysis

- **Potential household demand for off-grid solar products**

Looking beyond current use of off-grid solar products by households, this study analyzes potential for OGS market development by estimating potential household demand based on household income. Household income shown in **Table 14** is sourced from World Bank demographic data based on household surveys, which reports income by population quintiles. From household income, potential for energy spending is estimated as 10% of monthly income (see methodology annex). Future scenarios project higher energy budgets as household incomes rise with economic development over time. In all scenarios, the large majority of off-grid households will fall under the lowest income quintile.

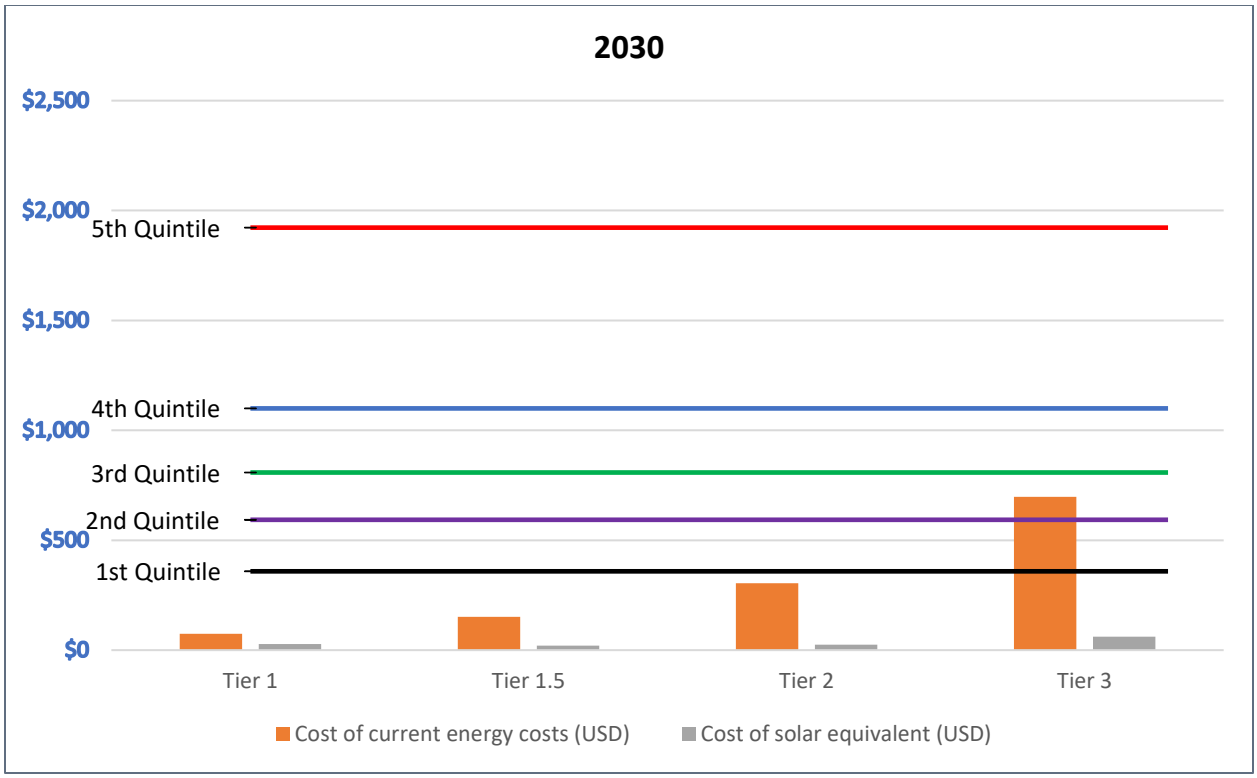
Table 14: Energy Expenditure of Different Income Groups

Population Income Quintiles	Per Capita Income (USD per month)	Household Income (USD per month)	Energy as % of Income	Monthly Energy Budget (USD)
2018 Scenario				
Lowest Quintile of Population	$40.79	$248.80	10%	$24.88
2nd Quintile of Population	$67.44	$411.36	10%	$41.14
3rd Quintile of Population	$91.91	$560.64	10%	$56.06
4th Quintile of Population	$125.08	$763.00	10%	$76.30
Highest Quintile of Population	$218.62	$1,333.59	10%	$133.36
2023 Scenario				
Lowest Quintile of Population	$46.09	$281.15	10%	$28.12
2nd Quintile of Population	$76.20	$464.84	10%	$46.48
3rd Quintile of Population	$103.86	$633.53	10%	$63.35
4th Quintile of Population	$141.35	$862.21	10%	$86.22
Highest Quintile of Population	$247.05	$1,506.99	10%	$150.70
2030 Scenario				
Lowest Quintile of Population	$48.99	$298.86	10%	$29.89
2nd Quintile of Population	$81.00	$494.12	10%	$49.41
3rd Quintile of Population	$110.40	$673.43	10%	$67.34
4th Quintile of Population	$150.25	$916.51	10%	$91.65
Highest Quintile of Population	$262.61	$1,601.90	10%	$160.19

Source: African Solar Designs analysis

Figure 18 summarizes the preceding data in this section by comparing household energy spending with typical rural energy costs and their solar equivalents. This analysis presents annualized costs (not including financing cost) of current energy technologies for each energy tier, compared with the annual cost of an equivalent solar product. Both the annual costs of current energy technologies and equivalent solar solutions consider the capital costs of the units, and the operating costs considered over the average unit life times. The data clearly shows strong potential savings for households to switch to solar products. Affordability also increases over time, as the cost of solar technology reduces, while the cost of traditional energy sources increases with inflation, and household income increases. Affordability here is shown by comparing annual income and energy costs over the life of a product. This indicates the need for short term financing, as many households still struggle to pay up front unit capital costs to achieve subsequent savings.

Figure 18: Annual Household Energy Budget by Quintile, Annual Energy Costs and Cost of Solar Equivalents



Source: African Solar Designs analysis

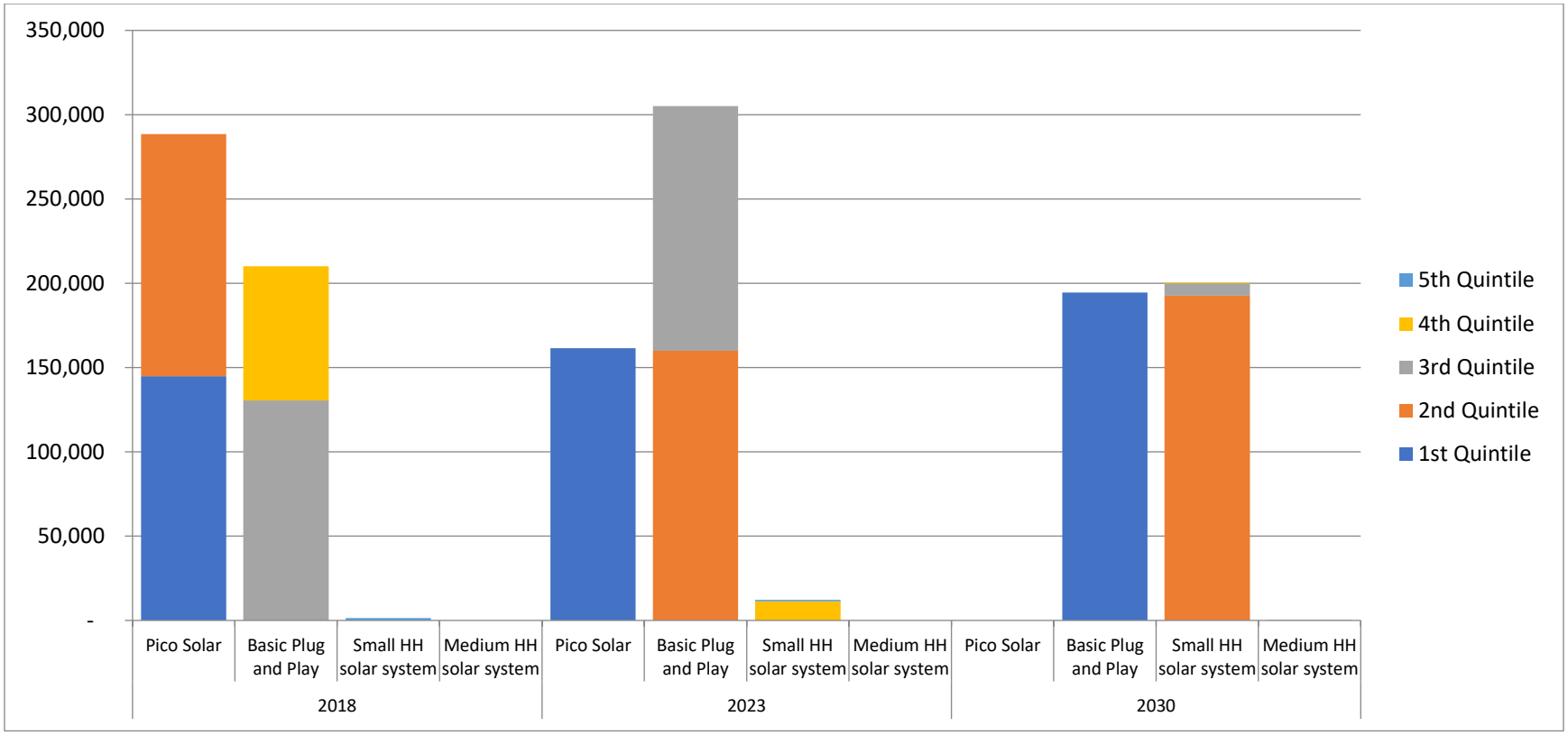
2.1.3 The Market for Household Devices without Consumer Finance

This section analyzes the cash market for various income levels and the corresponding energy services powered by OGS systems they can afford. Modelling of the viable market was based on income quintiles associated with data from the World Bank. The calculations and assumptions made are presented in **Table 14**. It was assumed that for a cash purchase a household is willing to save three months of their current energy expenditure to purchase the OGS system.

Based on the income quintiles and corresponding estimated current energy expenditure, all the households without access in all the income quintiles can afford an OGS system unfinanced. However, the households in the bottom four quintiles can only afford to purchase pico solar and basic plug and play systems in the 2018 scenario. Based on the assumption that 99% of the households in the highest quintile live in urban areas and are connected to the grid, the annualized off-grid cash market for basic plug and play systems is limited to 70,047 units in 2018. The market size would decrease over time grid electrification efforts outpace population growth, as shown below.

The model assumes that each household purchases only one system. It also does not consider on-grid households that would purchase OGS systems as a back-up power system due to poor grid quality and reliability. This market has become a key segment of the more mature OGS markets (e.g. in East Africa), but is not the focus of this study, which is based on sizing the current markets in West Africa, alongside a least cost analysis for future access to energy that prioritizes reliable grid connections where possible.

Figure 19: Estimated Number of Households Able to Afford Cash Purchase of OGS Systems by Income Group



Source: African Solar Designs analysis

Table 15 presents the estimated annualized cash market potential for off-grid solar product sales in the country's household sector.

Table 15: Estimated Cash Market Potential for Household Sector

Solar System	Annualized Demand (Units)	Annualized Demand (kW)	Annualized Market Value (USD)
2018 Scenario			
Pico Solar	144,199	433	$6,488,975
Basic Plug and Play	70,047	700	$8,755,828
Small HH solar system	290	14	$72,462
Medium HH solar system	0	0	$0.00
Total	**214,536**	**1,147**	**$15,317,265**
2023 Scenario			
Pico Solar	80,734	242	$3,848,157
Basic Plug and Play	101,725	1,017	$10,282,913
Small HH solar system	2,430	122	$491,278
Medium HH solar system	0	0	$0.00
Total	**184,889**	**1,381**	**$14,622,348**
2030 Scenario			
Pico Solar	0	0	$0.00
Basic Plug and Play	64,857	649	$3,994,550
Small HH solar system	40,055	2,003	$4,933,999
Medium HH solar system	39	10	$11,984
Total	**104,951**	**2,662**	**$8,940,533**

Source: African Solar Designs analysis

The following observations and conclusions can be made based on this analysis:

- The most common type of systems which the market can afford on a cash basis are Pico and small plug and play systems. Based on available income figures Tier 2 and Tier 3 solutions are less viable for the vast majority of the population.
- The model does not adequately address highest quintile and actual sales in the market. Note that the analysis does not predict purchases of Tier 3 equipment and it does not reflect what is happening at the extreme high end of the market. Because the analysis divides the population into relatively wide quintiles, it does not adequately address the very small portion of apex rural (and peri-urban) customers that now use generators.

2.1.4 The Financed Market for Off-Grid Solutions

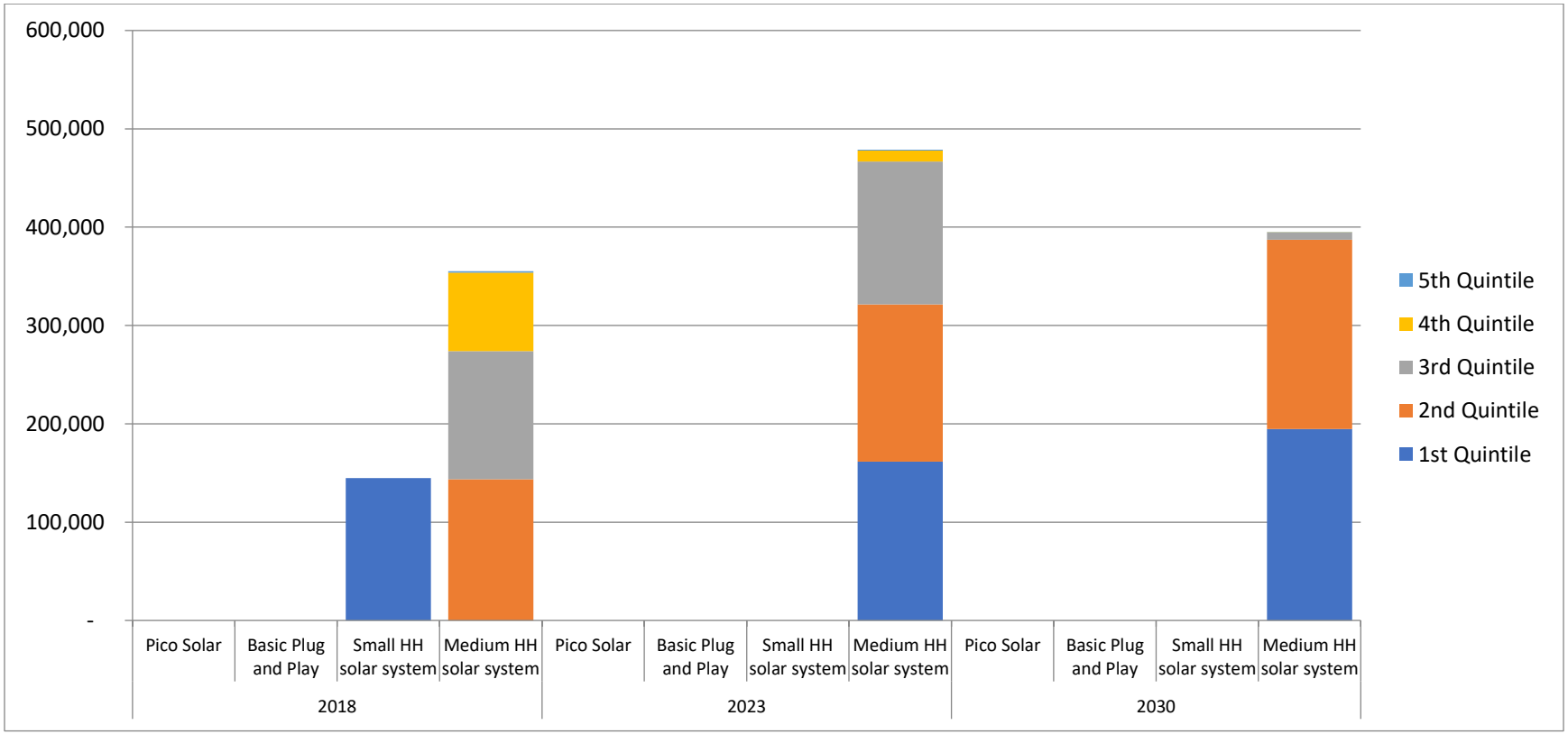
- **Financial Model**

In order to portray the effects of finance, a simple model was prepared that provides OGS system finance with a 16% p.a. interest rate[116] and a 24-month term. The financial model assumes that the households would be willing to save for three months of their current energy expenditure to cover a small upfront deposit of 10% of the system and their current energy expenditure would be used to pay the monthly installments.

This model assumes that each household will purchase the system that offers the highest energy serve level they can afford. As with the cash market model, it assumes that each household purchases one unit each. However, this finance model greatly over-estimates the potential market for credit as both MFIs and PAYG companies would likely be extremely cautious in approving customers. Without concrete data on the loans given to consumers in each income quintile in the country, it is difficult to estimate what the more realistic figures are. Nevertheless, this model does give a clear indication that long loan tenors combined with a low upfront payment would result in significant market transformation. The results of this analysis are presented below.

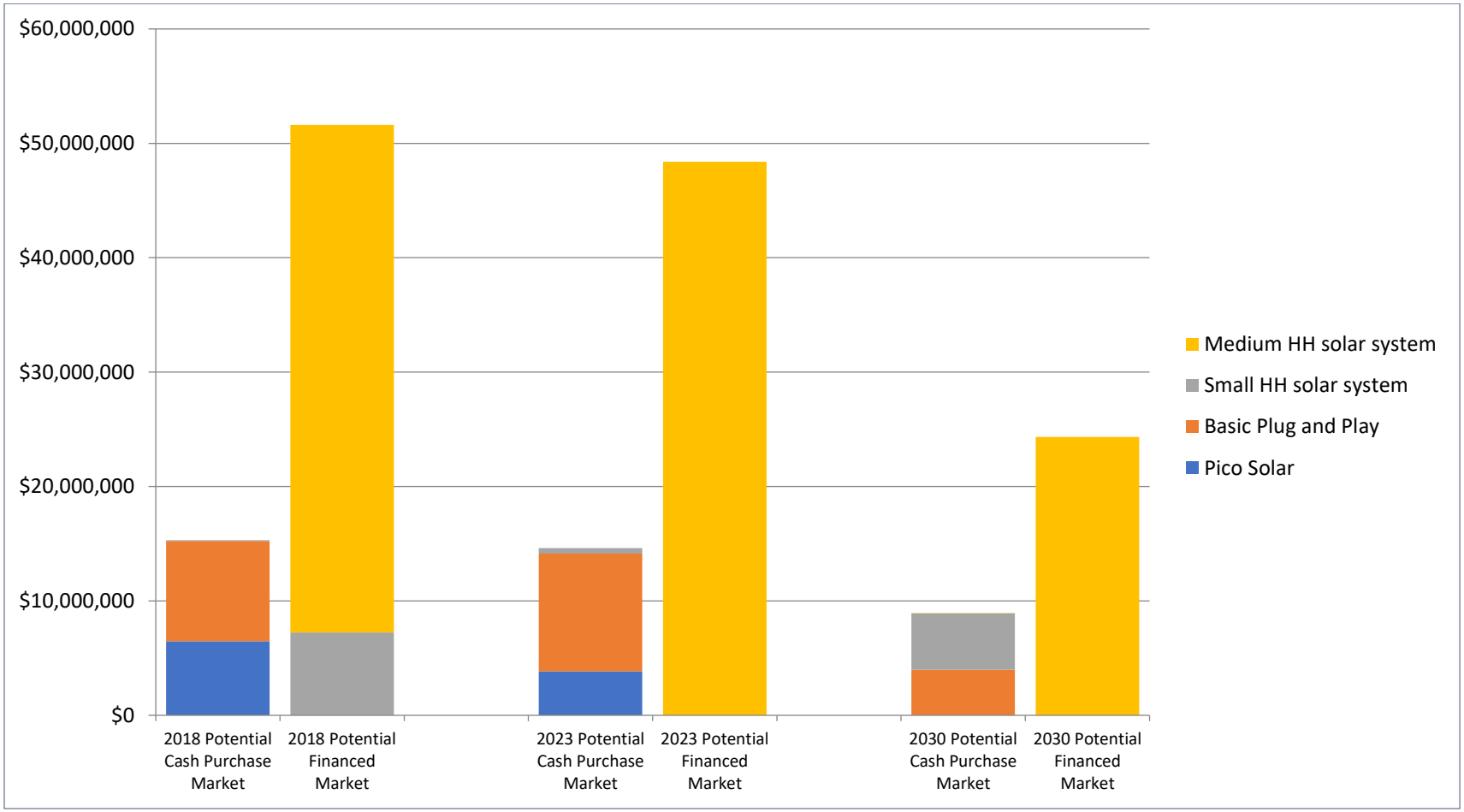
[116] "Financial Access and Household Welfare: evidence from Mauritania," World Bank Working Paper, (January, 2016): https://www.researchgate.net/publication/290433833_Financial_Access_and_Household_Welfare_evidence_from_Mauritania

Figure 20: Estimated Number of Households Able to Afford Financed OGS Systems by Income Group



Source: African Solar Designs analysis

Figure 21: Estimated Off-Grid Solar Cash and Financed Market Potential for Household Sector by System Type



Source: African Solar Designs analysis

In 2018, without financing, all 499,988 households without access in the country could afford an OGS system. However, with financing, they were enabled to acquire the larger systems. Consequently, the annualized potential market size increases from USD 15,317,266 to USD 51,629,198 (**Figure 21**).

The least-cost electrification 2023 scenario calculates that 478,791 households could be electrified by stand-alone systems. Under this scenario, all the households without access would have the ability to acquire at least one OGS system, however, financing enables them to acquire the larger systems. The annualized potential market size increases from USD 14,622,348 to USD 48,399,020 (**Figure 21**).

The least-cost electrification 2030 scenario calculates that the total number of households that could be electrified by stand-alone systems would rise to 395,042. Under this scenario, all the households without access would also have the ability to acquire at least one OGS system, however, financing enables them to acquire the larger systems. The annualized potential market size therefore increases from USD 8,940,534 to USD 24,330,634 (**Figure 21**).

Table 16 presents the estimated annualized financed market potential for off-grid solar product sales in the country's household sector.

Table 16: Estimated Financed Market Potential for Household Sector

Solar System	Annualized Demand (Units)	Annualized Demand (kW)	Annualized Market Value (USD)
2018 Scenario			
Pico Solar	0	0	$0.00
Basic Plug and Play	0	0	$0.00
Small HH solar system	28,985	1,449	$7,246,203
Medium HH solar system	71,013	17,753	$44,382,995
Total	**99,998**	**19,202**	**$51,629,198**
2023 Scenario			
Pico Solar	0	0	$0.00
Basic Plug and Play	0	0	$0.00
Small HH solar system	0	0	$0.00
Medium HH solar system	95,758	23,940	$48,399,020
Total	**95,758**	**23,940**	**$48,399,020**
2030 Scenario			
Pico Solar	0	0	$0.00
Basic Plug and Play	0	0	$0.00
Small HH solar system	0	0	$0.00
Medium HH solar system	79,008	19,752	$24,330,634
Total	**79,008**	**19,752**	**$24,330,634**

Source: African Solar Designs analysis

2.1.5 Consumer Perceptions, Interest and Awareness

- **Purchasers of solar are "early adopters" who tend to buy from system integrators as well as hardware traders**

  - **Retail purchasers:** Most purchases are made over-the-counter sales in capital and major cities as cash purchases. As with the consumer migration from kerosene to electric lights, there is a gradual migration from low cost dry-cell electric lamps to solar PV systems. Consumers make purchases in the same shops, and sellers are adapting to changes in demand by offering solar equipment.
  - **High-end consumers:** As elaborated in **Section 2.4**, a small number of early adopting consumers buy from specialized solar integrators who offer quality services and components. A large portion of buyers in this segment opt for systems above 200Wp for residential and small business demand.
  - **PAYG:** As the PAYG market segment is still in its nascent stages, detailed data of PAYG customers is still largely unavailable, although recent experience from East Africa suggests that these customers include both rural and peri-urban inhabitants. The PAYG business model / method is still not widely understood; moreover, there are still questions about how to account for the seasonality of incomes as opposed to regular monthly payment plans.

- **Consumers have a general awareness that solar can economically replace generators and batteries, but they are still largely uninformed about solar electric specifics**

  - While knowledge is gradually improving (particularly for small/pico solar lighting systems) most consumers are not yet educated enough to make informed decisions about solar systems.
  - There are often geographic disparities in awareness levels of OGS products, as households in urban or peri-urban areas tend to have better understanding of solar vis-à-vis rural villages.
  - Consumers are hearing "general messages" (i.e. "solar is good," "solar can be cheap," "solar can be more economical"). These messages need to be translated into more specific understanding of the technology (i.e. what are the options, what products are better than others, where to buy solar, what is a best way to pay for solar, what suppliers are more reliable, how to manage O&M, etc.).
  - Consumers often do not get fair information on the product they are buying. Marketing messages are quite mixed and much 'overpromising' occurs for systems. Consumers are largely unaware of standards and quality assurance for solar.

- **Perceptions of households vary according to experience they have had with solar**

  - Although many households recognize the benefits of solar, there is a general perception that solar equipment is very expensive and that products are considered largely un-affordable.
  - Many customers are disappointed with solar technology or mistrust it because:
    - They have bought a substandard/not certified product that broke down quickly;
    - There was no adequate maintenance, aftersales service when the system broke down;
    - There was lack of understanding/experience on how to use the system and it broke down due to over usage or incorrect usage, with no warranty or fault management system
  - Households that have a fuel-powered generator, consider them as a 'sunk cost' and treat solar only as an addition to that cost.
  - Solar is seen as risky by many. Since there are so many options and little information as to what the best solution is, many people think that it is easy to make a costly mistake in choosing what is best for them. Generators are much better understood.
  - Some consumers have 'investment fatigue' from buying multiple solar products of low or unknown quality and are unwilling to make further investments.

- **Willingness to Pay is strongly associated with consumer understanding and perceptions of OGS**

  Although there is demonstrated ability to pay for households in higher income demographics on cash purchase, and for many households through a financed scenario, willingness to pay is strongly associated with consumer understanding and perceptions of OGS. Component-based Plug-and-Play SHS are much more expensive than battery-powered alternatives and are more than what households expect to pay for access to lighting. Consumers who purchase low-priced inferior lighting products for which they have low expectations are less likely to be willing to purchase a relatively high priced OGS system without fully understanding the difference between the products. Since most of the retail battery-powered lighting products are low cost, conservative rural consumers are wary of expensive new products if they are unable to assess product quality and durability. For this reason, willingness to pay presents a much larger barrier for the development of sales than actual *ability* to pay. Consumer awareness campaigns can grow the demand for quality products.

2.2 Demand – Institutional

2.2.1 Overview of Institutional Market Segment

This section estimates the market potential for off-grid solar products for institutional users in Mauritania. This market includes the following segments: (i) rural water supply, (ii) healthcare facilities, (iii) primary and secondary schools, and (iv) public town center lighting. The following sub-sections provide an overview of the assumptions used for each market segment along with corresponding analysis. The section concludes with an assessment of institutional ability to pay, looking at funding sources and highest potential market segments. **Annex 2** provides an overview of the methodology, including all calculations.

2.2.2 Analysis of Institutional Market Segment Demand

Table 17 shows the estimated annualized cash market potential for institutional users in Mauritania. This estimation is calculated using available GIS data, secondary research, and primary source field data. The analysis is based on available information from planned expansion of the sectors and typical usage patterns and costs of existing systems in the country. There was insufficient GIS data available to properly estimate the market size; as a result, per capita comparisons were made with similar countries to analyze certain sectors as described below.[117]

Table 17: Indicative Total Cash Market Potential for Institutional Sector[118]

Institutional Sector		Units	kW Equivalent	Cash Value (USD)
Water supply	Low power pumping system	181	271	$677,438
	Medium power pumping system	28	113	$283,000
	High power pumping system	59	590	$1,475,000
	Subtotal	268	974	$2,435,438
Healthcare	Health post (HC1)	42	10	$26,000
	Basic healthcare facility (HC2)	7	10	$24,563
	Enhanced healthcare facility (HC3)	4	15	$37,275
	Subtotal	53	35	$87,838
Education	Primary schools	165	82	$246,975
	Secondary schools	4	8	$19,440
	Subtotal	169	90	$266,415
Public lighting	Public lighting (excluding street lighting)	75	38	$113,025
TOTAL		**565**	**1,137**	**$2,902,716**

Source: African Solar Designs analysis

[117] See **Annex 2** for more details.
[118] Estimated units, kW equivalent and cash value are annualized to reflect typical lifespan of OGS systems; see **Annex 2** for more details.

- **Water Supply**

Table 18: Key Assumptions for Water Supply Sector Analysis

Sector	System Sizes	Key Assumptions
Water supply	• Low Power (1,500 W) • Medium Power (4,000 W) • High Power (10,000 W)	The type of pump selected is dependent on depth, yield, community need and other factors. System sizes depend on the common pump sizes used for rural applications: • Low power pumps are used for low/medium head applications. They replace hand pumps for shallow wells • Medium power pumps have high volume low head and medium volume medium head applications • High power pumps are used for high volume or high head applications such as deep wells and boreholes

The water supply sector analysis considered the electricity needs for water supply for communities in off-grid areas. Energy is only one component of this sector – a variety of factors (water quality, number of users, yields of well, delivery system etc.) need to be considered when planning for off-grid water supply. The supply of solar powered pumping systems for village water supply requires additional planning and study to identify the most viable sites.

As GIS data was not available to conduct the analysis, a per capita comparison made using data from Côte d'Ivoire[119] identified off-grid potable water points such as boreholes and wells that could be electrified by stand-alone systems. Based on these assumptions, the estimated annualized cash market potential for the water supply sector is presented in **Table 19**.

Table 19: Estimated Cash Market Potential for Water Supply[120]

Pump Type	Units	Size (kW)	Cash Value (USD)
Low power	181	271	$677,438
Medium power	28	113	$283,000
High power	59	590	$1,475,000
Total	**268**	**974**	**$2,435,438**

Source: African Solar Designs analysis

- **Healthcare**

Table 20: Key Assumptions for Healthcare Sector Analysis

Sector	System Sizes	Key Assumptions
Healthcare	• HC1: Dispensary health post (300 W) • HC2: Basic health facility (1500 W) • HC3: Enhanced health facility (4200 W)	A per capita comparison identified a total of 410 off-grid healthcare facilities that could be electrified by stand-alone systems

The healthcare sector analysis considered the electricity needs for off-grid health facilities in the country. Off-grid clinics require power for lighting and various Information and Communications Technology (ICT) needs, including phone charging, maternity, medical examinations, vaccine refrigeration, laboratory, sterilization and staff housing. The size of a facility and number of patients served determines the amount of energy it requires.

[119] Côte d'Ivoire was grouped in the same category as Mauritania; See **Annex 2** for more details

[120] Estimated units, kW equivalent and cash value are annualized to reflect typical lifespan of OGS systems; see **Annex 2** for more details.

As GIS data was not available to conduct the analysis, a per capita comparison made using data from Côte d'Ivoire[121] identified off-grid health facilities categorized according to their size (HC1, HC2, and HC3) that could be electrified by stand-alone systems.[122] To establish electricity demand, an assessment of equipment found within each category of healthcare facility was undertaken, with the daily demand of each used to calculate the system size required to cater to the load of the facility (**Table 21**). The assumptions of system size below are based on the services offered at each of these facilities.

Table 21: Healthcare Facility Categorization and Electricity Demand[123]

Type of Facility	Load Category	Wh/day	Total Load (Wh/day)	System Size (W)
Health post (HC1)	Lighting	240		
	Communication	160		
	ICT	800		
			1,200	**250**
Basic healthcare facility (HC2)	Lighting	1,600		
	Maternity	800		
	Vaccine refrigeration	800		
	Communication	400		
	Examination room	400		
	ICT	1,600		
	Staff housing	400		
			6,000	**1,500**
Enhanced healthcare facility (HC3)	Lighting	3,200		
	Communication	1,600		
	Examination room	1,200		
	ICT	2,400		
	Maternity	2,400		
	Laboratory	2,000		
	Sterilization	1,200		
	Vaccine refrigeration	1,200		
	Staff housing	1,600		
			16,800	**4,200**

Source: GIZ; African Solar Designs analysis

Based on these assumptions, the estimated annualized cash market potential for health facilities is presented in **Table 22**. The distribution of potential off-grid health facilities is shown in **Figure 8** in **Section 1.2.2.4**.

Table 22: Estimated Cash Market Potential for Healthcare Facilities[124]

Type of Facility	Units	kW Equivalent	Cash value (USD)
Health post (HC1)	42	10	$26,000
Basic healthcare facility (HC2)	7	10	$24,563
Enhanced healthcare facility (HC3)	4	15	$37,275
Total	**53**	**35**	**$87,838**

Source: African Solar Designs analysis

[121] Côte d'Ivoire was grouped in the same category as Mauritania; See **Annex 2** for more details

[122] NOTE: This represents a small subset of the overall health infrastructure in the country; See **Annex 1** for more details.

[123] "Photovoltaics for Productive Use Applications: A Catalogue of DC-Appliances," GIZ, (2016): https://www.sun-connect-news.org/fileadmin/DATEIEN/Dateien/New/GIZ__2016__Catalogue_PV_Appliances_for_Micro_Enterprises_low.pdf

[124] Estimated units, kW equivalent and cash value are annualized to reflect typical lifespan of OGS systems; see **Annex 2** for more details.

- **Education**

Table 23: Key Assumptions for Education Sector Analysis[125]

Sector	System Sizes	Key Assumptions
Education	• Elementary schools (500 W) • Secondary schools (1920 W)	A per capita comparison identified a total of 3,293 off-grid primary schools and 81 off-grid secondary schools that could be electrified by stand-alone systems

The education sector analysis considered the electricity needs of off-grid primary and secondary schools.[126] These include lighting, ICT (computers, tablets etc.), communication (phone charging), laboratories and staff housing. The size of a school and number of students determines the amount of energy it requires. As GIS data was not available to conduct the analysis, a per capita comparison made using data from Côte d'Ivoire[127] identified off-grid schools primary and secondary that could be electrified by stand-alone systems. To establish electricity demand, an assessment of equipment found within each type of school was undertaken, with the daily demand of each used to calculate the system size required to cater to the load of the school (**Table 24**).

Table 24: Education Center Categorization and Electricity Demand[128]

Type of Facility	Load Category	Wh/day	Total Load (Wh/day)	System Size (W)
Primary School	Communication	160		
	Lighting	640		
	ICT	800		
	Staff house	400		
			2,000	**500**
Secondary School	Communication	160		
	Lighting	1,920		
	ICT	3,200		
	Laboratory use	800		
	Staff house	1,600		
			7,680	**1,920**

Source: GIZ; African Solar Designs analysis

Based on these assumptions, the estimated annualized cash market potential for primary and secondary schools is presented in **Table 25**. The distribution of potential off-grid primary and secondary schools is shown in **Figure 8** in **Section 1.2.2.4**.

