

Falling Short:

World Bank needs to focus on
new connections for
energy poor countries



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Falling Short: World Bank needs to focus on new connections for energy poor countries

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The United Nations (UN) and the World Bank emphasize that access to energy is essential to reducing poverty. Correspondingly, the UN's Sustainable Development Goal 7 (SDG 7) aims for universal access to affordable, reliable and sustainable energy by 2030. In 2013, the World Bank Group (WBG)¹ pledged that its energy practice would be centered on the achievement of the UN's SDG 7 universal energy access goals.²

The World Bank, International Energy Agency (IEA) and other agencies track global progress in meeting the SDG 7 goals as reported in *Tracking SDG 7: The Energy Progress Report*. The most recent report of October 2020³ revealed that in 2018 there still remained 789 million people without access to energy. Overall, the report concluded: "Although the world continues to advance toward SDG 7, its efforts fall well short of the scale required to reach the goal by 2030."

Furthermore, the Energy Progress Report found that although between 2016 and 2018, the annual rate of global electrification slightly accelerated, it still remains well short of what

is needed to reach universal access by 2030. As such, under current and planned policies (before the COVID crisis) it is estimated that:

- ⊙ **620 million people will remain without access to energy in 2030, 85 percent of them in Sub-Saharan Africa.**

The following assessment reviewed energy sector operations of the WBG approved during 2017 to 2020 in the top 5 energy access deficit countries: Nigeria, Democratic Republic of Congo, India, Pakistan, and Ethiopia. In 2018, these 5 countries account for 43% of the global population without access to electricity or 338 million people. Similar to the Energy Progress Report's conclusion, the assessment of the WBG concludes:

- ⊙ **Although the World Bank Group assisted all 5 countries' advancement toward universal energy access, the Bank's efforts are not adequately centered on reaching universal access by 2030.**
- ⊙ **Specifically, the WBG does not provide enough finance for new household energy connections.**

Table 1. WBG Energy Portfolio in Top 5 Energy Access Deficit Countries 2017-2020

Country	WBG Energy-focused Projects	Total Energy-focused Finance (million USD)	Projects with New Household Electricity Connection Targets			Electrification Rate			People without Access 2018 (million)
			# of projects	Amount (million USD)	% of total energy finance	2016	2018	Change	
Nigeria	6	\$2,032	1	\$350	17%	61%	57%	↓4%	85
Congo, DR	1	\$145	1	\$145	100%	15%	19%	↑4%	68
India	13	\$1,616	1	\$250	15%	82%	95%	↑13%	64
Pakistan	14	\$2,565	1	\$100	4%	74%	71%	↓3%	61
Ethiopia	3	\$885	1	\$375	42%	45%	45%	0%	60
Total	37	\$7,443	5	\$1,220	17%				338

Data sources: IEA and World Bank

The World Bank Group (WBG) includes: International Development Association (IDA), International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), International Finance Corporation (IFC), and Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA).

Funding made through financial intermediaries and technical assistance/advisory services is not included.

The data summarized in Table 1 suggest that the WBG's energy-focused operations in the top 5 energy deficit countries are not adequately centered on meeting universal energy access. To begin, from 2017 to 2020, the WBG provided relatively small amounts of finance directed at new household electricity connections – only 5 out of 37 energy-focused operations involved new household connections. Overall, the operations targeting new connections only represented 17 percent of total energy-focused finance in these countries from 2017 to 2020.

As further indication of WBG priority misalignment, the two countries with the most energy-focused WBG finance, Pakistan and Nigeria, demonstrated the worst electrification progress from 2016 to 2018. In fact, these two countries' overall electrification rates reduced over this period. Both countries had a small percentage of WBG energy finance directed at new household connections (4% and 17%, respectively). In Pakistan, which had the most WBG energy finance and the largest number of projects from 2017 to 2020, the Bank achieved 0 new household connections as of December 2020 (see Table 3).

On a positive note, the assessment revealed that in 4 of the 5 countries, all of the WBG expected new household electricity connections, totaling over 1.9 million, are linked to renewable energy sources of power (see Table 5). The only exception was India, where it was not possible to determine sources of power linked to the WBG-targeted new connections. This finding provides further evidence that renewable energy is the best solution for meeting universal energy access.

