

Continental Energy Programme in Africa

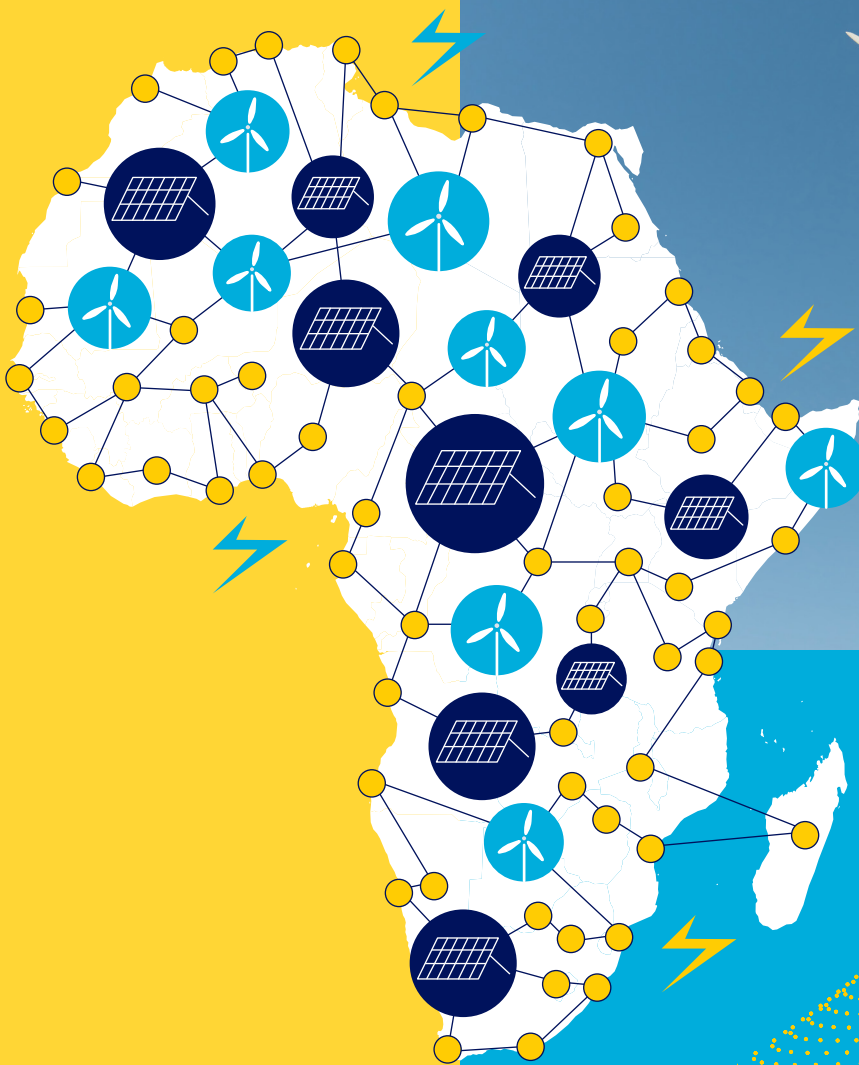
Powering Africa's Just and Integrated Energy Future

March 2026

Africa holds immense renewable energy potential — yet millions still lack access to electricity.

CEPA is an EU-funded initiative under the Global Gateway Investment Strategy that **supports the African Union and its key energy institutions in building an integrated, resilient and sustainable continental energy system.**

Building on **more than ten years of EU-AU cooperation in the energy sector**, CEPA supports the implementation of **three flagship continental initiatives** — the African Single Electricity Market, the Continental Power System Master Plan, and the African Energy Efficiency Strategy - aligned with the African Union's Agenda 2063.



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Africa's Energy Transition

Why now?

Africa's Energy Paradox – and its Historic Opportunity

Africa stands at a pivotal moment in its energy history. The continent is rich in natural resources and renewable energy potential, yet millions of people still lack access to reliable and affordable electricity. Bridging this gap is not only a strategic priority — it is essential for economic growth, industrialisation, social inclusion and climate resilience.