Table 25: Estimated Cash Market Potential for Primary and Secondary Schools[129]

Type of Facility	Units	kW Equivalent	Cash value (USD)
Primary school	165	82	$246,975
Secondary school	4	8	$19,440
Total	**169**	**90**	**$266,415**

Source: African Solar Designs analysis

[125] NOTE: While the GIS analysis in **Section 1.2.2.4** covers all education centers (including nursery, pre-primary, primary, secondary, technical-vocational, universities etc.), this analysis only examines primary and secondary schools (see **Annex 1** and **Annex 2**).
[126] Primary schools encompass both primary and nursery schools. Vocational schools and universities were not considered because they tend to be in cities, which are often grid electrified.
[127] Côte d'Ivoire was grouped in the same category as Mauritania; See **Annex 2** for more details
[128] "Photovoltaics for Productive Use Applications: A Catalogue of DC-Appliances," GIZ, (2016): https://www.sun-connect-news.org/fileadmin/DATEIEN/Dateien/New/GIZ__2016__Catalogue_PV_Appliances_for_Micro_Enterprises_low.pdf
[129] Estimated units, kW equivalent and cash value are annualized to reflect typical lifespan of OGS systems; see **Annex 2** for more details.

- **Public Lighting**

Table 26: Key Assumptions for Public Lighting Sector Analysis

Sector	System Sizes	Key Assumptions
Public lighting	Standard system (200 W)	• District population figures were used to determine the number of market centers per district, assuming 2,000 people per market center • Each market center was assumed to have two public lighting points

Analysis of the public lighting sector considered the public lighting needs for off-grid villages and market centers. It did not assess public street lighting, which would generally be included in road infrastructure projects. Based on these assumptions, the estimated annualized cash market potential for the public lighting sector is presented in **Table 27**.

Table 27: Estimated Cash Market Potential for Public Lighting[130]

Public Lighting Network	Units	kW Equivalent	Cash value (USD)
Village lighting (excluding street lighting)	75	38	$113,025

Source: African Solar Designs analysis

2.2.3 Ability to Pay and Access to Finance

Financing for institutional off-grid systems in Mauritania typically comes from budget allocations made directly by relevant ministries or, more commonly, by donor-funded projects. In recent years, virtually all institutional solar projects in the country have been financed with tender-based procurements and cash-based contracts. Government allocations are typically made ad-hoc, depending on the needs and priorities of the ministry, and whether funds are available. Operation, maintenance and replacement of parts in energy systems (e.g. solar system batteries and inverters) is typically the responsibility of the institution and community. Schools, clinics and other institutions with generators must buy fuel on a regular basis. With the development of the renewable energy sector, NGO/donor funds increasingly design projects that ensure that maintenance of the system is factored into its implementation. However, when there are no funds to maintain the system any further, usage is typically discontinued, and the system falls into disrepair.

Institutional users that rely on government or donor funds for the purchase and O&M of solar systems may be constrained by limited funds and/or competing budget priorities. Thus, local communities benefiting from solar electrification would also have to bear some long-term costs for the maintenance of systems and replacement of parts. In the event that public or donor funding is made available to cover the initial capital expenditure, funds can be raised by local communities through a minimal tariff to customers of the health facilities, water pumping stations etc. for long-term O&M. A market standard of 5-10% of the capital expenditure is accepted as a rate for annual maintenance of systems.[131]

Given budgetary constraints, some institutional sectors may be prioritized for solar electrification over others. Advanced health centers for example, could be prioritized by governments and communities given that electricity is essential to run advanced healthcare equipment. It may be easier in this case to extract maintenance fees from community members receiving health services or budget allocations from local government. In contrast, off-grid schools can be run more easily without access to electricity and may therefore present a lower priority institutional market.

[130] Estimated units, kW equivalent and cash value are annualized to reflect typical lifespan of OGS systems; see **Annex 2** for more details.
[131] Grundfos: https://www.grundfos.com/service-support/encyclopedia-search/maintenance-and-repaircostscm.html

2.3 Demand – Productive Use

2.3.1 Overview of Productive Use Market Segment

The section provides an overview of the main characteristics of productive use of energy (PUE) and how off-grid solar applications have the potential to generate economic activity, increase productivity and transform rural livelihoods in Mauritania. Focus group participants noted that productive use applications in the agricultural, food processing and informal sectors already exist in the country, including solar powered lighting, mobile phone charging, refrigeration and chilling, water pumping, irrigation and agricultural processing. Focus group participants indicated that support for private sector can play a key role in scaling-up usage of solar powered appliances for PUE, especially in agro-pastoral activities. Other observations included the need for support for good quality solar products, equipment maintenance services, targeted training for youth and women and provision of credit to companies.

The PUE market sizing analyzed demand for SME applications for village microenterprises, value-added applications for solar powered irrigation, milling and refrigeration, and connectivity applications for mobile phone charging enterprises.

The calculation of the estimated off-grid solar market for SMEs focused only on barbering and tailoring appliances, which comprises a small portion of overall SME sector demand. These two microenterprises are indicative of the service-based SME off-grid solar market, as they benefit significantly from extended working hours and the use of modern appliances/machinery. The estimated demand for this market segment is therefore intended to provide a baseline for future research, as a more robust analysis would be necessary to assess realistic demand from all SMEs.

The value-added applications that were analyzed include solar pumping for smallholder agricultural irrigation, solar powered milling and solar refrigeration. Access to energy for agriculture is critical to economic development, particularly given the sector's importance to GDP in the country.

Off-grid solar power supports a wide range of connectivity applications, including mobile phone charging, wi-fi servers, banks, mobile money kiosks, and telecommunications towers. Mobile phone and internet connectivity are also necessary precursors for mobile money and PAYG solutions in the off-grid solar sector. The market sizing examined rates of mobile phone ownership and mobile internet penetration to estimate the market potential for mobile phone charging enterprises (stations/kiosks) in the country.

Mauritania's economy is gradually recovering from low commodity prices that threatened recent gains in poverty reduction. Economic diversification has become a key priority for the Government, which has in the past relied heavily on mining and public sectors. To reduce future risks, the GoM plans to close infrastructure gaps and support development of labor-intensive sectors (fisheries, agriculture, and livestock production) where comparative advantages have been identified and move the country toward renewable energy sources such as solar and wind.[132] Solar applications for PUE could benefit Mauritanians in southern regions where most of the population are rural livestock and agricultural producers.[133]

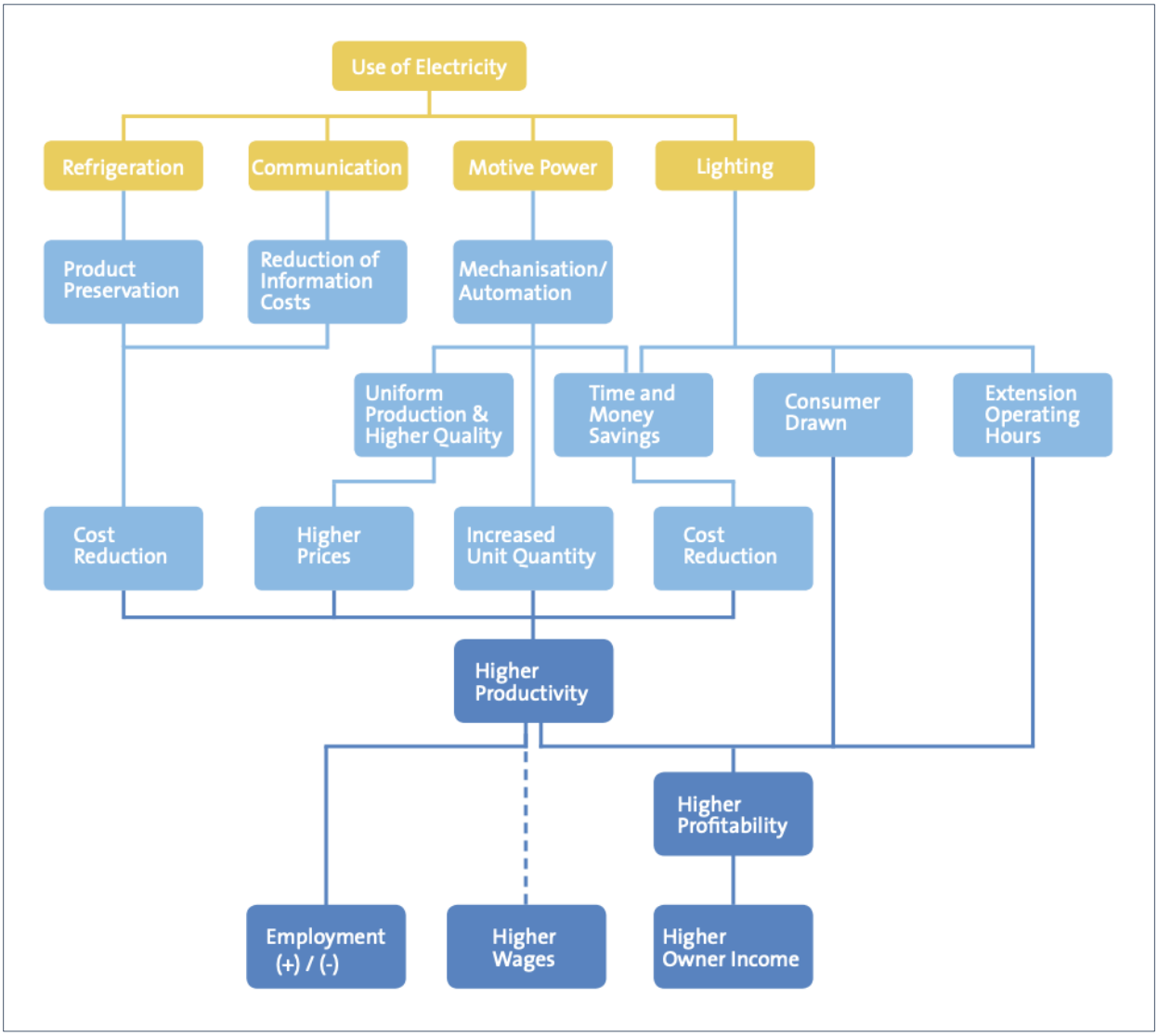
Solar appliances could also help boost services, which is another key sector for economic growth. This would particularly be useful to SMEs in Mauritania that are constrained by poor and unreliable electricity

[132] "Islamic Republic of Mauritania: Staff Report for the 2016 Article IV Consultation," International Monetary Fund (May 2016): https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/scr/2016/cr16115.pdf

[133] More than 60% of rural households in Mauritania rely on agro-pastoralism for their livelihoods especially livestock production which represents 75% of agricultural GDP and plays a vital role in food security and resilience.

supply. It is important to note that the impact of electricity use on SMEs depends on a variety of external and internal factors, especially access to markets, the location of the firm, supply of inputs and financial capability. Therefore, the extent to which firms can afford to invest in off-grid solar solutions is determined largely by increases in productivity, profitability, and employment/wages from the investment in the off-grid appliance (**Figure 22**).

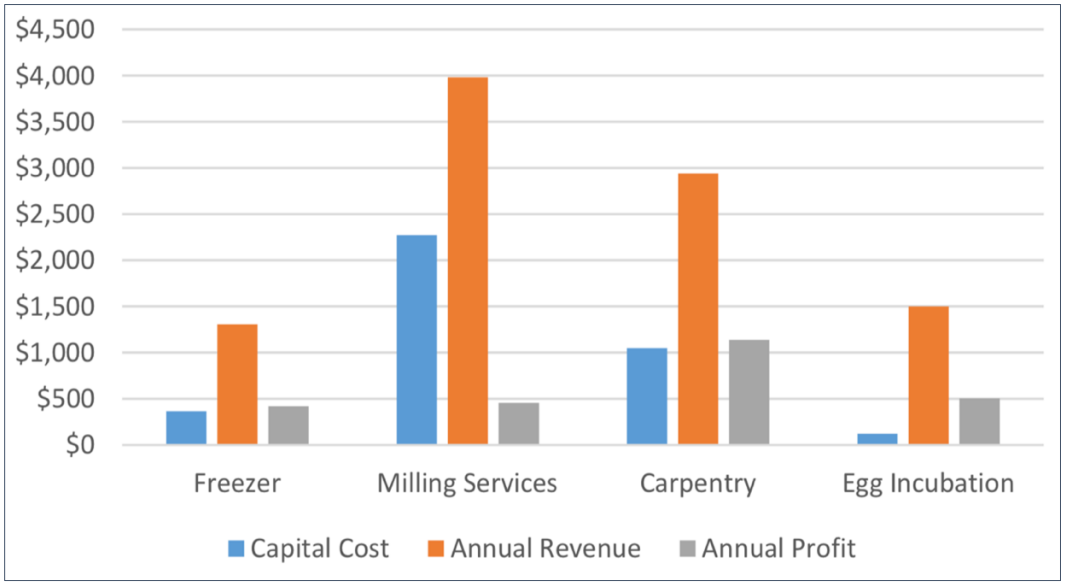
Figure 22: Pathways from Electricity to Income Generation[134]



Source: EUEI PDF and GIZ: Productive Use of Energy – A Manual for Electrification Practitioners

[134] Productive Use of Energy – A Manual for Electrification Practitioners," European Union Energy Initiative Partnership Dialogue Facility (EUEI PDF) and GIZ, (2011): https://www.giz.de/fachexpertise/downloads/giz-eueipdf-en-productive-use-manual.pdf

Figure 23: Analysis of Cost, Revenue and Profit for Various Off-Grid Productive Use Applications[135]



NOTE: Annual profit does not include recovery of cost capital

Source: USAID-NREL and Energy 4 Impact: Productive Use of Energy in African Microgrids

In order to organize and simplify this analysis and to deliver meaningful insights on country-level market sizing, productive solar applications have been divided into three main groups (**Table 28**).

Table 28: Overview of Productive Use Application

Productive Use Application	Description
1) SME applications for village businesses	Barbers and tailors are the two microenterprises that were analyzed. While these businesses employ people and are critical for off-grid towns, they do not create additional income for towns and are not transformative in nature. SME businesses are therefore most at risk during economic downturns because they are at the mercy of the overall economic and political climate.
2) Value-added applications	Solar-powered irrigation, refrigeration/chilling and milling are the three value-added applications that were analyzed. Value-added productive use applications enable businesses to add value to products or services and to build new income streams. This can be done by creating a new product or service or by enhancing the value of an existing product (e.g. milling maize). Water pumping tools that support the agricultural, dairy or fishing value chains are included here (water pumps, refrigerators/chillers, and grain mills).
3) Connectivity / ICT applications	Mobile phone charging is the connectivity application that was analyzed. Connectivity applications enable consumers to communicate and access data from the internet. Following the advent of mobile phones and mobile money in East Africa, solar devices that support connectivity applications became the most important income earning applications in East Africa. Mobile phone charging is extremely important for the telecommunications sector. Other connectivity applications include wi-fi servers, mobile money kiosks, banks, and telecommunications towers.

Source: African Solar Designs

[135] "Productive Use of Energy in African Micro-Grids: Technical and Business Considerations," USAID-NREL and Energy 4 Impact, (August 2018): https://sun-connect-news.org/fileadmin/DATEIEN/Dateien/New/productive_use_of_energy_in_african_micro-grids.pdf

- **Geographic Locations**

Most PUE sector activities take place in rural off-grid areas in Mauritania, especially in the southern regions where electricity access is restricted and expensive. These include Trarza, Brakna, Adrar and Assaba regions where solar is already widely used as a result of various GoM and donor supported off-grid projects. Other identified areas include Tagant, Gorgol and Hodh el Charghi.

2.3.2 Analysis of Productive Use Market Segment Demand

Data from the World Bank, Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO) and GSMA was used to conduct the PUE market study. In order to conduct the analysis, several key assumptions were made about PUE applications, which are presented in the sections below and in **Annex 2**in greater detail. **Table 29** presents the estimated annualized cash market potential for off-grid solar productive use applications.

Table 29: Indicative Total Cash Market Potential for Productive Use Sector[136]

Productive Use Sector		Units	kW Equivalent	Cash Value (USD)
SME Applications for Village Businesses	Microenterprises	117	29	$73,125
Value-added Applications	Irrigation	34,722	4,167	$22,569,444
	Milling	13	82	$204,411
	Refrigeration	75	414	$1,036,063
	Subtotal	34,810	4,663	$23,809,918
Connectivity Applications	Phone Charging	3,225	1,290	$2,780,249
TOTAL		**38,152**	**5,982**	**$26,663,292**

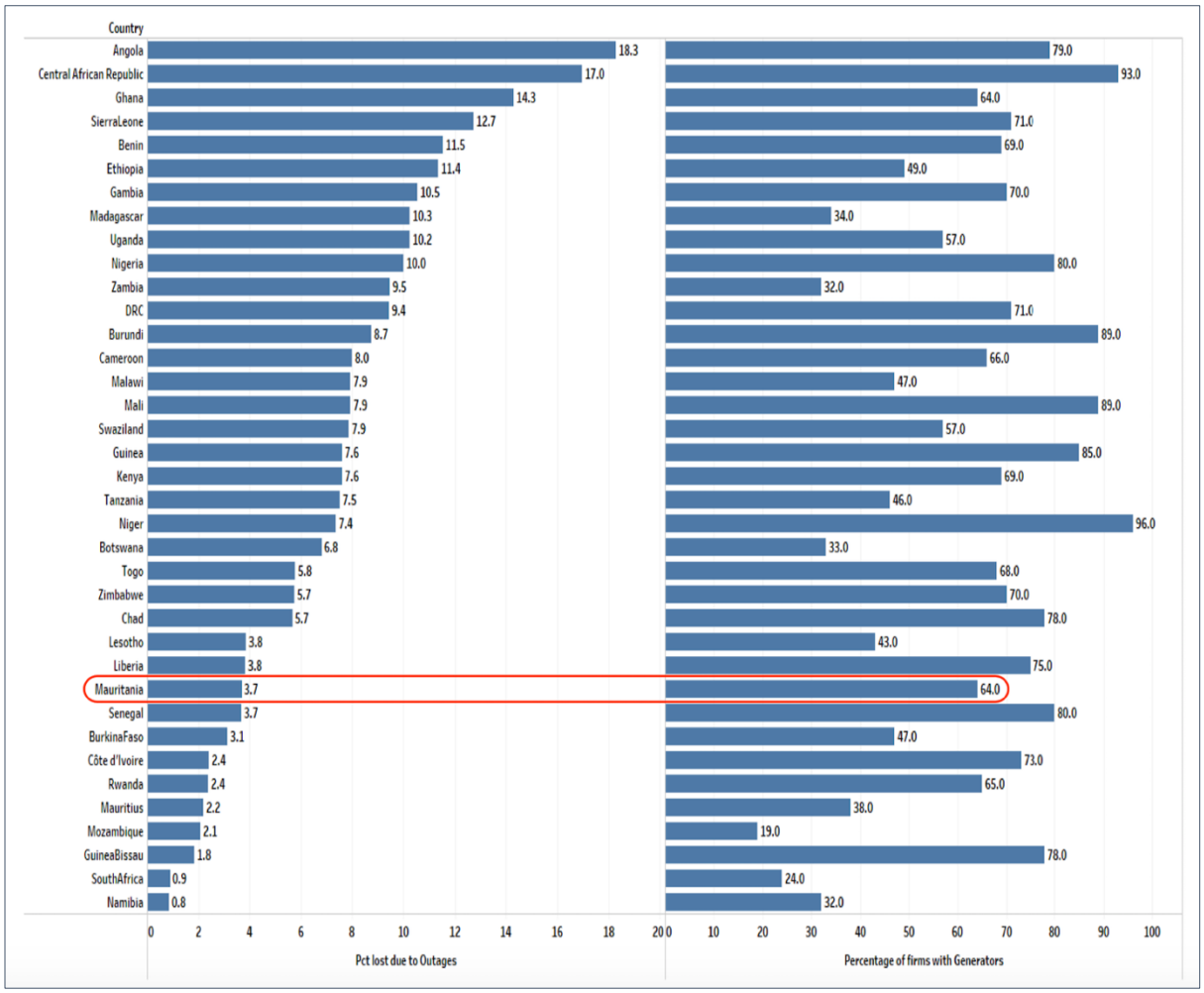
Source: Food and Agriculture Organization, GIZ and GSMA; African Solar Designs analysis

- **SME Applications for Village Businesses**

Access to solar powered appliances can have a wide-ranging impact on SMEs, many of which would otherwise rely on diesel generators to power their enterprises. An estimated 33% of SMEs in developing countries use fossil fuel powered generators in order to address energy insecurity.[137] This practice is extremely common in Mauritania, where power outages have accounted for 3.7% of annual sales lost and where 64% of firms own generators to compensate for inconsistent power supply **(Figure 24)**.

[136] Estimated units, kW equivalent and cash value are annualized to reflect typical lifespan of OGS systems; see **Annex 2** for more details.
[137] Foster, V., and Steinbuks, J., "Paying the Price for Unreliable Power Supplies: In-House Generation of Electricity by Firms in Africa," World Bank Policy Research Working Paper, (2009): https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/4116

Figure 24: Percentage of Sales Lost due to Power Outages and Percentage of Firms with Generator[138]



Source: Center for Global Development

While many rural microenterprises would benefit from access to solar power, it may not be a requirement for a commercial enterprise to have access to electrical appliances. Further, while petit trade is facilitated greatly by the availability of electricity (kiosks and retail shops can be open longer hours and sell more and fresher products), electricity is not essential for SMEs because even without lighting, small shops can still sell their merchandise. Additionally, unlike value-added applications, there is not as strong a correlation between the value of the electric appliance and the economic capability of the SME. For example, a refrigerator used to preserve perishable food and chill beverages, irrespective of the value of food and beverages, may be used by either a large hotel or a street side vendor.

With the exception of replacing diesel gensets, the estimation of the available market for off-grid solar appliances for SMEs is not as closely correlated with economic indicators. Nonetheless, some widely marketed solar powered appliances are more centrally related to the revenue generation of SMEs. Investments in such appliances in off-grid and low-income settings are more likely to be sustainable. This

[138] Ramachandran, V., Shah, M. K., Moss, T., "How Do African Firms Respond to Unreliable Power? Exploring Firm Heterogeneity Using K-Means Clustering," Center for Global Development, (August 2018): https://www.cgdev.org/sites/default/files/how-do-african-firms-respond-unreliable-power-exploring-firm-heterogeneity-using-k-means.pdf

study analyzed barbering and tailoring appliances (i.e. hair clippers and sewing machines designed or marketed for off-grid solar powered settings) with respect to microenterprises that face difficulty in accessing outside capital, as the two appliances would provide an economic opportunity for such entrepreneurs that are demographically most likely to be in off-grid communities. A study undertaken in West Africa that found little correlation between electricity access and a firm's profitability did, however, find that tailors do consistently benefit from electricity access.[139]

Focus group participants also highlighted the potential for solar power to support service-based industries, specifically those participating in retail sales of fish, meat, beverages, entertainment and phone charging. The calculation of the estimated OGS market focused only on barbering and tailoring appliances, which comprises a small portion of overall SME sector demand. These two microenterprises are indicative of the service-based SME off-grid solar market, as they benefit most from extended working hours and the use of modern appliances/machinery. The quantitative demand estimate for this market segment is therefore intended to provide a baseline for future research, as a more robust analysis would be necessary to assess OGS demand from all SMEs.

According to the analysis, estimated annualized off-grid solar cash market potential for barbers and tailors is USD 73,125 (**Table 30**).

Table 30: Estimated Cash Market Potential for SMEs – Barbers and Tailor[140]

No. of SMEs with Constrained Access to Finance[141]	Units	kW Equivalent	Cash Value (USD)
585	117	29	$73,125

Source: World Bank; African Solar Designs Analysis

- **Value-Added Applications**

Agricultural practices, especially for smallholder farmers, can benefit from a wide range of off-grid solar technologies. Cold rooms and ice production are valuable investments for economies engaged in aquaculture. Solar refrigeration, cooling and processing equipment would enable traders and livestock farmers to sell dairy products. Solar drying of cocoa and palm oil processing are productive use applications that would greatly benefit rural farmers in countries where these products contribute to export revenues.

The three value-added applications that were analyzed include solar pumping for agricultural irrigation, solar milling and solar powered refrigeration.

Solar Powered Irrigation:

In most West African countries, the national government is typically responsible for carrying out irrigation initiatives, which vary by the scale of the project and often require the construction of civil works such as dams, canals, embankments, and piping. Donor agencies and development partners provide funding for such projects. This analysis focused instead on a small-scale private sector driven approach and estimated the market potential for off-grid solar pumping systems to support smallholder farmers.

[139] Grimm, M., Harwig, R., Lay, J., "How much does Utility Access matter for the Performance of Micro and Small Enterprises?" World Bank (2012): http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTLM/Resources/390041-1212776476091/5078455-1398787692813/9552655-1398787856039/Grimm-Hartwig-Lay-How_Much_Does_Utility_Access_Matter_for_the_Performance_of_MSE.pdf
[140] Estimated units, kW equivalent and cash value are annualized to reflect typical lifespan of OGS systems; see **Annex 2** for more details.
[141] "MSME Finance Gap," SME Finance Forum: https://www.smefinanceforum.org/data-sites/msme-finance-gap

Solar pumping systems vary in their wattage depending on the area of land irrigated, the depth of water abstracted and the quality of the soil and crops among other factors.[142] GIS analysis demonstrated that access to the water table and surface water is not a major determinant of the costing of applicable solar irrigation systems, as most farming settlements in Mauritania are within close proximity to either surface water or relatively easily extractable sources of water (**Figure 25**).

It is important to note Mauritanian farmers may be discouraged from making long-term irrigation investments on their land due to unclear land tenure rights resulting from competing claims in the dual system of formal and customary land laws.[143] Lack of reliable record-keeping, dated land registries, and databases of rural land have resulted in opportunities for land theft and tenure insecurity. As such, there is social tension and mistrust in formal land registration. Nevertheless, the Mauritanian government has committed to undertake an ambitious process for reforming the land policy framework.[144]

In analyzing the available market for solar-powered irrigation, this market scoping exercise focused exclusively on smallholder farmers and solar water pumping irrigation technologies to address their needs. In doing so, this analysis took into consideration the emerging experience with small-scale productive use pumping in East Africa. Small pumps of 80 Wp-150 Wp (e.g. Futurepump and SunCulture) make up the bulk of sales, while larger-sized pumps (e.g., Grundfos) are also frequently marketed to address differing water access and crop conditions.

Table 31 presents the estimated annualized off-grid solar cash market potential for smallholder value-added solar irrigation applications in Mauritania, which has an estimated cash value of USD 22.5 million (see **Annex 2** for more details).

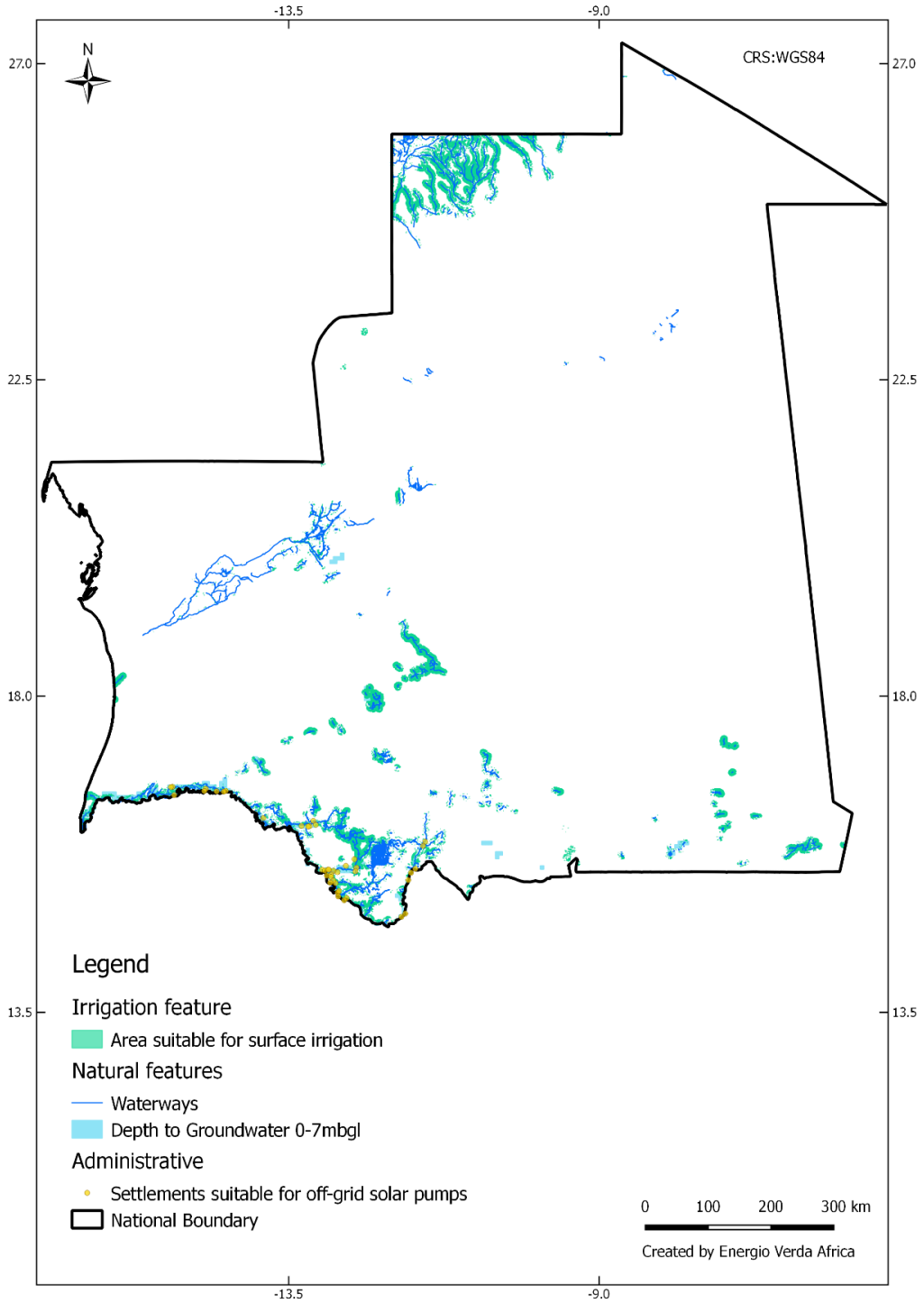
Table 31: Estimated Cash Market Potential for Value-Added Applications – Irrigation[145]

Estimated No. of Smallholder Farms Suitable for OGS Pumping for Irrigation	Units	kW Equivalent	Cash Value (USD)
208,333	34,722	4,167	$22,569,444

Source: Food and Agriculture Organization; World Bank; African Solar Designs analysis

[142] *See* GIZ Powering Agriculture Toolbox on Solar Powered Irrigation Systems: https://energypedia.info/wiki/Toolbox_on_SPIS
[143] The majority of smallholders rely on prevailing, though abolished customary land management systems that marginalize the poor and women. See: http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/311841500256927016/pdf/MAU-SCD-06292017.pdf
[144] Ibid
[145] Estimated units, kW equivalent and cash value are annualized to reflect typical lifespan of OGS systems; see **Annex 2** for more details.

Figure 25: Area Suitable for Surface Irrigation and Identified Settlements Suitable for Off-Grid Solar Pumps



Source: British Geological Survey, Bureau of Statistics; ESA Climate Change Initiative; OpenStreetMap
Energio Verda Africa GIS analysis[146]

[146] NOTE: mbgl = meters below ground level
Sources: Mapping provided by British Geological Survey © NERC 2012. All rights reserved; Irrigation area identified from a Land Cover data set through the ESA Climate Change Initiative, Land Cover project 2017. © Modified Copernicus data (2015/2016): https://www.esa-landcover-cci.org/?q=node/187; Settlements provided by OpenStreet Map (2018) and the Bureau of Statistics (2013).

Solar Powered Milling:

Cereal crops like maize, sorghum, millet, and rice provide an opportunity for value addition through hulling or milling. Off-grid communities use maize or rice milling equipment that is typically powered by diesel generators. Discussions with off-grid community groups revealed that although many are aware of the long-term cost savings associated with solar powered mills, the up-front cost of purchasing equipment was viewed as too high.

Table 32 presents the estimated annualized off-grid solar market potential for smallholder value-added solar grain milling applications in Mauritania, which has an estimated cash value of USD 204K (see **Annex 2** for more details).

Table 32: Estimated Cash MArket Potential for Value-Added Applciations – Milling[147]

Estimated No. of Solar Mills	Units	kW Equivalent	Cash Value (USD)
252	13	82	$204,411

Source: Food and Agriculture Organization; African Solar Designs analysis

Solar Powered Cooling and Refrigeration:

Solar-powered refrigerators and freezers in rural areas serve multiple purposes, including to store milk, fish, meat and vegetables to extend the life of produce and reduce losses. In addition to storing produce, ice-makers can increase the income of rural SMEs by providing ice to businesses that require cold storage (stores, restaurants etc.). **Table 33** presents the estimated annualized off-grid solar market potential for smallholder value-added solar refrigeration applications in Mauritania, which has an estimated cash value of USD 1 million (see **Annex 2** for more details).