Overall, the assessment makes clear that the WBG needs to figure out what more the Bank can do to help countries achieve universal energy access and what it means to have the Bank's energy practice truly "centered" on that goal. To begin:

- ⊙ **The World Bank Group needs to accelerate electrification rates in all high energy access deficit countries by providing significantly more finance directly to new household energy connections.**

The African Development Bank (AfDB) has pledged 75 million new off-grid connections for rural households and small businesses by 2025 (AfDB's New Energy Deal for Africa).⁴ The World Bank Group is expected to reveal its Africa Energy Plan soon. **The WBG should commit to match or exceed the AfDB's new connections pledge and to avoid double counting make clear in the Africa Energy Plan new household electricity connections the WBG will supply that are additional to the AfDB's commitment.**

- ⊙ **Given the rapidly growing climate crisis, the WBG's public money for energy access should only fund renewable energy solutions, both utility scale and distributed renewable energy.**

There are vast renewable energy resources that remain un-developed in every country. In November 2020, **the UN Sustainable Energy for All initiative recommended that "financing of fossil fuel projects as a means of closing the energy access gap should be terminated."**⁵

Scope and Methodology of Assessment

The aim of the assessment is to determine how many new household connections the World Bank Group (WBG) has contributed in the 5 countries with the highest number of people without access to electricity. The assessment reviewed all WBG operations approved between the years 2017 and 2020 that contain energy sector activities.

Types of WBG operations reviewed include: investment project finance (IPF), development policy finance (DPF), and Program for Results (PFR) of the International Development Association (IDA) and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) as well as loans and equity of the International Finance Corporation and guarantees of the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA). Funding made through financial intermediaries and technical assistance/advisory services is not included.

A WBG project or program is considered to support new household electricity connections if it has a development outcome indicator targeting new household connections, either expressed in number of households or people. The assessment also tracks intended targets and actual connections achieved by December 31, 2020.

Baseline: Countries with the Largest Energy Access Deficits in 2016

Table 2 provides a list of the top 10 countries with the largest electricity deficits in 2016. The assessment uses 2016 as the baseline year from which to measure progress in WBG operations that were approved between the years 2017 and 2020 (note: the Paris Climate Agreement was adopted in December 2015). In 2016, the top 5 energy access deficit countries were India, Nigeria, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Ethiopia and Pakistan. Together these countries represented 488 million people without access to electricity.

Table 2. Top 10 Countries with the Largest Energy Access Deficits in 2016

Country	Population w/o Access (million people)	Overall Electrification Rate	Urban Rate	Rural Rate
1. India	239	82%	97%	74%
2. Nigeria	74	61%	86%	34%
3. Congo, DR	68	15%	35%	1%
4. Ethiopia	56	45%	85%	29%
5. Pakistan	51	74%	90%	63%
6. Bangladesh	41	75%	90%	67%
7. Tanzania	37	33%	65%	17%
8. Uganda	33	19%	23%	19%
9. Indonesia	23	91%	99%	82%
10. Myanmar	22	59%	79%	43%
Total:	644	million people		

Based on data from: International Energy Agency (IEA), Energy Access Outlook 2017: From Poverty to Prosperity. In addition, Table 2 illustrates that all countries have a large disparity in energy access between urban and rural populations, i.e., rural populations lag far behind urban populations. This disparity continues to this day (see next section).

