EAIF 2026

POST-EVENT REPORT

ARE Energy Access Investment Forum 2026

Nairobi, Kenya | 21-24 April 2026

ARE

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Investment Forum 2026

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Acknowledgements

As the organiser of the event, the Alliance for Renewable Electrification would like to thank the Co-host, Patron, Partners, and Sponsors for their contribution and support to make this Forum a success, pushing forward the renewable electrification worldwide.

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Key Statistics

1,400
Participants

215
Investors

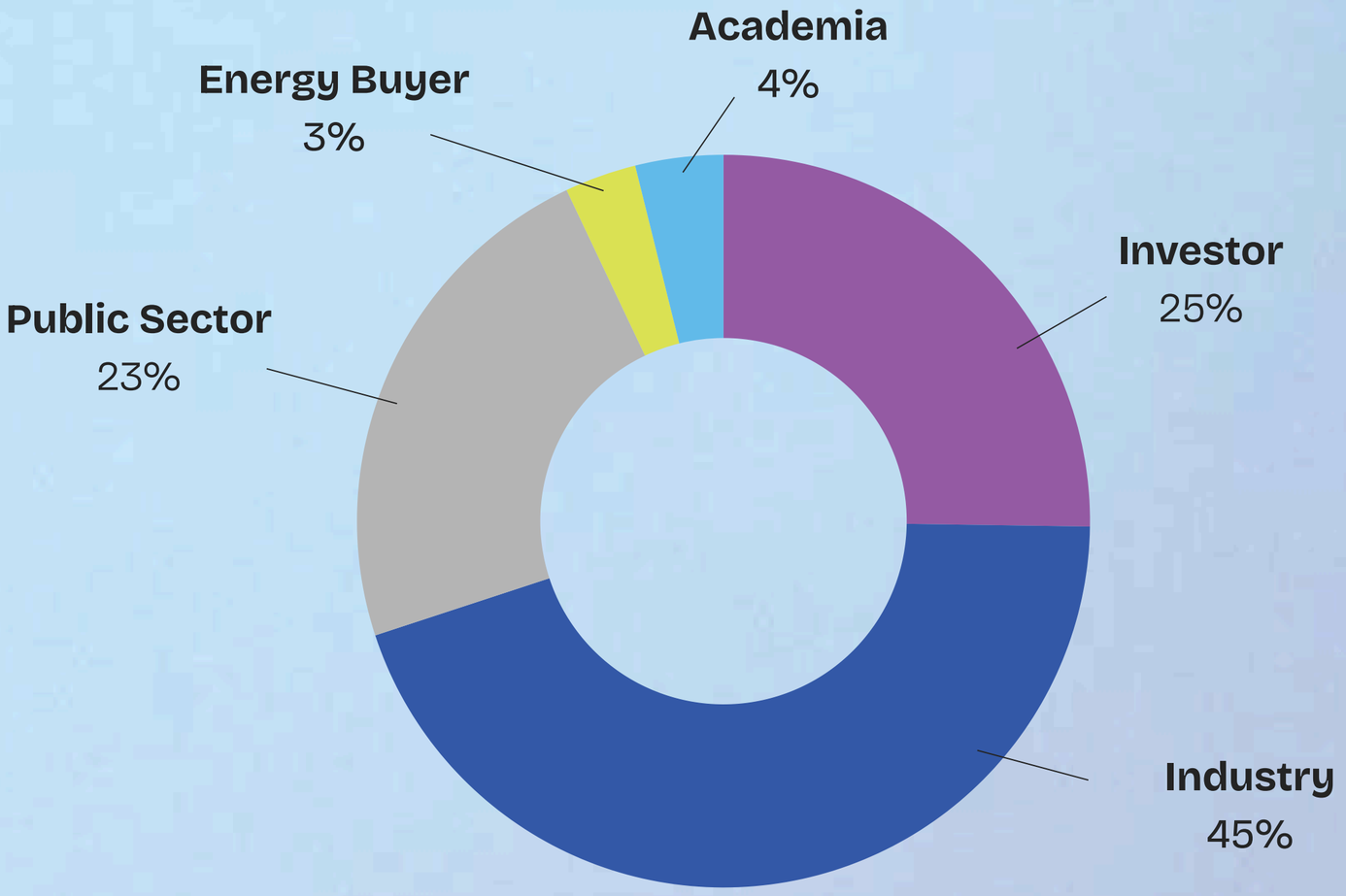
1,026
Structured
B2B Meetings

89%
Satisfaction rate

15m
Views on media

87
Countries represented

Participant Types



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mirova Investing in sustainability
Nithio
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NEFCO
NRC NORWEGIAN REFUGEE COUNCIL
QEB
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Introduction

The ARE Energy Access Investment Forum (EAIF) is the leading annual investment event dedicated to advancing renewable electrification, including energy access, productive uses of energy, commercial & industrial uses of power and grid improvement.