Table 33: Estimated Cash Market Potential for Value-Added Applications – Refrigeration[148]

Off-grid Market Centers	Units	kW Equivalent	Cash Value (USD)
1,507	75	414	$1,036,063

Source: Solar-Powered Cold Hubs, Nigeria; African Solar Designs analysis

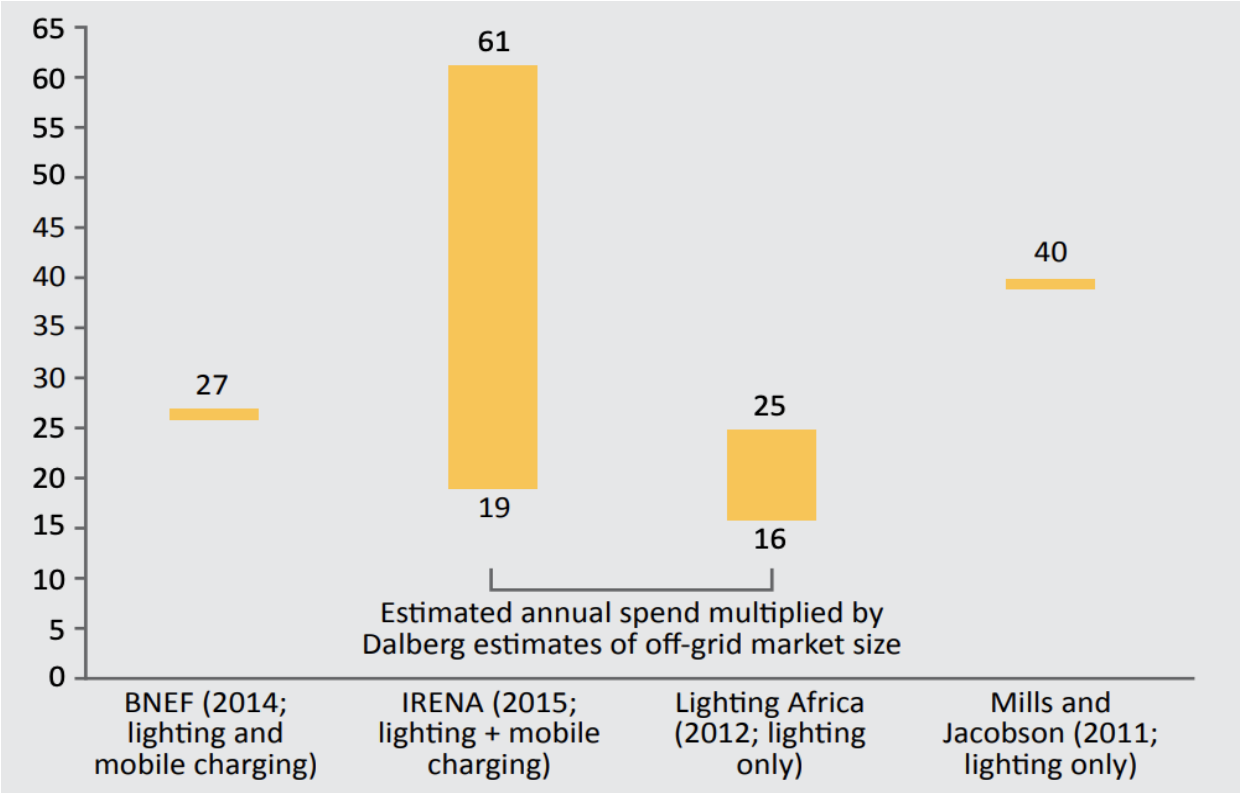
Ultimately, the ability for an agricultural community to benefit from productive use applications has as much to do with access to markets and improved crop inputs, as it has to do with the pricing and availability of financing to purchase the equipment. Hence, the macroeconomic approach used to carry out this market sizing does not account for country-specific cost and supply chain constraints

- **Connectivity Applications**

Mobile phone charging stations/kiosks make up a critical segment of off-grid solar demand, as the market for solar phone charging is expected to grow significantly in the near-term. Household rates of mobile phone ownership often greatly exceed rates of electricity access, while households spend a significant share of income on lighting and phone charging (**Figure 26**). Increasingly, off-grid solar devices, such as lighting devices, also include phone-charging capabilities that enable owners to engage in mobile-phone charging businesses.

[147] Estimated units, kW equivalent and cash value are annualized to reflect typical lifespan of OGS systems; see **Annex 2** for more details.
[148] Estimated units, kW equivalent and cash value are annualized to reflect typical lifespan of OGS systems; see **Annex 2** for more details.

Figure 26: Estimated Annual Off-Grid Household Expenditure on Lighting and Mobile Phone Charging[149]



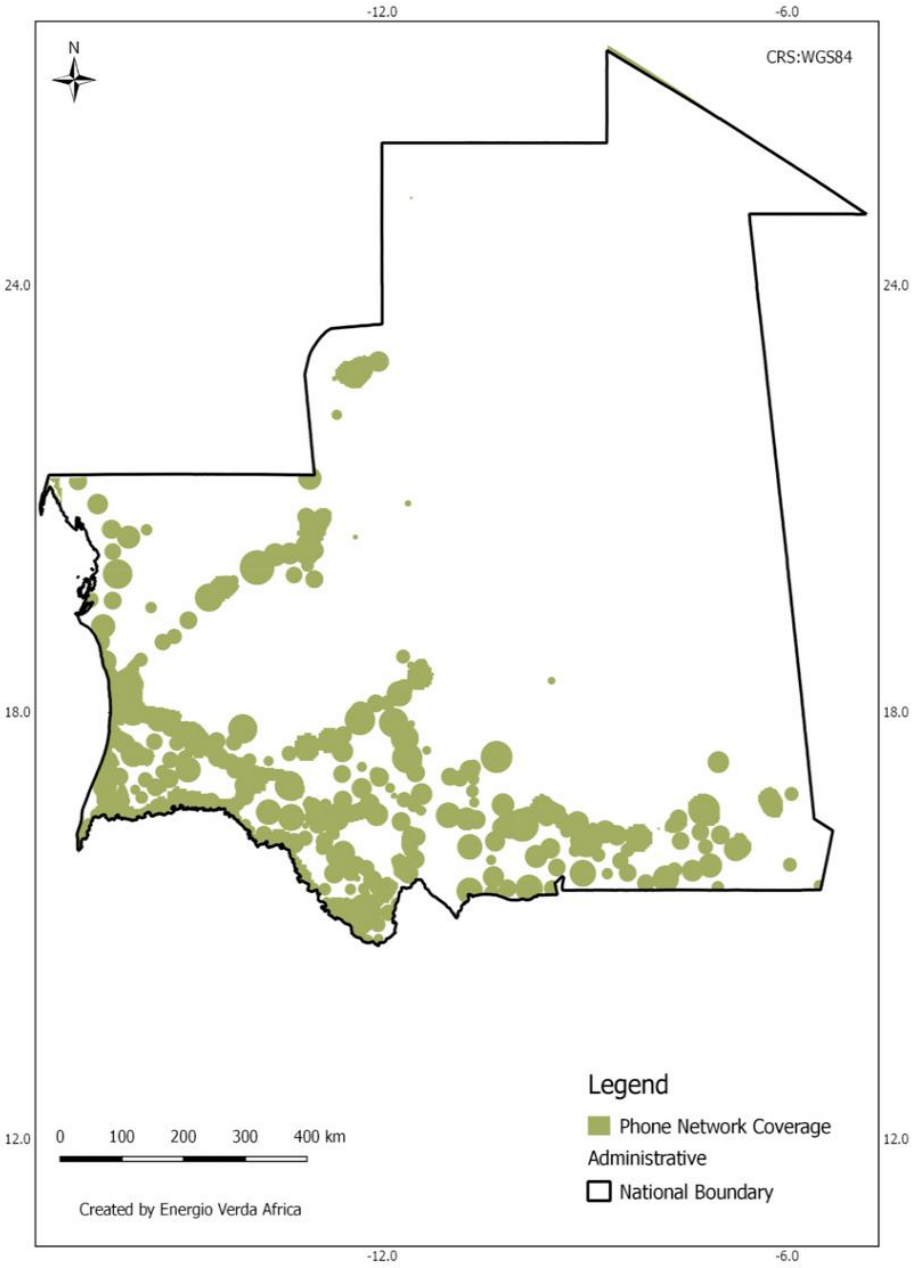
NOTE: Figures in Billion USD

Source: Dahlberg Advisors, Lighting Global, GOGLA and World Bank ESMAP

Figure 27 shows the relatively broad geographic coverage of cellular signals across the region. Cellular connectivity is essential for solar PV markets. In many African countries, mobile phone charging provides a primary productive use application for off-grid solar. Mobile phone access – and more importantly connectivity – helps drive commerce and employment in rural areas. The penetration of mobile money services is also critical, as it drives greater financial inclusion, expands consumer financing options and further increases demand for phone charging enterprises. Above all, mobile phones and connectivity are a necessary precursor to PAYG solutions in the OGS sector. Countries with expanding mobile phone coverage and especially broadband internet users are more attractive to PAYG solar companies

[149] "Off-Grid Solar Market Trends Report 2018," Dahlberg Advisors, Lighting Global, GOGLA and World Bank ESMAP, (January 2018): https://www.lightingafrica.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/2018_Off_Grid_Solar_Market_Trends_Report_Full.pdf

Figure 27: Mobile Phone Network Geographic Coverage[150]



Source: GSMA

The analysis of the potential solar-powered phone charging market was based on the country's mobile phone penetration rate, rural population rate, and the average costs of OGS phone charging appliances. **Table 34** presents the estimated annualized cash market potential for off-grid solar mobile phone charging enterprises in Mauritania, which has an estimated cash value of USD 2.7 million (see **Annex 2** for more details).

[150] See **Annex 2** for more details.

Table 34: Estimated Market Potential for Off-Grid Solar Connectivity Applications

Mobile Subscribers[151]	Rural Population (%)[152]	Units	kW Equivalent	Cash Value (USD)
4,074,157	39.6%	3,225	1,290	$2,780,249

Source: GSMA; World Bank; African Solar Designs analysis

2.3.3 Ability to Pay and Access to Finance

The above analysis illustrates that there is a sizeable off-grid solar cash market for productive use applications in Mauritania. However, more research needs to be done in each segment to better understand affordability of OGS appliances and equipment based on ability and willingness to pay as well as other factors such as access to finance and ultimately whether the expenditure for the equipment is justifiable given increased revenue/productivity in the long-term.

The value-added market for water pumping for irrigation indicates that increased revenues from the use of solar appliances would justify the expenditure for the equipment – although as mentioned, agricultural productivity also depends on other environmental and market factors that are specific to each country. Solar powered irrigation systems may require a financed solution to be profitable investments for farmers, as their cost may exceed benefits depending on how the systems are designed and what components are used.

With regard to microenterprises, further study would be needed to determine the impact of off-grid solar on this sector, especially as it relates to income and affordability of the sectors analyzed (phone charging, barbers and tailoring). Providing solar-kits through subsidized micro-credit schemes can lead to productive uses and boost household income.

The focus group discussion yielded additional insights into the off-grid solar PUE sector from a consumer point of view:

- There is need to develop private sector capacity to help scale-up PUE applications.
- There is also a need for training so that communities and businesses can resolve solar equipment breakdown and maintenance issues.
- Most companies cannot afford the up-front cost of solar solutions. A potential solution to this could be to implement consignment schemes to allow distributors to better engage retailers for solar appliances.
- Despite public and donor-led interventions to lower financial constraints, firms in rural areas still struggle to access to credit and other financing solutions. This is especially the case for smallholders and livestock producers. The National Union of Livestock Savings and Loan Associates created in 2008 to address private sector funding constraints never entered operation. Nevertheless, the government is currently reviewing credit mechanisms in the sector.[153]

[151] "The Mobile Economy: Sub-Saharan Africa," GSMA, (2017): https://www.gsmaintelligence.com/research/?file=7bf3592e6d750144e58d9dcfac6adfab&download

[152] World Bank: Rural Population (% of total population) https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.RUR.TOTL.ZS

[153] "Islamic Republic of Mauritania: Turning Challenges into Opportunities for Ending Poverty and Promoting Shared Prosperity", Systematic Country Diagnostic, World Bank, May 2017: http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/311841500256927016/pdf/MAU-SCD-06292017.pdf

2.4 Supply Chain

This section reviews the off-grid solar supply chain in Mauritania, including an overview of key actors, solar products and services, business models, and sales volumes. The section also analyzes the role of informal market players and the impact of uncertified products. The section concludes with an assessment of local capacity and the needs of the supplier market segment. The data presented in this section was obtained through desk research, interviews with local officials and industry stakeholders, focus group discussions and surveys of international and local solar companies (see **Annex 2** for more details). The tier system used to classify solar companies throughout this section is described in **Table 35**.

Table 35: Solar Company Tier Classification

	Classification	Description
Tier 1	Startup companies	• Less than 3 full time employees • Less than 300 SHS or Less than 1,500 lanterns sold • Less than USD 100,000 annual revenues • Does not have access to outside finance except personal loans and may have a business account
Tier 2	Early stage companies	• 3 to 25 full time employees • 300 to 30,000 solar home systems or 1,500 to 50,000 lanterns sold
Tier 3	Growth/Mature	• More than 25 full time employees • More than 30,000 solar home systems or 50,000 lanterns sold • More than USD 3 million annual revenues • Has a credit line at a bank and financial statements • Raising equity or other outside financing

Source: ECOWAS Center for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency

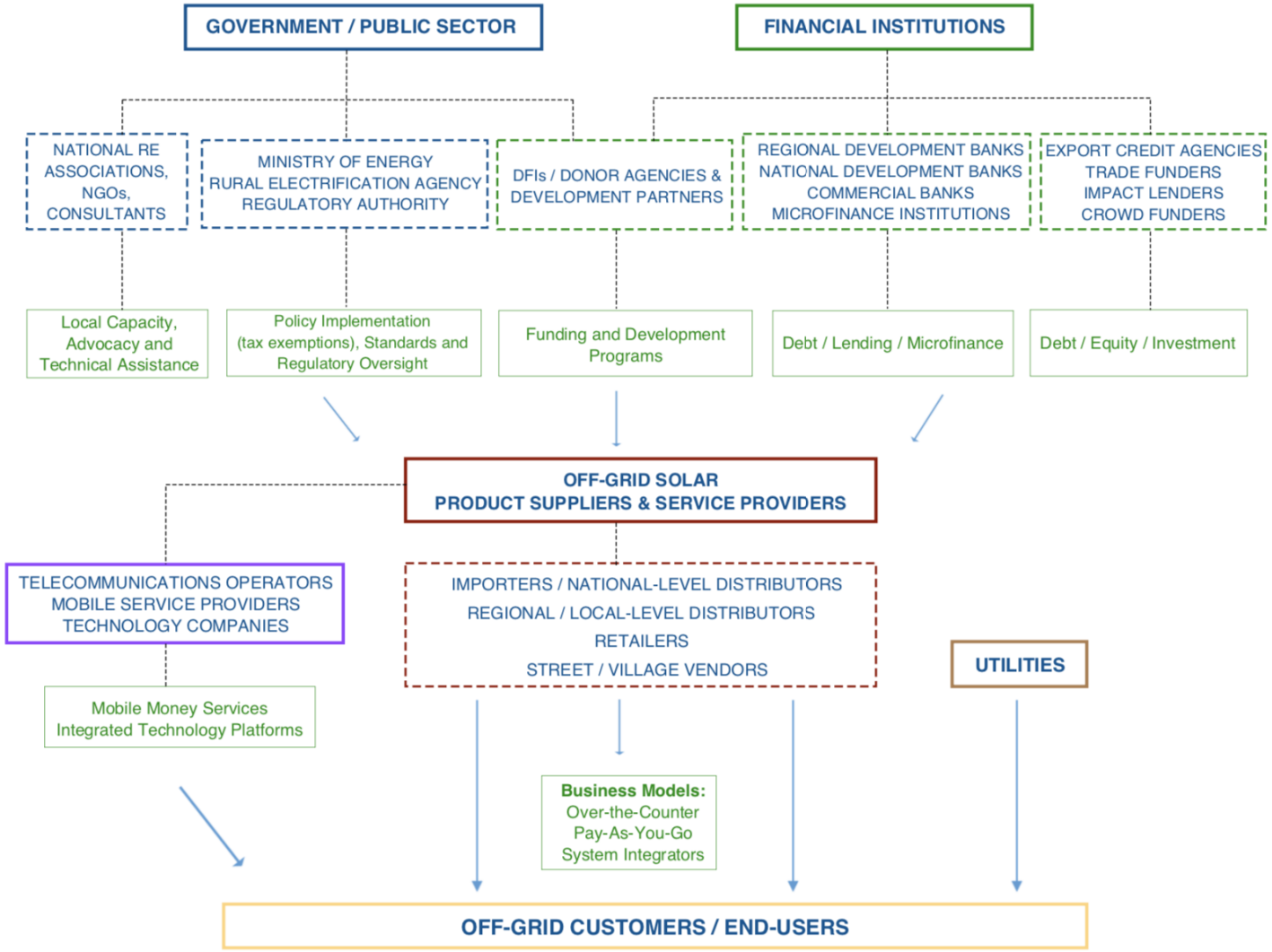
2.4.1 Overview of Commercial Market for Solar PV Equipment

The off-grid solar supply chain in Mauritania is made up of a wide range of stakeholders – importers, distributors, wholesalers, retailers, NGOs, and end-users (**Figure 28**). Mauritania has a relatively small solar market, as the country's overall market environment and opportunity for solar companies remains limited, despite slight improvement in recent years (**Figure 11**).

A variety of solar products and systems are offered by companies in the market (by both the formal and informal sector) and, as examined in further detail below, there are a number of business models currently being utilized. Rural households make up the main market for off-grid lighting products in the country, as the demand for lighting products and household electrical appliances is growing. Nevertheless, urban households, both electrified and non-electrified, are also a key consumer market, as they may have greater ability to afford OGS products and systems. Moreover, power supply is often not sufficient, continuous, or reliable (**Figure 3**), further supporting expanded use of solar PV equipment by this consumer segment.

The main business model deployed by local solar companies is cash/over-the-counter sales, with no companies yet to utilize PAYGO systems. While large companies selling certified products play a central role in the market, the informal sector remains a key factor. Surveys of local industry stakeholders and focus group discussions noted that a regulatory framework was necessary to address the widespread sale of low-quality, uncertified products, which is hindering development of the country's OGS market.

Figure 28: Off-Grid Solar Market and Supply Chain Overview



Source: GreenMax Capital Advisors

2.4.2 Overview of OGS Companies in Africa and Level of Interest in the Region

The African off-grid solar market has experienced rapid growth over the last five years. This growth can largely be attributed to the emergence of a progressively diverse, global pool of manufacturers and distributors, decreased system costs and an increase in three major product categories – pico solar, Plug-and-Play SHS, and component-based systems.[154] Leading solar companies such as Greenlight Planet, D.Light, Off-Grid Electric, M-KOPA Solar, Fenix International, and BBOXX represent the largest share of the African off-grid market and are joining other players in West Africa and the Sahel, including Lumos Global, PEG Africa, Barefoot Power, Yandalux, Schneider Electric, Azuri Technologies, Solarama, AD Solar, Enertec, SmarterGrid, GoSolar, Total, Oolu Solar, EnergenWao and SunTech Power to list a few.

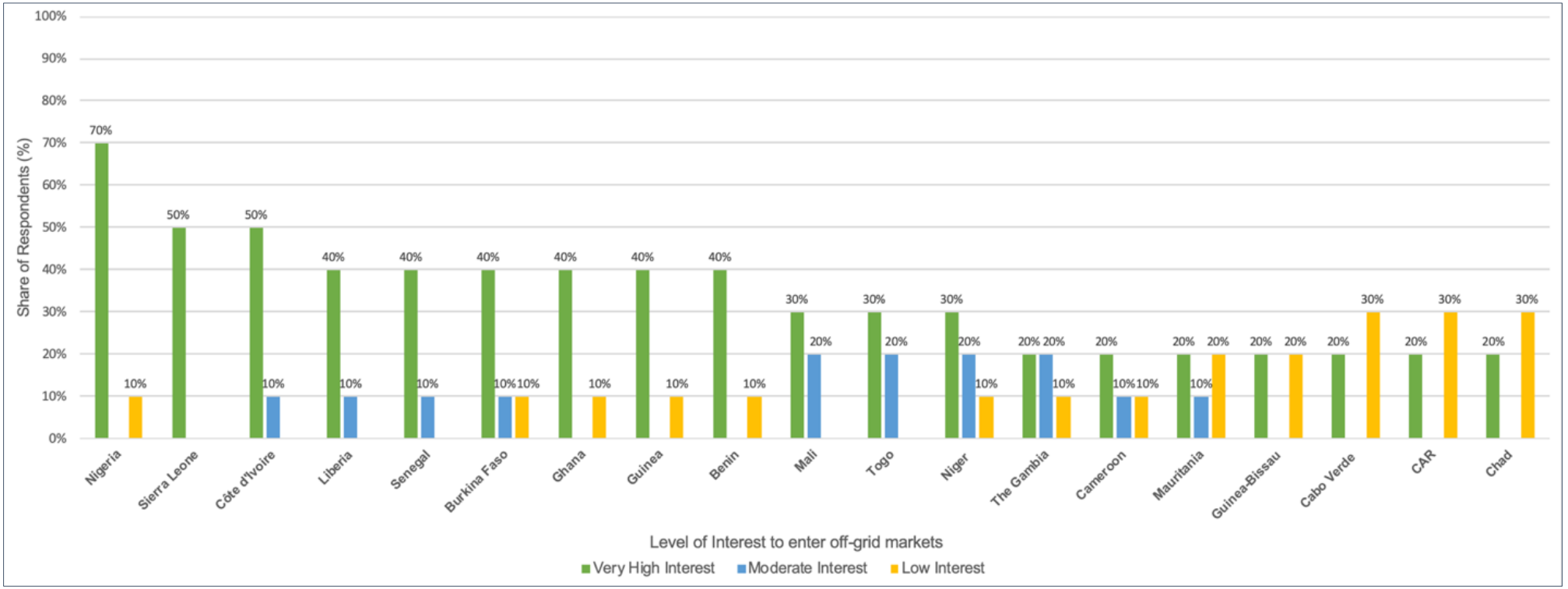
Market entry into Africa began in East Africa for a majority of the leading companies, a trend that can be attributed to advancements in mobile money transfer systems such as M-Pesa that have facilitated the PAYG off-grid business model. As the East African market becomes more crowded and mobile money services spread across the Continent, many international off-grid solar companies have recently entered markets in West Africa and the Sahel. The regional market grew from being nearly non-existent in 2013 to accounting for 9% of worldwide sales (20% of SSA) with over 2 million systems sold in 2017.[155]

Over 500 solar companies have been identified operating across the region, many of which are small local players. These local distributors either operate independently or act as local affiliates of larger international companies operating in this space. The majority of companies in the region are primarily Tier 1 and Tier 2 companies, with relatively few Tier 3 companies. The highest concentration of Tier 3 companies was identified in Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Mali, Nigeria and Senegal.[156]

A survey of large international solar companies that assessed *inter alia* their level of interest in entering the off-grid markets in West Africa and the Sahel is presented in **Figure 29**. The survey found that among respondents, companies expressed the most interest in Nigeria, Sierra Leone, and Côte d'Ivoire, with at least half of respondents indicating a "very high level of interest" in these markets. There was also a relatively high level of interest in Liberia, Senegal, Burkina Faso, Mali and Togo, with at least half of respondents indicating a "very high" or "moderate" level of interest in these markets.

[154] "Off-Grid Solar Market Trends Report, 2018," Dahlberg Advisors and Lighting Africa, (January 2018): https://www.lightingafrica.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/2018_Off_Grid_Solar_Market_Trends_Report_Full.pdf
[155] Ibid.
[156] "Insights from Interviews with Off-Grid Energy Companies," ECREEE, (June 2018).

Figure 29: Level of Interest in Off-Grid Markets of ROGEP Countries among Major Suppliers[157]



Source: Stakeholder interviews; GreenMax Capital Advisors analysis

[157] NOTE: This is not a representative sample of respondents (sample size = 10 respondents). The figure is meant to provide feedback from "major suppliers" of off-grid solar products and services and gauge their level of interest in entering specific ROGEP country off-grid markets. Respondents are all GOGLA members and are either already active in the West Africa and Sahel region or seeking to enter it. The figures presented are the share of respondents (%) who indicated their level of interest in a given country.

2.4.3 Solar Market, Products and Companies in Mauritania

This section characterizes the current formal market (local and international companies) including recent sales trends, the main solar products, brands and prices.

- **The Formal Market – Local and International Companies**

Focus groups and stakeholder interviews identified over 30 companies operating in Mauritania's solar sector, offering a wide range of products and services to consumers throughout the country (see **Annex 2** for a complete list of identified companies). In addition to local firms, the formal market includes international players that enter the market to install systems for donor-funded projects. As of 2018, most of the solar companies operating in Mauritania were Tier 1 companies, with only one Tier 3 company – CDS Eau & Énergie. Solar is largely utilized for water pumping in the regions of Trarza, Brakna, Adrar, Assaba.

Mauritania's solar sector is concentrated around five main players, CDS Eau & Énergie, COGER, Techno Systèmes, SOMER and TD, which provide a wide variety of products to all types of clients (households and businesses in particular). However, the majority of players are non-specialized electronic shops and hardware stores, some of which are unformal players. The formal market also includes international players – mainly for donor-funded projects – and all industry players operating in rural areas have limited geographic coverage, mainly operating in the regions of Nouakchott and Kaédi. Among the five major companies, Tier 3 CDS Eau & Énergie is a distributor of a wide range of Lighting Global and GOGLA affiliated brands, including Greenlight Power/Sun King Pro, Barefoot and BBOXX.

Solar companies focus on households, businesses and productive use applications (pumping and refrigeration), providing design, installation, maintenance and after-sales services to customers. Most players operate along the supply chain and are not specialized. Other supply chain's players include a few manufacturer representatives (e.g. Tier 1 MKM-Électrique, Boutique El-Emane and Ets El Aqsa) - that are wholesalers and retailers.

- **Sales Volumes and Revenue**

Focus group participants indicated that it is challenging to assess the size of the current market due to a lack of standardization in pricing from one company to another and a shortage of sound statistical data. Moreover, during surveys and FGDs, companies were reluctant to share confidential data on sales volumes and market shares. Most local solar market players in the country are also not Lighting Global and GOGLA affiliated members; hence, relevant sales volumes and revenue from GOGLA are not available for Mauritania.

- **Main Solar Products and Components**

Table 36 lists the brands of common solar products and components in Mauritania. The list does not include non-certified brands that are also common in the country's grey market.[158]

[158] In this context, "grey market" refers to products that are not Lighting Global or IEC certified that are typically sold over-the-counter at low prices. Some grey market products are counterfeit or replicas of certified products that undercut the markets of certified products.

Table 36: Off-Grid Solar and Component Products

System category	Standard Companies
Distributors of pico solar lanterns	CDS, COGER, Techno Systems, SOMER, TD
Single Module distributors	
Multi module system distributors	
Very large system supplier	
Product	**Brand**
Lighting products (solar pico, plug and play and single module systems)	Iso Photon, World Power, PB Solar, BLVD, Sun King Pro, D Light
Refrigeration/coolers	Sundanzer
Solar modules	-
Inverters	Steca, Yackson (UEA), New Star (China)
Regulators	Phocos
Lead Acid Battery	Forté (Japan), Fulmen (Turkey), Rolls, Fulmen, Imo, Expa

Source: Stakeholder interviews

- **Market Prices**

Table 37 presents average prices for off-grid systems and components in Mauritania's solar market.

Table 37: Estimated Prices of Solar Systems and Components in Mauritania

Off-Grid System / Component	Standard prices in Mauritania (USD/unit)	Off-Grid System / Component	Non-standard prices in Mauritania (USD/unit)	Off-Grid System / Component	Standard prices in Ghana (USD/unit)
Pico solar and Plug and Play	$9-$95	Pico solar and Plug and Play	-	Pico solar and Plug and Play	$25-$40
SHS (average)	-	SHS (average)	-	SHS (average, rooftop PV for rural households)	$1,500
Solar module (200W- 2,000W)	$79-$187	Solar module (150W- 200W)	$65-$84	Solar Module (0.265 kW- 0.26 kW)	-
Inverter (1,500W-1,700W)	$28-$395	Inverter (150W-1,000W)	$10-$98	Inverter (0.6 kW-50 kW)	$154-$6,000
Lead Acid Battery (100Ah-250Ah)	$42-$268	Lead Acid Battery (100Ah-150Ah)	$56-$98	Lead Acid Battery (100 Ah-220Ah)	$144-$500

Source: Stakeholder interviews

- **Importation Clearance Processes**

For the importation of solar products (and all types of imports), two government ministries are involved in Mauritania: The Ministry of Finance, and the Ministry of Trade. imported solar equipment is applied a 34% tax (applied to all products and components). It takes about 43 days to import solar equipment to Mauritania, typically 40 days for the cargo to reach the country and then only 3 days for custom clearance procedures. While no international standards such as Lighting Global and GOGLA are systematically used to verify the quality of products entering the country's market, technical specifications (through a technical sheet) are required by the Public Procurement Commission in invitations to tender, in order to verify the equipment's source and its quality.

2.4.4 Overview of Business Models

- **Company Approach to Market**

In Mauritania, the market is concentrated around CDS Eau & Énergie and a few other players COGER, Techno Systèmes, SOMER and TD. These major companies, as well as manufacturer representatives (e.g. MKM Électrique, Ets El-Aqsa) are long-experienced players and have been in business for more than five years. However, 80% of other surveyed companies entered the market recently and have been in business for between four and five years for Nouakchott Production and Comptoir Europe, and three years of less for El-Jawhara, El-Rayan Énergie Solaire and Chinguitt Électronique, while Comptoir El-Tessamouh entered the market about one year ago.

While a few major companies and wholesalers import directly from a manufacturer outside the country, they mostly buy their products from a supplier inside the country, and deal in all types of systems to answer needs from various customers (households, productive users, institutional/social users). Companies rely almost exclusively on the cash over-the-counter business model, even though a few offer short-term consumer facilities to their customers. For the household sector, there is no PAYG financing nor medium to long-term consumer credit system in place. As a result, firms do not target low-income bottom of the pyramid customers and many customers, especially in rural areas cannot afford solar systems. Companies rarely offer follow-up and maintenance (e.g. warrantee) services, as there is a lack of trained technicians.

- **Business Models**

Of the off-grid solar business models (**Table 38),** the cash/over-the-counter model is used almost exclusively in Mauritania.

- **Over-the-counter cash sales** include both informal and formal components, is the dominant model in the market. Many traders simply offer solar products over-the-counter. Formal sector solar companies also stock modules, batteries and balance of system and offer them over-the-counter to do-it-yourselfers and agents. In Mauritania, surveyed stakeholders indicated that it was the only business model utilized by solar companies in the market.
- **System integrators handle large systems and projects**. They design, procure and install systems which range from high-end residential sites, to institutional power to mini-grids. Local integrators represent international solar, inverter and battery brands with whom they partner with on projects. While feedback from focus group discussion did not mention systems integrators, CDS Eau and Énergie, who operate as a small energy utility and work under procurement contracts, can be categorized as a system integrator in Mauritania.
- **Plug and play and pico suppliers** cooperate with many of the major OGS brands to distribute products in the country. In Mauritania, plug and play systems are offered by the five major companies (e.g. CDS, COGER, Techno Systèmes, SOMER and TD), although they are not specialized and sell all types of products, including solar pico lanterns and solar home systems.
- **The PAYG sector is not developed at all in Mauritania**. Suppliers are building up client bases which number in the tens of thousands and are quickly evolving to develop credit mechanisms that fit with local income patterns. The margins are made from subscriptions of thousands of consumers who buy systems through created accounts. The task of installation and after sales services is undertaken by agents. Common products sold include plug and play systems that are fully designed. In Mauritania, interviewed stakeholders indicated that the PAYG consumer finance business model was not offered by any of the largest companies.

Table 38: Overview of Off-Grid Solar Business Models

Business Model	Strategy and Customer Base	State of Development
Over-the-counter solar market	**Formal**: Only a few retailers in Mauritania are both large-scale (acting as suppliers and distributors) and medium size and are mainly located in large cities and towns around the country. They already sell lighting/electrical products, including solar, pico systems and large panels. **Informal:** Kiosks, street vendors form a key pico-product retailer segment (that has not been fully explored). They sell low-priced products which are often short-lived. They have been seen as the entry points for black market low quality solar products to the country.	Mature commercial market Early stage commercial development
System integrator *	Integrators operate out of central offices with small specialized staff. They do not typically carry stock for sale over-the-counter. Instead, they deal directly with consumers and institutional clients and provide as per orders. Integrators target the NGO/donor market and participate in procurement tenders for supply and installation of larger systems.	Early stage commercial development
Plug and Play system supplier *	These suppliers distribute equipment to retailers' projects, rural agents, community groups and over-the-counter. Traders of plug and play often sell these devices as part of other businesses.	Early stage commercial development
PAYG Sales *	PAYG companies seek to implement the rent-to-own payment-based models used successfully in other countries. The business model is data-driven and relies on mobile money services and a network of agents to meet last-mile customers. Innovative OGS PAYG collaborations between shop-owners, mobile-operators and other larger local businesses are being tested.	Non-existing

***** Not present in the Mauritanian market

Source: Focus Group Discussions; Stakeholder interviews; African Solar Designs analysis

- **Company Financing**

With so many companies being exclusively self-financed, it can become difficult for companies to finance their operations and grow their business in Mauritania. In addition to the purchase of equipment, suppliers also require significant working capital to cover high investment costs: to buy and renew inventory, transport merchandise from suppliers, distribute products (especially considering Mauritania large territory and sparse population), cover risk of equipment theft, and finance field costs. Distributors of international off-grid solar products are supported by FI loans and international funds, but most firms are self-financed with cash flow covered by shareholders and founders and from on-going business transactions.

Most local players in Mauritania are unable to raise funds to expand their business, while a minority of self-financed companies (30%) indicated that they did not need any financial assistance. Local financiers have yet to develop an appetite for the solar sector. Local banks are extremely conservative with regard to solar enterprises. Commercial financiers – including banks and MFIs – are not set up to service solar distributor financing requirements. Local SME financing is not available to support businesses in their growth phase. If it was available, companies would make use of cash-flow/credit line financing against the signed contracts with major commercial clients, large NGOs or donors.

When importing, companies are exposed to considerable FOREX risks because they must cover costs of equipment in foreign currency. When projects are delayed, during seasonal low-income periods or when products are delayed in port, dealers must bear FOREX losses. The lack of consumer financing arrangements impedes the growth of the solar market because distributors must take all finance risks and cannot plan with commercial or MFI financing to grow their business.

- **Evolving Business Models**

New business models in the off-grid solar sector will require partnerships between developers, solar distributors, telecommunications companies, commercial finance and the retail sector. One of the results of the FGDs was a list of potential partnerships that can be explored to enhance existing and new business models (**Table 39)**.

Table 39: Evolving Off-Grid Solar Business Models

Partnership	Description
Solar Distributors	• Improve efficiency within the supply/distribution chain, positioning them to be able to manage distribution, seek potential for long-term credit lines and capital infusions • Develop better contract terms between large local suppliers in Mauritania with foreign manufacturers • Test new sales and distribution strategies that increase sales at minimum cost • Prove solar market potential, ultimately attracting a strong group of competing players that scale up solar product access
Commercial financiers	• Commercial financiers are key to unlocking working capital and consumer finance and enabling the market by providing both the funds and means of transferring these funds • Develop financial products for both distributors (financing for working capital needs) and off-grid solar consumers (consumer financing for purchase of systems)
Telecommunications companies and technology providers	• Bring together telecommunications operators, mobile service providers and technology companies and solar supplier/distributor companies to develop Pay-As-You-Go technology platforms • Encourage telecommunications partners to distribute off-grid solar systems through their existing network of agents
Business/Retail Sector	• Comprises networks of retail stores that cover the entire country and provide all types of domestic and agriculture goods for the rural community • Encourage linkages between specialized solar companies and these networks so as to facilitate the increase of the distribution network at a lowest cost possible • Provide promotional tools for local retailers to promote solar products to households/SMEs • Facilitate microfinancing for the domestic market through these networks
Advocacy Bodies	• Capitalize on GoM and donor efforts to (i) facilitate interagency dialogue and oversee policy proposals on new business models and (ii) enhance legislative changes to support the sector

Source: Focus Group Discussions; Stakeholder interviews; African Solar Designs analysis

2.4.5 The Role of Non-Standard Players in the Market

Stakeholder interviews and FGDs were not able to assess the share of the over-the-counter informal market in the overall market volume. Informal traders sell modules, inverters, batteries and pico-products. Given that informal sellers are largely unregulated and do not report sales figures, very little data is available on this sector. The sector, however, is very influential as it also controls the delivery of lighting products imported mainly from East Asia. Informal traders understand growing consumer interest in solar solutions and sell competitively-priced low-quality products. Informal traders do not actively cooperate with the GoM or formal projects.