Electrification Progress made between 2016 and 2018

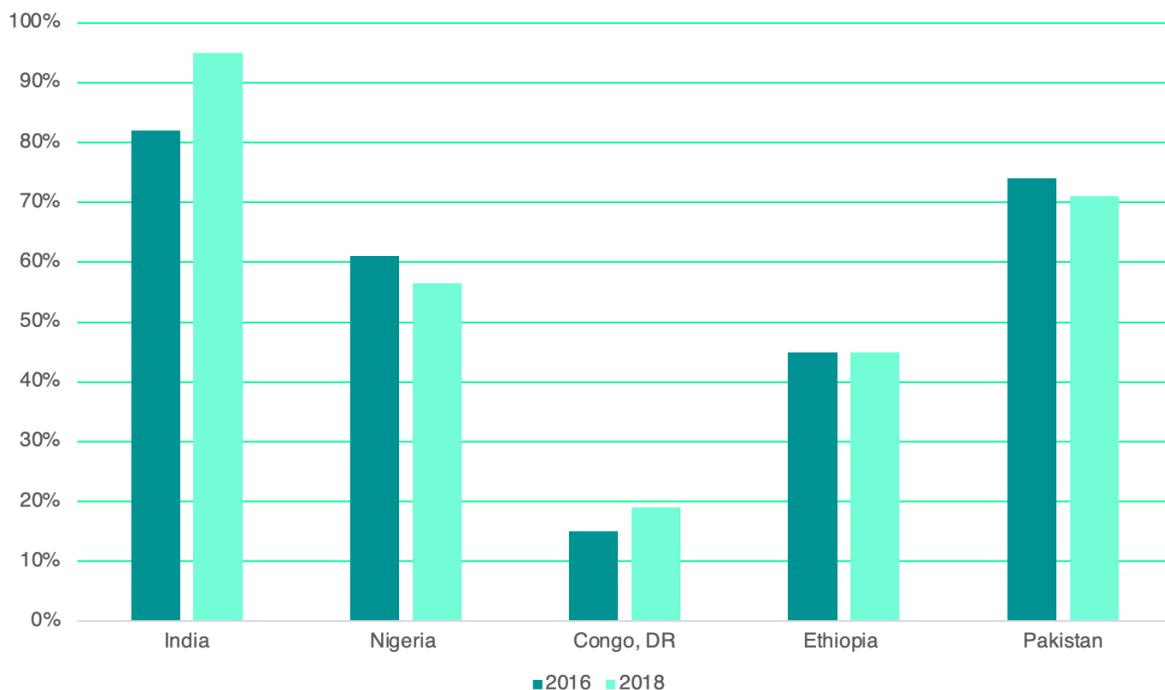
According to the World Bank and IEA's 2020 *Tracking SDG 7: The Energy Progress Report*,⁶ in 2018 there still remained 789 million people without access to energy. Overall, the report concluded: "Although the world continues to advance toward SDG 7, its efforts fall well short of the scale required to reach the goal by 2030."

Furthermore, the Energy Progress Report found that although between 2016 and 2018 annual global electrification rates slightly accelerated to an average of 0.82 percentage points, it still falls well short of what is needed

to reach universal access by 2030. As such, under current and planned policies (before the COVID crisis) it is estimated that: 620 million people will remain without access to energy in 2030, 85 percent of them in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Figure 1 shows that from 2016 to 2018, out of the top 5 energy deficit countries, India is the only country that made significant progress. The DRC made modest progress while Ethiopia's overall electrification rate did not change. During this period, Nigeria and Pakistan saw the percent of the population having access to electricity drop. In these two countries, population growth outpaced the growth in electrification.

Figure 1. Change in Rates of Electrification



Data sources: IEA and World Bank

In 2018, the top 5 energy deficit countries remained the same as in 2016. However, the order changed largely reflecting India's progress and Nigeria's and Pakistan's lacking progress. The new order puts Nigeria on top, the Congo DR second, India third followed by Pakistan and Ethiopia in fifth place (see Table 4 below).

The Energy Progress Report further revealed that the world's energy access deficit is increasingly concentrated in Sub-Saharan Africa, which, in 2018, was home to about 548 million people who lacked access or nearly 70 percent of the global population without access. In addition, the disparity between rural and urban populations persisted. In 2018,

rural populations made up about 85 percent or 668 million people of the global access deficit.

WBG New Electricity Connections in the Top 5 Energy Access Deficit Countries 2017-2020

Table 3 summarizes how many WBG operations had development outcomes targeting

the creation of new household energy connections over the last four years. From 2017 until end of 2020, the WBG had one operation in each country that targeted increasing the number of new household electricity connections.