EAIF 2026 successfully concluded in Nairobi, Kenya, from 21 to 24 April 2026, bringing together more than 800 on-site participants for **multi-track sessions**, **Commercial & Industrial Day**, **matchmaking** opportunities, an **exhibition**, networking **receptions**, partner **workshops**, and **site visits**.

Key announcements at EAIF 2026

COMESA launched the **USD 25m ASCENT Project Preparation Facility (PPF)**

Solar23 had taken over Redavia, company active in the commercial and industrial sector with a lease to own model for private companies.

The UK's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office announced **GBP 14m contribution to the African Development Bank Sustainable Energy Fund for Africa in the DRC**, strengthening clean energy deployment across the region.

The **Songwe Hill rare earth project in Malawi**, which amounts to a roughly USD 400m investment plan, was also announced as being fast-tracked, with backing from the European Commission.

ARE announced its rebrand to the **Alliance for Renewable Electrification**, marking a new chapter as it celebrates over 20 years of advancing renewable energy in emerging markets.

What do participants say ?

Testimonials from EAIF participants

“EAIF today is the gold standard of investment forums on decentralised renewable energy.”

Kevin K. Kariuki
Vice President, AfDB

“Instead of competing for attention, we found that investors were proactively reaching out to us at EAIF.”

Ronak Bhagvandas
Co-founder, Masontsika

“EAIF is a valuable platform to engage on how to better align capital, instruments, and pipelines to turn strong market momentum into scalable, investable opportunities.”

Duda Slawek
Associate Partner, Open Capital

“EAIF let us connect with mini-grid developers and financiers in a very useful way. We will definitely be here next year as well.”

Erick Ongera,
Sales Manager, ComAp

Core Themes of EAIF 2026

1 Optimising catalytic funding & enabling private sector investments in renewable electrification

EAIF took stock of the current funding landscape for private sector-driven electrification discussing how long-term operational and financial sustainability could be achieved. Event sessions deep-dived into the role of public & private capital and reflect on the optimisation of grants, guarantees and patient equity.

2 Accelerating green mini-grid deployment for sustainable development

Green mini-grids are essential to supporting electrification, development, and climate objectives. EAIF featured a dedicated track on green energy mini-grids, deep-diving into enabling conditions, financing, demand-side considerations, and practical approaches.

3 Modernising African grids through public-private partnerships

EAIF explored how public-private partnerships could support long-term electrification goals through grid modernisation, deep-diving into private sector grid solutions, IPP, power purchase agreements, and interconnection between mini-grids and national grids.

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Core Themes of EAIF 2026

4 State of the market: Productive uses of energy, e-mobility & clean cooking

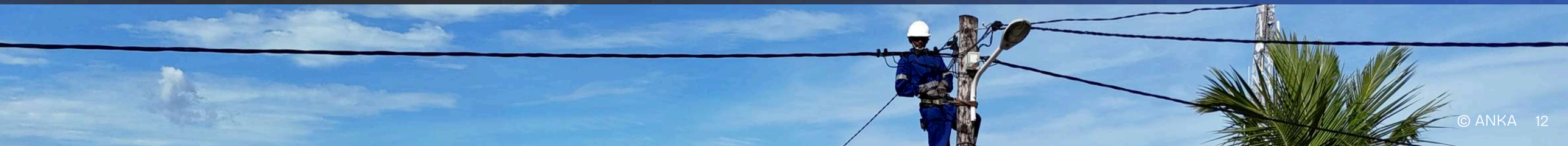
Boosting affordability for local populations and supporting local economies requires addressing market trends, demand patterns, and financing gaps. EAIF discussed actionable approaches to expanding productive uses of energy, e-mobility, and clean cooking in underserved areas.

5 C&I: Advancing industrialisation through renewables

Renewable energy adoption in the C&I sector can unlock cost savings, improve operational efficiency, reduce GHG emissions, and are prime investment opportunities. EAIF sessions explored how renewables could contribute to industrialisation, with an emphasis on key sectors.

