



OVERVIEW

SUSTAINABLE ENERGY FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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Electricity is fundamental to economic well-being and reducing poverty but is also a major contributor to climate change. It allows people to spend less time on manual labor and less money on dirty and often dangerous fuels, improves education by allowing students to study by safe electric light, improves health outcomes by providing refrigeration and reducing kerosene use, and enables growth in businesses and productive commerce. Power sectors that support such development need strong institutions to guide and implement well-conceived projects and programs, local leaders with vision to weave new or adapted approaches and technologies into the system, and effectively deploy capital to support growth in access to electricity and economic development.

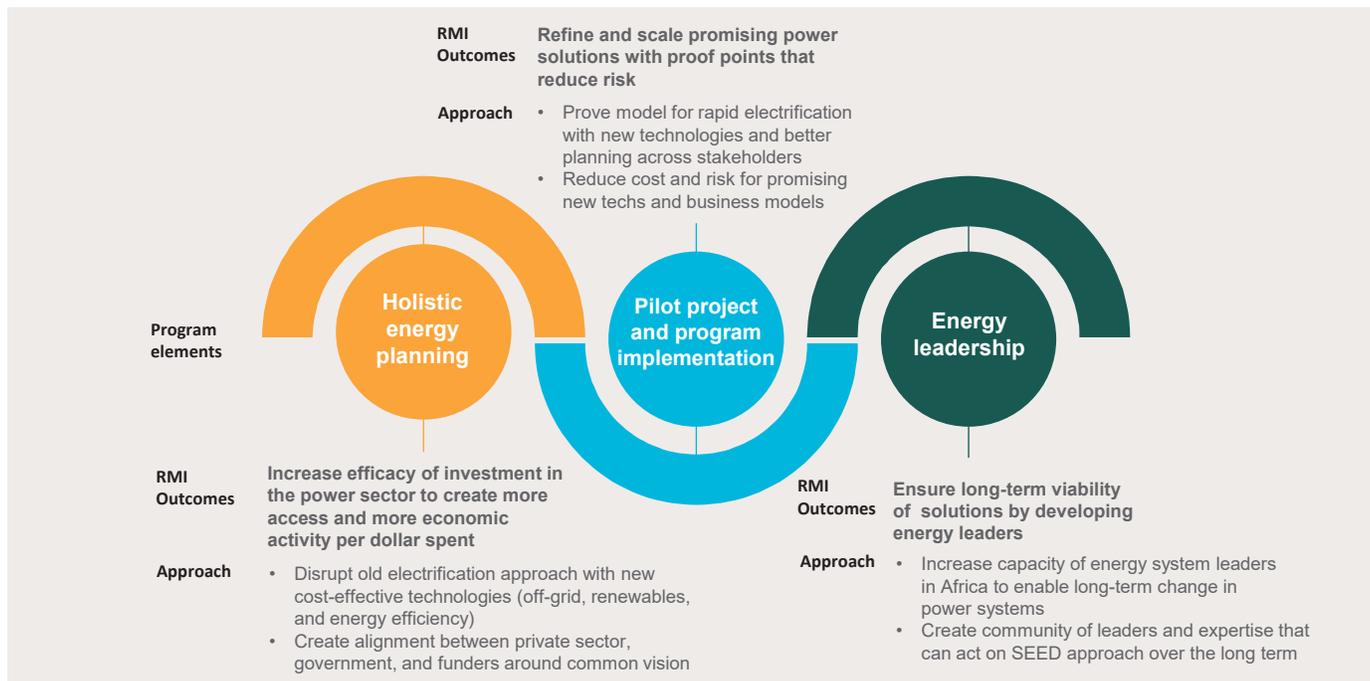
Today, more than 600 million people in sub-Saharan Africa lack access to reliable electricity. What's more, it is the only region in the world where population growth is outstripping growth in access, which means the percentage of people

in the region with access to electricity—and the benefits it brings—is set to decline.

CONTEXT

At Rocky Mountain Institute (RMI), we envision a world where investment in the energy sector enables human and economic development and focuses on innovative, data-driven, and timely solutions that are executed by leaders with the vision and drive to transform power systems in emerging economies. To achieve this vision, RMI's Sustainable Energy for Economic Development (SEED) program is working in sub-Saharan Africa to increase access to and the productive use of sustainable electricity. Our three-year goal is to transform the power sector in a select number of countries and demonstrate how a whole-system approach improves lives and accelerates economic development. Longer term impact includes reducing or avoiding CO₂ emissions whilst increasing resilience to a changing climate.

The SEED theory of change is built on three program elements that support RMI's vision:



- Holistic Energy Planning:** Electricity sector development has historically meant countries piecing together their systems using the solutions offered to them. We are shifting the paradigm by giving governments and partners information and support to create the electricity systems that will best help countries to drive human and economic development using the full range of on- and off-grid solutions.
- Project and Program Implementation:** To transition promising opportunities to full-scale solutions, we are creating projects to develop and test technical and business model innovations that reduce cost and accelerate growth, exploring community engagement and ownership models to amplify the benefits of electricity, and building financing and regulatory frameworks to enable long-term growth.
- Energy Leadership:** The SEED program provides leadership development opportunities through change labs, providing opportunity for fellowship and employment, and collaborating with key agencies in government and utilities.



About Rocky Mountain Institute

RMI—an independent nonprofit founded in 1982—transforms global energy use to create a clean, prosperous, and secure low-carbon future. It engages businesses, communities, institutions, and entrepreneurs to accelerate the adoption of market-based solutions that cost-effectively shift from fossil fuels to efficiency and renewables.

With current support from Virgin Unite, The Rockefeller Foundation, Good Energies Foundation, The Dutch Postcode Lottery, and The Global Environment Facility the SEED program operates in multiple countries including Uganda, Nigeria, Rwanda, and Ethiopia. The program seeks additional partners to support our work in the region and will consider engagement with additional geographies contingent on local energy sector alignment and commitment.

GET INVOLVED

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