Table 3. WBG Contribution to New Household Electricity Connections 2017-2020

Country	WBG Operations & Timeframe	Amount of Funding (million USD)	Population w/o Access 2016 (million people)	Targeted New People Connected	New People Connected Achieved*	Targeted New Household Connections^	New Household Connections Achieved*
1. India	1 DPF, Jul18-Oct19	\$250	239	7,160,900	2,017,495	1,432,180	403,499
2. Nigeria	1 IPF, Jun18-Oct23	\$350	74	2,500,000	345,710	500,000	69,142
3. Congo, DR	1 IPF, May17-Oct22	\$145	68	265,000	55,000	53,000	11,000
4. Ethiopia	1 PFR, Mar18-Jul23	\$375	56	5,655,000	1,676,455	1,131,000	335,291
5. Pakistan	1 IPF, Jun18-Sep23	\$100	51	1,200,000	0	240,000	0
Total (million)		\$1,220	488	16.78	4.09	3.36	.820

*As reported by World Bank Implementation Status Results (ISR) reports for each Bank operation as of December 2020.

^Based on 5 people per household (this is the common World Bank assumption).

Table Key: DPF=development policy finance; IPF=investment project finance; PFR=program for results finance

Overall, the WBG intended development outcomes target approximately 16.78 million people to receive new electricity connections or 3% of the 488 million people without electricity access in the 5 countries in 2016 (which does not account for population growth between 2017-2023). With the exception of the operation in India, each one of these WBG projects runs for a five-year period. Thus, the new electricity connections represent what the Bank intends to accomplish over five years (2017/18 to 2022/23).

Over the last four years, the Bank reportedly achieved 818,932 new household connections reaching approximately 4.09 million people. A significant number of these new connections, 403,499, were achieved in India as an indirect outcome linked to the Bank's general budget support provided as part of development policy finance (DPF). It is also important to note that India is the only country that is a member of the G20 or the Group of 20 largest economies in the world. Notably, the Bank did not achieve any new household connections in Pakistan over this time period.

Table 4. WBG Energy Portfolio Priority on New Electricity Connections 2017-2020

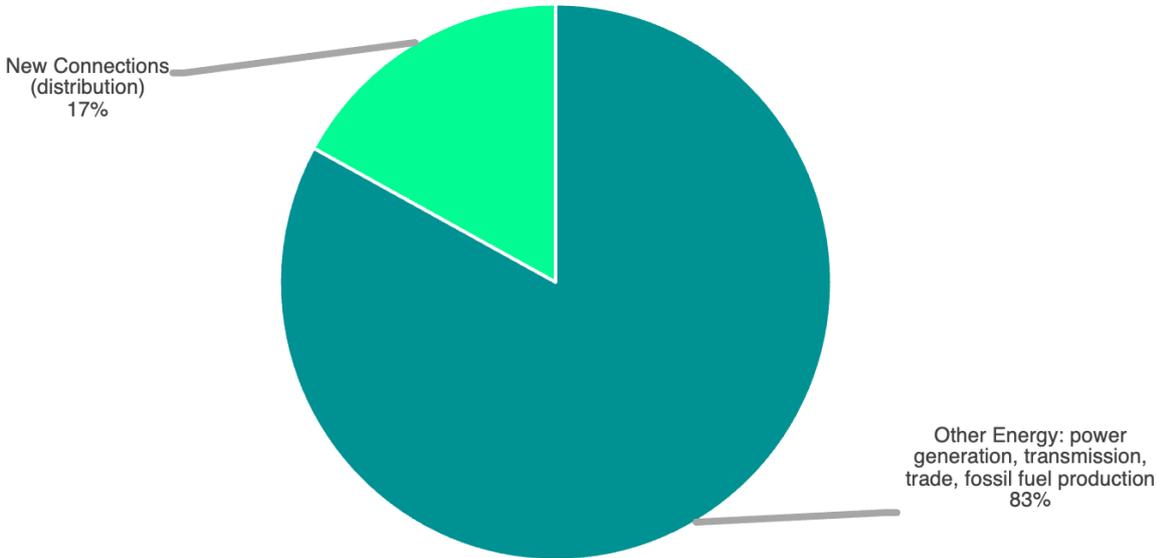
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The data summarized in Table 4 suggest that the WBG’s energy-focused operations in the top 5 energy deficit countries is not adequately centered on meeting universal energy access. To begin, from 2017 to 2020 the WBG provided relatively small amounts of finance directed at new household electricity connections – only 5 out of 37 energy-focused operations involved new household connections. Overall, the operations targeting new connections only represented 17 percent of total energy-focused finance from 2017 to 2020 (see Figure 2). Notably, the two countries with the most en-