6 Local manufacturing, skills development and green job creation

Expanding local manufacturing presents significant opportunities for green job creation. The agenda spotlighted opportunities to develop African manufacturing hubs and green jobs, while building local skills through university-level and TVET training.



Part 1:
Plenary Sessions

ARE Rebrand Announcement

One of the key highlights of EAIF was ARE's announcement of its rebrand to the **Alliance for Renewable Electrification**, marking a new chapter as it celebrates over 20 years of advancing renewable energy in emerging markets.

Reflecting the evolution of energy systems, the new identity underscores an expanded mission to accelerate renewable electrification across the full energy landscape—from energy access and productive use to commercial and industrial applications, as well as modern grid and utility integration—while continuing to serve its members with a broader, future-focused vision. Learn more

Key takeaways: Two Plenary Panels - Funding the Path to SDG7 & Maximising Grant Impact

Capital is not the bottleneck — allocation is.

Over 600 million people still lack access, yet record investor appetite and capital announcements are failing to reach the small, African-led firms that form the sector's backbone — the most urgent systemic gap named across both panels.

Project preparation is where bankable pipelines are won or lost.

COMESA's new USD 25M ASCENT Facility — covering 16 countries — and AfDB/SEFA's minimum revenue guarantee pilots show that upstream structuring support is not a luxury: it is the precondition for private capital to move.

RBF transfers risk to developers — it doesn't reduce it.

Cliff-edge funding, post-commissioning-only payments, and verification delays of up to six months are structural barriers — and incentivising connection volumes over sustainability is distorting markets and deterring the investors the sector needs most.

(see ARE White Paper: Unlocking long-term scale: Rethinking RBF for sustainable mini-grids)

The verdict from both panels was the same three words: **streamline, simplify, execute.**

Spotlight: C&I Day — Telecom, Mining, Agro-Processing & Industrialisation

The water-energy nexus is an underleveraged industrialisation pathway.

Energy costs represent 40–70% of water utilities' operating budgets. Solar-powered water systems can cut costs and unlock agro-processing, manufacturing and irrigation.

Local manufacturing is the missing link in green industrialisation.

Nigeria grew domestic solar panel manufacturing from 120 MW to 300 MW through deliberate offtake agreements and fiscal incentives.

Agro-processing makes productive use tangible.

Renewable energy can directly strengthen agricultural value chains and competitiveness.

Telecom towers are becoming an anchor for DRE demand.

Tower companies are prioritising hybrid solar-plus-battery to cut diesel dependency and improve uptime, combining solar, storage and automated backup. A recent USD 15M commitment to iSAT shows growing investor appetite for proven operators.

Critical minerals could be Africa's next big energy demand driver.

Mining and beneficiation are reshaping national energy plans — from Malawi's IPP licensing reforms to the Songwe Rare Earth project's ~25 MW power and 95 km transmission-line needs. Closing the gap requires deeper collaboration between governments, developers, DFIs.

Part 2:
Side Sessions

Led by:

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Spotlight: Side Sessions — Mini-grid track (Led by AfDB, IFC and UNDP AMP)

TA is shifting from consultant deliverables to developer-led execution.

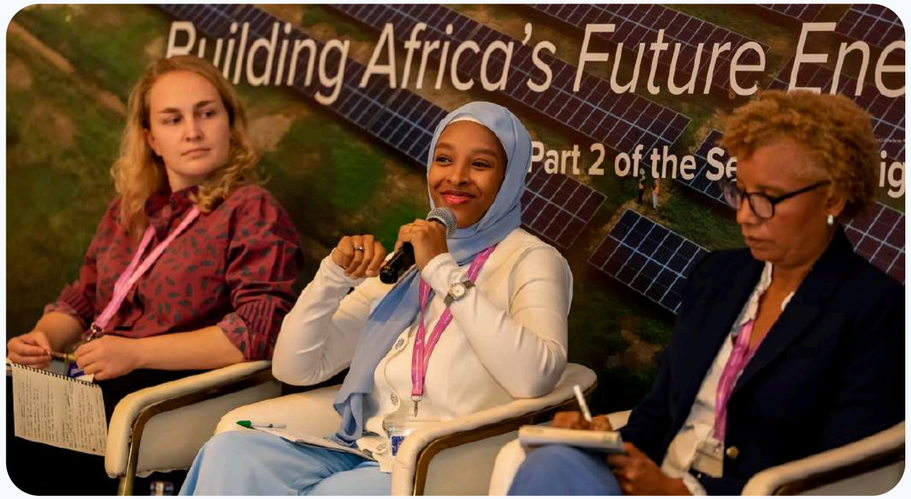
The Africa Mini-Grid Acceleration Programme 1 (AMAP1) reached 11 countries but lacked public-sector depth; AMAP2 will put TA in developers' hands, prioritising corporate capacity and market de-risking over pre-packaged designs.

