

# Possible roles and functions of the coming International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA)

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# Overview

- Outline of a new international organisation for a new international priority
- What IRENA will do
- How IRENA will be structured
- IRENA in the context of other international organisations
- Pushing for IRENA – the art of timing

# Outline of a new international organisation for a new international priority

## **OUTLINE**

# The roadmap

- Final preparatory conference: Madrid, October 2008
  - Final negotiation of the treaty
- Founding conference: Bonn, January 2009
  - Official foundation, founding treaty open for signatures
  - Establishment of a Preparatory Commission
  - Pledges for financing of start-up phase
- Preparatory Commission meeting: early summer 2009
  - Decisions on the seat of IRENA's headquarters and the Director General
  - Start of activities of IRENA (start-up phase)
- First Assembly: 2010
  - Coming into force of the Founding Treaty (after ratification)
  - Formal decisions on seat and Director General
  - Decision on the first regular budget and associated work programme

# Outline of IRENA

- INTERNATIONAL RENEWABLE ENERGY AGENCY
- Members: open to UN members
- Regular budget: > 25 Million US\$
- Funding: mandatory contributions according to UN key + voluntary contributions
- Personnel: > 150
- Headquarters: to be defined, several countries interested
- Objective: to promote the widespread and increased adoption and the sustainable use of renewable energy

# IRENA - the story so far

- 1981: IRENA first suggested at a UN conference in Nairobi
- 2001: International conference hosted by EUROSOLAR collects ideas for an IRENA
- 2004: International Conference for Renewable Energies in Bonn discusses ideas for a specific organisation for renewables
- 2005: Coalition agreement for the German government: decision to push ahead with the establishment of an IRENA. Decision reaffirmed by a resolution of the German Bundestag in 2008
- 2006 onwards: consultations with governments on all continents
- 2008: April: International Preparatory Conference for the founding of IRENA in Berlin
  - Denmark and Spain support German efforts as “friends of the chair”
  - June: Workshop in Berlin. 100 delegates from 40 countries discuss draft statutes and initial work programme

# What IRENA will do

## **TASKS**

# IRENA's mission

- IRENA shall become a centre of excellence for renewable energy. It shall act as a facilitator and catalyst, providing experience for practical applications and policies
- IRENA shall offer support on all matters relating to renewable energy and help countries to benefit from the efficient development and transfer of knowledge and technology
- IRENA is not intended to take decisions on behalf of its member countries. The founding treaty does not contain obligations of the member states concerning their own policies.



