Future of Energy Conference
2026

**Powering Africa's Industrial Transformation:**
Energy Systems for Value Addition and Competitiveness

# Action Points

Africa Centre for Energy Policy

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# Introduction

The Future of Energy Conference (FEC) is an annual platform that brings together stakeholders to advance an inclusive, sustainable and competitive energy future for Africa. It provides a strategic space to examine how Africa's energy systems can support economic transformation.

The 2026 edition was held from 25 to 26 August 2026 under the theme "Powering Africa's Industrial Transformation: Energy Systems for Value Addition and Competitiveness." It brought together policymakers, industry, financial institutions, development partners, civil society and researchers to examine how Africa can leverage its energy resources, mineral wealth, regional markets and emerging capabilities to support industrialisation, deepen value creation and strengthen long-term competitiveness.The following action points reflect the key priorities emerging from the Conference and identify areas where key stakeholders can advance implementation.

# Top-Level Takeaways from the Conference

1. **Africa must plan energy for production, not just access:** Energy access remains important, but industrial transformation requires electricity that is affordable, reliable, scalable and available where productive activity occurs. Energy-sector performance should therefore be judged increasingly by what the system enables economies to produce, process, manufacture and export.
2. **Energy policy and industrial policy can no longer operate separately:** Energy, minerals, industry, trade, finance, infrastructure and climate policy must be organised around common productive objectives. Countries should identify the industries and value chains they intend to develop and work backwards to determine the energy, infrastructure, technology, skills and financing required.
3. **Africa's resource advantage will matter more if it creates stronger productive linkages:** Resource development should not stop at extraction or focus only on downstream processing and manufacturing. It should also deepen backward linkages through local suppliers, services, engineering, logistics, skills and technology, so that more jobs, capabilities and economic value are created and retained within African economies.
4. **Regional integration must be leverage for competitiveness:** Not every country needs to build complete value chains domestically. Regional power pools, AfCFTA, infrastructure corridors and industrial ecosystems should be leveraged to enable countries specialise, connect upstream and downstream activities, share infrastructure and combine energy, minerals, skills, suppliers and markets at commercially viable scale.
5. **Africa's financing challenge is also a project structuring and risk allocation problem:** Beyond high capital costs, poor project preparation, weak offtakers and regulatory uncertainty continue to constrain investment. De-risking should address specific risks and allocate them to the parties best able to manage them, rather than shifting avoidable commercial risks to governments, taxpayers or consumers.
6. **Africa needs better data to price investment risk more accurately:** Stronger country- and project-level data can help distinguish genuine risks from perceived risks and reduce the tendency to apply a broad "Africa premium" to the cost of capital. Better evidence should support more accurate risk pricing, stronger negotiations and more proportionate guarantees and incentives.

# Top-Level Takeaways from the Conference

7. **Stronger state capacity can strengthen negotiating power:** Governments are better placed to negotiate with investors when they can independently model project economics, assess alternatives and demonstrate credible domestic financing options. Stronger state analytical capacity can therefore reduce overpayment and improve the terms on which capital is attracted.
8. **Industrial policy must invest in capabilities, not just infrastructure:** Africa needs deliberate investment in technical training, industry-aligned skills, research and development and engineering capability. These should be built into industrial policy so that countries can operate, adapt and improve technologies in line with real market and industrial demand.
9. **Local content and incentives must build competitive firms:** Local content should move beyond ownership and participation targets to productivity, quality and capability development. Incentives should address specific investment barriers, be time-bound and proportionate, and be linked to measurable outcomes such as skills, technology transfer, local procurement and value addition.
10. **Emissions data must inform decisions, not just reporting:** Countries should use credible emissions data to guide regulation, investment, risk assessment and mitigation, while also informing broader socio-economic and industrial choices. Measurement, Reporting and Verification (MRV) systems should therefore be designed around the decisions they need to support, not treated merely as compliance exercises.




# Recommended Actions

## A. Governments

1. **Plan energy around productive demand:** Align generation, transmission, distribution and infrastructure investment with industrial, mineral and value-addition priorities rather than planning mainly for aggregate consumption.
2. **Strengthen integrated industrial policy and capability development:** Align energy and industrial planning with trade, finance and skills development. Industrial strategies should also embed technical training, R&D, engineering capability and technology absorption.
3. **Improve project appraisal, risk assessment and negotiation capacity:** Build in-house capability to model project economics, assess investor risk claims and use country and project-level data to distinguish genuine risks from perceived risks.
4. **Make local content and incentives performance-based:** Link public support to clearly identified investment barriers and measurable outcomes such as productivity, skills, technology transfer, local procurement and value addition.
5. **Use emissions data as a policy and investment tool:** Strengthen MRV systems and ensure credible emissions data inform regulation, mitigation, investment decisions, risk assessment and wider industrial and socio-economic planning.