Financing must follow the kWh, not the connection.

Kudura is piloting kWh tokenisation and battery leasing, and Cygnum's bankability checklist — strong CFO, patient aligned equity, RBF subordinated to debt — points to the move from project to platform finance.

The binding constraint on capital is information asymmetry, not supply.

InfraCredit's review of 40+ Nigerian developers points to credit ratings, standardised toolkits and underused domestic pension and insurance pools as the route to unlocking financing already on the table.



Spotlight: Side Sessions — Mini-grid track (Led by AfDB, IFC and UNDP AMP)

Catalytic capital is still moving the largest needle.

The USD 3M philanthropic commitment of the Global Energy Alliance for People and Planet unlocked USD 125M of World Bank financing for Nigeria's interconnected mini-grid pilot; a new developer support platform will coordinate TA providers and catalytic capital across the sector.

Integrated, multi-technology models are the next frontier.

Reframing the sector around kWh delivery (SEforALL), Anka's Madagascar mini-grid + solar kit + agro-processing + digital corridor, and e-mobility as an integration play across AMP's 21 countries point beyond single-technology silos.

Part 3:
Partner Workshops

Spotlight: Skills Development — Local Manufacturing Eco-Systems, Vocational Education & Training a future-ready generation

Skills development must start with jobs, not curricula.

TEI OP-VET's demand-driven model — piloted in Angola for off-grid electrification — designs training around concrete employment opportunities, while TVET CDACC's modularised curricula let green hydrogen and EV content be added without rewriting whole qualifications.

The skills gap risks becoming the binding constraint on the green transition.

FSD Africa projects 8M green jobs by 2030 and 85M by 2050, yet less than 1% of climate finance supports skills — and Africa holds 60% of the world's best solar resources but only 2% of the global renewable workforce.

Workforce development is an investable asset, not an operational cost.

Sun King's in-house programme is scaling from 37,000 to 45,000 agents across logistics, customer support and after-sales; Eastlands College leans on 80+ industry partners to outpace national curriculum cycles with supplementary EV and renewables training.

Spotlight: Skills Development — Local Manufacturing Eco-Systems, Vocational Education & Training a future-ready generation

New financing instruments are needed to close the employer–training gap.

Outcome-based funding tied to placement, employer–VET co-funded consortia, demand-signalling mechanisms and de-risking instruments can shift training from supply-led to demand-led — already visible in Yakazi Network's pre-financing of technician wages.

AI literacy is the next layer of the renewable energy curriculum.

TEA-LP's co-design workshop produced three tools — a Green Skills Passport, an AI Curriculum Sprint Model and an Industry-Led Applied Sandbox — to embed machine learning, predictive analytics and live industry datasets into university programmes.

Spotlight: Workshops & Side Sessions — Wind, KOSAP, RBF & ESG

Kenya's wind potential is ready — if procurement catches up.

Lake Turkana remains among the best wind resources globally, but procurement transparency, bankable PPAs, land issues, and slow wheeling and open-access frameworks are holding back investment. Transmission and storage are now the critical frontier.

KOSAP exceeded solar targets — but clean cooking lags.

433,000 solar home systems sold vs. a 250,000 target. Clean cooking remains demand-constrained: shared digital infrastructure (PAYG platforms), demand-side subsidies, and tariff reform are the missing pieces.

RBF without a clear objective is a subsidy without a strategy — and the sector keeps making the same mistake.

The workshop's top-voted principle: use competitive mechanisms like reverse auctions for price discovery, keep subsidies capped, time-bound, and periodically reviewed — and measure fund performance on just two KPIs: time from inception to first disbursement, and time from claim submission to payment.

ESG compliance for mini-grids is now practical and affordable.

A new compliance manual and 11-tool toolkit calibrate ESG responsibilities to mini-grid realities — average 100 kWp sites and USD 1,000–4,000 monthly revenues — turning compliance into a genuine business enabler rather than a barrier.

Spotlight: Workshops & Side Sessions — Productive Use of Energy

TA must extend from project preparation to the investor side of the table.

PFAN's new Investor Pivot adds buy-side services — origination support, investment-readiness prep and post-investment monitoring — for first-time fund and facility managers, alongside targeted training for local banks to expand ecosystem liquidity.