# IRENA's tasks

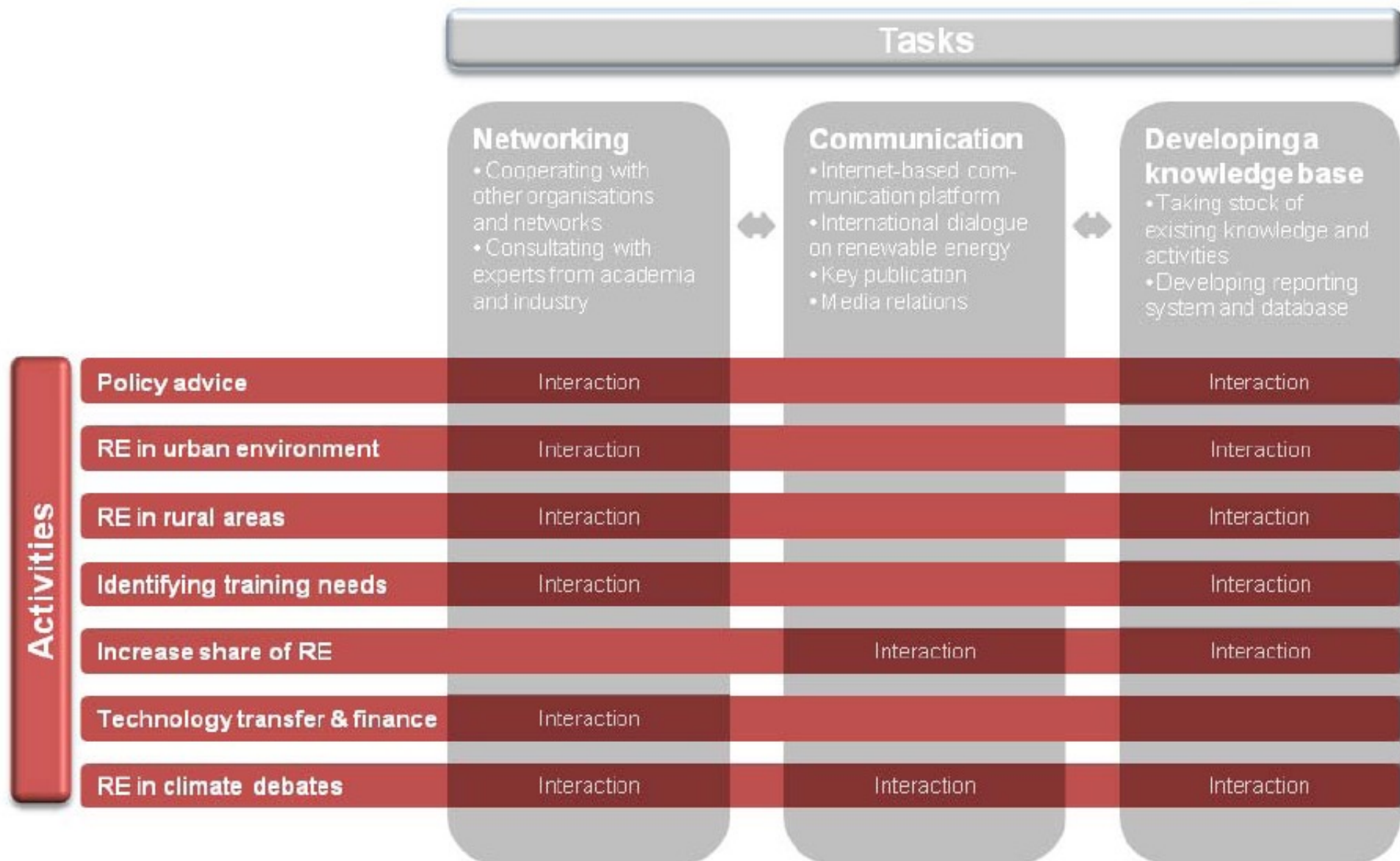
- review, systematise and monitor current renewable energy practices
- cooperate closely with other organisations and networks in this field
- provide relevant policy advice and assistance to its members
- improve pertinent knowledge and technology transfer
- offer capacity-building
- provide advice on the financing for renewable energy, support the application of related mechanisms
- stimulate and encourage research
- participate in and inform about the development of national and international standards
- disseminate information and increase public awareness

# IRENA's initial work programme (1): capacity building tasks

1. Developing a comprehensive knowledge base
  - Taking stock of existing knowledge and activities
  - Developing a reporting system and extensive database
2. Networking
  - Cooperating with other organisations, institutions and networks
  - Consulting with experts from academia and industry
3. Communication
  - Establishing an Internet-based communication platform
  - Strengthening international dialogue on renewable energy
  - Developing a key publication
  - Building media relations

# IRENA's initial work programme (2): initial activities

1. Advising national governments in developing an integrated approach to promoting renewable energy
2. Integrating renewable energy into the urban environment
3. Strengthening strategic cooperation in rural areas
4. Identifying training needs and opportunities for developing renewable energy
5. Increasing the share of renewable energy used in existing energy systems
6. Promoting technology transfer
7. Raising the profile of renewable energy in the energy and climate debate



# Principles used in constructing the initial work programme

- Show the ambition of IRENA
- Cover the main activities of IRENA
- Address the main bottlenecks in the spread of renewable energy
- Contribute to the internal capacity building of IRENA
- Promote networking and co-operation among members
- Connect the different organisations and actors involved in renewable energy

