

ELECTRICITY CONSUMERS' COMMITTEE MANUAL

How did the Electricity Supply Industry Structure Come into Place?

The Electricity Act 1999 (Cap 145) is an Act of the Parliament of Uganda enacted in 1999 to govern the electricity sector operations in Uganda. Under this law the previously vertically integrated Uganda Electricity Board (UEB) was unbundled into generation, transmission and distribution segments. This same law introduced multiple operators in the generation and distribution segments effectively introducing competition in the sector. To oversee the sector and the implied competitive arrangements the law provided for a regulator; the Electricity Regulatory Authority (ERA).

What is Electricity Regulatory Authority?

The Electricity Regulatory Authority (ERA) is a statutory body established in accordance with The Electricity Act 1999 (CAP 145). The Act empowers ERA to regulate the generation, transmission, sale export, import and distribution of electrical energy in Uganda. The Electricity Regulatory Authority has the following mandate:

Licensing Operators: Licensing operators and owners of generation, transmission, distribution, sale, export, and import of electricity businesses.

Sector Performance: Develop/Establish and Enforce Sector Performance Standards i.e. financial, technical, and commercial to ensure quality and safety of electrical power to consumers.

Tariff Structure: Establish the Electricity Tariff Structure and regularly ensures that it is appropriate for computation of end-user tariffs and electricity pricing.

Approval of Tariffs: Consider and if appropriate approve Tariff Applications by electricity companies.

Supervisory Role: Regulatory supervision of all licensed companies and businesses to ensure they comply with terms of licenses issued to them by ERA.

Advisory Role: Advise the Energy Minister regarding the need for electricity sector projects.

Stakeholder Consultation: Safeguarding all stakeholders' often competing interests which requires regular and wide consultation with various stakeholders.

What are Electricity consumers committees?

The Electricity Regulatory Authority opted to enhance further its stakeholder consultation and involvement through establishment of community based Electricity Consumer Committees (ECCs). To a big extent Electricity Consumer Committees can be the voice of electricity consumers. ECCs have been established in the utility sectors of several other countries e.g. United Kingdom, Zambia and South Africa. In Uganda, these are being rolled out gradually to cover the whole country.

Electricity Consumer Committees (ECCs); created to promote citizen participation in Uganda in regulatory matters are groups of residents who live or work in residential and industrial zones where the ECCs are established and are recruited and deployed by ERA in effort to improve electricity service delivery and reinvigorate compliance enforcement. Driven largely by voluntarism, these members of the community hold the potential to advance a grass roots-driven "community electricity policing" strategy in the Ugandan society where electricity theft and equipment vandalism are a problem. Early experience with pilot ECCs has offered ERA an important empirical opportunity of witnessing the effectiveness of participatory strategies for public participation in some of the utility regulatory functions.

Why ECCs?

ECCs came on board following the need for ERA to effectively and efficiently carry out its **sector standards performance, enforcement and stakeholder consultation roles**. They facilitate the following:

- ERA strategy to raise consumer knowledge about sector issues and consumers' obligations as well as rights. They are a channel of communication with the electricity consumers.
- Through ECCs, the Regulator is able to receive feedback directly from consumers to inform its licensee monitoring mandate.
- Harmonizing of working relations between the electricity companies and their consumers.
- Promote stakeholder participation and involvement – improve multi-sectoral collaboration and coordination.

ECCs guiding principles:-

- Putting the consumer first.
- Being open and accessible.
- Providing an independent consumer voice.

Who is legible for being an ECCs member?

Eligible persons for membership to ECCs must be:

- Citizens or official residents of Uganda.
- Legal consumers of Electricity (registered with an electricity distributor such as Umeme)
- Willing to work on voluntary basis (on part time basis)
- Local residents or nominees of a formal business, NGO, Industry organization or Local administration in the specified area where the ECC is established.
- Literate and can speak and write English.
- Interested in community service
- Have no criminal record
- Willing to undergo training in the operations of ECCs, and the electricity sector in general.
- Understand the language of the local residents in that particular area.

