

Key Findings of the Baseline Assessment report on qualification and certification frameworks and needs for the Pacific Community, East African Community and the Economic Community of West African State

Key Findings

The project “Structuring of an International Network of Solar Technology and Application Resource Centres” (STAR C) is a joint initiative resulting from the strategic partnership between the International Solar Alliance (ISA) and UNIDO, with funding support from the government of France.

In developing countries, particularly in the least developed countries (LDCs) and small island developing states (SIDS), the uptake of solar energy products and service markets face manifold supply-side and demand-side barriers related to quality infrastructure, qualification and certification, local entrepreneurship, and innovation along with other challenges, including conducive policies and access to low-cost finance. Moreover, there is no equal progress and harmonization between countries remains weak. This hinders the uptake of regional trade and value chains for sustainable energy products and services, even within the free trade area/regions. There is a need to connect these regions to international best practice of solar QI.

Within the framework of the project, a Baseline Assessment was conducted that serves as the foundation upon which the broader UNIDO and ISA initiative will be built. The overall objective of the assessment is to thoroughly evaluate these regions' existing landscape of solar skills, certification, and QF. This comprehensive assessment encompasses a multifaceted analysis, encompassing not only the examination of existing legislation and standards but also the assessment of regional capacities and needs. The Baseline Assessment explored the regulatory frameworks in place, examining how well they align with the dynamic needs of each region's evolving solar market.

The key findings of the Baseline Assessment report are:

- Pacific Community (SPC) has a strong regional framework but faces challenges in standardisation and collaboration among countries, whereas some leading countries in the East African Community (EAC) could serve as a basis for a stronger regional framework, and the ECOWAS Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (ECREEE) is taking a leading role as the regional organisation striving to harmonise national frameworks in the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). The challenge lies in achieving alignment of solar qualification frameworks, bridging the gap between the established regional frameworks and the existing national regulations, all while fostering synergies that harnesses the strengths of both frameworks.

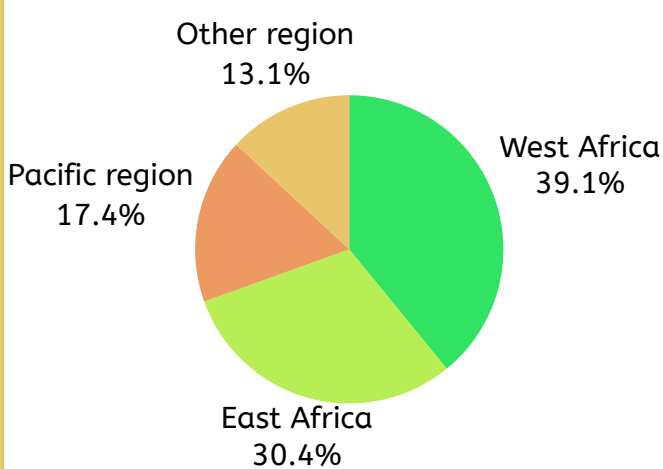
- In SPC region, key actions to reinforce training and capacity building on solar PV include upgrading the existing regional qualification framework by developing training courses to level 5 (diploma level) incorporating the SEI-API 4 skill set courses and training of trainers to deliver the qualification. There is also a need to develop a system for certifying the skills of solar PV installers and other sustainable energy professionals and to expand the training curricula to include solar thermal training.

- In EAC specific attention will be given to common accreditation and quality assurance of solar PV and solar thermal training curriculums at the higher education level through collaboration with the Inter-University Council for East Africa (IUCEA) based on the East African Qualifications Framework for Higher Education (EAQFHE), East African Community (EAC) Secretariat, East African Centre for Renewable Energy and Efficiency (EACREEE), and responsible Ministries in the EAC. Emphasis may also be placed on integrating EAC countries that are less advanced in their training frameworks.