Informal traders play an important role in the market because they respond to consumer demand rapidly. Many traders do provide IEC-approved components – this means knowledgeable consumers and technicians can assemble quality systems from over-the-counter selections of components that informal traders sell. It is notable that some informal traders are gaining skills and improving product offerings. The presence of a large informal market, however, leads to issues with equipment quality that hamper development of the country's OGS market.

2.4.6 Equipment Quality and the Impact of Uncertified Equipment

Mauritania's solar market is dominated by informal market players, selling equipment through electronics shops, hardware stores, kiosks and even street vendors. The over-the-counter sales strategies of this group is to provide low-cost, fast moving products. As a sector, informal retailers provide widely-used lighting products mainly from East Asia to rural customers. However, most of their product range does not meet Lighting Global standards. Moreover, given that the most of their lighting products are low-cost and short-lived, they also ignore and avoid regulations and their products lack warrantees. In Mauritania, feedback from focus group discussions indicated that marketed equipment's amperage and voltage is often non-compliant with international quality standards. FGDs acknowledged the need to create a national body responsible for quality standards and certification in the off-grid solar sector. The lack of overall sector regulation in the solar sector is considered as a major barrier to growth by stakeholders.

Many of the local industry stakeholders cited counterfeit products as a significant barrier to market growth. Poor-quality and/or counterfeit products negatively impact the entire market by creating a misperception about product quality, which in turn undermines consumer confidence in solar equipment. Moreover, grey-market traders significantly undercut the prices of registered businesses who are still subject to taxes and import duties. Low prices of over-the-counter products make compliant products uncompetitive as many customers opt to buy non-compliant goods that are cheaper. Focus group participants suggested that there is a role for the Government, to assist in enforcement of standards through the establishment of a quality standards and certification body.

2.4.7 Local Capacity to Manage Business Development, Installation and Maintenance

Mauritania's nascent solar market is poised to grow if requisite technical assistance (TA) is provided. The existing market environment is challenging for solar companies. To operate effectively, companies need a significant amount of both local and international technical and financial expertise, and an ability to make practical decisions about their operations. Companies face a number of technical competency requirements – the selection of approaches and solar PV technologies, the design of their associated marketing instruments and the implementation of related initiatives.

The synergy with formal training institutions has yet to be fully explored and most of the players in the industry are not adequately equipped with the skills needed to design and assess policies, understand and deploy technologies, grasp electricity user needs and ability to pay, and operate and maintain systems. Some of the other areas where TA and capacity building is needed to support growth of the solar market include:

- Provision of TA and training to public and private partners on the development of OGS power projects.
- Support in development of vocational training curricula for solar technicians by working with education institutions to adopt the curricula and implement training programs. This support could include development of community training materials to raise community awareness about the importance of solar PV technologies, the various uses ranging from household use, productive uses and institutional uses of energy, and related safety aspects.
- In order to ensure that interaction with local communities is seamless, the collaborating partners could develop a management training manual for villages addressing the different aspects of solar technologies as well. This could include supporting technicians with troubleshooting posters for on-site display that could help identify and tackle operational issues as they arise.
- Solar technicians were noted to be sparse for some areas and lacking in other areas; as a result, solar businesses send out teams from major cities/towns for any installation and maintenance work. Training people based locally in remote areas to support O&M of solar systems (e.g. battery replacement) could help address this issue and expedite market uptake.

2.4.8 Capacity Building Needs of the Supplier Market Segment

An analysis of the supplier market segment revealed a number of interrelated challenges, including financial, capacity, awareness and regulatory challenges. The focus groups and supplier surveys found that:

- High taxes on solar products are a major challenge facing the industry in Mauritania. Solar market players expect customs duty and tax exemptions on solar products.
- While large companies have access to various sources of financing, local financing is largely not available (or affordable) to support the sector's development; as a result, surveyed companies are self-financed and do not have the working capital they need to grow and expand their operations.
- Reasons for denied finance by financial institutions included lack of collateral, lack of expertise in finance, the high cost involved in small transactions, and risk aversion.
- Knowledge, technical capacity and expertise is possessed by a few professionals in the industry working for large established solar companies; the majority of vendors lack the expertise or knowledge necessary to adequately service the market.
- Existing Mauritanian regulation is insufficient to properly manage development of the solar sector. Improved regulations and frameworks are necessary to ensure product quality.

Table 40 presents various areas of support and associated capacity building for the OGS supply chain in Mauritania. Attention should be given to the following:

- **Importers**: Reducing the cost of financing for importing solar PV products by reducing or exempting VAT and other taxes for the product supply chain (targeting products and component-based systems).
- **Over-the-counter**: Focus on growing the number of solar technicians who are adequately skilled to support the supplier network. Unskilled technicians have connections with solar distributors and retailers who subcontract them (these often involves unlicensed technicians.) Formalizing this through a regulation is paramount that may require only licensed technicians to design and install solar PV systems. However, such a regulation should be complemented by equally robust efforts to build the capacity of the stakeholders.
- **Consumers**: Deal with sociotechnical barriers: Although PV technology has advanced tremendously in the last decades, there are still several sociotechnical barriers to adoption, including the local conditions of the user's environment, the political and financial arrangements of the market. Just like most countries in the region, various fake solar PV products have infiltrated the market. Implementation of regulations on quality/standards could further boost market growth.

Table 40: Capacity Buildings and Technical Assistance for the OGS Supply Chain in Mauritania[159]

Area of Support	Description	Rationale
Tax exemptions on solar technology	Pass a law on solar products and components tax exemption/reduction	• Costs of solar products are inflated by high import duties; costs are passed on to customers, making solar less affordable.
Quality standards and certification control body	Set up national body to control solar equipment standards and safety	• Improve overall quality of products on the market
Consumer education programs	Supplier and consumer education and benefit awareness campaigns, targeting both segments, distributors and retailers	• Overcome investment fatigue / negative perceptions • Influence purchase decisions and ease access to distribution channels
Inventory financing facility	Concessionary credit line so financial institutions can access liquidity for solar market lending; create frameworks that avail loans to solar companies (small household systems, larger PV installations, and mini-grids), pilot with aim of scaling out	• Long inventory financing periods present a key challenge to growth for solar lantern and solar home system distributors • High upfront financing requirements present a key challenge to distributors of larger PV systems (including pumps)
Credit guarantee scheme for inventory financing	Private sector lending portfolio is de-risked through guarantees and effect loss sharing agreements to cover irrecoverable inventory loans	• De-risking encourages private sector lending to solar sector • Initial security until the proof case of economic viability of lending to solar businesses has been established
Market entry and expansion grants	Combination of upfront grants and results-based financing to invest in infrastructure and working capital; mostly for scaling up	• Significant upfront investment to build distribution network and source inventories to serve household market
Technical Assistance	Solar companies: Support in setting up distribution network; incubation and acceleration of early-stage businesses; Capacity building for solar technicians to enable nationwide installation and maintenance of solar equipment	• Make the business environment more conducive and profitable • Strengthen the overall ecosystem surrounding the solar market • Ensure knowledge transfer from abroad for faster, more cost-efficient progress

Source: Focus Group Discussions; Stakeholder interviews; African Solar Designs analysis

[159] Capacity building interventions are proposed for all ROGEP countries at national and regional level under ROGEP Component 1B: Entrepreneurship support, which includes TA and financing for companies in the solar product value chain. Through this component, TA to solar companies can build on existing ECREEE training programs as well as through a new regional business plan competition. Technical assistance can leverage national solar ecosystem stakeholders, and operational national service providers identified and mobilized through this component. The market entry and expansion grants suggested here would also align with Component 1B planned financing interventions for matching grants, repayable grants, co-investment grants, and be connected to the technical assistance interventions.

2.5 Key Market Characteristics

This section reviews the main characteristics of the off-grid solar market in Mauritania, including a summary of key barriers to and drivers of market growth and an overview of gender considerations. The synopsis presented below is largely based on feedback obtained from interviews with local officials and industry stakeholders, as well as focus group discussions and surveys assessing the demand and supply side of the market (see **Annex 2**).

2.5.1 Barriers to Off-Grid Solar Market Growth

Table 41 examines the key barriers to OGS market growth from the perspective of both the demand and supply side of the market. See **Section 1.3.5** for an overview of the gaps in the country's off-grid policy and regulatory framework.

Table 41: Key Barriers to Off-Grid Solar Market Growth in Mauritania

Market Barrier	Description
Demand[160]	
Consumers are unable to afford solar systems	• Low-income consumers, particularly in rural areas, lack of access to finance • Purchasing solar products of all varieties among end-consumers remains relatively low.
Lack of initial funding by HHs, businesses and institutions for the initial capital investment	• Relatively high costs of OGS systems (compared to more mature markets in the region) • Consumers rather choose cheaper one-off solutions – like generators and fuel – rather than more expensive up-front solutions that will be cheaper long-term (especially with incremental payments, e.g. PAYG)
A lack of understanding of and trust in solar solutions among consumers impedes development of the market	• There is still considerable lack of general awareness about solar solutions • There is an inability to distinguish between solar products or product quality • Consumers lack information about the most suitable design options, funding options, PAYG benefits and options, points of sales and support, etc. • Products are still not widely available in rural areas, so consumers are unfamiliar with them • Any poor history / track record with OGS will deter consumers from taking expensive risks
Informal sector competition and market spoilage	• The non-standard / unlicensed market still accounts for a majority of OGS product sales • Consumers need to understand the quality and value issues of quality solar products vis-a-vis inferior over-the-counter lighting products and generators. Educated consumers drive markets.
Lack of experience in maintaining the systems and sourcing qualified technicians	• A sustainable approach to O&M is critical for long-term success
Supply	
Technical capacity	• Technical skills lack through the supply chain within the sector, affecting both the upstream, midstream and downstream, thus adversely affecting the ability of the sector to pick up and grow. Majority of the firms decry lack of adequate number of technicians to support the downstream side of the market
Transportation costs	• High transportation costs of inventory deter new entrants; devices and equipment are shipped either from China or from Europe, creating long delivery lead times of up to three months and long inventory holding times once products have arrived in country • Typical supplier payment terms are 30% upon placement of the production order and the remaining 70% upon shipment before any cargo has even left its port of origin. • Transport by container would reduce the costs dramatically; however, this requires purchases in bulk, which local solar distributors aren't able to make without financing

[160] The barriers described here apply to some combination of the Household, Institutional, and SME / Productive Use market segments

Poor sales and performance history of the sector	• A lack of investment into the sector prevents growth; this is due to perceived high risks resulting primarily from lack of track record of sales • Solar distributors have limited alternative financing options. Solar suppliers are unwilling to provide trade financing while commercial financiers in Mauritania, including banks and MFIs, are currently not positioned to service the financing requirements of solar distributors.
Company finance	• Entrants into the sector require significant working capital, which is not readily available • Equity investments are needed into the local distribution/sales companies. It is quite easy to obtain debt financing and other loans once the solar companies have sufficiently grown and reached the "level of interest" of the larger funds; however, until the number of customers and sales volumes are reached, they need some equity investors to share higher risks with the original founders of the companies
Informal sector competition and market spoilage	• Several informal entrepreneurs have taken advantage of high import duties by illegally importing low-quality solar products ranging from solar lanterns to larger home installations • Black-market traders are able to significantly undercut the prices of registered businesses who are still subject to high taxes and import duties • These products are largely low-grade, failure-prone counterfeits with short lifespans • Damaged perceptions of solar systems durability and reliability hinders market uptake
Lack of data	• No clear figures on the actual needs, actual usage or experience of consumers • The data for the private market players on the available opportunities is very limited and not concise due to fragmented data
High 'transaction costs' for solar installations	• Cash-flow and bureaucratic hurdles for the local suppliers • Sales and O&M services in remote areas can be costly, especially for small businesses

Source: Focus Group Discussions; Stakeholder interviews; African Solar Designs analysis

2.5.2 Drivers of Off-Grid Solar Market Growth

Table 42 is a summary of the key drivers of OGS market growth in the country.

Table 42: Key Drivers of Off-Grid Solar Market Growth in Mauritania

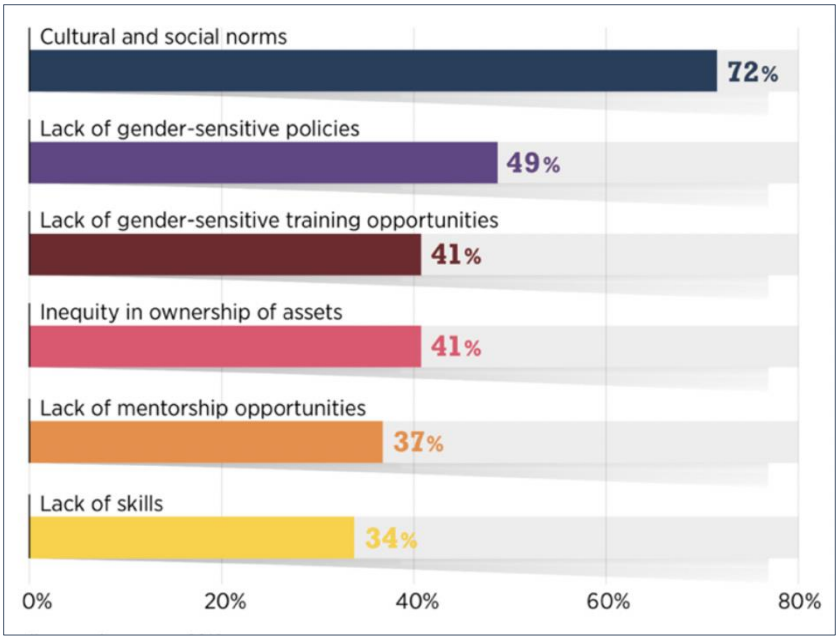
Market Driver	Description
Strong off-grid electricity demand	• Consumers from every market segment are aware of the high costs associated with energy access and consumption and are willing to take on quality, cost-effective alternatives
Willing government to support the industry	• The Government is viewed by sector players as forward- leaning and action-oriented, creating and supporting momentum and positive attention for the solar sector, which helps attract substantial and sustained investment to the market
Engaged and open-minded private sector	• Local OGS suppliers are engaged in efforts to improve / reform the sector, accept new business models and strategies and take measures to attract external investment
Strong donor/NGO presence	• The presence and wide range of donor-funded activities in the country's off-grid sector provides confidence that the market will continue to receive financial and policy support to develop.

Source: Focus Group Discussions; Stakeholder interviews; African Solar Designs analysis

2.5.3 Inclusive Participation[161]

Given that the off-grid market is only beginning to emerge in Mauritania, women are not yet highly engaged in the sector. The overall lack of inclusive participation in the off-grid space is attributable to a wide range of factors. In a 2018 survey that assessed barriers to women's participation in expanding energy access, nearly three-quarters of respondents cited cultural and social norms as the most common barrier, which reflects the need for gender mainstreaming (**Figure 30**). More than half of the women surveyed in Africa identified a lack of skills and training as the most critical barrier, compared to just one-third of respondents globally.[162]

Figure 30: Key Barriers to Women's Participation in Expanding Energy Access



Source: International Renewable Energy Agency

As a starting point, electrification (whether grid-connected or off-grid) increases access to information, which can help challenge gender norms and increase the autonomy of women.[163] Access to electricity can save women time and/or enable them to complete domestic activities in the evening, thus allowing them to participate in paid work during the day. Many opportunities also exist for women in the productive use of energy, including solar-powered machinery that can support productive applications, particularly in the agricultural sector in the areas of irrigation, water pumping, and milling/food processing.[164]

Women, who are often the primary energy users in households, have a strong influence on the energy value chain. Women can take on different roles, including as engaged end-users, community mobilizers,

[161] See **Annex 4** for more details
[162] "Renewable Energy: A Gender Perspective," International Renewable Energy Agency, (2019): https://irena.org/-/media/Files/IRENA/Agency/Publication/2019/Jan/IRENA_Gender_perspective_2019.pdf
[163] "Productive Use of Energy in African Micro-Grids: Technical and Business Considerations," USAID-NREL and Energy 4 Impact, (August 2018): https://sun-connect-news.org/fileadmin/DATEIEN/Dateien/New/productive_use_of_energy_in_african_micro-grids.pdf
[164] "Turning promises into action: Gender equality in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development," UN Women, (2018): http://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2018/sdg-report-fact-sheet-sub-saharan-africa-en.pdf?la=en&vs=3558

technicians, and part time and full-time employees and entrepreneurs.[165] Women also have unique social networks that typically offer greater access to rural households, which can be important to deploying energy access solutions.

Despite these opportunities, women are typically not part of key decision-making processes at nearly all levels of society. Women tend to have limited access to land and capital, as these are often determined by traditional and religious customs that remain deeply rooted in patriarchal traditions. Women also have more difficulty accessing finance due in part to lack of collateral required to guarantee payment and often resort to obtaining loans from money lenders who charge exorbitant interest rates.[166]

The gender analysis undertaken in Mauritania corroborated many of these trends, and revealed several interrelated challenges that women face in the off-grid sector:

- Women lack access to skills, technical capacity, and education/training
- Women broadly lack access to capital, asset ownership, collateral and credit (e.g. to start a business)[167]
- Extensive household responsibilities reduce their ability to generate income and service credit
- Financial literacy among women remains low and there is a lack of education and information available to women on access to financial resources

The GoM has implemented several policy measures that seek to address some of these challenges and help improve the rate of participation among women in the country's energy and off-grid sectors. At the national level, Mauritania's policy framework for promoting gender equality and women's empowerment is guided mainly by the National Family Policy (2006) and by the National Strategy of Institutionalization of Gender (2015). Together, these policies aim to create an enabling environment to improve women's participation in the country's development process. In the energy sector, several Government and donor-funded programs (e.g. EU, UNDP) facilitate training for women in the solar sector.

[165] "Renewable Energy: A Gender Perspective," International Renewable Energy Agency, (2019): https://irena.org/-/media/Files/IRENA/Agency/Publication/2019/Jan/IRENA_Gender_perspective_2019.pdf

[166] See **Section 3.2** for more details.

[167] This is a huge challenge for women in the country, particularly in rural areas, where the population depends on seasonal income from the agricultural sector for their livelihood, which makes loans inaccessible or only available at extremely high interest rates. This issue is examined in further detail in **Section 3.2.**

III. ANALYSIS OF THE ROLE OF FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

This section begins with an introduction to financial products for the off-grid sector, including for end-users and stand-alone solar companies (**Section 3.1**). This is followed by a comprehensive overview of the country's financial market and commercial lending environment (**Section 3.2**), including an assessment of financial inclusion and a summary any off-grid solar lending activity/programs. **Section 3.3** examines other financial institutions (in addition to commercial banks) that are active in the country. **Section 3.4** presents a summary of key findings from the Task 3 analysis. The data presented in this section was obtained through desk research as well as interviews with/surveys of key officials and representatives from local financial institutions. **Annex 3** provides an overview of the Task 3 methodology.

3.1 Introduction to Financial Products for the Off-Grid Sector

A wide range of financial products can be utilized to support development of the stand-alone solar sector in West Africa and the Sahel. These may include instruments such as matching grants, contingent loans, results-based financing (grants reimbursing cost after completion of work), equity investment (seed capital and later stages), concessional debt (subsidized interest or forgiveness of a portion of principal repayment), short- term commercial credits for inventory purchases and working capital, trade finance solutions (from export credit agencies or private trade funders) and medium-term loans secured on assets or receivables from a portfolio of installed projects. This "financial supply chain" consists of capital delivered at different stages of standalone solar enterprise development, by financial sector players that have risk appetites well matched to each specific stage. This section focuses on the roles of commercial financial institutions (FIs) and microfinance institutions (MFIs) in providing debt financing to stand-alone solar consumers and enterprises.

3.1.1 Financial Products for End-Users

In order to determine what kinds of debt instruments are available to support stand-alone solar purchases for end-users, it is important to identify the different end-users.

- **Households**

Households represent the majority of end-users in the West Africa and Sahel region and the level of cash flow this market segment has available for energy access depends heavily upon the formal and/or informal economic activity they are engaged in. In general, the ability for households to pay from their own internal resources declines as their distance from urban centers increases and their opportunity to participate in the formal economy with regular cash income declines. Meanwhile, external funding is typically not available for rural households as they remain largely off of the radar of mainstream FIs (with the exception of households where members have regular sources of income from urban centers). MFIs in fact are generally more appropriate sources of household finance. Most of a given country's households can access external funding typically only through microfinance or informal financial services such as local money lenders, cooperative societies and rotating savings and credit associations.

- **Public Institutions**

The main public institutional facilities that require funding for off-grid electrification are directly linked to national, provincial or local administrations and budgets, including schools, health facilities, and other public buildings/lighting systems. Sustainable energy finance for community facilities is typically provided through a ministry, department or agency if the facility falls under the purview of the national or provincial

budget. The challenge is that budget resources are severely limited and constantly face competing priorities; as a result, many public community facilities are left without access to energy.

In order to implement financial products targeting public institutional projects, a few critical questions need to be answered, such as who would be the borrower and whether there are sufficient financial resources available in the budget to pay for the service over a long period of time. This question is also important if these public community facilities end up being included alongside households as part of a local mini-grid.

- **Productive Use**

Financial instruments for SMEs as end-users of sustainable energy represent a very important category of products in that they tend to be commercially viable and are thus important for the long-term sustainability of energy systems. While households and community facilities use energy primarily for consumption, often resulting in other sources of income or budget being allocated to cover the cost of service, SMEs use energy for income-generating activities and can therefore cover electricity costs through the income generated by their business. An enterprise with positive cash flows gives financiers more comfort as well as an opportunity to design financial instruments that are commercial in nature. A loan product with parameters that match the company's ability to service the debt would be a strong and commercially viable option. MFIs often provide short-term loans to microenterprises on this basis while FIs often limit their lending to SMEs with strong balance sheets and available collateral.

- **Commercial and Industrial**

Commercial and industrial (C&I) facilities such as industrial plants, mining operations, shopping malls, logistics and distribution centers or commercial office buildings generally have considerable power consumption requiring energy supply from much larger solar systems that can range from several hundred kW to several MW in capacity. Where there is particularly high cost advantage for stand-alone solar systems over existing energy supply (i.e. vs. diesel generators), some C&I facility owners may find the payback of these investments so attractive that they will seek to purchase the solar power plant outright, often requiring debt financing to complete the transaction. This entails a corporate loan backed by the full faith and credit of the company, a pledge on the installed assets and usually supplemented by additional collateral and personal guarantees posted by the C&I facility owners. Many commercial FIs will offer credits to their existing C&I customers for this purpose but the C&I facility loan applicants are often unable or unwilling to post the required collateral for this specific purpose as their assets may already be encumbered for other business needs.

3.1.2 Financial Products for Suppliers/Service Providers

The stand-alone solar sector remains nascent in most markets across West Africa and the Sahel. The companies offering standalone solar products and energy services are therefore often at start-up or early development stage. Overall by number of players, small indigenous entrepreneurs are well in the majority; however, a few international companies dominate the overall market share. Most equipment is imported with purchases denominated in hard currency, while sales to consumers – whether on a direct purchase, Lease-to-Own (LTO) or Pay-As-You-Go (PAYG) basis – are almost always in local currency. At start-up or early stages of operation, local entrepreneurs, although in need of funding, are usually not ready to take on debt financing and should rely more on seed capital investment and grants until they are able to generate an initial book of business. Once orders begin to materialize, these enterprises have growing funding needs suitable for debt financing instruments which may include the following:

- **Working Capital**

All entrepreneurs need working capital to fuel their business growth and cover basic overheads for operations, marketing and sales. Throughout West Africa and the Sahel, there is a dearth of working capital financing for businesses in all sectors, and the situation is no different for stand-alone solar companies. When available, working capital loans have very short tenors of 3-12 months, must be secured on confirmable cash flows, have difficult-to-meet collateral requirements and carry high interest rates. Since their costs and income are in local currency, local entrepreneurs are best served by working capital loans also denominated in local currency. However, due to high cost of local currency debt, many companies will see advantages in borrowing at much lower interest rates in hard currency as the perceived risk of currency fluctuations across such short tenors is relatively low. Some international companies operating in the West African off-grid solar sector may prefer hard currency financing at the offshore holding company level, depending on how they have structured their local subsidiaries or affiliates in the region.

- **Inventory and Trade Finance**

To fulfill orders, solar system providers need inventory on hand. Equipment suppliers to the off-grid sector in West Africa and the Sahel are usually unwilling or unable to offer generous terms, often requiring down payments with balance due in full at cash-on-delivery (COD). Therefore, these businesses are in dire need of short-term loans of 6-12 months duration to finance inventory purchases. Yet, such loans are hard to come by for developing off-grid enterprises. Since equipment purchase arrangements are usually denominated in hard currency, loans also in hard currency over such short tenors are often acceptable. Trade finance from export credit agencies (ECAs) and private trade funders may also provide good solutions, but these lenders are often unwilling to finance orders under a few million USD or euro in value.

- **Asset-Based or Receivables Financing**

Once stand-alone solar system providers achieve a portfolio of operating PAYG or LTO installations, the system assets and revenues from customer payments can be used to leverage debt financing to fund business activities and expansion. Typically, a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) is established to house the asset portfolio, which is sold by the solar provider to lenders. This form of financing has been widely deployed in East Africa and is also increasingly available in West Africa through a variety of regionally focused specialized debt funds that are focused on portfolio financings in the range of USD 1-10 million.[168]

- **Crowd Funding**

Crowd funding platforms have played an important role in offering working capital, inventory financing and smaller increment asset or receivables-backed loans to off-grid entrepreneurs. Loans of two-five years have been provided to both locally-owned and international solar enterprises with a good number of financings in the USD 150-500K range occurring in Nigeria, Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire.[169]

[168] A total of 11 such specialized debt funds were identified, including those managed by: Sunfunder, responsAbility, Lendable, Sima Funds, Solar Frontier, Neot, Deutsche Bank, Triple Jump, Crossboundary, Lion's Head, Shell and Solar Connect. Only a handful of these have vehicles that are fully funded and deploying capital but as of mid-2018 they reported expectations for financial closings that would make roughly USD 1.5 billion in off-grid focused debt available across Sub Saharan Africa by mid-2019.

[169] The most active crowd funding platforms in the off-grid space have been Kiva, TRINE, Lendahand and Bettervest with the latter two most focused on West Africa.

3.2 Financial Market Overview

3.2.1 Market Structure

The Mauritanian financial market includes a Central Bank (Banque Centrale de Mauritanie, BCM), 17 licensed commercial banks (**Table 43**) and 29 licensed MFIs.[170] The BCM aims to modernize the country's banking sector through development of a money market and implementation structural reforms in line with Islamic finance. The Mauritanian financial market is dominated by the banking sector, which controlled 93% of total assets in 2017.[171] The country's microfinance sector has a wide geographic coverage, especially in rural areas, and is primarily made up savings and credit unions and savings and loan funds. The semi-formal and informal financial sector also plays a key role in providing financing to the population.

Table 43: Licensed Commercial Banks in Mauritania

Banque Mauritanienne de l'Investissement (BMI)
Banque des Financements Islamiques (BFI)
Qatar National Bank Mauritanie (QNBM)
Banque Islamique de Mauritanie (BIM)
Nouvelle Banque de Mauritanie (NBM)
Banque Muamelat As Sahiha (BMS)
Banque Populaire de Mauritanie (BPM)
Attijari Bank Mauritanie (ABM)
Chinguetti Bank
Société Générale Mauritanie (SGM)
Orabank Mauritanie
Banque El Amana (BEA)
Banque Al Wava Mauritanienne Islamique (BAMIS)
Societe Générale de Banque de Mauritanie (SGBM)
Banque Nationale de Mauritanie (BNM)
Banque Mauritanienne pour le Commerce International (BMCI)
Banque pour le Commerce et l'Industrie (BCI)

Source: Central Bank of Mauritania

The banking sector provides relatively little credit to the country's small economy. Despite increased competition arising from the entrance of several new banks into the market, the narrow formal sector and limited scope of financial services available has left the banking system highly concentrated. In 2017, the country's three largest banks controlled 38.8% of total assets (**Table 44)**.[172]

Table 44: Market Share of Three Largest Banks in Mauritania

Indicator	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Number of Commercial Banks	10	12	12	15	15	16	16	17
Market Share of Assets of the Three Largest Banks (%)	53.7	50.7	45.4	42.3	45.7	42.0	41.0	38.8

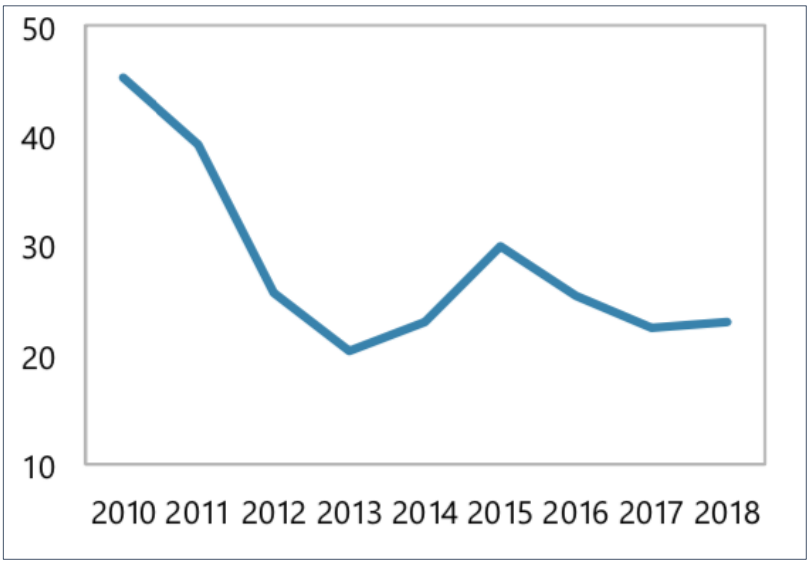
Source: International Monetary Fund

[170] Central Bank of Mauritania Annual Report, 2017: http://www.bcm.mr/IMG/pdf/rapport_annuel_bcm_2017_fr.pdf
[171] Ibid.
[172] Central Bank of Mauritania Annual Report, 2015: http://www.bcm.mr/IMG/pdf/rapport_annuel_2015_version_francaise.pdf

- **Banking Sector Financial Soundness Indicators**

Asset-Based Indicators: Banks in Mauritania generally have poor asset quality with a high share of non-performing loans (NPLs) to total loans. On average, between 2010 and 2018, NPLs have accounted for about 25% of total loans (**Figure 31**).

Figure 31: Banking Sector Non-Performing Loans to Total Loans (%)[173]



Source: International Monetary Fund

Liquidity Indicators: The banking sector's liquidity indicators have been relatively stable in recent years. In 2017, the liquidity ratio stood at 33%, well above the regulatory minimum of 20%.[174]

Capital-Based indicators: Between 2010 and 2018, the banking sector's average capital adequacy ratio (CAR) decreased by about 10%, while total capital to assets fluctuated slightly but remained largely unchanged over this period (**Table 45** and **Figure 32**). As of 2016, most commercial banks were in compliance with minimum capital adequacy requirements; however, it is worth noting that this is partially due to the high ratios carried by banks that only recently entered the market and have yet to engage in significant lending.

Table 45: Banking Sector Capital Adequacy Indicators (%)[175]

Indicator	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017 Est.	2018 Est.
Capital/total assets	16.7	18.5	17.5	18.7	14.7	13.7	14.2	13.8	12.3
Capital adequacy ratio	34.0	35.2	29.2	32.4	28.1	23.1	23.7	22.2	24.5

Source: International Monetary Fund

[173] "Islamic Republic of Mauritania: IMF Country Report No. 18/365," International Monetary Fund, (December 2018): https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/CR/Issues/2018/12/13/Islamic-Republic-of-Mauritania-Second-Review-Under-the-Extended-Credit-Facility-Arrangement-46465

[174] BCM Annual Report, 2017.

[175] IMF Country Report No. 18/365, 2018.

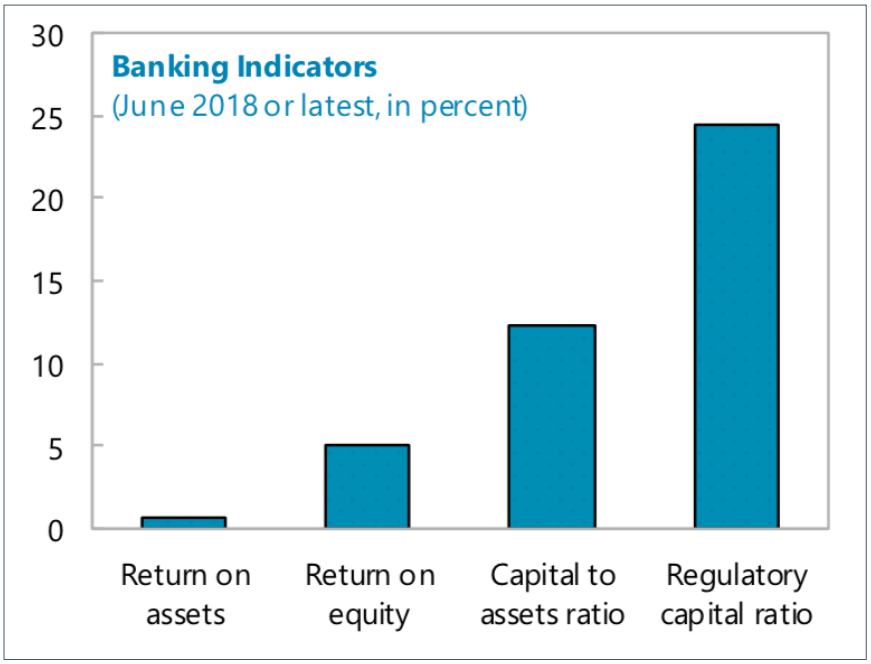
Income and Expense Based Indicators: Banking sector profitability has been relatively weak, as return on assets (ROA) and return on equity (ROE) averaged 1% and 5.8%, respectively, between 2010 and 2015 (**Table 46** and **Figure 32**). This can partially be attributed to the cost of provisioning but may also be due to the low profitability of new banks in their initial years of operation in the market. Banks' most profitable activity is import financing through credit or letters of credit, which makes them highly reliant on BCM's FX supply.[176] There were signs of improvement, however, as the sector's consolidated net profit increased by MRO 0.84 billion – from MRO 4.21 billion in 2016 to MRO 5.1 billion in 2017 – a 20% improvement.[177]

Table 46: Banking Sector Profitability Indicators[178]

Indicator	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Return on Assets (%)	0.4	1.2	1.4	1.2	1.2	0.7
Return on Equity (%)	2.7	6.0	8.4	6.4	6.6	5.1

Source: International Monetary Fund

Figure 32: Banking Sector Financial Indicators, 2018[179]



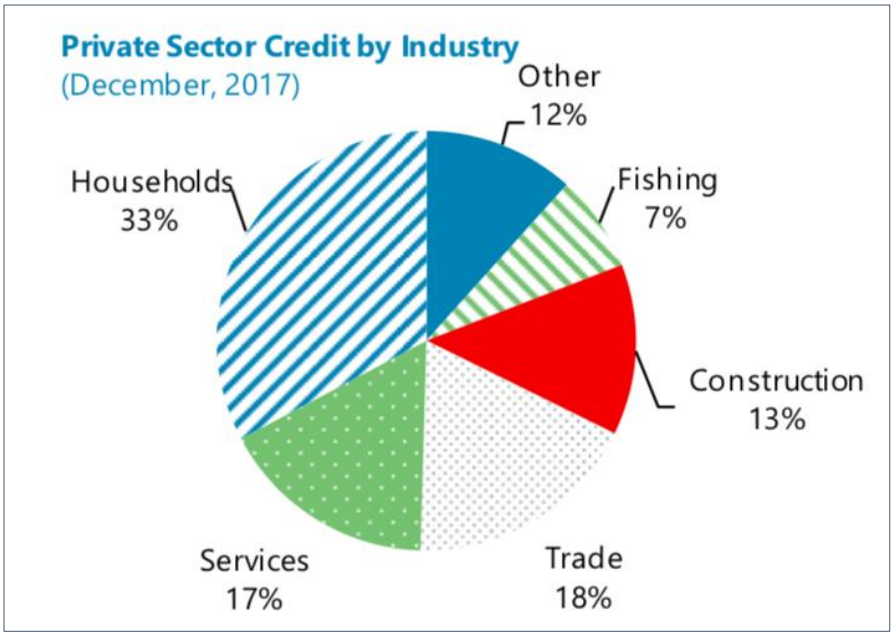
Source: International Monetary Fund

[176] Ozden, A., and Hacikoglu, M., "Mauritania Economic Research," A&T Bank, (April 2017): https://www.atbank.com.tr/documents/MAURITANIA-%20APRIL%202017.PDF
[177] BCM Annual Report, 2017.
[178] IMF Country Report No. 18/365, 2018.
[179] Ibid.