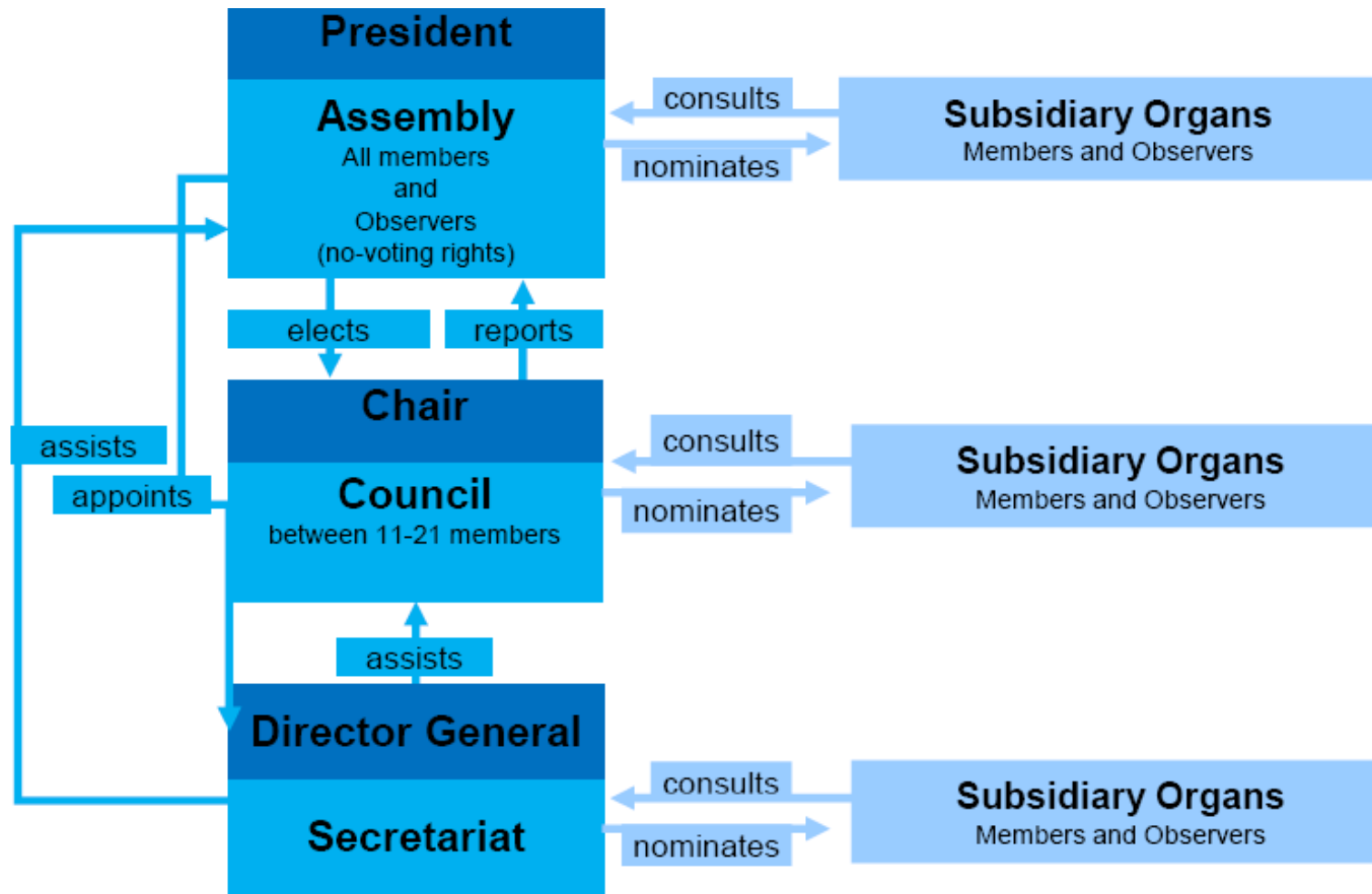
# How IRENA will be structured

## **STRUCTURE**

# Structural elements

- Membership open to all UN members and regional intergovernmental economic integration organisations with own energy policy competencies.
- There are original and additional members. One member one vote.
- Observers without voting rights
  - intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations
  - signatories that have not ratified the treaty
  - potential members with approved membership application
- Staff will be mainly concentrated in the headquarters
- Budget and staff may grow with increasing membership

