

Linking North Africa's Renewable Electricity Potential to Europe: Policy Challenges

Several recent studies¹ have analyzed the technical feasibility of Europe importing significant quantities of renewable electricity from North Africa. Based on evaluations of both renewable electricity production and long-distance electricity transmission technologies, these studies have found that a range of electricity import schemes could be technically feasible, and could play a substantial role in a European effort to eliminate greenhouse gas emissions at a modest cost. Given this, there is significant value in considering whether and how such necessary trans-Mediterranean cooperation could best be enabled to serve the broader objectives of enhancing sustainable development and security in North Africa and Europe, while complementing the simultaneous development of renewable energy generation within Europe (as reflected in schemes such as the *SuperSmart Grid* concept).

To advance the in-depth exploration of trans-Mediterranean political and financial cooperation on renewable energy infrastructure development, ECF, IIASA and PIK are convening a high-level analytic workshop from 24 – 26 November 2008. It will build upon the existing technical analyses by exploring key policy issues—both immediate and longer term—associated with financing the development of and the subsequent governance of large renewable electricity imports from North Africa. Examples of the policy issues to be examined include: definition of appropriate financing policies and mechanisms; integration of imported energy into existing and planned infrastructure and policy architectures; assessment of the likely impact on the sustainable development of the North African region; and evaluation of the likely impact on Europe's energy security and global geopolitical relations.

Prior to the workshop, participants will receive background briefing materials and a synopsis of the key policy questions for both issue areas (along with a summary of relevant literature). At the workshop, participants will:

1. Receive, discuss, and clarify briefings on recent technical evaluations of North African renewable energy generation and transmission options to the EU; (*Evening of 24 November*)
2. Explore a series of specific policy-oriented questions in one of two broad issue areas (*economic and financial issues* and *governance and security issues*) through small group working sessions, each of which will commence with a set of short expert presentations and then focus discussion around a set of three generic scenarios²; (*25 November*)
3. Collaboratively integrate, through plenary presentations and discussions, the findings from the two issue areas into a coherent set of questions for further investigation and, where possible, policy recommendations for advancing proposals for trans-Mediterranean cooperation on renewable energy generation and transmission. (*26 November*)

The immediate output of this workshop will take the form of a report to be distributed to political, social and economic stakeholders in the EU and North Africa within a month of the workshop. The workshop findings will provide the base and direction for further in-depth research and writing on the issues identified by the workshop participants.

¹ These include reports, technical analyses, and briefing documents prepared by the German Aerospace Centre, the University of Kassel, the Club of Rome, McKinsey Consulting, and the European Commission.

² These scenarios consider the EU importing 20%, 50% and 80% of its total electricity requirements from renewable energy sources in North Africa.
