

Nigeria Energy Day 3: Grid and off-grid solutions get equal treatment

Written by Alan Mammoser [📧 \(https://energy-utilities.com/author-profile-alan-mammoser-page000572.html\)](https://energy-utilities.com/author-profile-alan-mammoser-page000572.html)
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Nigerian agency leaders explore the close relationship of power grid sustainability and the growth of off-grid deployments, as mini-grid solutions come to the fore in discussion of closing the electricity access gap; the importance of seeing projects on the ground

The Nigeria Energy Leadership Summit, at the Landmark Centre in Lagos this week, had more than 50 experts engaged in presentations, chats, and panel discussions across three days.

Day three saw senior stakeholders explore the close relationship of |

Stand-alone systems: seeing i

A Keynote Address, 'Strengthening the nation's off-grid sector: An REA perspective' was delivered by Eng. Ahmad Salihijo Ahmad, who is Managing Director and CEO, Rural Electrification Agency (REA) of Nigeria.

He quickly explained what is at stake.

"At the moment we're still talking about at least 80 million Nigerians without any form of energy access."

He then described the REA's systematic approach to developing stand-alone systems for unserved and underserved rural areas, and his agency's openness to bringing in many kinds of investors.

Salihijo Ahmad covered his agencies' funded programs and specific kinds of interventions. But he talked most passionately about his own site visits, and how this experience in the field left a good impression on potential investors.

"Seeing is believing, and this is how we can see the potential impacts," he said.

Closing the gap at the last mile

His comments resonated toward the end of the day, during a 4-person panel discussion called 'Sustainability of grids,' which was moderated by Engr. Lucas Istifanus Ibrahim, Principal Engineer/Adjunct Lecturer at the University of Jos, Nigeria.

The panellists quickly outlined the current deficiencies, noting that Nigerian power generation is 14-15 GW but the transmission system carries just 4 GW. The mini-grid solution again came to the fore.

Olamide Niyi-Afuye, CEO, Africa Minigrad Developers Association (AMDA), explained that he had recently started with the association and quickly became aware of the sheer size of the challenge, referring to the 80 million.

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Niyi-Afuye also spoke of his field mini-grids for communities, which development.

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He then linked mini-grid development in Nigeria to the imperative for large-scale main grid expansion. “Speaking of scale, and speaking of speed, it is mini-grids that will help us achieve scale and speed,” he said.

“All hands are on deck to achieve 160,000 mini-grids in Africa...by 2030,” he said, referring to recent research for the World Bank and noting that Nigeria may be a 40 percent share of this.

“The Electricity Act has a lot of potential...for more investment in the conventional grid,” he said. “In the meantime we have another solution called mini-grids, which are addressing the last mile beyond the grid.”

With this, he expressed certainty that the electricity access gap in Nigeria can indeed be closed.

Other contributors on the panel were Ayodeji Ademilua, President of the Renewable Energy Association of Nigeria (REAN), and Tolutope Dada, Director of Business Development, Havenhill Synergy Ltd.

Energy & Utilities reported last year on a US-based mini-grid developer in Nigeria (<https://energy-utilities.com/nigerian-mini-grid-developer-reports-profit-news119962.html>). E&U also reported on Nigeria opening its largest grid-connected solar power plant (<https://energy-utilities.com/nigeria-commissions-largest-grid-connected-solar-news120056.html>) earlier this year.

A new report on West Africa (<https://energy-utilities.com/new-report-sees-bright-future-for-west-africa-news121691.html>) is now out from Informa Energy & Utilities. It combines a useful overview of each country combined with close looks at four key sectors across the region.

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