➢ **Distribution of Credit by Sector**

The distribution of credit by sector in 2017 is shown in **Figure 33**. Household credit represented the largest share, with one-third of overall credit going to households, followed by trade, services and construction. Private sector credit increased in 2018, driven mainly by the telecommunications sector.[180]

Figure 33: Distribution of Credit by Sector[181]



Source: International Monetary Fund

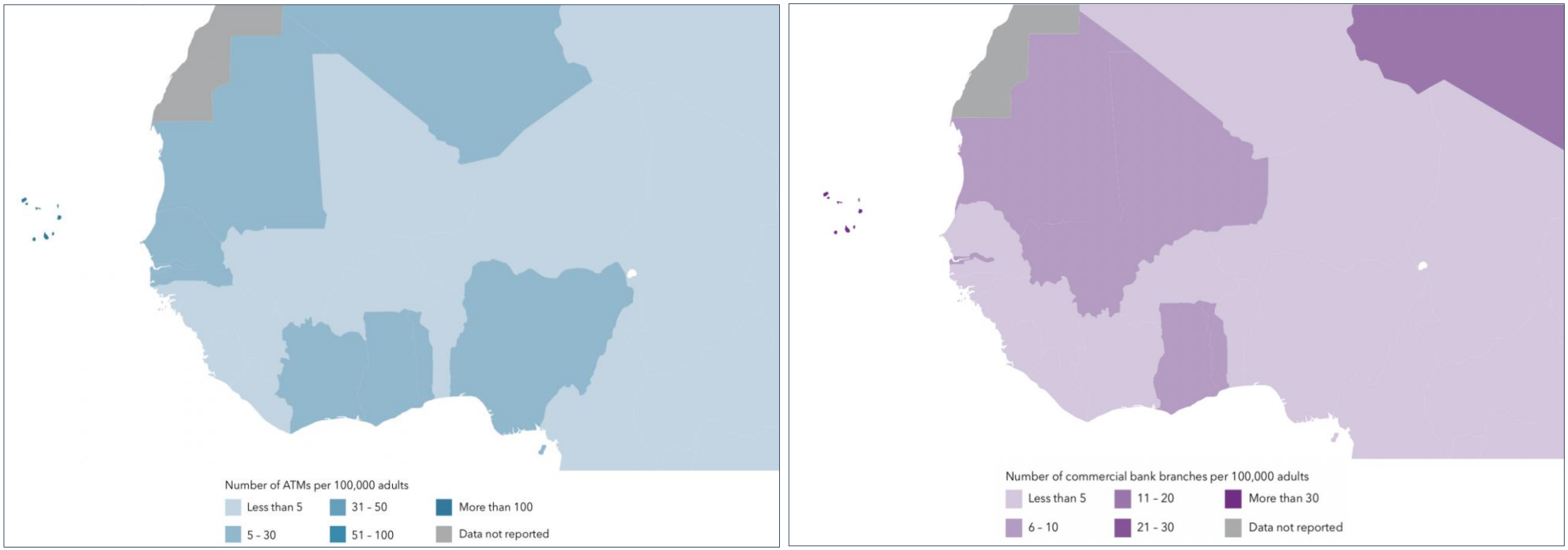
3.2.2 Financial Inclusion

➢ **Access to Financial Services**

Access to financial services represents an ongoing challenge in West Africa and the Sahel. Overall, about three-quarters of the region's population remains financially excluded, lacking access to banking and financial services through formal institutions (**Figure 34**).[182] There are, however, notable signs of progress. Between 2011 and 2017, the share of the population covered by formal financial institutions increased by nearly 10%.[183] Many countries across the region have also seen an increase in mobile money account ownership (**Figure 35**) and transaction volume (**Figure 36**).

[180] Ozden and Hacikoglu, 2017.
[181] IMF Country Report No. 18/365, 2018.
[182] "Le secteur bancaire en Afrique De l'inclusion financière à la stabilité financière," European Investment Bank, (October 2018): https://www.eib.org/attachments/efs/economic_report_banking_africa_2018_fr.pdf
[183] Demirguc-Kunt, A., Klapper, L., Singer, D., Ansar, S., and Hess, J., "The Global Findex Database 2017: Measuring Financial Inclusion and the Fintech Revolution," World Bank, (2017): http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/332881525873182837/pdf/126033-PUB-PUBLIC-pubdate-4-19-2018.pdf

Figure 34: ATMs and Branches of Commercial Banks per 100,000 Adults in West Africa and the Sahel, 2017[184]

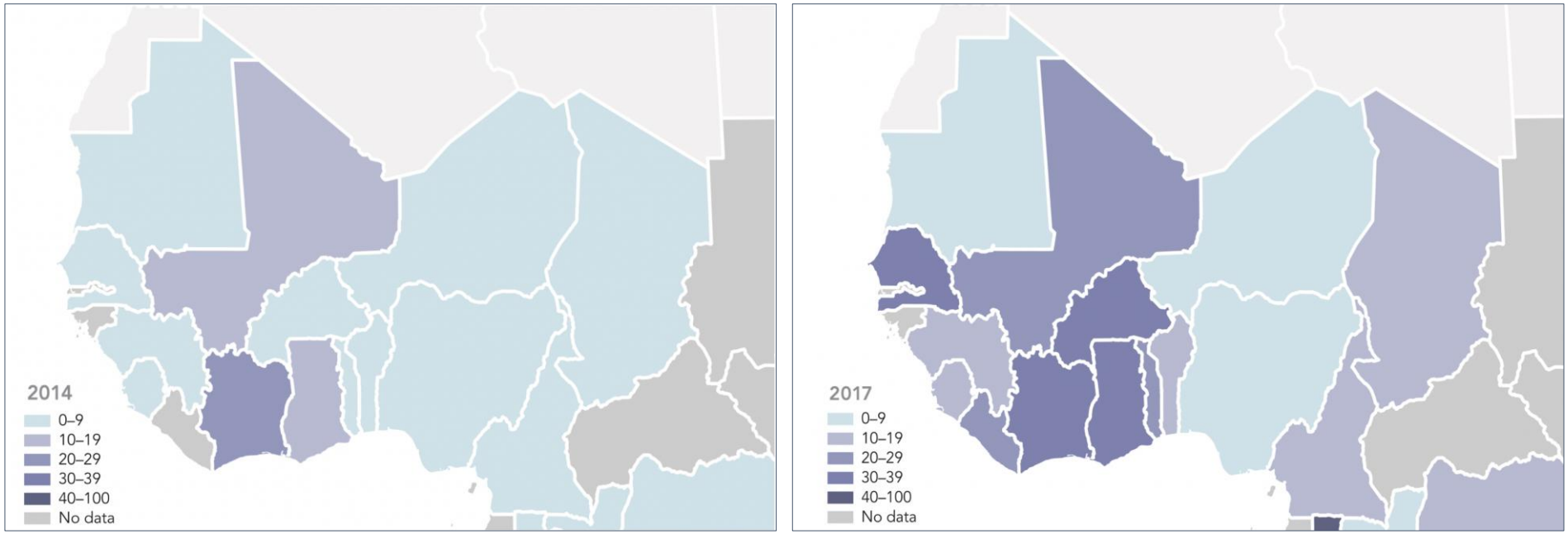


Source: International Monetary Fund

Figure 34 shows the number of ATMs (left) and commercial bank branches (right) per 100,000 adults across West Africa and the Sahel. The shade of the country corresponds to the magnitude of the indicator; the darker the shade, the higher the value. As of 2017, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Mauritania, Nigeria, Senegal and Togo had a relatively higher number of ATMs per 100,000 adults compared to the rest of the region, while The Gambia, Ghana, Mali, **Mauritania** and Togo had a relatively higher number of commercial bank branches per 100,000 adults. Cabo Verde ranked above all countries in the region on both indicators.

[184] International Monetary Fund – Financial Access Survey: http://data.imf.org/?sk=E5DCAB7E-A5CA-4892-A6EA-598B5463A34C&sId=1460054136937

Figure 35: Share of Adults with a Mobile Money Account in West Africa and the Sahel (%), 2014 and 2017[185]



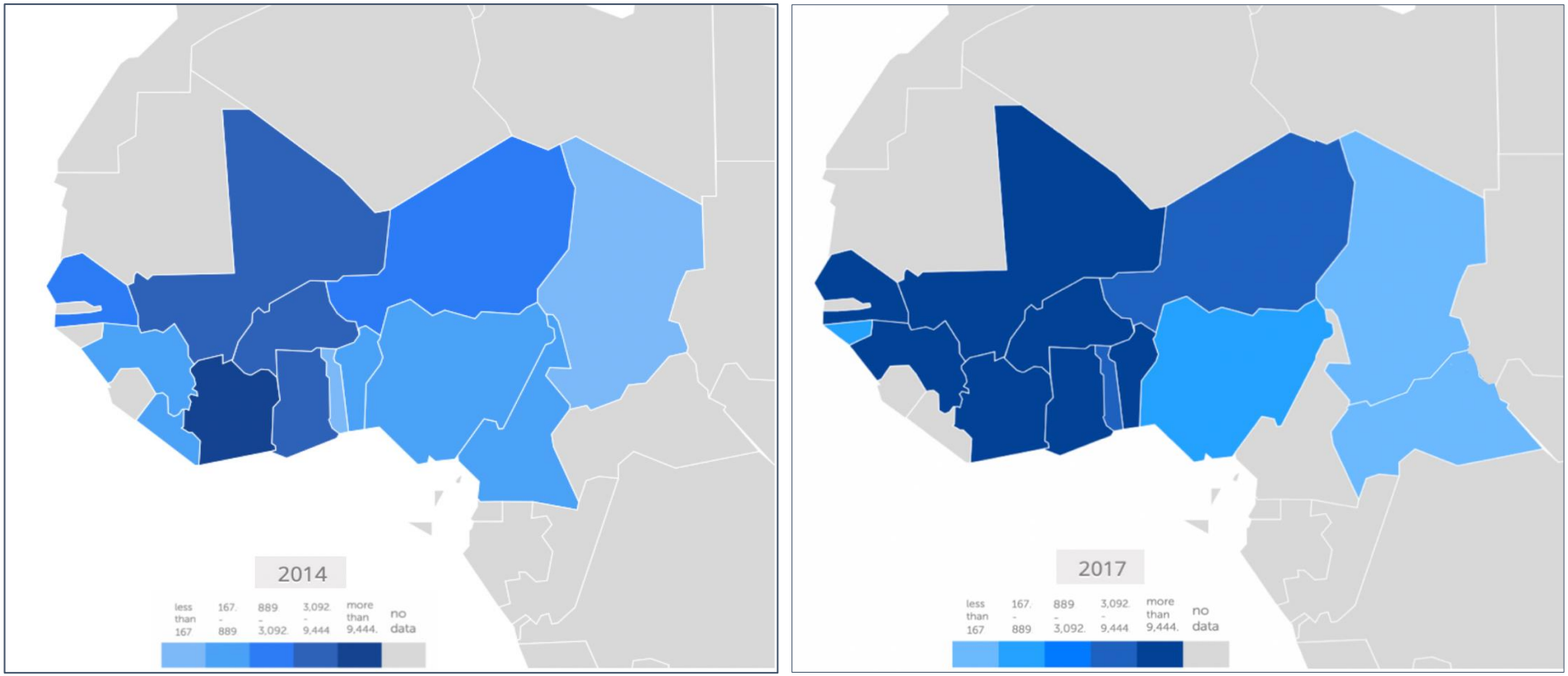
NOTE: Maps exclude Cabo Verde (no data)

Source: World Bank Global Findex Database

Figure 35 shows the increase in the share of adults (%) owning a mobile money account across West Africa and the Sahel between 2014 and 2017. The shade of the country corresponds to the magnitude of the indicator; the darker the shade, the higher the value. As of 2017, the share of adults owning a mobile money account is about 33% in Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, and Senegal, and 39% in Ghana. Between 2014 and 2017, mobile money account ownership also increased significantly in Benin, Cameroon, Chad, Guinea, Mali, Sierra Leone and Togo, while growth in account ownership was slower in Niger, Nigeria and **Mauritania**. There was either no data or insufficient data available to assess account ownership in Cabo Verde, Central African Republic, The Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, and Liberia.

[185] Demirguc-Kunt et al., 2017.

Figure 36: Mobile Money Transactions per 1,000 Adults in West Africa and the Sahel, 2014 and 2017[186]



NOTE: Maps exclude Cabo Verde (no data)

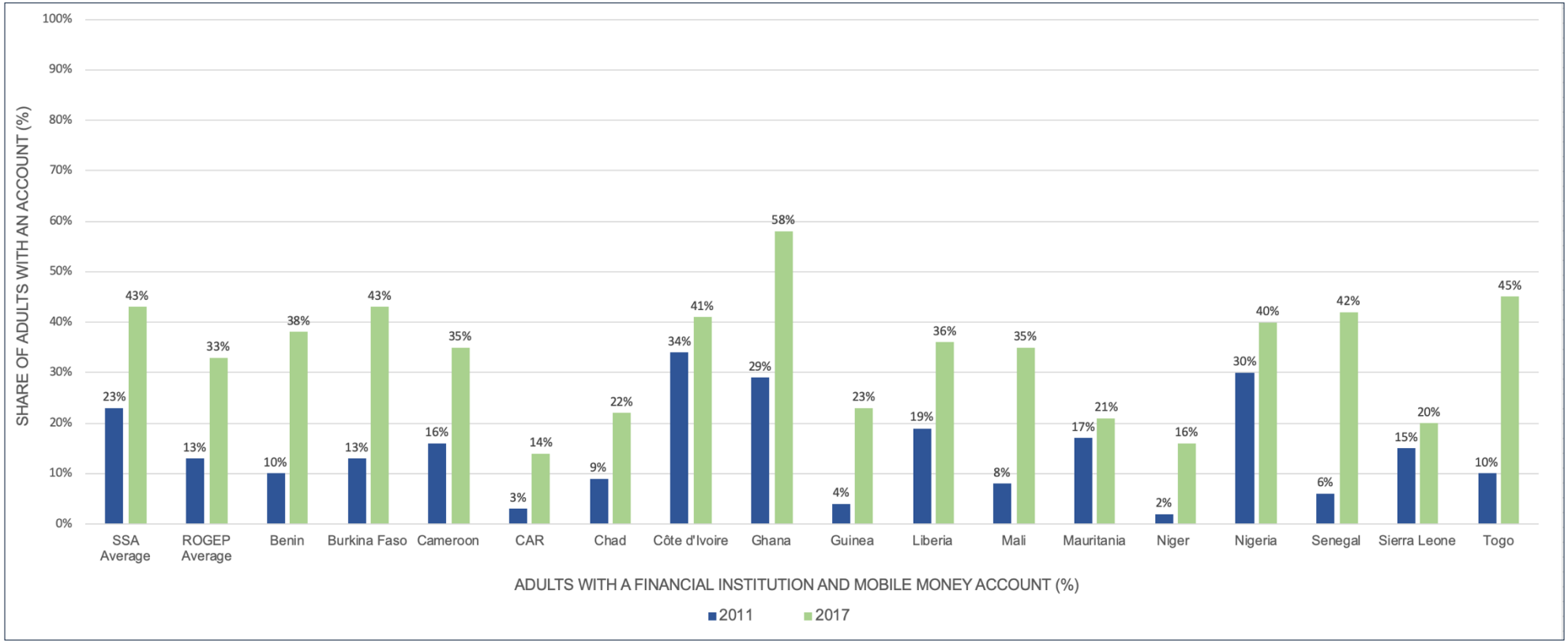
Source: International Monetary Fund

Figure 36 shows the increase in the number of mobile money transactions across West Africa and the Sahel between 2014 and 2017. The shade of the country corresponds to the magnitude of the indicator; the darker the shade, the higher the value. Between 2014 and 2017, mobile money transaction volume increased significantly in Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Mali, Niger, Senegal and Togo, while growth in transaction volume was slower in Nigeria and Chad. There was either no data or insufficient data available to assess transaction volume in Cabo Verde, Cameroon, Central African Republic, The Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mauritania and Sierra Leone.

[186] International Monetary Fund – Financial Access Survey: http://data.imf.org/?sk=E5DCAB7E-A5CA-4892-A6EA-598B5463A34C&sId=1460054136937

In 2017, 21% of Mauritania's adult population had an account at a financial institution or with a mobile money service provider, up from 17% in 2011. In 2017, the country had one of the lowest rates of financial inclusion in West Africa and the Sahel, 12% below the region's average and 22% below the average for Sub-Saharan Africa (**Figure 37**).

Figure 37: Share of Adults with Access to Financial Services in West Africa and the Sahel (%), 2011 and 2017[187]



NOTE: Cabo Verde, Guinea-Bissau and The Gambia excluded (no data); data for Côte d'Ivoire is from 2014 and 2017

Source: World Bank Global Findex Database

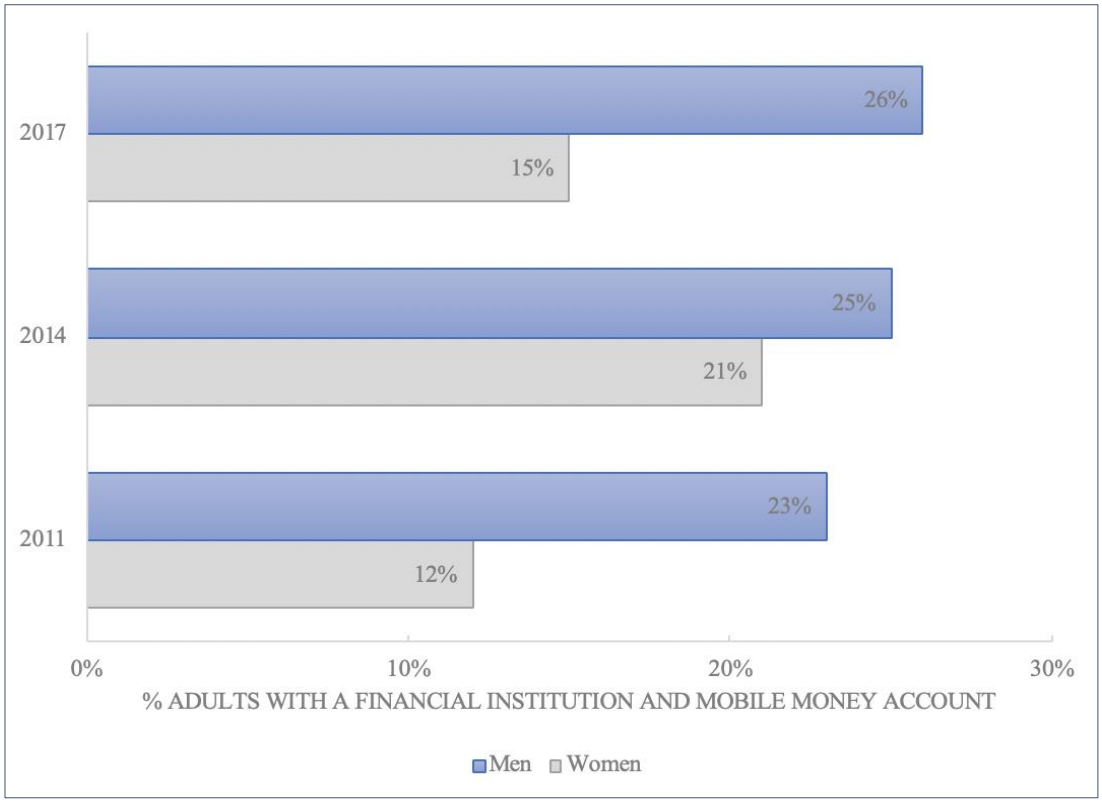
[187] Demirguc-Kunt et al., 2017.

Financial intermediation and inclusion remain ongoing challenges in Mauritania. To improve rates of financial inclusion, the BCM aims to reinforce banking supervision through more reliable financial reporting and to strengthen regulations to build trust between banks and economic agents to facilitate access to financing. The BCM will focus on the following policy initiatives: establishing a new credit information bureau; developing an integrated digital payment system, including a mobile banking platform; reforming the microfinance sector; providing financing for SMEs; strengthening banking sector regulations and supervision; and regularly monitoring financial inclusion indicators.[188]

- **Gender and Women's Financial Inclusion**

According to data from the World Bank's 2017 Global Findex survey – which examines, among many things, the extent of financial inclusion in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) – women in the region are about 10% less likely to have an account at a financial institution or with a mobile money service provider than men. In Mauritania, the gender gap is slightly larger than the regional average, with 15% of women compared to 26% of men holding an account (**Figure 38**). The size of the financial inclusion gender gap increased from 2014 to 2017 and in 2017 was equivalent to the gap in 2011.

Figure 38: Financial Inclusion Gender Gap in Mauritania[189]



Source: World Bank Global Findex Database

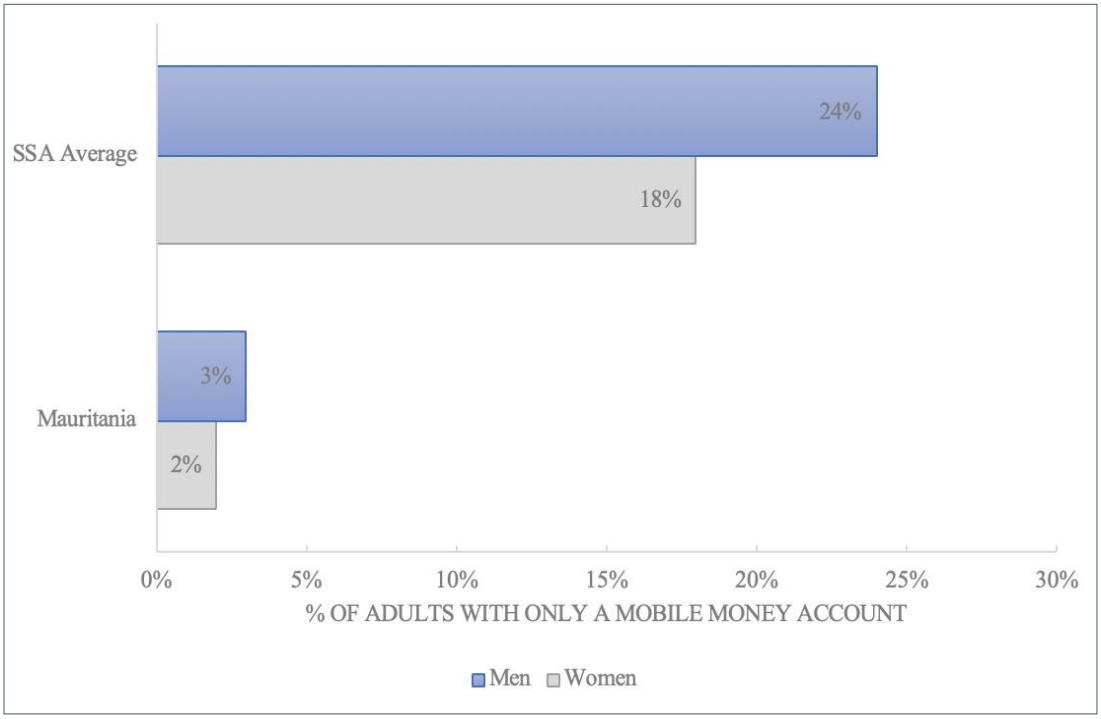
Studies have found that increasing financial inclusion can significantly empower women by increasing savings, reducing levels of inequality, and improving decision-making power in the household. Supportive

[188] IMF Country Report No. 18/365, 2018.
[189] Demirguc-Kunt et al., 2017.69

government programs, policies and regulations are therefore critical to overcoming the barriers that women face and driving overall progress towards financial inclusion.[190]

The persistent financial inclusion gender gap could be related to the weakness of Mauritania's market for digital financial services. Expanding digital financial services, especially mobile money, can create new opportunities to better serve women, the lower-income population, and other groups that are traditionally excluded from the formal financial system. As of 2017, 3% of adult men only had a mobile money account, compared to 2% of women, which is well below the regional average (**Figure 39**). The mobile money market appears to have significant growth potential given the country's high mobile phone penetration rate and increasing usage of mobile internet services,[191] suggesting the mobile money market could expand significantly with supportive policies and targeted programs.[192]

Figure 39: Gender Gap in Mobile Money, 2017[193]



Source: World Bank Global Findex Database

[190] El-Zoghbi, M., "Measuring Women's Financial Inclusion: The 2017 Findex Story," Consultative Group to Assist the Poor (CGAP), (30 April 2018): https://www.cgap.org/blog/measuring-womens-financial-inclusion-2017-findex-story
[191] "The Mobile Economy: Middle East and North Africa," GSMA Intelligence (2016): https://www.gsmaintelligence.com/research/?file=9246bbe14813f73dd85b97a90738c860&download
[192] "Country Partnership Framework for the Islamic Republic of Mauritania for the Period FY18-FY23," World Bank, (13 June 2018): http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/288231531625439579/pdf/MAURITANIA-CPF-NEW-06192018.pdf
[193] Demirguc-Kunt et al. (2017)

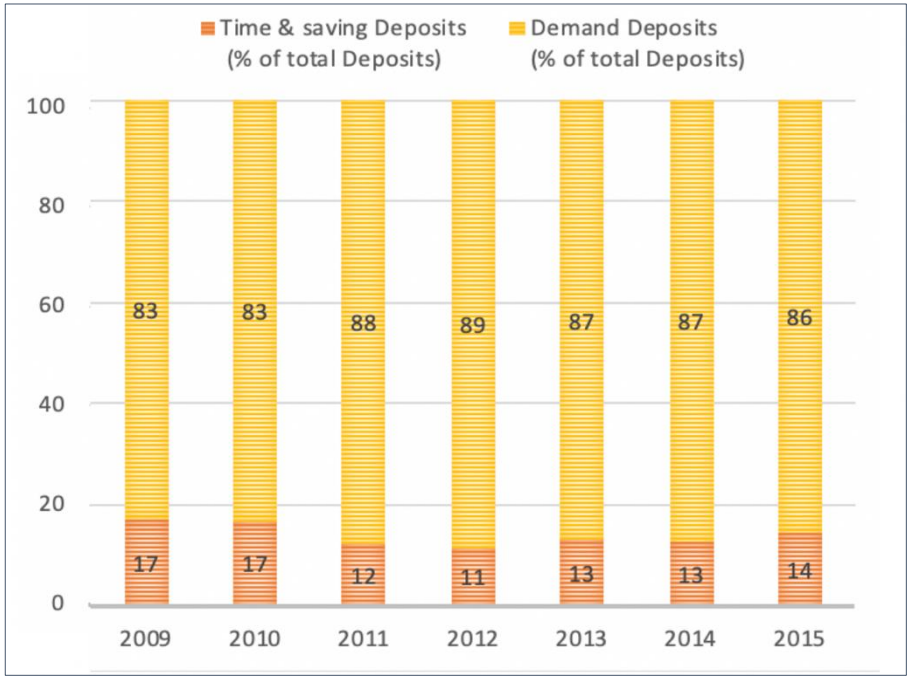
3.2.3 Commercial Lending Environment

- **Maturity Structure of Bank Deposits and Credit**

Banks in Mauritania remain heavily dependent on short term funding. Between 2009 and 2015, short-term deposits and short-term loans accounted for at least three-quarters of total deposits and loans in the banking sector (**Figure 40** and **Figure 41**).[194] At the same time, the corresponding share of consumer time and savings deposits and medium- and long-term bank loans has declined over this period. This can largely be attributed to risk aversion among banks and a negative long-term economic outlook for consumers.[195]

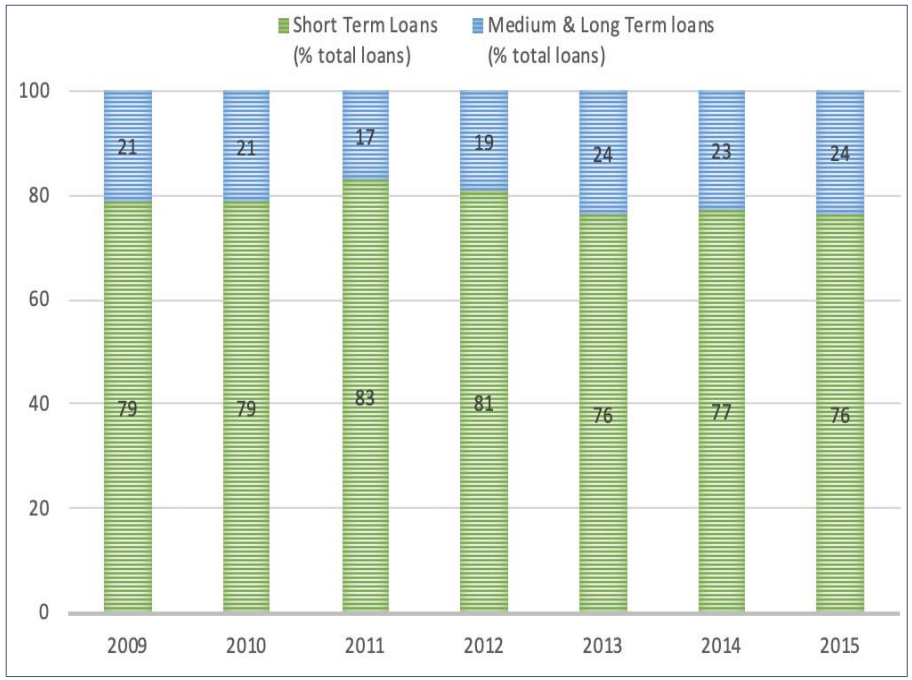
[194] African Financial Sector Database, African Development Bank, (2016): http://dataportal.opendataforafrica.org/AFDBFP2016/african-financial-sector-database-2016?action=download#signup=complete&provider=internal
[195] Ozden and Hacikoglu, 2017.