ergy-focused WBG finance, Pakistan and Nigeria, demonstrated the worst electrification progress from 2016 to 2018. In fact, these two countries’ overall electrification rates reduced over this period by 3 and 4 percent respectively. Over the 4-year period (2017-20) assessed, Pakistan had the most WBG finance out of the 5 countries and the largest number of energy-focused operations, but the least amount of WBG finance targeting new household connections – only \$100 million or 4 percent of total energy-linked financing. It is important to note that some WBG operations involve actions such as upgrading and

Figure 2. WBG Energy Finance in Top 5 Energy Access Deficit Countries 2017-20



improving the reliability of the existing grid, which are important to improving electricity services. Furthermore, WBG projects involving new power generation and transmission can contribute to increased access. However, with the exception of distributed renewable energy, no WBG power generation operation was associated with the creation of new household connections and none of these projects had a development outcome targeting new connections or increasing the rate of electrification.

New megawatts do not equal new connections. Too often people confuse increasing the number of megawatts with increasing energy access. Household connections only take place if connections are directly financed. The World Bank and IEA’s Energy Progress Report clearly demonstrates not enough finance is being provided for new household energy connections.

Types of World Bank Operations providing Electricity Connections

Table 5 summarizes the types of WBG operations and the types of new electricity con-

nections. It turns out that only World Bank operations and not the private sector arms of the WBG, i.e., the IFC or MIGA, provided new household electricity connections in the 5 countries assessed. Table 5 shows that the type of World Bank of operation was diverse. Of the World Bank operations providing new electricity connections, three were investment project finance (IPF), one was program for results (PFR) financing, and one was development policy finance (DPF).

For IPF and PFR, the Bank’s finance is directly used to pay for expenditures involved in creating new connections. However, in the case of DPFs, the Bank provides the finance as non-earmarked budget support linked to prior policy and institutional reforms. Thus, in the case of India’s DPF, the finance is not directly linked and it is clear that the Bank’s targeted development outcome of 7.2 million new people connected would cost significantly more than the Bank’s \$250 million DPF.

Table 5. World Bank Contribution by Type of Electricity Connection 2017-2020

Country	World Bank Operations & Timeframe	Amount of Funding (million USD)	Targeted New People Connected	New People Connected as of Dec. 2020	Energy Sources	On-grid	Off-grid, Distributed
1. India	1 DPF, Jul18-Oct19	\$250	7,160,900	2,017,495	unknown	unknown	unknown
2. Nigeria	1 IPF, Jun18-Oct23	\$350	2,500,000	345,710	solar		mini-grids, SHS
3. Congo, DR	1 IPF, May17-Oct22	\$145	265,000	55,000	hydropower	grid expansion	
4. Ethiopia	1 PFR, Mar18-Jul23	\$375	5,655,000	1,676,455	grid = mixed renewables	5,400,000 on-grid	255,000 off-grid RE
5. Pakistan	1 IPF, Jun18-Sep23	\$100	1,200,000	0	solar	Utility-scale solar	mini-grids, SHS

Source: Data collected from World Bank Group project documents.
 Key: DPF=development policy finance; IPF=investment project finance; PFR=program for results finance; SHS=solar home systems

Perhaps the most positive finding of the assessment, especially on the climate front, is that in 4 of the 5 countries, all of the WBG's expected new household electricity connections, totaling over 1.9 million, are linked to renewable energy sources of power. The one exception is India, where as noted above the WBG operation involves a development policy operation. Thus, the Bank operation was not directly involved in creating new household connections and therefore, it was not possible to determine the type of energy connections or the sources of power involved. The Bank's heavy reliance on renewable energy sources to provide new household connections is a strong indication that renewable energy is the best solution for meeting universal energy access.