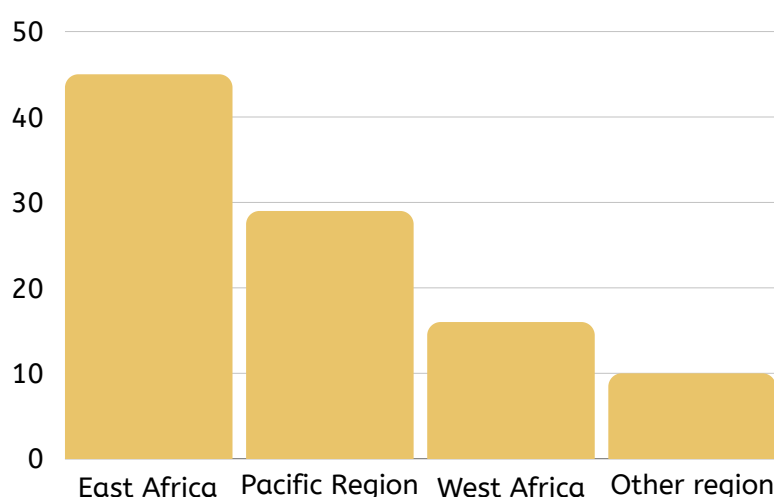
- ECOWAS is comparatively advanced in regional training and certification. ECREEE has established a scheme for certifying the skills of solar PV installers and other sustainable energy professionals: the Regional Certification Scheme for Sustainable Energy Skills programme. The scheme initially focuses on certifying installers of simple off-grid PV systems but will gradually cover installers of more complex off-grid and on-grid PV systems, as well as other renewable energy and energy efficiency professionals for the exams, and other training institutions organise the certification exams. Emphasis in this assignment will be given to improve training frameworks on PV further (e.g. on solar PV mini-grids), as well as solar thermal training, which is less advanced. Lastly, ECOWAS works closely with countries to ensure alignment of national systems with the regional system, which also makes it an essential priority.

Survey Result

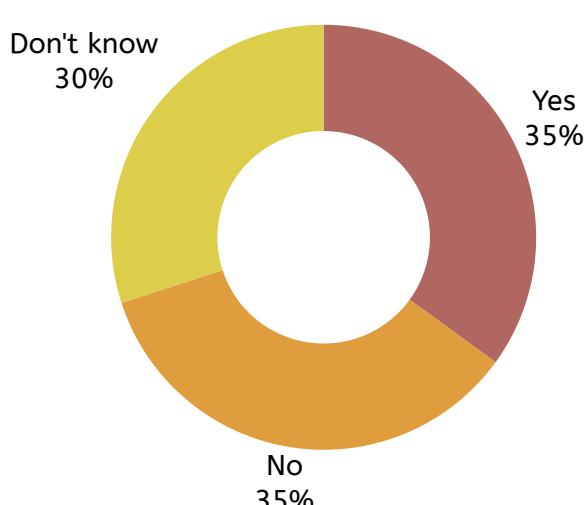
Respondents



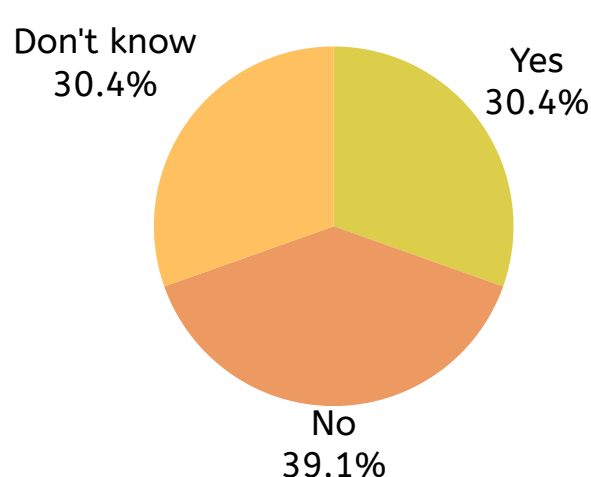
Awareness of Solar Workforce Certification and Training