Knowledgeable in current electricity supply industry issues
Aged 24 years and above.

Who are the representatives on ECC?

Electricity Consumers Committee consists of local community members under the following composition;

- A Chairperson (Chosen by and from the members themselves).
- Four representatives of domestic electricity consumers (in the relevant ECC locality).
- A representative of large industry representative organizations e.g. Uganda Manufacturers Association (UMA) domicile in the relevant ECC area.
- A representative of small scale industry organizations e.g. Uganda Small Scale Industries Association (USSIA) in the relevant ECC area.
- A Uganda National Chamber of Commerce and Industry (UNCCI) representative from the relevant area.
- A representative of an active NGO nominated by local administration of the area.
- A representative from the Private Sector Foundation in the relevant ECC area.
- A representative from the Local Government Structure in the relevant ECC area.

ERA appoints these individuals either through direct recommendations from representative organizations or, in the case of the domestic consumer representative positions, through a public advertisement calling for expressions of interest. All members of an ECC sign on a Memorandum of Understanding – MOU (see Annex 1) which defines the roles of the ECC and the relationship with ERA for a period of three years.

How ECCs work?

(i) Community Activism

ECC members are strongly encouraged to regularly interact with the community or membership of organization they represent on the ECC through door-to-door interactions or formal meetings.

The members of new ECCs always undergo a day's formal training by a joint team of Era and the relevant utility at inception, which is followed by regular training on key issues in the electricity sector.

As channels of information flow they are equipped with fliers, brochures and other publications of Era and some utilities for distribution to the communities they interact with to increase and enhance public knowledge of the sector issues.

They are encouraged to pick as much information as possible on the perceived service delivery by the utilities from the community and pass the same to ERA and or the concerned utility at ERA convened meetings.

(ii) Persistent Complaints Handling

ECCs members have proved a useful tool in getting unresolved electricity consumer complaints communicated to the utility (Umeme Ltd) for a hearing and often solution. Unresolved complaints are summarized on an ERA supplied format (Annex 2) in order to forward them to the concerned parties in a standardized manner.

To do this effectively ERA has developed and published a Consumer Complaints Manual and guided the ECCs members to familiarize themselves with it so as to guide those with outstanding complaints to raise them properly initially with their electricity suppliers and subsequently through ERA if they remain unresolved. ECCs members are actively involved in the gathering of consumers' complaints which are compiled in one report, presented to ERA, forwarded to Umeme for a resolution and then a meeting is held to discuss the resolutions upon which ECC members are tasked to take feedback to complainants/consumers. This has helped bridge the gap between electricity consumers and the service providers and is also creating a positive public image of electricity service providers. The complaints gathered on a monthly basis follow through the stages below:

- Electricity consumers register complaints with ECC members on the ERA complaint form.
- Complaints gathered by all members are compiled in one lot/report.
- Compiled complaint report is presented to ERA.
- ERA forwards the complaint report to the service providers in

this case Umeme

- Umeme makes a thorough follow through of each complaint to a resolution.
- Umeme forwards back the resolved complaint report to ERA.
- ERA calls for a meeting attended by ECC members, Umeme and ERA representatives.
- And finally each ECC member required to take feedback of Umeme solutions to the electricity complainants (consumers).

(iii) Mandatory Meetings with ERA (and Utilities)

Each ECC is required to hold a monthly meeting in a convenient location in their area of jurisdiction to consolidate the month's general findings into a report for the ERA Customer Care Assistant and where necessary also receive information from Era for electricity consumers in their jurisdiction.

These meetings are used to also consolidate the unresolved complaints that must be forwarded to the regulator.

Each quarter the Chairpersons and Secretaries of the various ECCs meet together with senior ERA officials and those of the Utilities in a more central location to consider and exchange information on emerging concerns of consumers of the electricity sector services. It is an opportunity for specialized leadership skills transfer and general education to the ECCs team leaders.