Due diligence harmonisation is a near-term lever to compress timelines.

Participants pointed to standardised core documentation, common checklists and streamlined prospectuses (building on the CROWD working group) as ways to cut duplication without compromising investor trust or independent risk judgement.

PURE only scales when finance, design and partnerships start with the community.

The CLEAN–WRI–SEforALL workshop landed on demand-led design as non-negotiable — supply-driven approaches have underperformed and interventions must follow income patterns and productive activities, not appliance availability.

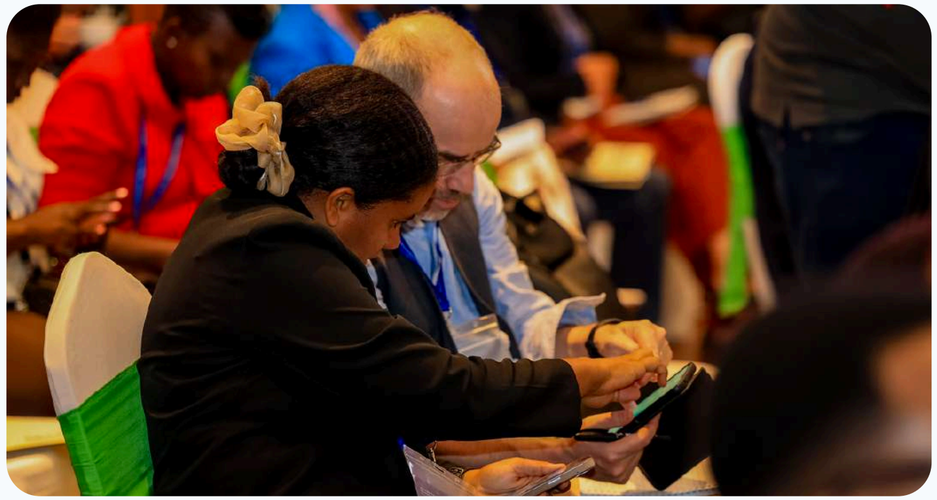
Spotlight: Workshops & Side Sessions — Productive Use of Energy

Concessional capital should catalyse, not replace, commercial finance.

Blended finance combining TA, performance-based incentives and concessional capital can shift local SACCOs, MFIs and mid-tier banks — GIZ EnDev Kenya is a concrete example — but rate subsidies and grant dependency risk distorting pricing if banks lose discretion.

Trust, standards and South–South learning are the underused growth levers.

Weak after-sales, inconsistent product quality and the absence of structured peer learning across India, Uganda, Kenya and Zambia limit scale — local technician training, quality enforcement and cross-country exchange were flagged as essential complements to financing.



Part 4:
Exhibition, Networking, Site Visits

Exhibitors
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Scenes from EAIF 2026 Exhibition

Ministerial tour to the EAIF Exhibition

Networking

GET.invest Matchmaking

EAIF 2026 featured GET.invest matchmaking sessions throughout the first three days of the event to catalyse networking and partnerships.

This year, matchmaking platform recorded strong engagement, with an all time record.

1,026
Meetings booked

1,085
Pending meetings

85%
Transnational meetings

90%
Successful meetings

Networking Receptions

In addition to the GET.invest matchmaking sessions, ARE hosted two networking receptions and offered numerous opportunities for delegates to connect throughout the coffee breaks.

After a full day of discussions and conferencing, EAIF delegates gathered at the poolside evening reception to unwind and network in a more informal setting, with conversations continuing well into the evening.

Site visits

Four site visits were organised on the sidelines of EAIF 2026.

Organised by
Phaesun GmbH

The site visit to **Jungle Harvest Farm** showcased a real world example of solar powered cooling systems in agriculture, highlighting their practical application.

Organised by
UNIDO ITPO Germany

The site visit to **Bio Foods Ltd.** allowed delegates to explore practical examples of sustainable industrial development and the integration of clean energy solutions within the food processing industry.

Organised by
ennos ag

Delegates visited **Mlango Farm** to experience sustainable agriculture in action. The visit showcased organic farming practices alongside solar powered irrigation using the Sunlight Pump.

Organised by
PowerPay Africa

AIoT Manufacturing and Assembly Plant visit offered participants valuable insights into PowerPay's technologies, manufacturing, and the innovative technologies to advance the clean energy transition.

Scenes from EAIF 2026

Scenes from EAIF 2026

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