Figure 40: Maturity Structure of Bank Deposits



Source: African Development Bank

Figure 41: Maturity Structure of Bank Loans

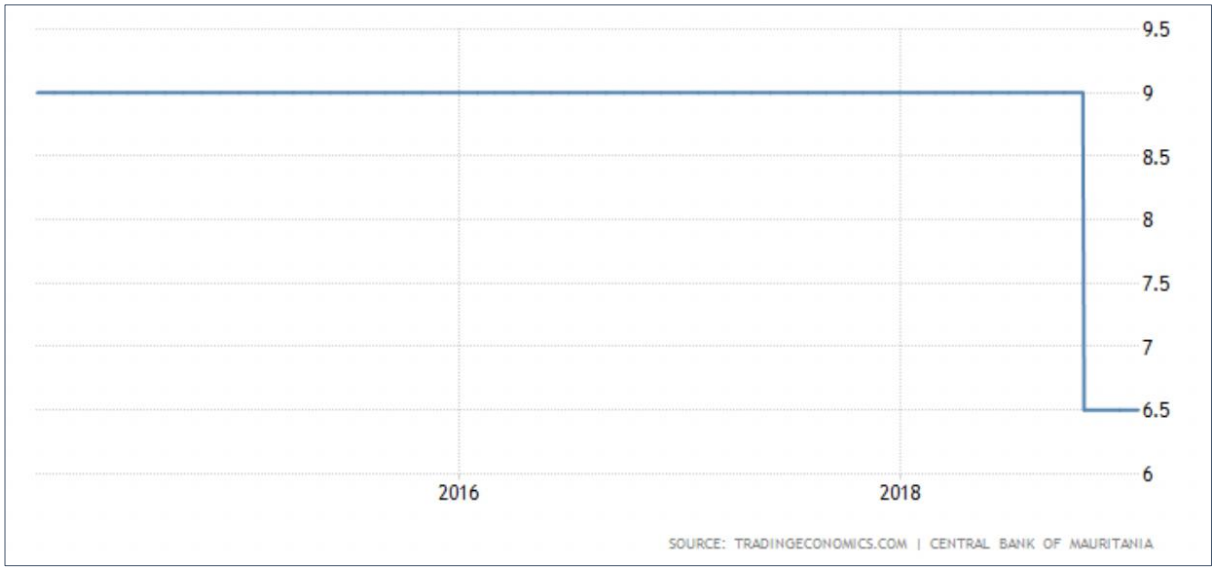


Source: African Development Bank

- **Interest Rates**

IN 2018, BCM's interest rate dropped from 9% to 6.5% (**Figure 42**). With support from the IMF, the central bank has developed plans to set up an interest rate corridor including new refinancing facilities with the objective of modernizing its monetary policy framework. In 2019, the BCM will also set up an integrated technical platform to manage implementation of its monetary policy operations in order to improve liquidity management in the financial sector.[196]

Figure 42: Interest Rates (%)



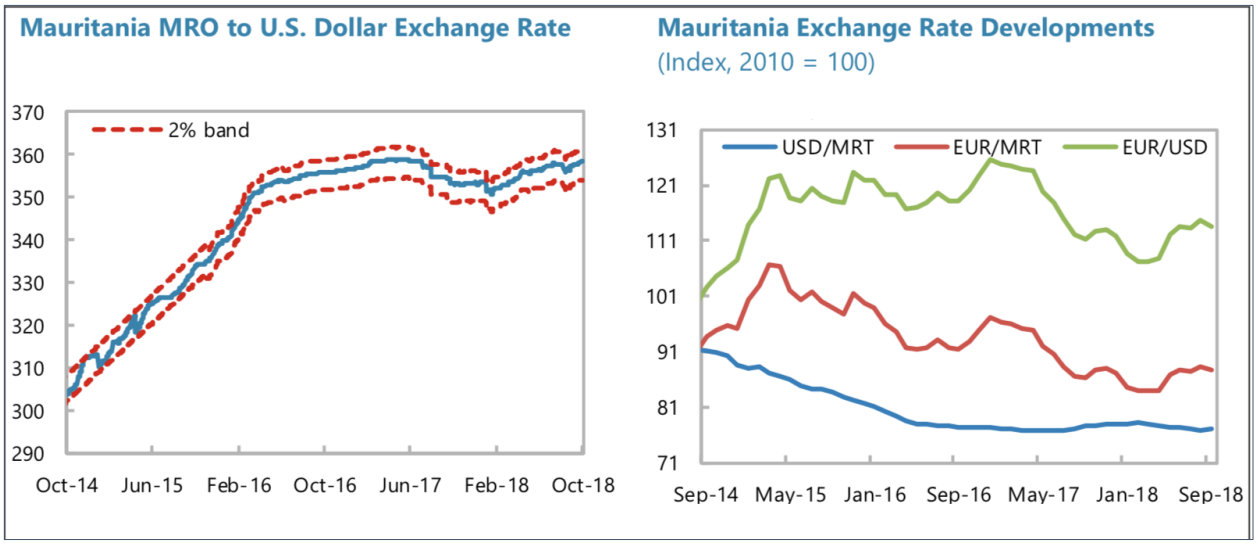
Source: Central Bank of Mauritania

- **Foreign Exchange Market**

Mauritanian authorities are working with the IMF to undertake a series of reforms to the foreign exchange market with the goal of improving its functioning and introducing more flexibility to the exchange rate to better absorb shocks. As part of this process, the BCM ultimately aims to form a market-based exchange rate, reduce transaction costs, and limit the need for BCM interventions. Following sizable exchange rate depreciation in 2015–16, the exchange rate has been relatively stable vis-à-vis the U.S. dollar in 2017–18 (**Figure 43** and **Table 47**).[197]

[196] IMF Country Report No. 18/365, 2018.
[197] Ibid.

Figure 43: Exchange Rate Developments (MRO-USD)



Source: International Monetary Fund

Table 47: Official Exchange Rate (MRO-USD)[198]

Exchange Rate	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
End of Period	29.90	31.26	33.90	35.65	35.35
Period Average	30.07	30.27	32.47	35.24	35.79

Source: International Monetary Fund

- **Collateral Requirements**

A challenge in Mauritania's financial market is poor judicial processes regarding collateral registry and recovery, as well as a lack of available credit information about the borrower. Hence, most commercial banks require relatively high amounts of collateral in order to mitigate consumer credit risk – typically between 100-120% of the loan principal and sometimes as high as 150%. Consequently, the majority of firms in the country are unable to obtain loans due to high costs of credit, insufficient funds offered, the short maturity of the loans, and/or the amount of required collateral.

- **Banking Supervision**

The Central Bank of Mauritania supervises the country's banking sector. With technical assistance for the IMF, BCM has developed a risk-based mechanism to better assess the risk of commercial banks. Specifically, the mechanisms strengthens enforcement of BCM's regulatory framework and improves the quality of statistics gathered from each institution. Moreover, BCM has strengthened its anti-money laundering and terrorism financing compliance mechanisms through tighter regulation of foreign currency transfers and control of bank activities.

Regarding Basel II and III requirements, in 2018, Mauritanian authorities adopted a new directive and composition of capital and solvency requirements. The directive will raise the minimum capital to MRO 10 billion over two years, which should encourage banking sector consolidation and reduce the number of

[198] International Financial Statistics (IMF): http://data.imf.org/?sk=4C514D48-B6BA-49ED-8AB9-52B0C1A0179B

new license applications. Moreover, the BCM established an emergency liquidity facility for commercial banks and is engaging with the sector to facilitate loan recovery and enforcement of collateral provisions by banks.[199]

3.2.4 Lending to the Off-Grid Solar Sector

While there are several donor and DFI-funded programs and initiatives that have provided financing to support development of Mauritania's off-grid solar market, these funds have not been channeled through local commercial banks or MFIs to finance the sector. ROGEP is therefore a pioneering initiative in the country, as it endeavors to boost OGS lending via engagement with local financial partners. Local FIs are increasingly becoming more aware of the opportunities in the off-grid space, and interviews FIs revealed a willingness to participate in providing financing to the sector.

3.2.5 Key Barriers to Off-Grid Solar Lending[200]

- **Unfamiliarity with the Off-Grid Solar Sector**

Much like other African markets, local FIs in Mauritania are unfamiliar with lending to off-grid solar projects and companies and have a limited understanding of the nascent sector. During stakeholder interviews, many of the FIs noted a lack of expertise in assessing OGS risks and in structuring/developing customized products for the sector. There remains a significant gap in overall local FI capacity, as most of the interviewed FIs stressed that technical assistance would be necessary to facilitate off-grid solar lending.

- **Maturity Structure of Bank's Funding**

As described in **Section 3.2.3**, the sizable share of short-term deposits limits the ability of banks to offer longer-tenor consumer financing products, which are necessary to accelerate off-grid solar market growth. In more mature off-grid solar markets, Lease-to-Own, Pay-As-You-Go (PAYG) and Energy-as-a-Service payment and business models reduce entry barriers for consumers by allowing for small, incremental payments, which are more affordable, rather than demanding a high up-front cost for installation and service.

- **Lack of Credit History/High Collateral Requirements**

As described in **Section 3.2.3**, consumers in Mauritania face strict collateral requirements. Many consumers also lack basic financial literacy and knowledge about the terms and conditions of financial products and therefore struggle to obtain loans. The lack of credit history/track record and the weak balance sheet of most off-grid solar enterprises is a critical barrier that often prevents these firms from meeting the collateral requirements of banks. All of the interviewed commercial banks indicated that credit guarantees would be necessary to encourage lending to the off-grid sector.

[199] IMF Country Report No. 18/365, 2018.

[200] A potential barrier that may arise with off-grid solar lending in Mauritania is the banking sector's transition to Islamic finance, as lenders and borrowers are forbidden from charging or paying interest or *riba*. Banks that are compliant with Islamic finance therefore do not issue interest-based loans, which means they will have difficulty providing financing to off-grid solar companies. This issue needs to be explored further by ECREEE and Mauritanian authorities as it is beyond the scope of this market assessment.

3.3 Financial Institutions[201]

3.3.1 Development Finance Institutions

Several DFIs are active in Mauritania, including AfDB, AFD/Proparco, IFC, and KFW/DEG among others; however, there has been little funding made available to support development of the off-grid solar sector to date. The identified DFI programs relevant to this sector are described below.

- **African Development Bank: Sustainable Energy Fund for Africa / Facility for Energy Inclusion**

The **Sustainable Energy Fund for Africa (SEFA)** is a USD 60 million multi-donor trust fund administered by the African Development Bank with the objective of supporting sustainable private sector led economic growth in African countries through the efficient utilization of clean energy resources and support small- and medium-scale renewable energy project development.[202]

The **Facility for Energy Inclusion (FEI)** is a USD 500 million Pan-African debt facility created by the AfDB to support the achievement of its access to energy goals by providing debt capital to SHS companies, small independent power producers and mini-grid developers. The FEI Off-Grid Energy Access Fund (OGEF), structured by Lion's Head in partnership with the Nordic Development Fund, supports transaction structuring, provides local currency options to reduce risk for borrowers and their customers, and also offers technical assistance to companies to support off-grid market development.[203]

The launch of the FEI in 2016 led to a significant increase in AfDB financing for distributed renewable energy throughout Sub-Saharan Africa.[204] The FEI OGEF, which launched in 2018, will initially focus on East Africa, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana and Nigeria.[205]

3.3.2 Microfinance Institutions

In 2003, the GoM adopted a National Microfinance Strategy (Stratégie nationale de la microfinance, SNMF) with the primary objective of promoting access to financial services for the country's SME sector. As of 2017, there were 29 licensed microfinance institutions active in Mauritania. Outstanding net loans distributed by the MFI sector amounted to MRO 3.7 billion (USD 1 billion), an increase of 33% compared to 2016. Savings and credit unions (Caisses Populaires d'Epargne et de Crédit, CAPEC) accounted for about 40% of MFI sector loans and 72% of deposits in 2017.[206] Despite this increase, the microfinance sector only represented about 2% of the financial market's overall transaction volume in 2017.[207]

[201] Excluding commercial banks, which are reviewed in detail in **Section 3.2**.
[202] "Sustainable Energy Fund for Africa," African Development Bank, (2018): https://www.afdb.org/en/topics-and-sectors/initiatives-partnerships/sustainable-energy-fund-for-africa/
[203] Facility for Energy Inclusion – Off-Grid Energy Access Fund: https://www.ogefafrica.com
[204] Lee, A. Doukas, A. and DeAngelis, K., "The African Development Bank and Energy Access Finance in Sub-Saharan Africa: Trends and Insights from Recent Data," Oil Change International and Friends of the Earth U.S., (November 2018): http://priceofoil.org/content/uploads/2018/11/AfDB-Energy-Access-Finance-report-high-quality.pdf
[205] "African Development Bank, Nordic Development Fund and Partners launch Off-Grid Energy Access Fund with US$ 58 million," African Development Bank Group, (August 27, 2018): https://www.afdb.org/en/news-and-events/african-development-bank-nordic-development-fund-and-partners-launch-off-grid-energy-access-fund-with-us-58-million-18432/
[206] BCM Annual Report, 2017.
[207] Ibid.

3.3.3 Informal Financial Institutions

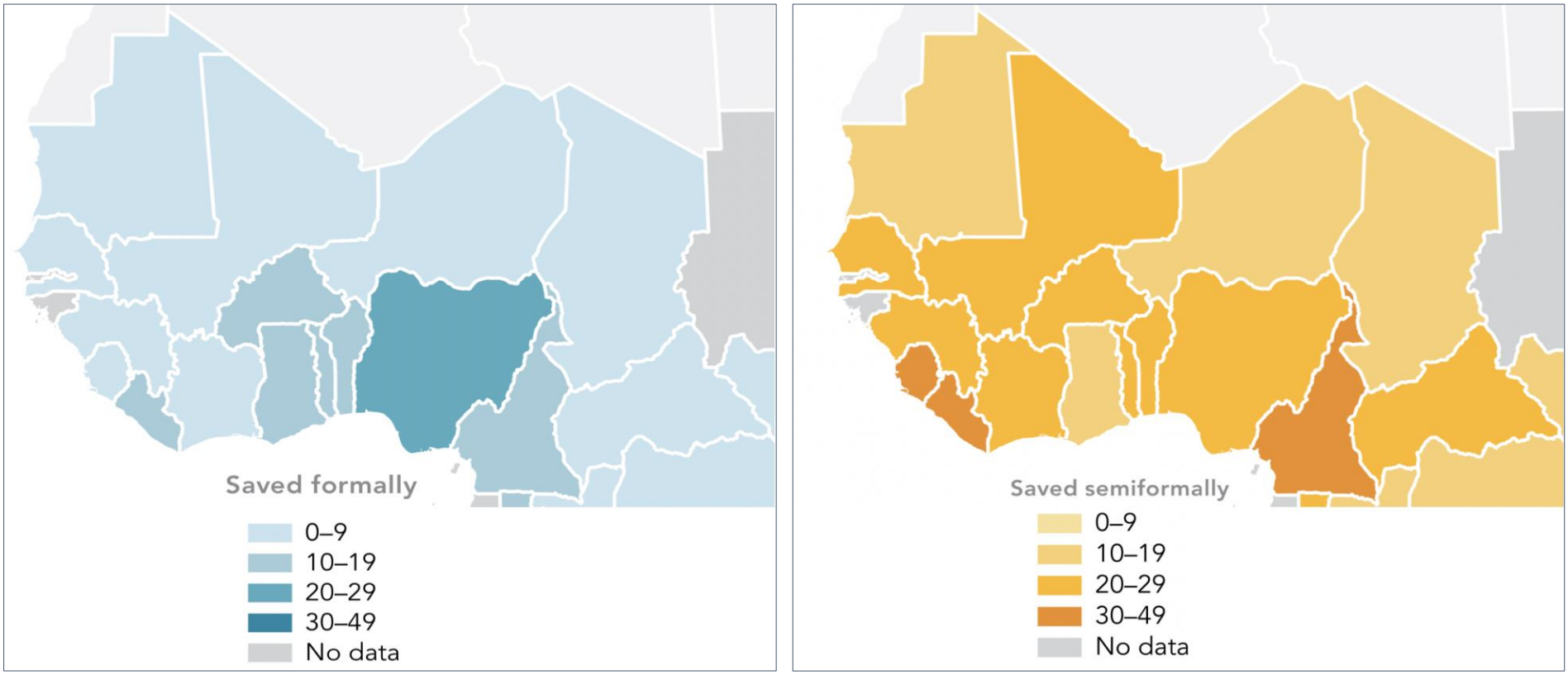
A 2017 World Bank study found that 38% of adults in Africa had borrowed money from an informal FI as opposed to 5% who borrowed from a formal FI. Although informal borrowing occurs at different rates across Africa, roughly 100 million adults in Sub-Saharan Africa use informal sources of finance.[208] The informal financial sector often serves as a major source of savings and credit services for women, the low-income population and others who lack access to formal institutions. Informal financial institutions typically include individual money lenders as well as collective entities such as Rotating Savings and Credit Associations and Accumulated Savings and Credit Associations, among other groups.[209]

Much like other African states, informal financial services are widely available in Mauritania (**Figure 44**). Data from this sector remains limited, largely due to the informal nature of these institutions, which does not facilitate access to information on their practices, cost standards and transaction levels. The overall lack of geographic coverage by FIs in rural areas of the country means that a significant portion of the rural population either relies exclusively on informal sources of finance at the community level or utilizes a combination of informal and formal credit and savings methods.

[208] "Demirguc-Kunt, A., Klapper, L., and Singer, D., "Financial Inclusion and Inclusive Growth: A Review of Recent Empirical Evidence," World Bank Policy Research Working Paper 8040, (April 2017): http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/403611493134249446/pdf/WPS8040.pdf

[209] Klapper, L., Singer, D., "The Role of Informal Financial Services in Africa," Journal of African Economies, (24 December 2014): https://academic.oup.com/jae/article-abstract/24/suppl_1/i12/2473408?redirectedFrom=fulltext

Figure 44: Share of Adults Saving in the Past Year (%), 2017[210]



NOTE: Maps exclude Cabo Verde (no data)

Source: World Bank Global Findex Database

Figure 44 shows how the savings behavior of adults varies in West Africa and the Sahel. The shade of the country corresponds to the magnitude of the indicator; the darker the shade, the higher the value. Saving semi-formally is much more common than saving formally across the region, including in Mauritania.

[210] Demirguc-Kunt et al., 2017.

3.4 Summary of Findings

- **Opportunity for ROGEP Credit Lines**: Mauritanian banks lack access to funding with the interest rates and tenors required to make off-grid solar projects attractive to end-users and SMEs. Local currency cost of capital remains very high for FIs, which in turn results in prohibitively high pricing for typical loans. Furthermore, loans are usually short-term, as customer deposits (mostly short-term) remain the largest source of funding for banks. This dynamic severely constrains OGS market growth. Stakeholder interviews revealed that there is indeed an opportunity for ROGEP credit lines to provide liquidity to local commercial banks and MFIs to support lending to the off-grid solar sector.

- **Local Currency and Pricing**: Most loans to off-grid enterprises and all loans for consumer purchases of stand-alone solar devices must be denominated in local currency. However, taking up hard currency denominated credit lines presents challenges for local lenders who would have to bear the FX risk.

- **Collateral Requirements**: The collateral requirements of commercial banks in Mauritania are high, particularly for small firms. Moreover, lenders already in the space are deeply constrained from originating loans where the borrower cannot meet these requirements. Hence, the use of third-party *pari-passu* guarantees as an alternative form of collateral would enable banks to extend loans to borrowers without such high collateral requirements. Accordingly, many of the interviewed commercial banks emphasized the need for partial credit guarantees to encourage lending to the OGS sector (50% coverage is helpful; 70-80% coverage could be transformative). However, pricing from most available third-party guarantors can be in the range of 3%+ per annum, which some lenders view as too high to remain competitive. This creates an opportunity for ROGEP to either provide low-cost guarantees directly or to subsidize the premiums offered by existing third-party guarantors such as GuarantCo, Afrexim and Africa Guarantee Fund.

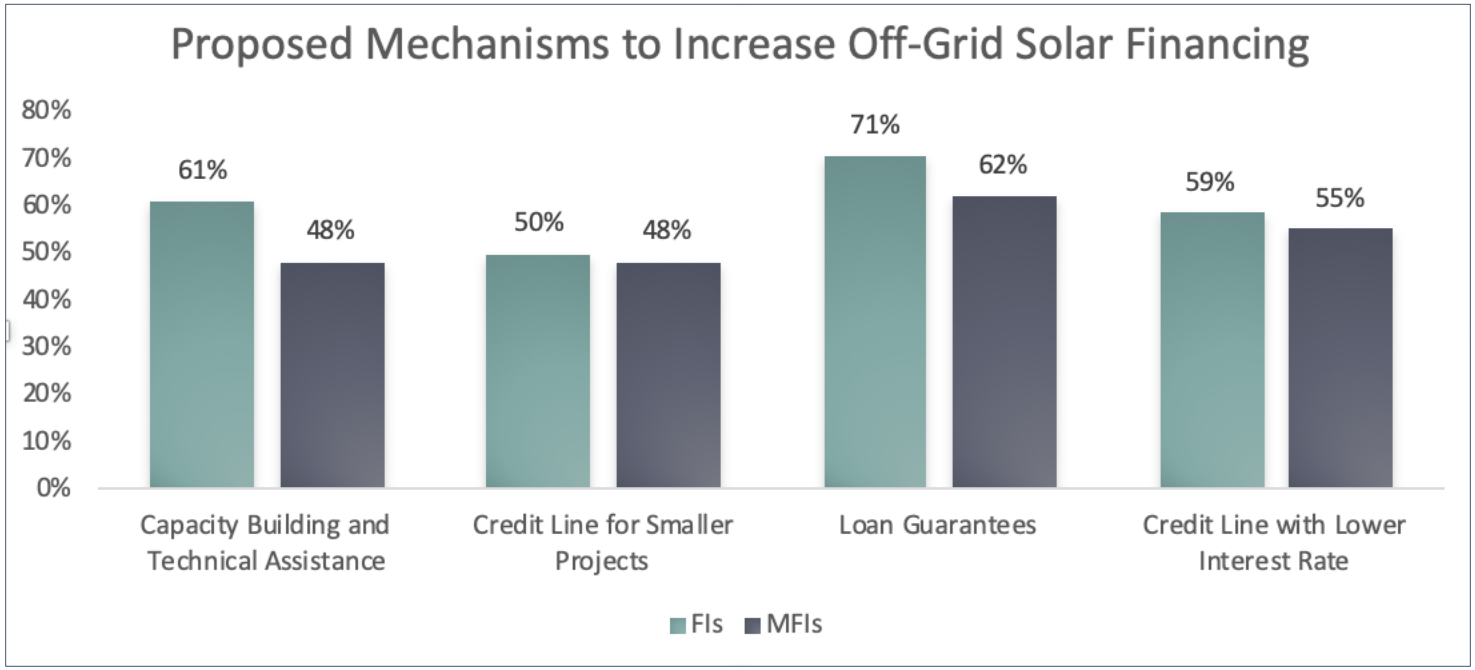
- **Risk Perception of New Lenders**: In order to attract additional lenders into the off-grid solar market segment, there is need for strong, reasonably priced credit enhancement mechanisms. In order to cover "market entry" risks for lenders unwilling to enter this market, guarantee instruments that cover first loss are needed. However, first-loss coverage, while necessary for attracting new lenders to the off-grid sector, does not address the key issue of collateral and is therefore likely insufficient on its own to stimulate growth in FI engagement unless coupled with third-party guarantee coverage.

- **Technical Assistance**: A well designed TA intervention is critical to accelerating OGS lending in the country. Stakeholder interviews revealed the following key areas of support: training of bank credit department and account representative personnel to originate deals and appropriately assess the credit risk of stand-alone solar firms and projects; extensive due diligence support to qualify products and approve vendors; and targeted support for new lenders to the sector with product structuring and development as well as building deal-flow. Special attention should also be paid to offering advisory services on the side of the stand-alone solar enterprises. Lenders opine that these entrepreneurs often do not have proper financial management and accounting systems in place, are unable to present quality financial models and lack the expertise required to structure their companies to take on debt obligations.

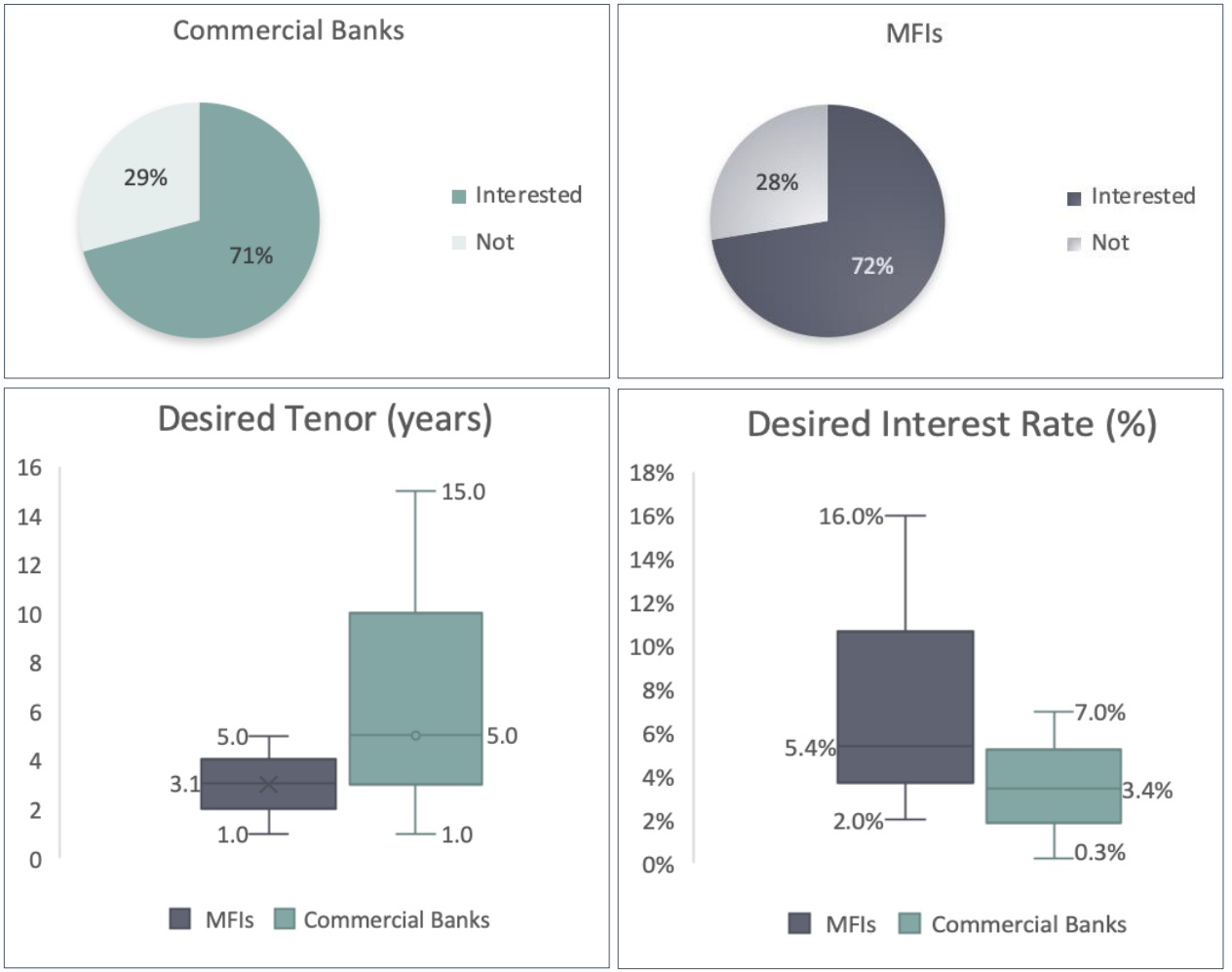
- **Digital Financial Services**: The advent of digital financial services and mobile money is one of the most important developments in off-grid solar market development to date, as it has allowed new and innovative business models to emerge that are now driving unprecedented growth in the sector. Mobile communication technology facilitates payments for solar products and systems (lease-to-own, pay-as-you-go) and/or for electricity usage (energy-as-a-service) and enables monitoring for operations and maintenance of equipment. Expanding access to mobile money services also creates new opportunities to better serve women, the lower-income population, and other groups that are traditionally excluded

from the formal financial system. The Government should take steps to support capacity building of and foster linkages between off-grid solar companies operating in the market and key stakeholders from various sectors, including energy access policymakers and regulators, financial and telecommunications companies, mobile network operators, financial service providers (commercial banks and microfinance institutions), mobile money service providers, international organizations, NGOs and civil society groups involved in financial inclusion etc.

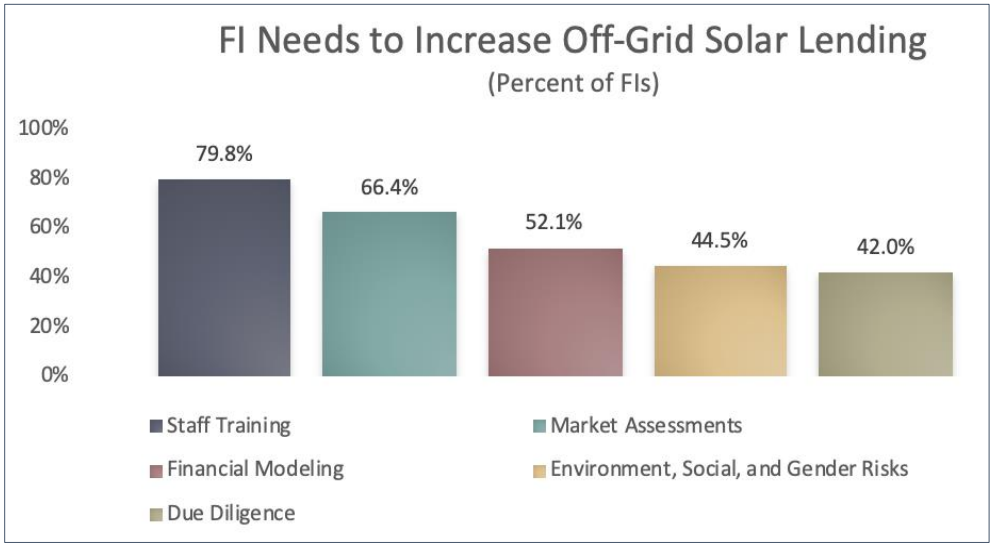
Key findings from the Task 3 FI survey activity are presented below. The results are based on feedback from a total of 121 FIs (including commercial banks, microfinance institutions and other non-bank FIs) that were interviewed across the 19 ROGEP countries. This summary only focuses on responses from commercial banks and MFIs, which together account for 92% of all respondents. See **Annex 3** for more details.



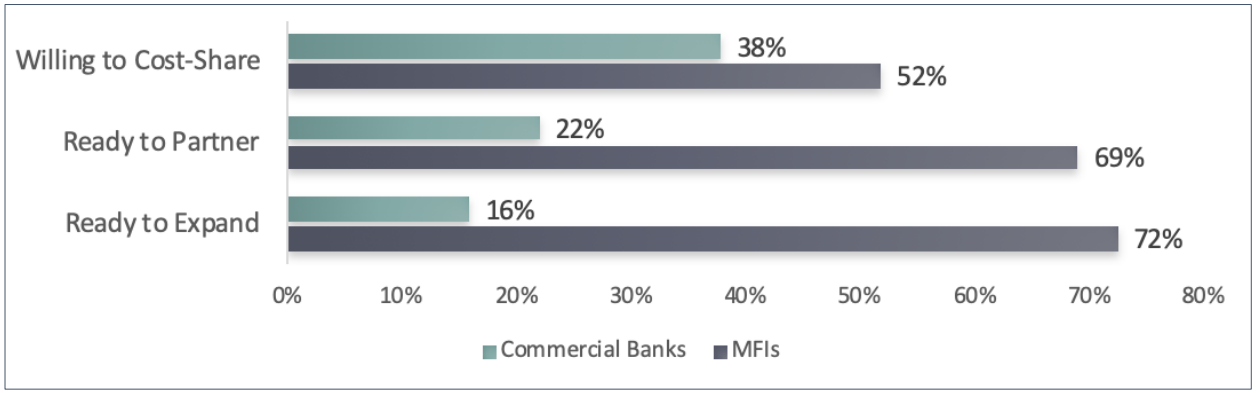
According to the survey, there is strong financial-sector interest across ROGEP countries to finance renewable energy projects, especially in off-grid solar. Commercial banks and MFIs identified loan guarantees as the most important measure that could improve their capacity to lend to the renewable energy sector. Most of the surveyed institutions also identified clear interest in credit lines.



More than 70% of surveyed commercial banks and MFIs are interested in a credit line to finance off-grid solar projects. Commercial banks want tenors of 1-15 years and interest rates from 0.25-7%. MFIs are seeking tenors of 1-5 years with interest rates from 2-16%. On average, commercial banks want a credit line with a 5-year tenor and 3.4 % interest rate, and MFIs want a 3.1-year tenor with 5.4% interest rate.



In addition to their clear interest in credit lines and loan guarantees to finance off-grid projects, surveyed financial institutions (commercial banks and MFIs) in ROGEP countries also identified several areas of internal capacity that require improvement in order to lend (or increase lending) to the off-grid solar sector.



Compared to commercial banks, MFIs reported a greater willingness to cost-share capacity building activities and a higher level of readiness to partner with solar companies and expand operations to serve rural and off-grid areas.

ANNEX 1: TASK 1 METHODOLOGY

STATE OF ENERGY ACCESS AND ENABLING MARKET ENVIRONMENT

Data presented in this section was collated from a range of public documents and reports as well as primary source documents either provided by ECREEE or obtained through supplemental market research (desk research and interviews with local public officials and industry stakeholders). These findings were subsequently corroborated by attendees of national validation workshops held in each country at the conclusion of the market assessment. Information obtained from the Task 2 focus group discussions and surveys of industry stakeholders (see **Annex 2**) was also used to support the Task 1 analysis.

GIS DATA ANALYSIS APPROACH / METHODOLOGY

1. Categorizations, key definitions and datasets for geospatial least-cost analysis

The main steps of the GIS analysis are as follows:
(i) Categorization/definition of settlements: scenario 2023;
(ii) Categorization/definition of settlements: scenario 2030;
(iii) Definition of un-electrified settlements within grid areas; and
(iv) Determination of population per settlement

1.1. Categorization/definition of settlements: Scenario 2023

1.1.1. *Electrification by grid extension* – settlements which are located within 5 km of the current electrical grid network[211] (according to WAPP densification plans).

1.1.2. *Electrification by mini-grid* – settlements that:
- Are located within 15 km of areas that have a high night-lights value (above 50/225 on grayscale raster)[212] and outside the buffer area established for the electrification by grid extension
- Are located within areas that have a population density of more than 350 people per km^2 (as defined by Eurostat for rural areas)[213], plus an additional 50 people per km^2 for greater feasibility of mini-grids[214] and are within 1 km[215] of a social facility (education center or health facility) and existing mini-grids of 2018.

1.1.3. *Electrification by off-grid stand-alone systems* – settlements that do not fall in the above categories

1.2. Categorization/definition of settlements: Scenario 2030

1.2.1. *Electrification by grid extension* – settlements which are located within 10 km of the current electrical grid network and 4 km of the current Power Stations (according to SOMELEC in a personal interview) or within 4 km of planned future line extensions[216]

[211] NOTE: Low-voltage distribution lines were not considered in this analysis (data was unavailable)
[212] The 50/225 classification represents the areas emitting light of the country with reduction of scattering light. The classification was first introduced in the USAID report ZAMBIA ELECTRIFICATION GEOSPATIAL MODEL and evaluated in cross-checks throughout the country. USAID: https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00T2JC.pdf
[213] http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/rural-development/methodology
[214] Identified in discussions with different international mini-grid developer.
[215] Preferred maximum distance for mini-grids from discussions with different international developer.
[216] NOTE: Low-voltage distribution lines were not considered in this analysis (data was unavailable)

1.2.2. *Electrification by mini-grid* – settlements that:
- Were defined as mini-grid settlements in the 2023 scenario
- Are located within 1 km of the above mini-grid settlements, which is the preferred distance of mini-grid developers for their grid according to discussions with several international developers.
- Are located within 15 km of economic growth centers – airports, mines and urban areas; average worker distance in Africa is 10 km, a distance of 5 km is added to include the growth of businesses in the periphery of the growth centers.[217]

1.2.3. *Electrification by off-grid stand-alone systems* – settlements that do not fall in the above categories

1.3. Definition of un-electrified settlements within grid areas

To identify settlements that are located close to the national electrical grid but are not served by it, the following criteria were used:
- Within the main grid line zones (see buffer zones for *electrification by grid extension* above)
- Outside 15 km night-lights of buffered areas to capture the densification within 5 years
- Within areas of low population density (less than 350 people per km^2)

1.4. Determination of population per settlement

A key component of the least-cost analysis was the number of people living in each settlement (city, town, village, hamlet) of a given country. While there are different publicly available sources of information on total population (e.g. World Bank demographic data), a more granular view of the population distribution was necessary to perform the geospatial analysis.

Another difficulty was the identification of locations of settlements. The exact location of each settlement (with given coordinates) was not available / accessible in many of the countries. As a result, the least-cost analysis had to revert to other studies of population distribution – such as the population distribution developed by WorldPop. WorldPop utilizes a range of geospatial datasets to develop accurate population data:

"New data sources and recent methodological advances made by the WorldPop program now provide high resolution, open and contemporary data on human population distributions, allowing accurate measurement of local population distributions, compositions, characteristics, growth and dynamics, across national and regional scales. Statistical assessments suggest that the resultant maps are consistently more accurate than existing population map products, as well as the simple gridding of census data." [218]

A Voronoi polygon analysis[219] was used to create boundaries for each identified settlement. These boundaries were then used in combination with the population density layer to estimate the total settlement population of the given year. The current annual national population growth rate of 2.7%[220] was applied to the geospatial analysis to project populations for the Scenario 2023 and 2030 analyses.