What are the achievements of ECCs since inauguration?

The first ECC in Uganda was established in Kampala Central Division of Kampala on 8th August, 2007 followed by others established in Nakawa and Makindye Divisions of Kampala City, Walukuba/Masese in Jinja Municipality and two more in the Municipalities of Mbale and Masaka.

Achievements thus far

The Electricity Consumers Committees in Makindye Division, Kampala Central, Nakawa Division, Walukuba/Masese Division in Jinja, Mbale and Masaka Municipalities have been a commendable success though not without challenges.

To a notable extent ECCs have helped to positively rebuild the public reputation/image of the service provider in areas where they exist.

- The ECCs have sensitized the public about the unbundling of UEB into the different companies i.e. Generation, Transmission and Distribution companies and have also brought to light the existence of Electricity Regulatory Authority in the electricity sector to the public. Sections of the public that ECCs has interfaced with are now aware of the role of the Regulator and other associated actors in the electricity sector.
- There is a notable improvement in quality of service delivered to consumers because of direct provision of complaints from consumers to ERA which ERA communicates to the concerned licensees.
- ECCs have helped reduce energy losses by sensitizing consumers on efficient power usage.

Reading materials of such information/issues are freely distributed to consumers in ECCs outreach.

- They have sensitized consumers on the ERA recommended complaints procedures for quick resolutions and this has helped in the reduction of long outstanding complaints from consumers.
- The ECCs have tried to inform communities on the electricity consumers' obligations and rights. Many assumptions have been put right through proper information.
- Through information sharing during monthly meetings between UMEME, ERA and ECCs, UMEME has improved on their

customer care and improved on their response towards complaints brought to their attention.

- ECCs have played a significant role in exposing power theft and vandalism of electricity installations to curb energy losses in the electricity sector and have also sensitized the public about the dangers of power theft and its consequences.
- ECCs have proved to be a reliable feedback mechanism for ERA on public perceptions of the electricity service providers which feedback has helped service providers improve on their services/customer management.
- The success above notwithstanding, challenges such as high levels of power theft, vandalism of electricity wires and siphoning of transformer oil, existence of many 'Kamyufus' (illegal wiremen) and impersonators, corruption, bribery & connivance are huddles yet to be overcome.



ERA CEO DR. Sebbowa exchanging the MOU with the newly formed Mbale ECC chairman Mr. Gizamba Fredrick.



Mbale ECC members pause for a picture with ERA CEO (Centre) after signing the MOU.

Appendix 1 - MOU



MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

BETWEEN
ELECTRICITY REGULATORY AUTHORITY

And

.....

ELECTRICITY CONSUMERS' COMMITTEE

THIS **MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING ('MOU')** is made this
..... day of.....Two
Thousand and Nine (2009).

BETWEEN

Electricity Regulatory Authority (ERA) – (herein referred to as the Regulator); a body corporate established in 2000 in accordance with the Electricity Act 1999 (Cap 145 Laws of Uganda) of Plot 15, Shimoni Road - Nakasero, of the first part
AND

..... **Electricity Consumers Committee** comprised and represented by the persons named in the schedule (hereinafter referred to as the '**ECC**') of the second part, the list of members is as indicated on Pg8.

WHEREAS

1. The Regulator is desirous of setting up Electricity Consumer Committees herein after referred to as ECCs.
2. The ECCs shall provide at no cost the services herein below mentioned to the community at large and to the Regulator individually and collectively
3. The parties have agreed to enter into this MOU on the terms and conditions enumerated hereunder

IT IS HEREBY AGREED as follows:-

i) Objective of the ECC

The objective of the ECC will be to represent consumer interests to the Utility Companies providing electricity ('the service providers') as provided under the Electricity Act 1999 (Cap 145 Laws of Uganda) for improved service delivery as well as providing information to consumers on service delivery. ECCs are an intervention expected to raise knowledge about sector issues to consumers – a channel of communication with the grass roots.