The Challenge

Today

Source: IEA, AU energy data, CMP Studies

- 600 million people still lack access to electricity
- Electricity demand is expected to triple by 2040
- Generation capacity must increase nearly fivefold to meet projected demand
- Climate resilience, affordability and energy security are becoming urgent priorities

Without coordinated action, fragmented planning and underinvestment could slow progress and increase costs for future generations.

The Opportunity

Africa has

At the same time, Africa holds some of the world's most significant untapped renewable energy resources. The continent has the potential not only to meet its own energy needs sustainably, but also to position itself as a global clean energy leader.

- Vast solar and wind potential
- Major hydropower resources
- Opportunities in green hydrogen and critical minerals value chains
- A rapidly growing market and workforce

Harnessing this opportunity requires a coordinated continental approach. The scale of transformation calls for:

Continental coordination across countries and regions

Investment-ready infrastructure and bankable projects

Harmonised regulatory and policy frameworks

Strong leadership on energy efficiency and demand-side transformation

Now → Expected in 2040 according to CMP Studies

266 GW → 1,218 GW

24% → 63% green energy share

This is not only an energy transition — it is a structural transformation of Africa's economic future.

Three Pillars

One Integrated Energy Vision

CEPA supports the implementation of three mutually reinforcing continental initiatives that form the backbone of Africa's energy transformation.

Together, they create the policy, market and infrastructure foundations for an integrated, resilient and sustainable energy system.

Their full potential can only be realised through coordinated action across institutions and regions, which is a core objective of CEPA.



AfSEM The African Single Energy Market

- Harmonises regulatory and market frameworks
- Enables cross-border electricity trade
- Creates economies of scale
- Aims to become the world's largest electricity market

AfEES The African Energy Efficiency Strategy

- Targets 50% increase in energy productivity by 2050
- Covers six key sectors: industry, the power sector, buildings, transport, agriculture and appliances including clean cooking
- Reduces system losses and improves energy performance, freeing up existing capacity to connect more households and businesses
- Strengthens monitoring frameworks and energy data systems across the continent
- Limits the need for costly new generation and infrastructure
- Drives sustainable demand-side transformation across the continent

CMP The Continental Power System Master Plan

- Technical backbone of AfSEM
- Coordinates generation and transmission planning
- Identifies priority interconnection and green energy zones and corridors
- Supports bankable infrastructure pipelines

CEPA 2025–2028

Delivering Africa's Energy Integration

Funded by the European Union under the Global Gateway Investment Strategy and implemented under the leadership of the African Union Commission (AUC-DIE), AUDA-NEPAD and AFREC, CEPA supports the coordinated implementation of Africa's continental energy priorities in partnership with Regional Power Pools, regulators and AU Member States.

Over the period 2025–2028, CEPA focuses on accelerating implementation and translating strategy into tangible results.

Key Milestones

A Stronger Continental Electricity Market

- Operational structures and coordination mechanisms fully functional
- Progress in regional regulatory harmonisation
- Enhanced cross-border electricity trade readiness

Investment Ready Infrastructure

- Updated Continental Master Plan guiding long-term development
- Priority transmission and renewable projects prepared for investment
- Strengthened pipeline of bankable infrastructure projects

Scaled Energy Efficiency Action

- Up to 10 National Energy Efficiency Action Plans supported
- Stronger monitoring and data systems across the continent
- Energy productivity targets translated into national frameworks

Benefits of CEPA

CEPA marks the next phase of coordinated continental implementation - deepening cooperation, strengthening institutions and accelerating Africa's just and sustainable energy transition.



Enhanced energy access



Greater energy security and resilience



Mobilisation of public and private investment



Pan-African cooperation and market integration



Climate mitigation and adaptation



Strengthened Africa-Europe energy partnership

More information

[African Union – Department of Infrastructure and Energy](https://au.int/en/ie) <https://au.int/en/ie>

[AFREC](https://au-afrec.org/african-energy-efficiency-strategy-afees) <https://au-afrec.org/african-energy-efficiency-strategy-afees>

[AUDA-NEPAD](https://nepad.org/continental-master-plan) <https://nepad.org/continental-master-plan>

[Capacity4Dev Page](https://capacity4dev.europa.eu/projects/continental-energy-programme-africa_en) https://capacity4dev.europa.eu/projects/continental-energy-programme-africa_en