[217] Lall, Somik Vinay; Henderson, J. Vernon; Venables, Anthony J. 2017. Africa's Cities: Opening Doors to the World. Washington, DC: World Bank. © World Bank. https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/25896 License: CC BY 3.0 IGO.
[218] https://www.worldpop.org
[219] To learn more about Voronoi polygons, see wikidot: http://djjr-courses.wikidot.com/soc128:qgis-voronoi-polygons
[220] The World Bank: https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.GROW?locations=MR

2. Summary of Key Datasets

The table below summarizes the key datasets used for scenarios 2023 and 2030 as well as the criteria applied, and sources used.

Overview of Key Datasets of the Least-Cost Electrification Analysis								
Dataset	Description	Criteria used by technology						Source and Year
		Scenario 2023			Scenario 2030			
		On-grid	Mini-grid	Off-grid	On-grid	Mini-grid	Off-grid	
Electricity grid network (current)	Current national grid network (HV & MV lines)	≤ 4km distance	≥ 4km distance	≥ 4km distance	≤ 10km distance	≥ 10km distance	≥ 10km distance	SOMELEC, 2017[221]
Electricity grid network (planned)	Future network planned to be built (HV & MV lines)	Not considered	Not considered	Not considered	≤ 4km distance	≥ 4km distance	≥ 4km distance	SOMELEC, 2017
Power Stations	Existing power stations and decentralized small power stations (above 400kW) operated by SOMELEC. Mainly electrification of mines.	≤ 4km distance	≥ 4km distance	≥ 4km distance	≤ 4km distance	≥ 4km distance	≥ 4km distance	SOMELEC, 2015[222]
Mini-grids	Existing renewable energy mini-grids and thermal mini-grids (below 400kW) in 2018	Not considered	≤ 1km distance	≥ 1km distance	Not considered	≤ 1km distance from all identified mini-grids in Scenario 2023	≥ 1km distance from all identified mini-grids in Scenario 2023	SOMELEC, 2015 and ECOWREX, 2018
Night-lights	Night-time light emissions used to identify electrified areas	Not considered	≤ 15km distance	≥ 15km distance	Not considered	Not considered	Not considered	NASA Earth Observatory, 2016
Population density	Population distribution in people per km^2.	≥ 350 people per km^2 [223]	≥ 350 people per km^2	≤ 350 people per km^2	Not considered	Not considered	Not considered	WorldPop, 2020 (projection)

[221] Digitized by EVA

[222] http://www.somelec.mr/?Puissances-installees

[223] Based on Eurostat definition plus an additional 50 people per km2 for greater feasibility of mini-grids as identified in discussions with different international mini-grid developer. Source: http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/rural-development/methodology

Settlements	Settlement layer giving location of settlements across Mauritania (cities, towns, villages, hamlets); list of towns with population above 500 in 2013 received from BoS	Used	Used	Used	Used	Used	Used	Bureau of Statistics (BoS), 2013 and OpenStreetMap (OSM), 2018
Social facility: education centers	Education centers (kindergarten, school, university) with GPS coordinates; Indicator of active local economy	Not considered	≤ 1km distance[224]	≥ 1km distance	Not considered	Not considered	Not considered	OSM, 2018
Social facility: health centers	Hospitals, health centers and clinics as collected through the Global Health sites Mapping Project; Indicator of active local economy	Not considered	≤ 1km distance[225]	≥ 1km distance	Not considered	Not considered	Not considered	Humanitarian Data Exchange (HDX), 2018
Growth center: airport, mines, urban areas	Economic growth centers for the analysis up to 2030 - defined for mini-grid areas; Urban areas as defined by Electricity Demand	Not used	Not used	Not used	Not considered	≤ 15km distance	≥ 15km distance	airports: HDX, 2017 mines: SOMELEC, 2017[226] urban areas: ECOWREX website, 2015[227]

[224] Preferred maximum distance for mini-grids from discussions with different international developer.
[225] Preferred maximum distance for mini-grids from discussions with different international developer.
[226] Digitized by EVA
[227] http://www.ecowrex.org/mapView/index.php?lang=eng

ANNEX 2: TASK 2 METHODOLOGY

OFF-GRID SOLAR PV MARKET ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were held in in Nouakchott and Aleg in June 2018 with key stakeholders from each of the four off-grid market segments analyzed under Task 2: (i) household, (ii) institutional, (iii) productive use, and (iv) supplier. Focus group participants included representatives from government, the donor community, NGOs, solar companies, business and industry associations, academia, community groups, and women's groups. Each market segment had its own dedicated meeting, although some stakeholders attended more than one discussion. Each FGD lasted approximately 90 minutes and covered a range of topics related to demand for off-grid solar vis-à-vis each market segment.

In addition to the FGDs, three additional survey activities were undertaken to support the Task 2 analysis: (i) a survey of large-scale international solar companies to gauge their level of interest in the country and wider region; (ii) a survey of local small-scale retail suppliers of solar equipment; and (iii) an assessment of an off-grid village to better understand how solar was being utilized for productive uses. The FGDs and surveys largely yielded qualitative inputs to supplement the quantitative analysis that was undertaken.

The methodology and assumptions utilized to assess each market segment under Task 2 is presented below.

1. HOUSEHOLD DEMAND

1.1 Household market segments

1.1.1 Total population without access to electricity was calculated using World Bank total population figures,[228] multiplied by electricity access rates from the International Energy Agency (IEA),[229] and translated to households using World Bank open data average household size. This method is used to align population data throughout the report, with IEA seen as an overarching source for energy access data and the World Bank providing important population and household income data. See Annex 1 for more details.

1.1.2 Based on the country demographic and income data, the household solar market was broken down into segments by income quintile, as shown in **Section 2.1.1**. For the purpose of this analysis, income quintiles were aligned with energy tiers, as indicated by the Multi-Tier Energy Access Framework, which is roughly determined by household ability to pay for tier levels of energy. Quintiles were also aligned roughly with geographic segments.

1.1.3 World Bank demographic data used does not provide household income data broken down by rural, urban, on-grid or off-grid. For example, the data shows the total population falling under a certain poverty line, shows the total population that does not have access to electricity, and shows the total population that is rural, but does not cross reference any of these indicators to e.g. show the total rural population without access to electricity living under the poverty line. For this reason, assumptions were made regarding the number of households per income quintile that are off-grid (detailed in section 1.3.1 of these assumptions). It was assumed that the majority of off-grid households are rural. The data gap prevents the presentation of an overlapping map of the traditional poverty line income pyramid with electricity access.

[228] World Bank Open Data, 2017: https://data.worldbank.org/

[229] IEA Energy Access Outlook, 2017: https://www.iea.org/publications/freepublications/publication/WEO2017SpecialReport_EnergyAccessOutlook.pdf

1.2 Household energy expenditure and potential savings

1.2.1 Current household expenditure on energy-related items (believed to be candidates for replacement with solar products) was estimated using information from the FGDs

1.2.2 From the existing household expenditures, "typical" monthly costs were estimated that households would incur in order to receive a standard level of electricity service according to the Multi-Tier Energy Access Framework.

1.2.3 The unit monthly costs were used for each of the energy-related items identified above.

1.2.4 The cumulative monthly expenditure was then determined for each tier.

1.2.5 Monthly expenditure by tier was compared with monthly cost associated with OGS products by tier to estimate potential household cost savings. Monthly cost for OGS products was based on representative data from the West African region.

1.2.6 In the process of this analysis, the following assumptions were made:

1.2.6.1 Solar system sizes and costs:

- Cost per watt on solar systems vary greatly and have changed rapidly in the past five years. Smaller pico and plug and play systems have a much higher per cost per watt. The USD/Watt prices are based on sample cost ranges from Lighting Global equipment available on the open market.
- Average system size by watts: values are chosen as representative values for solar systems from each of the Tier values. They are intended to represent system sizes that typical members of each group would purchase.
- Average system life values represent typical expected operating life of Lighting Global products.

1.2.6.2 Current household energy usage:

Current Household Energy Usage (# Units/HH)				
Technology	**Tier 1**	**Tier 1.5**	**Tier 2**	**Tier 3**
Torch lights/Lanterns	1	2	3	
Mobile Phone Charging	1	1	2	
DC Radio	-	1	-	-
DC TV	-	-	1	-
Small Generator	-	-	-	1

- Numbers of units of torch lights/lanterns, cell phones, dc radio, dc TV and small generator represent the numbers of appliances that are demonstrated to be in use in typical households of each tier based on FGDs and multiple survey documents.

1.2.6.3 Current household energy costs

- Typical purchase and operation costs of HH off-grid appliances were based on FGDs, field energy surveys and reports.

1.3 Total Cash and Financed Market for Off-Grid Solar

1.3.1 Beginning with World Bank demographic and population data for Mauritania, the number of off-grid households by income quintile was derived. For this, a percentage of off-grid households by quintile was assumed, as follows:

Quintile	% Off-Grid
Highest 20%	1%
Fourth 20%	55%
Third 20%	90%
Second 20%	99%
Lowest 20%	100%

It was assumed that there is a general correlation between income and access to electricity. The highest quintile has the highest percentage of population that are both urban and connected to the grid. Evidence indicates that the vast majority of households connected to the grid are from the top two quintiles Similarly, it was assumed that virtually all people in the bottom two quintiles are off-grid.

1.3.2 From this, average household energy expenditure was determined based on income, with the assumption that all households spend an average of 10% of their income on energy.

Average rural household expenditure on energy varies considerably. A study from Sierra Leone found that the "cost of lighting, on average, occupied between 10-15% of household incomes. Households using generators were found to spend a greater proportion of their income (upward of 20%) on lighting."[230] Other research has shown household energy spending between 6-12% for low income segments in sub-Saharan Africa.[231] For the purpose of this research, we have assumed that households can allocate 10% of their income on average to energy.

1.3.3 The monthly energy budget for each household per quintile was calculated by multiplying monthly Household income by the assumed 10% of Household income spent on energy. Monthly Household income per month was calculated by multiplying per capita income per month by the avg. # of persons/household. Per capita income per month for each quintile is calculated by dividing the Share of the country GDP for each quintile by the population of each quintile, which is one-fifth of the country population. The share of the country GDP for each quintile is based on World Bank, World Development Indicators demographic data.

1.3.4 A simple model was used to evaluate the market using the World Bank income quintile data and average energy expenditures as input data.

1.3.5 In determining the monthly energy expenditure related to each tier, the following assumptions were made with guidance from the FGDs output:

- **Tier 0**: Assumed to be an absolute energy poor household, relying solely on kerosene and charcoal both for cooking and lighting.

[230] Lai, K., Munro, P., Kebbay, M., and Thoronko, A., "Promoting Renewable Energy Services for Social Development in Sierra Leone: Baseline Data and Energy Sector Research, Final Report," European Union, (July 2015).
[231] 10% is an acceptable figure for lighting and cell phone charging costs for low income groups. See: https://www.brookings.edu/blog/africa-in-focus/2017/03/17/figures-of-the-week-benefits-of-off-grid-electricity-solutions/

- **Tier 1**: The household was assumed to have access to 1 torch light/lantern powered by dry cells, charging services for a phone charged on average 8 times a month.
- **Tier 1.5**: The household was assumed to have access to 1 torch light and 1 lantern each powered by dry cells, one regular cell phone charged on average 8 times a month, and a radio powered by dry cells (assume access to 2 low quality cells) replaced 4 times a month.
- **Tier 2**: The household was assumed to have access to 1 torch light and 2 lanterns each powered by dry cells, one regular cell phone charged on average 8 times a month, and one smart phone charged on average 16 times a month, a DC TV powered by lead acid battery recharged once per week.
- **Tier 3**: The household was assumed to have access to a generator powering a number of appliances but available only for 2-3 hours a day.
- **Annualized energy costs** for each of the systems = ([Capital system cost/average system life in years]+[Monthly operating cost*12])

1.3.6 The **potential market size** for each solar tier was then calculated by multiplying the number of off-grid households per quintile that will be willing to pay for each solar tier by the cost of each system (system cost is based on representative data from Mauritania, as shown in 2.2.5).

1.3.7 In determining the **number of off-grid households per quintile that will be willing to pay for each solar tier**, the key assumption of the model is that each off-grid household purchases only one system and that they will opt for the highest solar system tier they can afford.

- For cash purchases, the assumption was that they will be willing to save (set aside) up to 3 months (number of months can be adjusted on the 'HH Assumptions' tab) of their monthly energy budget to purchase the system.
- For PAYG/financed, the assumption was that they will be willing if their monthly energy budget is less than or equal to the monthly PAYG payment AND if the PAYG upfront payment is less than or equal to 3 months of their monthly energy budget.

1.3.8 The interest rate for consumer finance was estimated to be 16% p.a., based on the average interest rate charged by Microfinance Institutions on small business loans in the country.[232]

2023 and 2030 Household Demand Scenario: Assumptions

1. The GIS analysis estimated that by 2023, 35.5% of the population will be connected to the national grid, 5.2% will be connected by mini-grids while 59.3% of the population will be connected by off-grid stand-alone solutions. By 2030, the GIS analysis estimated that 57.1% of the population will be connected to the national grid, 2.3% will be connected by mini-grids while 40.6% of the population will be connected by off-grid stand-alone solutions. Based on these dynamics in the demographic patterns, coupled with the existing government plans, the following assumptions regarding the off-grid population based on the quintiles were made:
   - In the 2023 scenario, it was assumed that as the grid gets extended and mini-grids are deployed (based on GIS data), the households in the quintiles with the highest income will be given priority due to their relatively higher power demand and ability to pay for power consumption. Hence, the highest quintile was assumed to have only 1% off-grid households, while the second and third highest quintiles were assumed to have 7% and 90% off-grid households respectively. The percentages of off-grid households in the bottom two quintiles remain unchanged. These assumptions have been made such that the total number of off-grid households assumed is equal to the GIS data 2023 estimate.

[232] https://www.researchgate.net/publication/290433833_Financial_Access_and_Household_Welfare_evidence_from_Mauritania

- Similarly, in the 2030 scenario, it was assumed that the higher income quintiles will be prioritized for electrification, based on economic considerations, above the lower quintiles. Hence, the highest quintile was assumed to have only 0.1% off-grid households, while the second and third highest quintiles were assumed to have 0.2% and 3.7% off-grid households respectively. The percentages of off-grid households in the bottom two quintiles remain unchanged. These assumptions have been made such that the total number of off-grid households assumed is equal to the GIS data 2030 estimate.

Quintile	% Off-Grid (2023)	% Off-Grid (2030)
Highest 20%	1%	0.1%
Fourth 20%	7%	0.2%
Third 20%	90%	3.7%
Second 20%	99%	99%
Lowest 20%	100%	100%

2. Inflation rates for Mauritania: According to the IMF World Economic Outlook data, inflation in Mauritania is estimated to be at 4.4% in 2023. It was assumed that the rate will remain the same through 2030. Based on this assumption, the expected prices of the current household energy technologies and the solar alternatives were estimated using an annual price escalation factor of 1.044.

3. Based on a 2.7% population growth rate from the World Bank[233] and the population density dataset used in the study, the estimated total population will be 4,924,762.19 in 2023 and 5,934,421.22 in 2030**.**

4. The least-cost electrification analysis found that the share of the population with access to electricity via the national grid and mini-grids will be in 40.7% 2023 and 59.4% in 2030**.**

5. To estimate GDP, it was assumed that the current annual GDP growth rate of 3.6% will be maintained through 2023 and 2030:

Parameter	2023	2030
Population	4,924,762.19 (GIS estimate)	5,934,421.22 (GIS estimate)
GDP (constant 2010 USD)	$7,133,088,687	$9,136,837,723

6. According to the Lighting Global Off-Grid Solar Market Trends Report 2018,[234] the price of pico solar products is expected to fall to USD 10.60 in 2020 and USD 10.10 in 2022 down from USD 10.90 in 2016. Based on these 2020 and 2022 figures, the average annual decrease in prices from 2020 was estimated at 2.36%. It was assumed that the annual price decrease will be maintained at this rate through 2030 (annual cost reduction factor of 0.98)

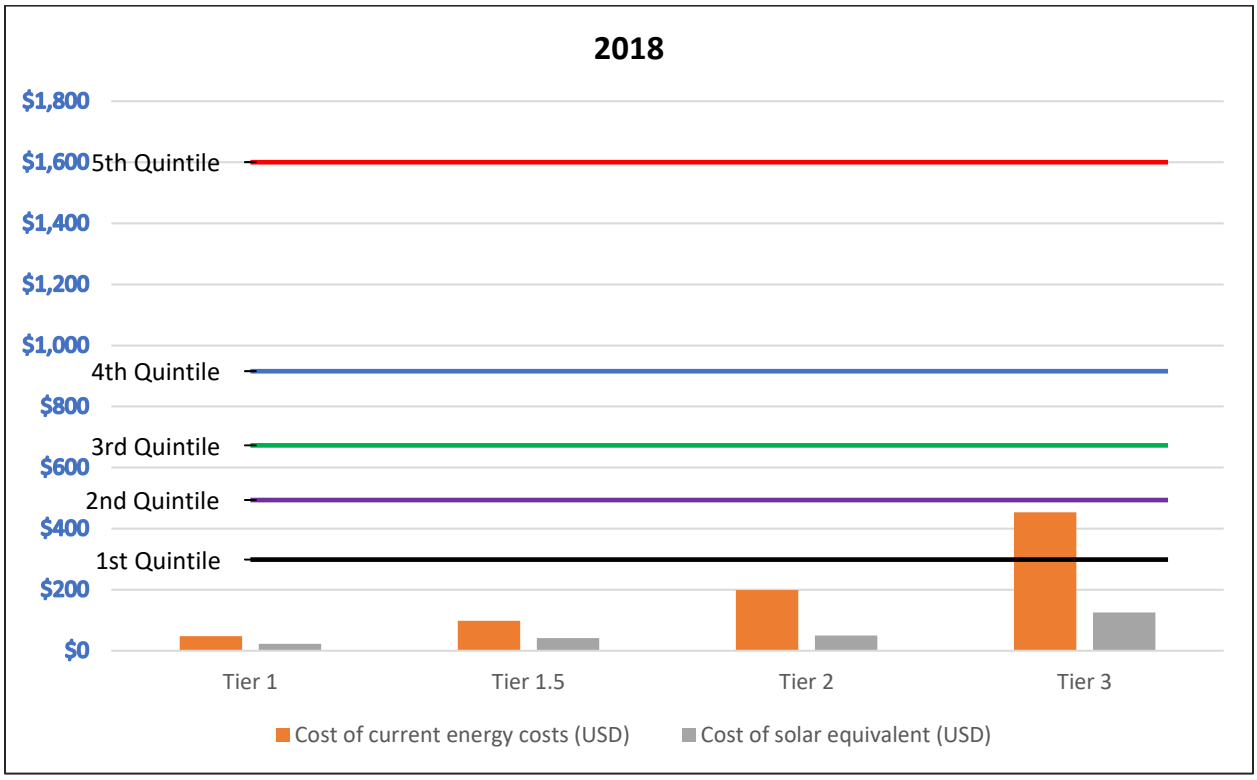
7. According to the same report, the price of small SHS components is expected to fall to USD 60.40 in 2020 and USD 47.40 in 2022, down from USD 77.80 in 2016. Based on these 2020 and 2022 figures, the average annual decrease in prices from 2020 was estimated at 10.76%. It was assumed that the annual price decrease will be maintained at this level through 2030 (annual cost reduction factor of 0.89)**.**

[233] https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.GROW?locations=BJ
[234] "Off-Grid Solar Market Trends Report 2018," Dahlberg Advisors, Lighting Global, GOGLA and World Bank ESMAP, (January 2018): https://www.lightingafrica.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/2018_Off_Grid_Solar_Market_Trends_Report_Full.pdf

8. It was assumed the interest rates in Mauritania will stagnate at the current rate of 16% or possibly decline.

Household Cost Savings and Affordability Calculation

Annual Household Energy Budget by Quintile, Annual Energy Costs and Annual Costs of Solar Equivalents



- This analysis presents annualized costs (not including financing cost) of current energy technologies for each energy tier, compared with the annual cost of an equivalent solar product. The same analysis was also completed for the 2023 and 2030 scenarios.

- Both the annual costs of current energy technologies and equivalent solar solutions considered the capital cost of each unit as well as the operating cost over the average lifetime of a unit.

- These costs were compared with a 10% monthly energy budget for households of different income quintiles. The analysis did not assess affordability for a cash vs. financed purchase over time.

2. INSTITUTIONAL DEMAND

2.1 Country Categorization

To assess institutional sector demand, the ROGEP countries were grouped into four categories based on income and population density, which are two key factors that influence the number of public service institutions in a given country. The countries were categorized as follows:

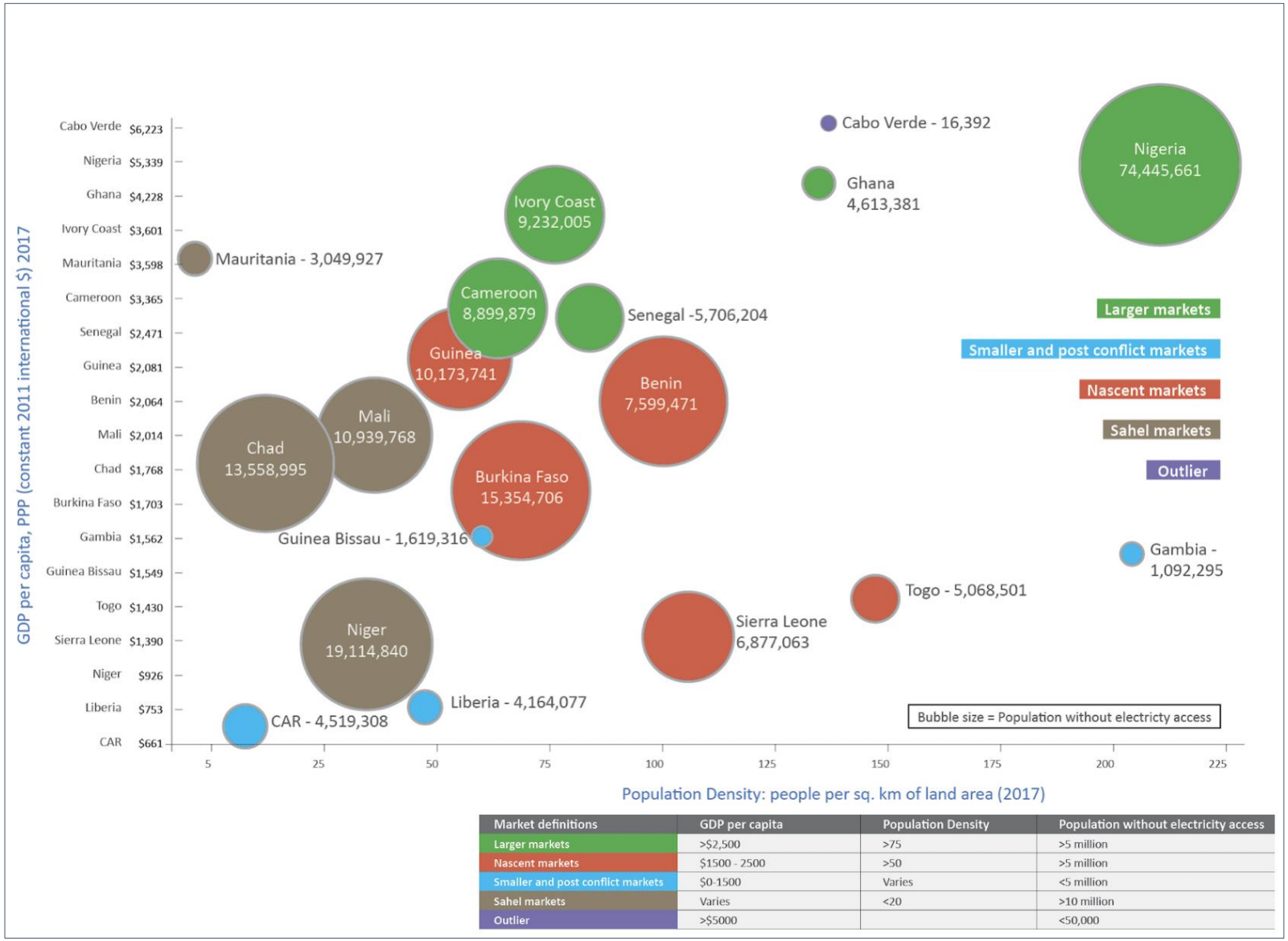
Country Categorization by Income and Population Density			
Category 1: Low-income / low population density	**Category 2:** Low-income / high population density	**Category 3:** High-income/ low population density	**Category 4:** High-income / high population density
Niger	Benin	Cameroon	Nigeria
Burkina Faso	Sierra Leone	Côte d'Ivoire	Ghana
Chad	Togo	Mauritania	Cabo Verde
Mali	Gambia	Senegal	
Guinea			
Guinea-Bissau			
Central African Republic			
Liberia			

These categories were used to address data gaps, as obtaining accurate and comprehensive data on the number of off-grid public institutions in many of the countries was challenging. Where data was not available, per capita assumptions based on data from similar countries in the same category were used. The following countries were used as reference countries for each category:

Category 1	Guinea, Liberia, Niger
Category 2	Benin, Sierra Leone
Category 3	Côte d'Ivoire
Category 4	Ghana

Categories are defined as follows (and illustrated in the figure below):

- Low population density: <95 people per square km of land area
- High population density: >95 people per square km of land area
- Low income: <$2,200 GDP per capita
- High income: >$2,200 GDP per capita



Market definitions	GDP per capita	Population Density	Population without electricity access
Larger markets	>$2,500	>75	>5 million
Nascent markets	$1500 - 2500	>50	>5 million
Smaller and post conflict markets	$0-1500	Varies	<5 million
Sahel markets	Varies	<20	>10 million
Outlier	>$5000		<50,000

Source: African Solar Designs analysis

2.2 Energy Needs by Institutional Market Segment

Institutional Sector	Description	Rating (W)	Time of use (hrs)	Total Wh/day	Total Load	Recommended system (W)
Water Pumping						
Low power		1,500	6	9,000		1,500
Medium power		4,000	6	24,000		4,000
High power		10,000	6	60,000		10,000
Healthcare						
HC1 Health post	Lighting	30	8	240		
	Communication	20	8	160		
	ICT	100	8	800	1,200	250
HC2 Basic healthcare facility	Lighting	200	8	1,600		
	Maternity	200	4	800		
	Vaccine refrigeration	100	8	800		
	Communication	100	4	400		
	Medical exams	200	2	400		
	ICT	200	8	1,600		
	Staff housing	50	8	400	6,000	1,500
HC3 Enhanced healthcare facility	Lighting	400	8	3,200		
	Communication	200	8	1,600		
	Medical exams	600	2	1,200		
	ICT	300	8	2,400		
	Maternity	600	4	2,400		
	Laboratory	1,000	2	2,000		
	Sterilization	1,200	1	1,200		
	Vaccine refrigeration	150	8	1,200		
	Staff housing	200	8	1,600	16,800	4,200
Education						
Primary school	Communication	20	8	160		
	Lighting	80	8	640		
	ICT	100	8	800		
	Staff house	50	8	400	2,000	500
Secondary school	Communication	20	8	160		
	Lighting	240	8	1,920		
	ICT	400	8	3,200		
	Laboratory use	100	8	800		
	Staff house	200	8	1,600	7,680	1,920
Public Lighting						
Street lighting	Lights	200	8	1,600	1,600	500

Source: The estimates in the table above are based on data obtained from local experts, interviews with solar industry stakeholders and corroborated by secondary desk research.

CALCULATIONS: Rating of systems is based on data for sizes of the appliances from a 2016 GIZ solar PV catalogue.[235] The solar PV sizing factor is based on the peak sun hours available across most of Africa.

[235] "Photovoltaics for Productive Use Applications: A Catalogue of DC-Appliances," GIZ, (2016): https://www.sun-connect-news.org/fileadmin/DATEIEN/Dateien/New/GIZ__2016__Catalogue_PV_Appliances_for_Micro_Enterprises_low.pdf

Energy Needs Assumptions:

Water Supply: Power requirements (low, medium, high) are based on the type of water point.

- Borehole: 40% low power pumps; 40% medium power; 20% high power
- Protected dug well: 80% no pump; 10% low power pumps; 10% medium power; no high-power
- Unprotected dug well: No pump
- Protected spring: No pump
- Unprotected spring: No pump
- Public tap/standpipe (stand-alone or water kiosk): No pump
- Sand/Sub-surface dam (with well or standpipe): No pump
- Piped water into dwelling/plot/yard: No pump
- Rainwater harvesting: No pump

Healthcare: The size of the healthcare facility (HC1, HC2, HC3) determines the amount of energy each facility requires.

Education: The size of the school and number of students determines the amount of energy each school requires.

Public lighting: It was assumed that two [2] public lighting points will be required to meet the energy needs of a town/market center.

2.3 Institutional Market Sizing Calculations

Household systems, cost and price per watt:

System Type	Tier Rating	USD/Watt[236]	Average Size (Watts)	Total Cost (USD)
Pico solar system	Tier 1	$15.00	3	$45.00
Basic Plug and Play system	Tier 1.5	$12.50	10	$125.00
Small HH solar system	Tier 2	$5.00	50	$250.00
Medium HH solar system	Tier 3	$2.50	250	$625.00

Size of systems used in institutional sector market sizing calculation:

Sector	Description	Size (corrected for time of use)	HH systems
Water Supply	Low Power	1,500	N/A
	Medium Power	4,000	N/A
	High power	10,000	N/A
Healthcare	HC1	250	Tier 3
	HC2	1,500	N/A
	HC3	4,200	N/A
Education	Primary	500	N/A
	Secondary	1,920	N/A
Public lighting		500	N/A

[236] Cost per watt derived from African Solar Designs analysis and from IRENA: https://www.irena.org/publications/2016/Sep/Solar-PV-in-Africa-Costs-and-Markets

Institutional Sector Market Sizing Calculations:

NOTE: Prices cover only solar components (except for the HC1 tier 3 system, which comes with lighting)

Water Supply						
# of water pumps	X	Size of solar system (watts) (low, medium, high power)	X	Cost per watt for pumping ($2.50) divided by system lifetime of 20 years	=	Estimated Annualized Off-Grid Solar Market Potential for Water Supply Sector

Healthcare						
# of healthcare facilities	X		X		=	Estimated Annualized Off-Grid Solar Market Potential for Healthcare Sector
HC 1		Cost per tier 3 system ($625)		Divided by system lifetime of 5 years		
HC 2		Size of solar system in Watts (1500W)		Cost per watt ($2.50) divided by system lifetime of 20 years		
HC 3		Size of solar system in Watts (4200W)		Cost per watt ($2.50) divided by system lifetime of 20 years		

Education						
# of schools	X		X		=	Estimated Annualized Off-Grid Solar Market Potential for Education Sector
Primary		Size of solar system in Watts (500W)		Cost per watt ($3) divided by system lifetime of 20 years		
Secondary		Size of solar system in Watts (1920W)		Cost per watt ($2.50) divided by system lifetime of 20 years		

Public Lighting						
# of off-grid market centers	X	Size of solar system in Watts (500W)	X	Cost per watt ($3) divided by system lifetime of 20 years	=	Estimated Annualized Off-Grid Solar Market Potential for Public Lighting Sector

2.4 Data Collection Approach by Institutional Market Segment

MAURITANIA			
Water Supply	**Healthcare**	**Education**	**Public Lighting**
Per capita assumption	Per capita assumption	Per capita assumption	Per capita assumption

Data was collected on the total number of off-grid institutions by institutional market segment for Mauritania from a combination of available GIS data, input from local experts, stakeholder interviews and desk research. Where there were gaps in available data, per capita assumptions were made, as explained in **Section 2.2.**

Assumptions:

Water Supply: Of the identified potable water points, it was assumed that 50% would be equipped with a solar-powered water pump. Of the equipped water sources, the division of pumps between low, medium and high-powered pumps was: 50%, 35% and 15%, respectively. The lower cost of the low power pumps

is the driving factor for this assumption. Where this information was not available, a per capita comparison was made with a country in the same category.

Healthcare: Wherever possible, specific data on the number of off-grid healthcare facilities by size was used (i.e. HC1, HC2, HC3). Where this information was not available, a per capita comparison was made with a country in the same category.

Education: Wherever possible, specific data on the number of off-grid primary and secondary schools was used. Primary schools encompass both primary and nursery schools. Vocational schools and universities were not considered because they tend to be in cities, which are often grid-electrified. Where this information was not available, a per capita comparison was made with a country in the same category. The following per-capita assumptions were made:[237]

- **Primary school**: Per capita calculation using the off-grid population that is 0-14 years
- **Secondary school**: Per capita calculation using the off-grid population that is 15-19 years

Public lighting: Using population figures by region, and assuming that the population per market center was 5,000 people, the number of market centers was calculated. An assumption of two [2] public lighting points per market center was used in the calculation. No data on street lighting was included, as it was assumed that street lighting projects are linked to road infrastructure rather than institutions.

2.5 Ability to Pay Analysis (Strongest Potential Market Segment)

Data was not available to estimate the monthly energy expenditures of institutional users. Secondary data was available through government and donor program annual budgets for public services but was not comprehensive. A rudimentary analysis was undertaken based on these funding sources and compared to the total solar product market estimate for each institutional market segment in order to discuss the realistic potential market outlook based on the ability to pay. Due to a lack of data, the analysis was not able to take into account other potential sources of funding, such as funds pooled at the national or local level, fees for services etc.

[237] Population without access to electricity: https://www.iea.org/publications/freepublications/publication/WEO2017SpecialReport_EnergyAccessOutlook.pdf
Population ages 0-14: https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.0014.TO
Population ages 15-19: https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.1519.MA.5Y; https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.1519.FE.5Y

3. PRODUCTIVE USE DEMAND

3.1 PUE Applications for Off-Grid Microenterprises (barbers and tailors)

The market sizing calculation for the barbers and tailors sector assumed that hair cutting and sewing appliances will be retrofitted to be powered by a Tier 3 DC solar system (5-year system life). By using a single price for all of the ROGEP countries, this methodology does not take into account country-specific cost and supply chain constraints.

Microenterprises					
# of financially constrained SMEs[238]	X	Cost per tier 3 system ($625)	Divided by system lifetime of 5 years	=	Estimated Annualized Off-Grid Solar Market Potential for SMEs

3.2 Value-Added PUE Applications

Available data from various sources such as the World Bank, the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization and GSMA was used to estimate the potential OGS market for productive use applications in each of the analyzed market segments – solar pumping for agricultural **irrigation**, solar powered **milling** and solar powered **refrigeration**.