- i) The ECC shall
- i. Present unresolved customer complaints to the electricity

- service providers and seek resolution of the said complaints.
- ii. Generally represent the interests of electricity customers.
- iii. Provide objective feedback directly to the Regulator on consumer concerns and relevant issues in the electricity sector in order to inform their licensee monitoring role.
- iv. Promote stakeholder participation and involvement – improve multi-sectoral collaboration and coordination.
- v. Facilitate joint working relations between the electricity Companies, ECCs, and consumers.

2. Membership and status of ECC

- i. Membership to the ECC shall be voluntary and shall not attract any remuneration for the services rendered and members of the ECC shall not represent themselves as employees or agents of the Regulator.
- ii. The ECC will consist of not more than 11 members and will identify a place where the members will meet customers on a given number of days in a month to transact the ECC roles and functions.

3. Roles and Responsibilities of ECC

The ECC shall:-

- i) Sensitize the electricity consumers on the roles and responsibilities of the ECC.
- ii) Facilitate exchange of communication between electricity consumers and electricity service providers.
- ii) Sensitize electricity consumers on the roles and functions of the Regulator.
- iii) Promote awareness on the procedure for resolution of disputes between the electricity consumers and electricity service providers.
- iv) Constantly provide information to ERA regarding electricity consumers' concerns.
- v) Constantly update electricity consumers on progress of resolution of their respective complaints.
- vi) Sensitize electricity consumers on their rights and obligations.
- vii) Promote awareness among electricity consumers on the current

- trends evolving in the electricity sector.
- viii) Submit to ERA monthly reports of electricity consumers' complaints that have been addressed to the electricity service provider in writing.
 - x) Carry out other functions related to consumer matters as may be agreed between the ECC and the Regulator.
 - xi) Account for funds which may be contributed to / advanced to / or appropriated to or given to the ECC members by the Regulator or by any donors.

4. Press statements

The ECC shall not whatsoever issue any press statements in respect of any matter in the electricity sector.

5. The Roles and Responsibilities of the Regulator

The Regulator shall undertake to support the ECC through:

- a. Provision of the standard forms in Annex 1 for reporting purposes
- b. Provision of limited financial support for programmes approved by the Regulator
- c. Provision of publicity and awareness campaign materials in the form of posters, brochures and such other form as may be agreed with the ECC
- d. Provision of training on the roles and functions of the ECC and various aspects of consumer representation, as needs are identified.
- e. To train and equip the ECC members with the necessary information and data about the Electricity sector.

6. Duration

This MOU shall be in effect for a period of 2 years from the date of its signing and may be renewed for a further term by mutual agreement.

7. Termination

- a. This MOU may be terminated by either party by giving fourteen (14) days notice in writing.
- b. Members to the ECC shall be terminated where the nominating company/organisation withdraws membership of a member(s).
- c. **Any member to the ECC who fails to participate in monthly meetings for two consecutive months without valid explanation shall also be terminated after receiving a 14-day Notice in writing.**

8. Reappointment

Electricity Regulatory Authority may after the expiry of this MoU reappoint the respective ECC members.

9. Modification

No change or modification of this MoU shall be made except by prior written agreement between the Regulator and the ECC

10. No Agency

Nothing in this MOU shall be construed as constituting the ECC as an agent of the Regulator and the ECC shall have no power to act on behalf of or to bind the Regulator by its actions.



Mbale ECC members carrying out radio sensitization on power thefts.