# Institutional design



Source: IRENA 2008



# IRENA in the context of other international organisations

## **INTERNATIONAL ROLE**

# Existing international organisations concerned with energy

- IAEA International Atomic Energy Agency. Founded in 1957 for promoting the peaceful use of Atomic energy and enforcing the Non-Proliferation-Treaty. Staff 2300, budget 425 M \$.
- IEA International Energy Agency. Founded in 1973-74 during the oil crisis for ensuring security of energy supply. Limited to OECD countries. Staff 190, budget 136 M \$.
- EU EURATOM, CEC, European Energy Community. Limited to Europe
- UN Many UN structures are dealing with renewable energy (UNEP, UNDP, UNIDO, UN-ECE, UNESCO..) but none of it as main task.
- REEEP Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Partnership. Founded in 2002. Regional contacts on all continents. Staff <15.
- REN21 Renewable Energy Policy Network for the 21st Century. Founded in 2004. Staff <15.

# The challenge: to transform the energy system within 20 years

- Renewables are ready to cover the overwhelming part of energy supply by 2050 if decisions are being taken in the next years
- Photovoltaic CEOs (EPIA): PV reaches grid parity for 90% of EU consumption in 2020. Ready to sustain a 40% yearly increase in PV installations → 12% of EU electricity in 2020.
- After help with FiTs, wind power market is taking off globally
- Maintaining most efficiently strong global growth of renewables is a difficult task – see the crash of the PV market in Spain
- Established structures and interest groups tend to avoid change

# Need to accelerate a collective global learning process

- Developing and introducing new products, new markets, new regulations, new skills, new system configurations requires a huge learning process involving a large variety of actors
- Enhancing global experience exchange can make a big difference
- Existing international energy organisations are learning too slowly (IEA) or are too weak (REEEP, REN21) for tackling this challenge
- There is a need for a new strong global cooperation agency standing for this new international priority

# IRENA to develop a division of labour with other international organisations

- Main international resource organisation for renewable energy providing support to other international organisations
- No own financing scheme
- No own permanent field presence in member countries
- Co-operation with other international organisations is an important element of IRENA's model of functioning
- Relation to IEA : division of labour to be developed, different perspective, some overlaps inevitable, cooperation essential
- IRENA is a governmental organisation, no multi-stakeholder network like REEEP

# Pushing for IRENA – the art of timing

## **DIPLOMACY**

# IRENA comes at the right moment

- Thanks to the success of feed-in-tariffs in boosting markets and innovation, the potential of renewables is becoming evident
- Rising oil prices raise the pressure for modifying established energy systems
- The threats of climate change caused by fossil fuel cannot be denied anymore
- Major industrialised countries are reconsidering their hesitating policy concerning renewables

# How strong will IRENA be?

- Strong support from developing countries
- Big potential contributors have not yet taken a final decision
- Hesitations in OECD countries: established IEA-linked networks in the administrations not yet convinced
- Under discussion: Funding, relations to other international organisations, headquarters
- Germany with core group determined to found IRENA  
→ others do not want to stay aside
- Open question: how strong will IRENA be?



# Use the momentum seeking a broad international alliance

- Germany has a critical role in this process
  - with considerable public support success in boosting renewable energy markets and innovation
  - good reputation concerning renewable energy technology and policies, driving force in climate policy
  - strong own renewable energy industry sector looking for export opportunities
  - It has credibility in taking the lead to push IRENA
  - It must pay attention to strongly involve other countries in the whole process
- IRENA can help to balance the dynamics of a new industrial revolution
- A broad support for IRENA can guarantee broad ownership of a co-operative learning approach

# IRENA – an occasion for a less defensive approach in energy and climate diplomacy

- International climate policy is dominated by the concept of “burden sharing” → defensive and time consuming negotiations
- Renewable energy is not a burden but a huge opportunity at local, regional, national and international levels
- Co-operating for renewable energy development is not a zero-sum-game
- The problems: how to manage the transition, how to organise rapid learning and experience exchange, how to transform the role of traditional centralised structures
- IRENA stands for a constructive, cooperative approach in tackling the climate issue

# THANK YOU

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