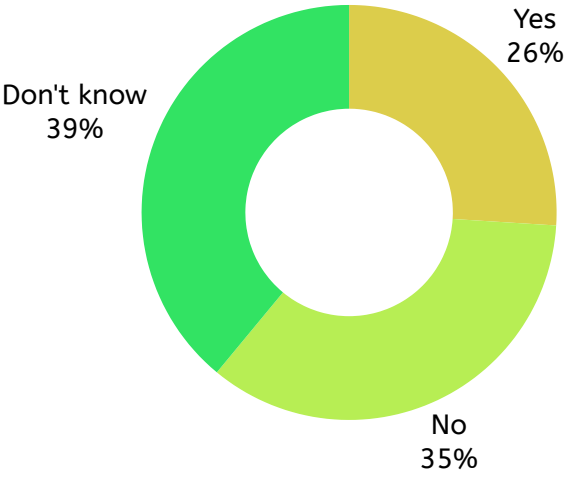
Regional awareness of Solar Workforce Certification requirements



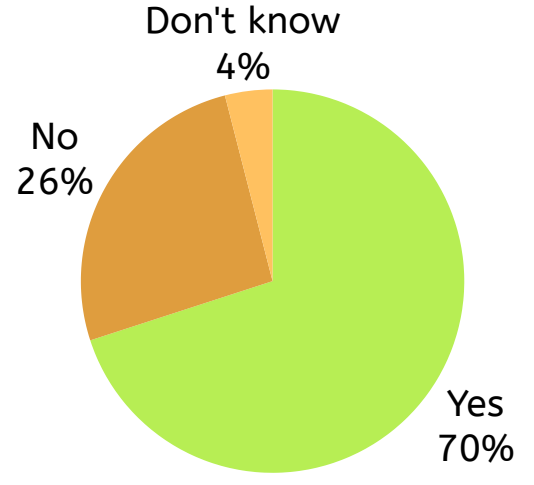
Collaborative Efforts in Developing Qualification Frameworks



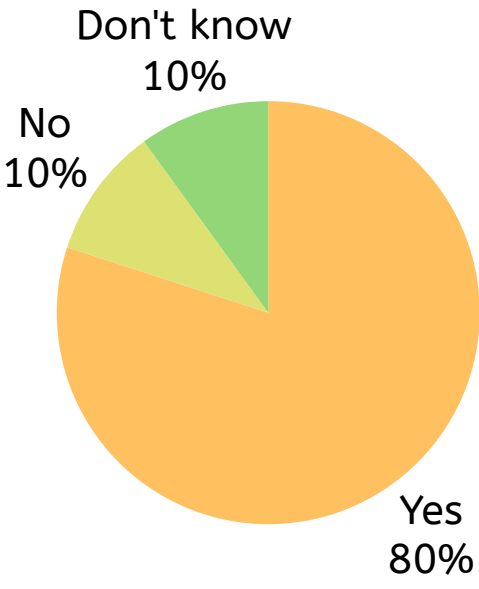
Presence of policies to specifically train and integrate women into the solar PV and solar thermal professions.



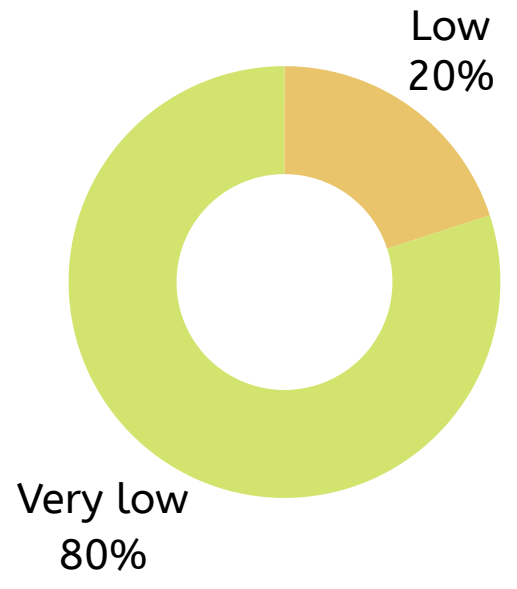
Awareness level on Solar Training Courses



Interest in Expanding Solar Thermal Topics in Future Training Courses



Inclusion of Solar Thermal Topics in Current Training Courses



Additional Training Topics Required