Makindye ECC members pose for a picture after the launch at ERA House in Feb 2009

Signed as member of Electricity Consumer Committee

Names and signatures of ECC Members:-

	Name	Address/Contact	Organisation/Area Represented	Signature
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				
11				

Signed for and on behalf of Electricity Regulatory Authority (ERA)

Signed:

Name: **Eng. Dr. F B Sebbowa**

Designation: **Chief Executive Officer, Electricity Regulatory Authority (ERA)**

Witnessed by:

Signed:

Name: **J.S.D Kwesigabo**

Designation: **Secretary / General Counsel, ERA**

Appendix 2 – Complaint Lodgment Form

 Complaint Lodgment Form		Residence:
Your details:		Complaint No.
Full name	Address:	
Organization:	Phone number	
Complaint Details		
ERA complaint classification:(please tick)		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Billing • Disconnection • Payment arrangement • Deposits • Charges • Other (specify) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Metering • New service connections • Damaged equipment • Service interruption • Customer service • Corruption charges 	
Product of Service:		
Nature of the Complaint:		
Utility company staff approached:		Date
Complainant's signature		Date:
For official use:		Chairperson Signature:
Date complaint received by ERA:	Date: --/--/ 09	
Complaint resolution date:	Date: --/--/ 09.	

Forwarded to ERA as resolved / unresolved on date:.....

Annex 3 - Members of the current ECCs as at December 2009

Kampala Central Division			
No.	Name	Organization/Entity Represented.	Contact
1.	Moses Kyayiise	UMA (Chairman)	0772 410 326
2.	Sarah Awelo	Domestic (Secretary)	0712 631 205
3.	Resty Kaddu Lwanga	PSFu	0772 605431
4.	Deo Nsubuga	USSIA	0772 422 459
5.	Hosea K. Sewanyana	UNCCI	0752 806 467
6.	Madau Dennis	Domestic	0774 185 445
7.	Asingwire Monica	Domestic	0779 269 455
8.	Andinda Andrew Albert	Domestic	0752 848 631
9.	Mbarushimana Stephen	Domestic	0772 831 951
10.	Lawrence Ntume	KACITA	0782 201187
Nakawa Division, Kampala			
1.	Dawood Kawadwa	UNCCI (Chairman)	0751 869 306
2.	Edward Kigozi	Local Gov't (Secretary)	0712 167 513 / 0779 919 207
3.	Harriet Nansukusa	PSFu	0772 471 852
4.	Vincent Kirumira	USSIA	0772 474 631
5.	George Williams Kiyingi	Active NGO	0772 447 503
6.	Linos Ngompek	Domestic	0712 433 816
7.	Ben Bwire Namwenge	Domestic	0752 412 803
8.	Arthur Karemire	Domestic	0712 871 111
9.	Awule Jackson	KACITA	0772 388 016
Walukuba/Masese Division, Jinja			
1.	Daniel Masaba	Domestic (Chairman)	0782 168 699
2.	Margaret Kyemba	PSFu (Secretary)	0774 202 987
3.	Fred Kyangwa	Local gov't	0712 427 278
4.	Patrick Kayemba	Active NGO	0772 469 156
5.	Difasi Tidhiryala	USSIA	0751 843 499
6.	Joel Kafuko	UNCCI	0752 628 971
7.	John Kalamu	UMA	0771 651 820
8.	Silver Eyoku	Domestic	0753 072 405
9.	William Isiika	Domestic	0772 643 178
10.	Robert Owinyi	Domestic	0774 436 699