Financing of New Connections is Shared.

It is important to point out that WBG funding often does not cover the full cost of the WBG-targeted new household electricity connections. For example, in the case of Nigeria, the total project cost is \$765 million. The World Bank covers \$350 million, while \$415 million is covered by the government of Nigeria and the African Development Bank (\$200 million). For the WBG-new connections in Ethiopia, the World Bank covers \$375 million, while the government of Ethiopia is responsible for \$302 million of the costs. The number of new connections the WBG counts in its Corporate Results Indicators should only reflect the Bank's portion of funding. However, it does not appear this is the case. To avoid double counting, the WBG should correct this corporate results accounting.

Recommendations

The assessment makes clear that the WBG needs to figure out what more it can do to help countries achieve universal energy access and what it means to have the Bank's energy practice truly "centered" on that goal. To begin:

- ⊙ **The World Bank Group needs to accelerate electrification rates in all high energy access deficit countries by providing significantly more finance directly to new household energy connection**

The African Development Bank (AfDB) has pledged 75 million new off-grid connections for rural households and small businesses by 2025 (AfDB's New Energy Deal for Africa).⁷ The World Bank Group is expected to reveal its Africa Energy Plan soon. **The WBG should commit to match or exceed the AfDB's new connections pledge and to avoid double counting make clear in the Africa Energy Plan new household electricity connections the WBG will supply that are additional to the AfDB's commitment.**

- ⊙ **Given the rapidly growing climate crisis, the WBG's public money for energy access should only fund renewable energy solutions, both utility scale and distributed renewable energy.**

There are vast renewable energy resources that remain un-developed in every country and as WBG data already point out, renewable energy is the main source of energy access. Furthermore, in November 2020, **the UN Sustainable Energy for All initiative recommended that "financing of fossil fuel projects as a means of closing the energy access gap should be terminated."**⁸

- ⊙ **The WBG should improve transparency and accountability of its reporting of WBG-funded new household electricity connections.** There are several areas that require improvement, which could provide greater clarity on the WBG's contributions and where gaps exist. For example, at times, the WBG is not transparent to what degree other sources of funding, e.g., domestic government or other development banks, are also financing the

WBG-targeted new connections. The number of new connections the WBG counts in its Corporate Results Indicators should only reflect its portion of funding. In addition, at times, the WBG combines the number of people receiving new connections with the number of people gaining improved services. These totals should be reported separately.

Annex:

Reviewed World Bank Group Energy Sector Operations 2017 – 2020

A World Bank Group operation was included as part of the assessment if the operation had activities or Prior Actions involving the energy sector.

Project	WBG	Amount (million US\$)	Approval Date	New Household Electricity Connections
India				
Shared Infrastructure for Solar Parks Project	IBRD, Investment Project Finance	\$75	30-Mar-17	No
Clean Max Equity	IFC, equity	\$15	13-Apr-17	No
FRV Solar India	IFC, loan	\$36	13-Jun-17	No
Rewa Actis	IFC, loan	\$61	20-Dec-17	No
Rewa Mahindra	IFC, loan	\$51	9-Feb-18	No
Azure RG	IFC, loan	\$45	29-Mar-18	No
Jharkhand Power System Improvement Project	IBRD, Investment Project Finance	\$310	1-Oct-18	No
Andhra Pradesh 24X7 Power for All Project	IBRD, Investment Project Finance	\$240	26-May-17	Maybe*
Second Programmatic Electricity Distribution Reform Development Policy Loan for Rajasthan	IBRD, DPF	\$250	5-Jul-18	Yes
Energy Efficiency Scale-Up Program	IBRD, Investment Project Finance and guarantees	\$300	17-May-18	No
Innovation in Solar Power and Hybrid Technologies	IBRD, Investment Project Finance	\$150	29-Mar-19	No
SECI Mahindra	IFC, loan	\$34.61	19-Mar-20	No
HFE Bhadla	IFC, loan	\$49.11	24-May-19	No