## B. Regional Economic Communities and Continental Institutions

1. **Accelerate regional power-market integration.** Strengthen power pools, cross-border transmission and electricity trading to improve reliability, affordability and resilience.
2. **Harmonise technical, regulatory and emissions standards.** Coordinate grid codes, interoperability requirements and product standards to reduce fragmentation and the cost of future integration.
3. **Develop regional industrial value chains.** Identify where countries can specialise across minerals, energy, processing, manufacturing and logistics rather than attempting to replicate complete value chains nationally.

4. **Develop shared regional infrastructure and financing platforms.** Pool demand and resources around industrial corridors, Special Economic Zones (SEZs), laboratories, transport systems, project preparation and regional
5. **Strengthen Africa's collective position in global trade and climate governance.** Coordinate engagement on MRV standards, supply-chain rules, climate finance and other international measures affecting African competitiveness.

## C. Private Sector

1. **Invest beyond extraction and asset deployment.** Structure projects to support supplier development, local procurement, manufacturing, technology absorption and higher-value productive activities.
2. **Improve project bankability and corporate readiness.** Improve feasibility studies, revenue models, ESG documentation, governance and operational systems to improve access to capital.
3. **Invest in skills, research and technology absorption.** Work with research and training institutions to develop industry-relevant skills, applied research and capabilities to adapt and improve technologies.
4. **Build scalable African businesses and regional partnerships.** Strengthen distribution, feedstock supply, after-sales systems and cross-border partnerships so viable innovations can move beyond pilot stage.
5. **Build stronger local supply chains and industrial partnerships.** Firms should deepen relationships with local suppliers, research institutions and other businesses to strengthen domestic capabilities, improve productivity and support participation in regional value chains.




## D. Financial Institutions and Investors

1. **Expand local-currency, patient and blended finance.** Develop products better aligned with African revenue structures, industrial investment cycles and emerging enterprises.
2. **Mobilise African institutional capital:** Create credible structures for pension funds, insurers, sovereign funds and other domestic investors to participate in strategic projects.
3. **Improve risk differentiation and allocation:** Assess risks at project and country level rather than applying generic African risk premiums, and ensure risks sit with the parties best able to manage them.
4. **Use concessional and DFI capital catalytically:** Focus public and concessional finance on early-stage or underserved areas without crowding out commercial capital.
5. **Finance scale, capability and productive outcomes:** Support viable firms beyond the pilot stage and combine finance with technical assistance, while assessing investments by the productive capacity, jobs and industrial capability they enable.

## E. CSOs, Research and Academic Institutions

1. **Strengthen independent analysis of risk, contracts and incentives:** Produce evidence on the cost of capital and scrutinise contracts, guarantees, subsidies and incentives to distinguish genuine risks from perceived risks and assess whether public support delivers value.
2. **Track implementation and development outcomes:** Monitor whether national and continental commitments translate into funded projects, improved energy performance, stronger productive linkages and measurable industrial outcomes.
3. **Build industry-linked research, training and technology partnerships.** Align curricula, applied research, skills development and technology development with actual industrial needs, working more closely with firms and policymakers.
4. **Support transparent and decision-oriented emissions governance:** Strengthen independent analysis and verification of emissions data while promoting access to credible information that can inform policy, investment and public oversight.
5. **Strengthen public participation and Africa's policy voice.** Support community participation, improve public understanding of complex policy issues and generate evidence that strengthens African positions in regional and international energy, trade and climate negotiations.

## E. Civil Society, NGOs, Academia and Research Institutions

1. Advocate for inclusive and transparent planning processes, ensuring that community voices, especially women, youth, and SMEs, are fully integrated in decision-making.
2. Drive public communication campaigns linking energy justice to affordability and fairness, while building public support for reforms.
3. Monitor and hold governments accountable on contract transparency, financing flows, and national oil company reforms.
4. Build and share evidence on why policy misalignment derails projects, providing accountability mechanisms and supporting consensus-building on difficult reforms such as subsidy removal and oil and gas futures.
5. Provide data-driven tools, such as energy indexes, forecasting models, and real-time monitoring systems, to guide effective planning and policymaking.
6. Strengthen research on the economic viability of renewables, storage, EV adoption, and local manufacturing value chains, embedding R&D into policy and industrial strategies.
7. Train the next generation of engineers, financiers, and policy experts, while championing grassroots innovation and community-driven solutions to anchor the transition in local economies.


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