

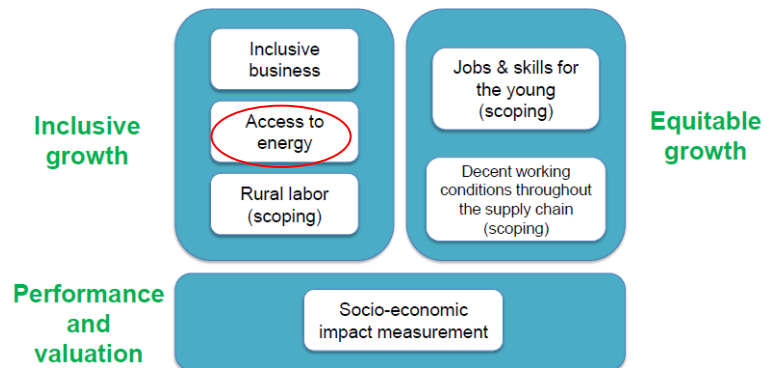


WBCSD & Access to Energy: The road ahead

Context

In the context of WBCSD’s “Strategy 2020”, centered on implementing business solutions to sustainability challenges, all of our Development-related activities (including the Access to Energy initiative) have now been integrated into a newly created Social Capital Focus Area. This reflects the desire of our Executive Committee to

strengthen the Council’s activities in addressing rapid socio-economic transformations in industrialized as well as emerging and developing markets. The Social Capital Focus Area will promote business solutions towards enabling greater social inclusion and equitable growth, and its work program themes are depicted in the image below, with access to energy being positioned as one of the 3 pillars of work as enablers for “Inclusive Growth”.



By “social capital” we mean people’s skills, experience and knowledge, in addition to societies’ shared values, norms and institutions. Together, these features can be considered resources that need to be maintained and enhanced to make society more cohesive and resilient, and business more successful. Social capital issues are embedded in WBCSD’s Vision 2050 of “9 billion people living well, and within the limits of the planet”.

Energy access as key development enabler

Access to energy is critical to economic development and social progress. While not explicitly listed, energy access is critical to achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Providing clean, reliable and affordable energy services to the billions of people who currently lack access therefore remains one of the world’s most important development challenges. Accordingly, the 2014-2024 decade has just been declared as the United Nations Decade of Sustainable Energy for All, underscoring the importance of energy issues for sustainable development and for the elaboration of the post-2015 development agenda and the future Sustainable Development Goals.

WBCSD & access to energy: What is in it for member companies?

WBCSD’s membership includes several of the leading innovators in delivering access to energy to the poor through the extension of electricity grids, extension, distributed / renewable energy systems, and providing products and appliances. Their activities have

significantly contributed to improving the lives of hundreds of thousands of people, but face significant economic, infrastructural and political barriers to be further scaled. The WBCSD plays an important role in providing a platform for the exchange of best practice and for establishing the necessary partnerships with other stakeholders in overcoming the barriers to universal access to energy.

The 2013 Access to Energy workstream builds on WBCSD's activities carried out in 2011-2012 under the leadership of GDF SUEZ, Schneider Electric and ERM, which chaired a working group of 20 companies. The work focused on exploring key opportunity areas to scaling the business contribution, namely through: innovative business models, enabling policy frameworks, financing mechanisms, and the establishment of partnerships. WBCSD also actively contributed to various international initiatives and high-level gatherings (most notably the UN's Sustainable Energy for All initiative and the Rio+20 Summit), thereby providing valuable insights on the business case for large companies and on how to overcome barriers to scale. Key messages and learnings were rolled out via a series of dialogues across the world, reaching some 250 key stakeholders in business, government, and civil society. A dedicated online section is available to track all outputs and outcomes of the work (<http://www.wbcspd.org/accesstoenergy.aspx>).

Leveraging WBCSD as a business organization regrouping leading companies from various industry sectors, GDF Suez and Schneider Electric wish to continue to push forward the collective agenda on access to energy at the global level, joining forces with other WBCSD members in view of:

- **Strengthening knowledge on state-of-the art business models**, ranging from product and service innovation to innovative financing mechanisms to risk reduction mechanisms and partnerships with social entrepreneurs. In that context, synergies with Social Capital's work on performance and valuation will be exploited, in view of determining impact indicators specifically focused on energy access. Furthermore, WBCSD will be offering an e-learning program on inclusive business models in the fall of 2013, which will also be beneficial for those company representatives wishing to gain further insights in this domain.
- **Promoting companies' work and advocating the key role of business in enabling access to energy**, showcasing initiatives and best practice at leading events and consultations. This includes the strengthening of linkages with key practitioner networks (most notably in the context of the operationalization phase of Sustainable Energy for All¹, but also initiatives such as Energy+ of the Norwegian government, Energy for All Partnership in Asia, and Energy Access Partnership in Africa). Furthermore, the long-term engagement among business organizations for the inclusion of energy access goals in the international processes that are defining global Sustainable Development Goals can be ensured. In essence, WBCSD can act as an umbrella organization facilitating (or, where needed, reinforcing) linkages within the international institutional framework that enable the work of companies in this space.

¹ Sustainable Energy for All is now gearing up for country-level action by supporting national governments as they design and implement national plans to develop local capacity, create the enabling conditions to attract private investment, reduce risk, and facilitate access to technical assistance and resources. See <http://www.sustainableenergyforall.org/>