Nigeria	WBG	Amount (million US\$)	Approval Date	New Household Electricity Connections
NG-Electricity Transmission Project	IBRD, Investment Project Finance	\$486	15-Feb-18	No
Nigeria Electrification Project	IDA, Investment Project Finance	\$350	27-Jun-18	Yes
Nigeria Kaduna State Economic Transformation Program-for-Results Project	IBRD - PFR	\$350	20-Jun-17	No
ND Refineries Ltd. [oil refinery]	IFC, loan	\$35	15-May-20	No
Power Sector Recovery Performance Based Operation	IDA, P for R	\$750	23-Jun-20	No
Nigeria Solar Capital Partners Ltd./Globeleq/ARM Harith	MIGA, guarantee	\$61	1-Dec-17	No
Ethiopia	WBG	Amount (million US\$)	Approval Date	New Household Electricity Connections
Ethiopia Electrification Program (ELEAP)	IDA, P for R	\$375	1-Mar-18	Yes
Second Ethiopia Growth and Competitiveness Programmatic Development Policy Financing	IDA, DPF	\$500	19-Mar-20	No
Renewable Energy Guarantees Program	IDA	\$10	23-May-19	No
Congo, DR	WBG	Amount (million US\$)	Approval Date	New Household Electricity Connections
Electricity Access and Services Expansion (EASE) Project	IDA, Investment Project Finance	\$145	4-May-17	Yes
Pakistan	WBG	Amount (million US\$)	Approval Date	New Household Electricity Connections

Sindh Solar Energy Project	IDA, Investment Project Finance	\$100	14-Jun-18	Yes
National Transmission and Modernization Project	IBRD, Investment Project Finance	\$425	19-Dec-17	No
Punjab Green Development Program Project	IDA, DPF - P for R	\$200	25-May-18	No
EVTL Expansion	IFC, loan	\$40	28-Jun-19	No
Additional Financing For Dasu Hydropower Stage I Project (Transmission Line)	IBRD, project finance	\$700	31-Mar-20	No
Resilient Institutions for Sustainable Economy DPL	IBRD (250); IDA (250); DPF	\$500	29-Jun-20	No
Tricom Wind Power Pvt Limited	IFC, loan	\$13	25-Oct-19	No
Metro Wind Power Limited	IFC, loan	\$20.53	25-Oct-19	No
DIN ENERGY LIMITED	IFC, loan	\$12.95	25-Oct-19	No
ACT II Wind	IFC, loan	\$12.81	25-Oct-19	No
ARTISTIC WIND POWER PVT LIMITED	IFC, loan	\$12.76	25-Oct-19	No
Gul Ahmed Electric Limited	IFC, loan	\$12.75	25-Oct-19	No
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Hydropower and Renewable Energy Development	IDA (250); IBRD (200); project finance	\$450	24-Sep-20	No
Additional Financing for the Central Asia South Asia Electricity Transmission and Trade Project	IDA, Investment Project Finance	\$65	31-May-19	No

*While the development indicators included "Distribution lines constructed or rehabilitated under the project = end target 474 km", it is not possible to tell if actual new connections were made or if it was rehabilitation of existing lines. *While the development indicators included "Distribution lines constructed or rehabilitated under the project = end target 474 km", it is not possible to tell if actual new connections were made or if it was rehabilitation of existing lines.

References:

- 1 The World Bank Group (WBG) includes: International Development Association (IDA), International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), International Finance Corporation (IFC), and Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA).
- 2 World Bank Group, 2013. Toward a Sustainable Energy Future for All: Directions for the World Bank Group's Energy Sector. July 2013. <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/745601468160524040/Toward-a-sustainable-energy-future-for-all-directions-for-the-World-Bank-Group-8217-s-energy-sector>
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- 7 AfDB, 2017. New Deal on Energy for Africa: A transformative partnership to light up and power Africa by 2025. African Development Bank. April, 2017. https://www.afdb.org/fileadmin/uploads/afdb/Documents/Generic-Documents/Brochure_New_Deal_2_red.pdf
- 8 [Energizing Finance: Understanding the Landscape 2020 | Sustainable Energy for All \(seforall.org\)](#)

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