3.2.1 Irrigation

The market sizing calculation for solar-powered irrigation was based on smallholder irrigation potential (i.e. the amount of irrigable land suitable for smallholder farmers) that could benefit from a solar pumping system ($650, 6-year system life, 120 W system). This methodology does not take into account affordability (ability to pay) nor does it account for country-specific cost and supply chain constraints.

Value-Added PUE Applications – Solar Irrigation											
Irrigation Potential (hectare)[239]	X 25%	=	Smallholder Irrigation Potential (hectare)[240]	Divided by 0.3[241]	=	Estimated No. of Smallholder Farms Suitable for Solar Irrigation	X	$650 (cost of solar pumping kit)[242]	Divided by 6 year (life of system)	=	Estimated Annualized Off-Grid Solar Market Potential for irrigation

Methodology for identifying areas suitable for irrigation activities on farms:

The areas for potential irrigation activities were calculated using the visible cropland[243] adjacent to permanent surface water sources. As identified by experts in a study in Zambia[244] and based on other expert consultations, beyond a 5 km distance from surface water, the returns are not economically feasible. **Figure 25** is a map of the cropland within a 5 km distance from permanent surface water.

[238] "MSME Finance Gap," SME Finance Forum: https://www.smefinanceforum.org/data-sites/msme-finance-gap
[239] AQUASTAT – Food and Agriculture Organization: http://www.fao.org/nr/water/aquastat/data/query/index.html?lang=en
[240] Assumption that 25% of irrigable land irrigated by smallholder farmers;
See: "Lessons Learned in the Development of Smallholder Private Irrigation for High Value Crops in West Africa," World Bank, (2011): http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTARD/Resources/West_Africa_web_fc.pdf
[241] Assumption that smallholder private irrigation consists of small farms (0.3 hectare);
See: "Off-grid Solar Market Assessment in Niger and Design of Market-based Solutions," World Bank, (December 2017): https://www.lightingafrica.org/publication/off-grid-solar-market-assessment-niger-design-market-based-solutions/
[242] 120W solar pumping kit: https://futurepump.com/futures-bright-farmers-kenya/
[243] "Prototype Land Cover Map over Africa at 20m Released," Esa, (February 2018): https://www.esa-landcover-cci.org/?q=node/187
[244] "Zambia Electrification Geospatial Model," USAID and Power Africa, (April 2018): https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00T2JC.pdf

3.2.2 Milling

The market sizing calculation for solar-powered milling utilized a series of inputs from the UN Food and Agriculture Organization to estimate the smallholder milling potential that could benefit from a 6.5 kW solar powered milling system (20-year system life). Cereals (e.g. rice, maize, millet and sorghum) as well as roots and tuber crops (e.g. cassava, yams and potatoes) were analyzed, as they provide an opportunity for value addition through hulling or milling.

Value-Added PUE Applications – Solar Milling												
Cereals, roots tuber crops (tons)[245]	X	70%[246]	X	50%[247]	=	Smallholder Milling Potential (tons)	Divided by 2 tons per day X 70% capacity factor[248]	=	Estimated No. of Solar Mills	X	6,500 W x $2.50 per watt Divided by system lifetime of 20 years	=	Estimated Annualized Off-Grid Solar Market Potential for Milling

Ultimately, the ability for an agricultural community to benefit from productive use applications has as much to do with access to markets and improved crop inputs, as it has to do with the pricing and availability of financing to purchase the equipment. Hence, the macroeconomic approach used to carry out this market sizing does not account for country-specific cost and supply chain constraints.

3.2.3 Refrigeration

The market sizing calculation for solar-powered refrigeration utilized the estimated number of off-grid market centers in each country to estimate the number that could benefit from a 5.5 kW solar refrigeration system (20-year system life).

Value-Added PUE Applications – Solar Refrigeration							
# Off-Grid Market Centers by country[249]	X	5,500 W[250]	X	$2.50 per watt	Divided by system lifetime of 20 years	=	Estimated Annualized Off-Grid Solar Market Potential for Refrigeration

3.3 PUE Applications for Connectivity/Mobile Phone Charging Enterprises

The market sizing calculation for solar-powered phone charging enterprises was based on each country's mobile phone penetration rate (number of unique subscribers), rural population rate, and the average costs of OGS phone charging appliances ($862, 5-year system life, 400 W system).

Mobile Phone Charging Enterprises							
# of Mobile Phone Subscribers in 2017[251]	X	% rural population	Cost of solar phone charging appliances* divided by lifetime of 5 years	X	0.01 (assuming 1 phone charger per 100 mobile phone users)	=	Estimated Annualized Off-Grid Solar Market Potential for Phone Charging Enterprises

[245] Food and Agriculture Organization: http://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#data/RF
[246] Assumption that 70% of crops are milled
[247] Assumption that 50% of milled crops are processed at smallholder farmer level
[248] Solar mill (6.5 kW system) can mill 2 tons of produce per day; assume capacity factor of 70% (for maintenance/seasonality) *See*: "Off-grid Solar Market Assessment in Niger and Design of Market-based Solutions," World Bank, (December 2017): https://www.lightingafrica.org/publication/off-grid-solar-market-assessment-niger-design-market-based-solutions/
[249] https://www.citypopulation.de
[250] 5.5kW solar powered refrigeration system – *See*: https://www.deutschland.de/en/solar-powered-coldhubs-nigeria
[251] "The Mobile Economy, Sub-Saharan Africa," GSMA Intelligence, (2017): https://www.gsmaintelligence.com/research/?file=7bf3592e6d750144e58d9dcfac6adfab&download

* Indicative Costs for Phone Charging Appliances[252]

Charging Stations	Cost (USD)	Manufacturer
Charging ECOBOXX Qube (sizes - 50) 5Wp panel	$83	EcoBoxx/ Sungrid Group (PTY) LTD South Africa
Charging ECOBOXX Qube (sizes - 90) 10Wp panel	$205	EcoBoxx/ Sungrid Group (PTY) LTD South Africa
Charging ECOBOXX Qube (sizes - 160) 2*10Wp panel	$209	EcoBoxx/ Sungrid Group (PTY) LTD South Africa
Portable charging station ECOBOXX 300	$681	EcoBoxx/ Sungrid Group (PTY) LTD South Africa
Portable charging station ECOBOXX 600	$965	EcoBoxx/ Sungrid Group (PTY) LTD South Africa
Portable Charging Station ECOBOXX 1500	$1,532	EcoBoxx/ Sungrid Group (PTY) LTD South Africa
Portable charging station BOSS Kit Portable	$3,025	Phaesun GmbH
Charging Sundaya Charging Station	$193	Sundaya
Average Cost	**$862**	

Source: GIZ and African Solar Designs analysis

Identifying areas of phone network coverage

The mobile phone network geographic coverage was mapped across each country (**Figure 27).** The source for this data is GSMA, which gives a radius ranging between 2-30 km. The radius is affected by a number of variables including tower height, power output, frequencies in use, and antenna type. Since this does not indicate the quality of network, the data was compared with data from OpenSignal, which tracks the signal from users registered on the platform.

[252] "Photovoltaics for Productive Use Applications: A Catalogue of DC-Appliances," GIZ, (2016): https://www.sun-connect-news.org/fileadmin/DATEIEN/Dateien/New/GIZ__2016__Catalogue_PV_Appliances_for_Micro_Enterprises_low.pdf

Green: Strong Signal (>-85dBm)
Red: Weak Signal (<-99dBm)
Source: Open Data Signal

4. SUPPLY CHAIN ANALYSIS

The Task 2 supply chain analysis was based on the following key sources of data:

- Supplier focus group discussions held in Nouakchott and in Aleg in June 2018
- Survey of 10 locally-based solar companies/suppliers in the country
- Survey of 10 larger international solar product suppliers
- ECREEE supplier database

- Additional supplemental desk research and solar industry stakeholder interviews

These findings were subsequently corroborated by attendees of national validation workshops held in each country at the conclusion of the market assessment.

A list of identified solar companies that are active in Mauritania is included below:

1	AGIPCO
2	AGRINEQ
3	ATERSA PV MAURITANIE
4	Boutique El-Emane
5	BTI BP
6	CDS Eau & énergie
7	Chinguitt Électronique
8	CIMA
9	COGER
10	Comptoir Europe
11	Comptoir El-Jawda
12	Comptoir El-Tessamouh
13	Deyloul
14	Ecima
15	El-Jawhara
16	El-Rayan Énergie Solaire
17	Energie De Mauritanie
18	E.S.B
19	Ets El-Aqsa
20	Geniservices
21	GIE ACTIF
22	INNOTEC
23	MACOGER
24	MAGEC
25	MATRASCO
26	MKM Électrique
27	MTK- Services
28	Nouakchott Production
29	SOC
30	SOMER
31	Sot MAT
32	Technosystems
33	Tout Electrique

Source: ECREEE, Focus Group Discussions; Stakeholder interviews

ANNEX 3: TASK 3 METHODOLOGY

FINANCIAL INSTITUTION ASSESSMENT

Data collection under Task 3 included a combination of desk research, collaboration with local experts, and extensive stakeholder engagement with key officials and representatives from local and regional commercial banks, microfinance institutions and other development banks and agencies in Mauritania. Interviews were also conducted with regional development banks (namely BOAD and EBID) and other financiers active in the African off-grid solar sector, including export credit agencies, trade funders, crowd funders and impact investors.

The stakeholder engagement activity, which included both phone interviews as well as in-person meetings with key representatives from each FI, was undertaken across the 19 countries with extensive support from ECREEE. As a follow up to each interview/meeting, a questionnaire was administered in order to gather critical data on each institution, including *inter alia* their level of experience and capabilities with off-grid sector lending, SME and consumer lending, relationships with local and international partners etc. Feedback from the interviews and questionnaire, as well as quantitative data from each bank's published annual reports, was compiled and analyzed in order to assess which FIs could be most suitable local partners / implementing agents for the proposed ROGEP facility.[253]

The questionnaire that was administered to FIs in the country and across the ROGEP region is included below.[254] The results of the survey are summarized in **Section 3.4**.

- Has the bank provided any loans to any segment of the off-grid sector? If so, please describe.
- Has the bank received any inquiries from any segment of the off-grid sector? How many inquiries?
- Did the bank engage in serious discussions or dismiss the inquiry(ies) as not within the bank's area of lending or not interesting as a new business line? If dismissed, please provide the bank's reasons.
- If the bank engaged in serious review/discussions and rejected the opportunity, please describe the bank's due diligence approach and reasons for rejection.
- Is the bank interested to pursue lending to any segment of the off-grid sector? Which segment and which of the bank's departments and existing products apply?
- Describe the bank's current loan products and lending activity for the SME, Corporate, Consumer and Agri markets. Please provide rough figures on volumes in number of loans and value in each category. For each category please provide average margins, pricing, loan tenors to borrowers, collateral requirements.
- Does the bank have a structured finance department? Has the bank provided financing to any IPPs? If so, please provide details on the transactions (location, technology, size, maturity, portion of bank engagement in the total financing)
- Does the bank have a trade finance department? What are standard terms and conditions? What are the volumes in number of loans and values?
- Does the bank operate nationwide or only in certain regions? Does the bank have a presence in rural areas and is rural consumer and SME and Agri lending a key business focus?
- Does the bank have experience with managing DFI credit lines? In which sectors/departments? Which DFIs? What volumes? Were the lines fully committed and disbursed? What was the bank's overall experience with these credit lines?
- Has the bank had dealings with the ECOWAS Bank for Investment and Development (EBID)? What type of relationship? Credit lines? Co-lending? Credit enhancement? Have the experiences been positive?
- What is the bank's view on accepting hard currency credit lines and on-lending in hard currency? Would the bank hedge hard currency credit lines and on-lend in local currency?

[253] The results of this assessment and corresponding recommendations were prepared for ECREEE in a separate, confidential report.
[254] The survey was adapted based on the type of FI that was being interviewed (commercial banks, MFIs, Regional Development Banks)

- Is the bank interested to explore a credit line with ROGEP? What size of credit line would the bank be comfortable launching with initially?
- Does the bank feel that it would need a third-party guarantee in order to reduce risk enough to make loans to off-grid enterprises? If so, would it be enough if a guarantor were to cover 50% of losses on par with the bank? Or will the bank need the guarantor to take the first 10-20% of losses in an off-gird loan portfolio?
- What pricing does the bank consider to be fair and affordable for third party pari-passu guarantees? For first loss coverage?
- Has the bank had experience with any of the following as guarantors on the bank's loans: Africa Guarantee Fund, Africa Trade Insurers, Afrexim Bank, GuarantCo, IFC, USAID DCA? Has their pricing been fair and affordable? Does the bank have any preference in working with one over the others?
- To engage in lending to the off-grid market segments, would Technical Assistance be helpful? What types of TA would be most useful? Outside consultants to help design specific loan products and underwriting guidelines for the off-grid sector? Outside consultants to develop deal flow and conduct due diligence? Training of bank credit department and account representative personnel? Direct funding to the bank to develop marketing and promotional materials and hire staff?
- Does the bank adhere to and is in compliance with all aspects of the Basel II and III accords?
- Does the bank adhere to and have implemented controls for the Equator Principals and the World Bank/IFC Environmental and Social Standards?

ANNEX 4: GENDER ASSESSMENT

1. Context and Purpose of the Gender Analysis

Within the context of this assignment, a gender-focused analysis was undertaken to assess the level of participation of women in each country's off-grid energy sector. This analysis is critical to the overall market assessment given the clear linkages between energy and gender, namely different rates of access and use as well as the impacts of energy sources and appliances in the home, community and wider society. Energy sector studies often fail to obtain gender-disaggregated data, which is necessary to inform policymakers and better understand the needs and priorities of women in the context of sustainable development.

Women in energy-poor households are at substantially higher risk of illness attributable to indoor air pollution and solid fuel (biomass) use.[255] Moreover, the significant time burdens that women and girls face in collecting fuel and water, cooking and processing food often keep girls from attending school; there is evidence that electrified milling equipment and water pumps can significantly reduce this burden. Lack of access to electricity also means that women do not have access to information and communication technologies that could improve their lives.[256]

As a region, West Africa and the Sahel has remained traditionally gender-stratified whereby males on average have greater access to resources, are more empowered by society and have more opportunities than women.[257] To address these challenges, governments across the region have adopted a range of policies to improve gender equality and promote gender mainstreaming. Member states of ECOWAS have adopted a Policy for Gender Mainstreaming in Energy Access, an initiative committed to promoting favorable policies and frameworks and mobilizing resources to more fully engage women in all areas of energy access, including as energy suppliers, planners, financiers, educators and customers.[258] ECREEE, the agency that is administering this policy throughout the region, is supporting implementation of regulatory and institutional measures that aim to improve inclusive energy access in each country by 2030. ECREEE has also partnered with AfDB to launch a separate regional initiative to advance the participation of women entrepreneurs in the renewable energy sector.[259]

Outside of ECOWAS, Cameroon, Chad and Central African Republic are pursuing gender mainstreaming at a regional level through the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) Regional Policy for universal access to modern energy services and economic and social development (2014-2030).[260] Mauritania is also implementing a national policy to address this issue – the National Strategy of Institutionalization of Gender (la Stratégie Nationale d'institutionalisation du genre).

[255] "The Energy Access Situation in Developing Countries: A Review Focusing on the Least Developed Countries and Sub-Saharan Africa," UNDP and World Health Organization, (2009): http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/Environment%20and%20Energy/Sustainable%20Energy/energy-access-situation-in-developing-countries.pdf

[256] Rewald, R., "Energy and Women and Girls: Analyzing the needs, uses, and impacts of energy on women and girls in the developing world," Oxfam, (2017): https://www.oxfamamerica.org/static/media/files/energy-women-girls.pdf

[257] "Situation Analysis of Energy and Gender Issues in ECOWAS Member States," ECREEE, National Energy Laboratory, (2015): https://www.seforall.org/sites/default/files/Situation-Analysis-of-Energy-and-Gender-Issues.pdf

[258] Ibid.

[259] "Feasibility study promotes women's participation in energy transition," ESI Africa, (May 7, 2018): https://www.esi-africa.com/feasibility-study-promotes-womens-participation-in-energy-transition/

[260] "Central Africa Regional Integration Strategy Paper," African Development Bank, (2011-2015): https://www.afdb.org/fileadmin/uploads/afdb/Documents/Policy-Documents/RISP%20CENTRAL%20AFRICA-ECCAS%20English%20FINAL.pdf

- **Description of Approach / Methodology**

While the data collection for this assignment was not sex dis-aggregated (which was beyond the scope of work), a gender-focused perspective was applied to the overall analysis. The methodology adopted to carry out this exercise included a combination of desk research, literature review, focus group discussions (FGDs) and face-to-face interviews with key gender "focal points" identified by ECREEE in each country. Representatives from women's groups, female-led businesses and energy sector organizations attended the focus group meetings that were held in Cotonou in July 2018 to share their insights and inform the overall market study. A gender questionnaire was also distributed to key stakeholders in Mauritania to assess the main barriers/constraints for inclusive participation in the country. The survey examined a number of key gender issues, including *inter alia* access to credit, access to education and information, entrepreneurial and income-generating activities for women (including productive use of energy), representation of women in leadership positions in business and government.

- **Gender Questionnaire**

The following questionnaire was administered to key stakeholders in each country. Respondents were asked to reply Yes/No to each question and elaborate as needed.

HOUSEHOLD

Are women generally involved in influencing decisions on household energy use/services?
Are off-grid solar solutions (E.g. solar lanterns, solar home systems) largely accessible/made available to the household sector, particularly women-headed households?
Are there any related programs and initiatives (donor, government, private sector, NGO etc.) that are specifically targeting energy access for women in the household sector?
Are off-grid solar products and services generally affordable for households headed by women? If not, are Microfinance Institutions or other organizations in the country providing credit/financing (grants/loans) to the household sector, particularly women-headed households to increase energy access?
Are women aware of the health impact of unclean energy (e.g. fuel-wood for cookstoves) and the solutions (i.e. solar) to address it?

COMMUNITY/INSTITUTIONAL

Are women represented in any high-level energy sector positions? Please provide names/examples, if available, of women in senior management positions in government, committees, boards etc.
Is the mobility and safety of women constrained due to poor energy services (e.g., unavailability of streetlights due to unreliable electricity supply)?

PRODUCTIVE USE

What kind of productive use activities do women engage in and what women-led productive use activities can be supported by off-grid solar solutions?

- Agriculture (irrigation, water pumping etc.)
- Shops (retail, artisanal/handicrafts, grocery, salons etc.)
- Restaurants (bar, cafe etc.)
- Kiosks (e.g. mobile money etc.)
- Tourism

SUPPLIER

Please describe the level of engagement that women have in in the off-grid energy services sector. Are women highly employed in this area (e.g. is there data collected on the number of women-owned businesses/SMEs)?
Are there any related programs and initiatives (donor, government, private sector, NGO etc.) that provide training for women to manage or be employed by energy-related enterprises?

ADDITIONAL:

What are the main barriers women face to access information?
What are the main barriers/constraints for women entrepreneurs to have access to credit?
Do women have equal access to capacity building and training services (e.g. vocational training/technical education) or do they experience discrimination in access to these services?
What policy, regulatory and institutional framework(s) exist, if any, to address gender mainstreaming[261] (e.g. national gender action plans/related policies etc.)?
Are gender-related issues taken into consideration in energy policy provisions and/or are energy-related issues reflected in gender policies (e.g. existence of 'gender units' within public sector agencies and/or 'gender audits' in energy sector)?

2. Gender Profile

2.1 The state of gender equality in Mauritania

Structural inequalities and gender discrimination against women and girls persist in Mauritania, as inclusive participation remains an ongoing challenge. The gender assessment found that while there have been modest improvements in recent years to certain social indicators, gender disparities still exist across the economy, particularly in access to resources, higher education, land ownership, inheritance systems, political power and decision-making. These findings are supported by the UNDP Human Development Index (HDI) on Gender Inequality, where Mauritania performs extremely poorly, ranking 159 out of 189 countries in the index.[262]

2.2 Gender and poverty

Poverty remains widespread in Mauritania, particularly amongst the nomadic herders, subsistence farmers, and unemployed urban masses. According to UNDP statistics, it is estimated that about 50% of the population lives in multidimensional poverty and 15.9 % of the labor force is considered working poor at PPP USD 3.10/day.[263] Furthermore, one third of households live in precarious housing, and 38% of people use electricity as a source of lighting.[264] HDI indicators and income levels are comparatively much lower for women, who constitute a disproportionate share of the country's poor and extremely poor population.

2.3 Gender, Human Capital and Economic Empowerment

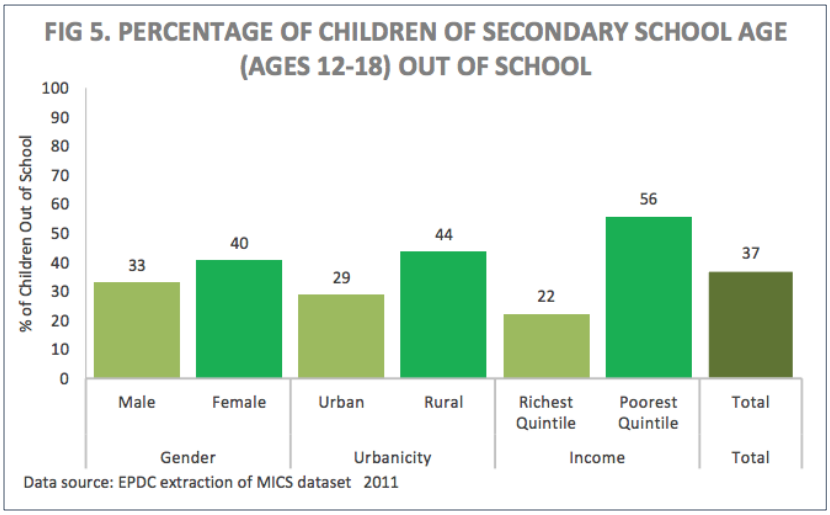
2.3.1 Education, Skills Development and Training

Despite laws making access to basic education mandatory for all children in Mauritania up to 14 years, girls continue to suffer from a lack of access to education. Due to this, Mauritania has very high participation in primary education at 95% for both girls and boys but this drops to 38% in lower secondary.[265] Nearly 40% of female youth of secondary school age are out of school compared to 33% of male youth of the same age. Across the entire sector, there are huge disparities between the poorest and the richest youth in terms

[261] **Gender mainstreaming**: The process of ensuring that women and men have equal access to and control over resources, development benefits and decision-making, at all stages of development process, projects, programs or policy.
[262] "UN Human Development Reports: Gender Inequality Index (GII)," UN Development Programme, (2018): http://hdr.undp.org/en/composite/GII
[263] "UN Human Development Indicators: Mauritania," UN Development Programme, (2018): http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/MRT
[264] "Mauritania Overview,"- World Bank (2019): https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/mauritania/overview
[265] "Mauritania: National Education Profile, 2018 Update," Education Policy and Data Center, (2018): https://www.epdc.org/sites/default/files/documents/EPDC_NEP_2018_Mauritania.pdf

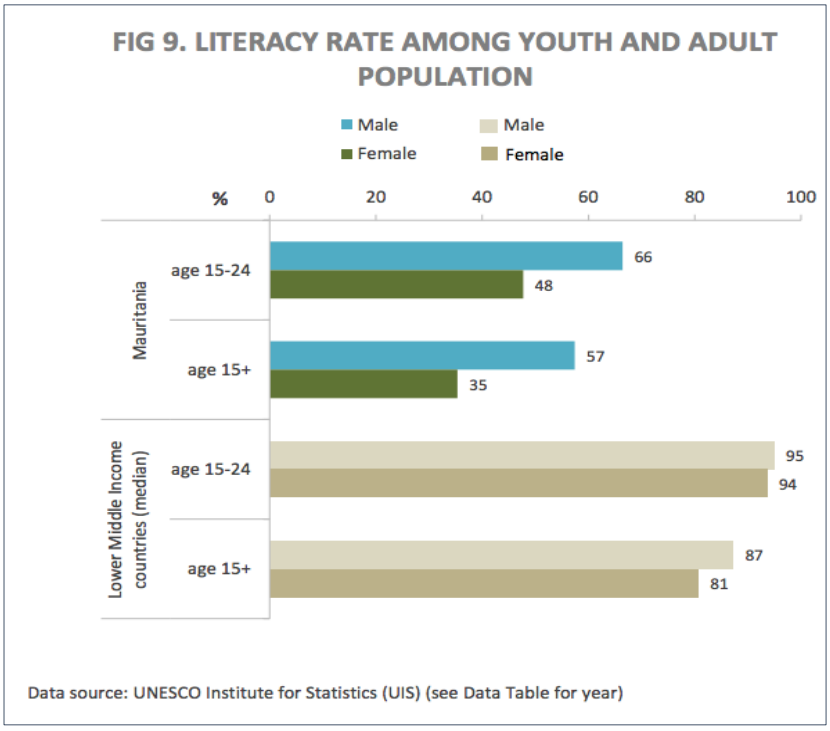
of access to education.[266] This trend remains consistent in literacy rates among Mauritania's youth and adult populations, as just 35% of the country's female adult population is literate, compared to 57% of the adult male population.[267]

Percentage of Children of Secondary School Age (13-19) Out of School



Source: Education Policy Data Center

Literacy Rate Among Youth and Adult Population



Source: Education Policy Data Center

[266] Ibid.
[267] Ibid.

Despite this progress, several issues persist and still need to be addressed in the sector. These include low quality basic education, low access to and quality of secondary education, weak involvement of civil society, local communities, and the private sector, low transition rate to secondary school and the lack of qualified teachers in secondary school.[268]

According to the UN, as of 2017, only 15.5% of women in Mauritania had an account at a financial institution or with a mobile money service provider.[269] This can be attributed to the country's elevated levels of poverty, low or irregular sources of income, low rates of financial literacy, and a perceived lack of need. This is also a result of the fact that most banks are focused on serving the formal sector, while many women remain engaged in informal economic activities – especially subsistence agriculture.

2.3.2 Fertility Rates and Reproductive Health

The Mauritanian health care system is characterized by a lack of investments in public health promotion and education, primary and preventive care, and hospital facilities. As of 2017, the fertility rate in Mauritania remained high, at 4.6 children per woman.[270]. The country also has a high maternal mortality rate; for every 100,000 live births, 406 women die from pregnancy related causes. An estimated 33.6% of women have an unmet need for family planning.

According to Global Centre for Renewal and Guidance 2012 report all facilities suffer from a lack of equipment, supplies, and trained personal. Women and girls, particularly in rural areas, do not have access to adequate health care services.[271]

2.3.3 Participation and Decision-Making

Socio-cultural perspectives in Mauritania remain male-dominated, as conventional gender roles continue to hold women back. This is reflected in household decision-making, which often plays a role in restricting the rights and empowerment of women. Female participation in the labor market is very low compared to other ROGEP countries, with only 31% of women participating in the labor market compared to men's 67.7%.[272]

In contrast to their labor participation, Mauritania has made legislative changes to improve the rate of female representation in government. This has been implemented through quotas in both constitutional and election Law Quotas to empower women to have a substantial impact in public life. Since 2006, electoral law has decreed that women must make up at least 20% of municipal council seats and parliamentary elections and the decree stipulated that one-fifth of political party positions be reserved for women. As a result, there has been some progress in recent years as more women are represented on the political landscape; In 2006, two women were appointed as the country's first female governors. As of 2018, women hold 25.2 % of the country's seats in parliament.[273] However female representation remains an ongoing challenge as there are only a few women in high-level positions.

[268] "Education in Mauritania," Global Partnership for Education, (2019): https://www.globalpartnership.org/country/mauritania
[269] "Human Development Indices and Indicators: 2018 Statistical Update," UN Development Programme, (2018): http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/2018_human_development_statistical_update.pdf
[270] Ibid.
[271] "The Mauritanian Health Care System Overview and Recommendations Health Care System," Diringer Associates, (March 2018): http://diringerassociates.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/Mauritanian-Health-System-GCRG-Report-Final.pdf.
[272] Ibid.
[273] "Human Development Indices and Indicators: 2018 Statistical Update," UN Development Programme, (2018): http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/2018_human_development_statistical_update.pdf

2.4 Gender Policy, Institutional and Legal Framework in Mauritania

2.4.1 Gender Mainstreaming initiatives by the Government

In recent years, gender equality in Mauritania has gained widespread support from women's cooperatives as a reaction to the continued violations of women's rights and persistence of discriminatory laws. As a result, the Government of Mauritania adopted gender mainstreaming as a pathway to achieve not only equality between the sexes, but also to address poverty reduction, economic growth, sustainable development and the improved well-being of its citizenry.

While gender equality is enshrined in Article 1 of the Mauritanian constitution, Mauritanian legislation does not contain a precise definition of gender discrimination. The country's policy framework for promoting gender equality and women's empowerment is guided mainly by its national strategies and policies, including the (i) Women empowerment National Strategy (1995), (ii) National Strategy of development of the early childhood (2010), (iii) Social Protection Strategy (2013), and (iv) National Family Policy (2006). These frameworks are reinforced by the National Strategy of institutionalization of gender (2015), which aims to create an enabling environment to improve women's status and their participation in the development process. In addressing the rural-urban divide Mauritania also enacted the Rural Woman Action Plan (2009-2012). Through these national policies, the GoM aims to empower women in all arenas and positions of leadership, including in legislative, judicial and executive institutions, as well as political parties, civil society organizations, military and security agencies, and businesses.

The gender assessment revealed that GOM programs have encouraged women to enter professions traditionally dominated by men (especially healthcare and ICT), although discriminatory practices persist.

2.4.2 Gaps in the Gender Policy/Legal Framework

Despite the Government's policy initiatives and legislative reforms, gender inequality remains an ongoing challenge across the country's political, economic and socio-cultural landscape, as women still face many barriers to inclusive participation. Closely related to inclusive participation are illiteracy rates, which remain higher among women leading to curtailment in access to information and standing in decision-making. Mauritania's legal system remains deeply discriminatory, especially in the area of the family, and consists of statutory, customary, and religious laws, leading to contradictions and inconsistencies among the three.

As described above, significant gender gaps persist in the areas of education, literacy, access to information and decision-making. There is also still a lack of sex-disaggregated data across all sectors of the economy, which is critical to inform policy decision and promote gender mainstreaming on a national scale.

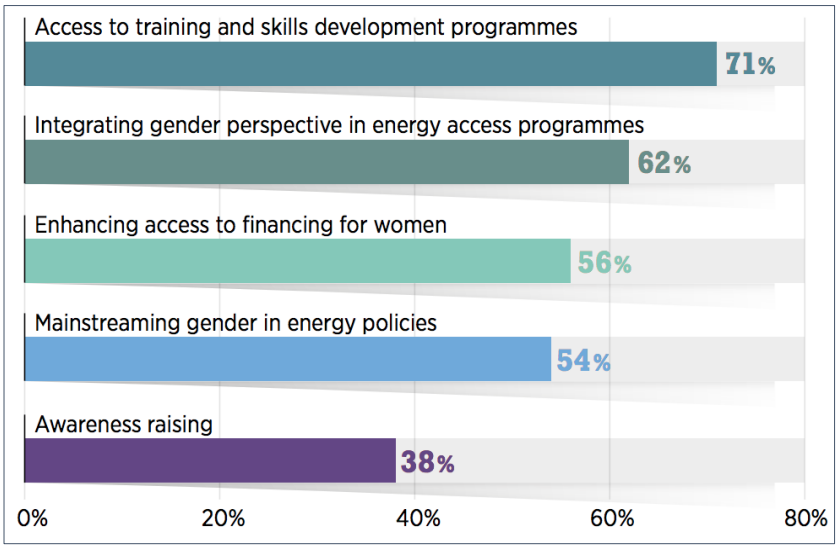
2.5 Summary of Recommendations

Given the increased attention that gender inclusion has received in development planning, there are a number of tools that are now available to policymakers that can be utilized to support gender mainstreaming and encourage women's participation in the energy sector. Despite encouraging progress in the discourse on gender and energy access, substantial efforts are still needed, especially in enabling women's participation in the sector in different roles, including as energy entrepreneurs and in leadership positions.[274] In seeking solutions to improve women's engagement in energy access, a 2018 IRENA survey found that access to necessary technical, business or leadership skills development programs was the single most

[274] "Renewable Energy: A Gender Perspective," International Renewable Energy Agency, (2019): https://irena.org/-/media/Files/IRENA/Agency/Publication/2019/Jan/IRENA_Gender_perspective_2019.pdf

important measure that could be taken. Over half of survey respondents also highlighted the need to integrate gender perspectives in energy access programs as well as enhanced access to finance.

Measures to Improve Women's Engagement in Energy Access



Source: International Renewable Energy Agency

In addition to the measures highlighted in the figure above, below is a list of additional policy recommendations that could further improve gender equality in Mauritania's energy sector:[275]

- At the international level, Mauritania should sign the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol).
- Take measures to close the gender gap in access to education, particularly in higher levels of education
- Implement a quota system to increase the number of women employed in government's energy ministry and ensure that women are part of decision-making processes in the energy sector
- Implement policy and budgetary measures to support programs that aim to raise awareness and promote opportunities for women as energy customers, suppliers, financiers, and educators
- Commission studies to collect, synthesize and publish gender-specific/sex-disaggregated data on women's energy access and usage to inform (i) public policy development to improve rates of access for women; and (ii) private sector on potential customer needs (e.g. clean cooking technologies, productive use of energy applications etc.)
- Undertake a "gender audit" of the energy sector and develop a gender action plan to inform long-term policy targeting gaps in the existing framework and promoting inclusive participation (e.g. by adding gender categories to policies and projects and accounting for gender impacts in strategic planning).
- Establish a Gender Focal Point or Unit within key national and local institutions in order to administer targeted gender policies and programs
- Raise awareness / provide training and technical support to private sector businesses / SMEs on (i) the benefits of gender inclusion and in viewing business decisions through a gender lens; (ii) the value of gender-disaggregated data; and (iii) how to develop and implement gender strategies to encourage inclusive participation.[276]

[275] NOTE: This is not an exhaustive list of recommendations as it is only intended to address inclusive participation in the energy sector; there are many gender-related challenges that warrant further study and attention within the context of the country's complex economic and social structures that are beyond the scope of this analysis

[276] "ECOWAS-CTCN Project on Mainstreaming Gender for a Climate Resilient Energy System in ECOWAS Countries: Final Report," ECREEE and CTCN, (May 2018): https://www.ctc-n.org/system/files/dossier/3b/180627_final_report-uk.pdf

GreenMax Senior Consultant, Ahmed Hamadi (second from left) with ROGEP focus group participants in Aleg, Mauritania, in June 2018. In addition to members of the private sector, donor and NGO communities, Deputy Governor, Salimou Ould Taleb Abderahmane (not pictured), also attended the meeting.[277]

[277] http://brakna.net/06192018-1854

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