Makindye Division, Kampala			
1.	Edward Kingongo	UMA (Chairman)	0772 401 962
2.	James Olaya	Domestic (Secretary)	0712 837 179
3.	Hajji Magatto Matovu	Katwe Area	0752 640 011
4.	Patrick Makanga Sendisa	Local gov't	0772 436 644
5.	Mr. David Muwonge Salongo	UNCCI	0752 651 265
6.	Kephar Kuchana Kateu	PSFu	0772 502 316
7.	Agnes Kimbugwe	Active NGO	0772 587 516
8.	Mohammed Katongole	USSIA	0712 800 537
9.	George Kachope	Domestic	0772 437 786
10.	Rogers Serunjogi	Domestic	0772 623 879
11.	Thomas Kalenge	Domestic	0752 495 656
Mbale Municipality			
1.	Fredrick Gizamba	Domestic (chairman)	0772 664 871
2.	Muhammed Tongi	UMA	0772664 871
3.	Jude Mungoma	USSIA	07682 881418
4.	Edith Wakumire	Active NGO	0751 523 387
5.	Deogracious Akolimo	Local Government	0772 620 910
6.	Patrick Makweta	UNCCI	0772 449 379
7.	Samuel Tibita	Hoteliers (Secretary)	0782 / 702 356 127
8.	Wangokho Stanely	Domestic	0772 525 998
9.	Zephania Musalwa	Domestic	0776 966 994
10.	Geofrey Wamoyo	Domestic	0782 408 093
Masaka Municipality			
1.	Mwesigwa Ausi Kanyonyi	UNCCI (Chairman)	0772 442 393
2.	Joseph Senzoga	Domestic (V.Chairman)	0772 420 406
3.	Badru Mayanja	Local Gov't (Secretary)	0772 443 145
4.	Irene Apio	Hoteliers (Assistant Secretary)	0784 068 641
5.	Abraham Lincon Tsubira	USSIA	0772 451 099
6.	Dickson Matovu Nsamba	UMA	0772 654 544
7.	Rev. Fr. Senkayi Peter	Active NGO	0772 415 233
8.	Juma Kintu Zabasajja	PSFu	0755 769 685
9.	Moses Matovu Nkulumbi	Domestic	0782 609 154
10.	Muhammed Kintu	Domestic	0752 / 0776 596 217
11.	Ronald Senyonjo	Domestic	0754 / 776 461 889
12.	Denis Luswata	Domestic	0775 491 396

ECC Expected service standards & Complaints Procedures

ERA expects utility service providers in the industry to continuously improve internal dispute resolution mechanisms to lessen the number of disputes that are referred outside of service providers. Moreover, we also believe that service providers (electricity companies) and consumers know each-others concerns better than external parties. A consumer has a right to complain about problems he/she is experiencing with their Electricity Services. Moreover, they are entitled to prompt solutions.

- In light of the above, ECCs stand in between the service providers and the consumers, to ensure that people's electricity supply related challenges are brought to the attention of the service provider while keeping ERA in the loop.
- As defined in the roles of ECCs, ERA expect ECCs to handle previously unresolved complaints from consumers on the quality of service being provided and other related issues.
- The first stop point for electricity related challenges is a customers local electricity office. Complaints are picked up by ECCs only if attempts to get the distributors attention have failed.
- ECC members are expected to put in their full commitment and interest while serving electricity consumers knowing its a purely voluntary role without any pay.
- Every member's commitment will be reflected in their filling of un-resolved electricity complaints among the groups he/she represent and beyond. Members are expected to regularly file in complaints from the field with the chairman or sectary for on-ward forwarding to ERA who look thru them and bring them to the attention of Umeme Ltd or the distributor.
- A monthly meeting is scheduled where ECCs sit with Umeme Ltd and ERA to get responses from the issues raised in the ECC report. Every ECC member is required to attend meetings regularly, but should they be un-able, they are expected to notify the chairman.
- A small facilitation/stipend is given out to members on every production of a report to facilitate their movements, communication and meals while on ERA work. Please note that this is neither a salary nor a wage, but a facilitation to enable you do the voluntary work.
- Should a member feel that have done enough, have gotten

more commitments, or have moved to a challenging location, or are just bored and therefore need to opt out of the work, you have the right and obligation to inform the chairman who will inform ERA of your decision.



Jinja ECC members.



Masaka ECC members listen to Eng. Norbert Semitala of ERA discuss the components of the Electricity Tariff.



Members of the Mbale ECC pose for a picture after their orientation training.



Masaka ECC on orientation day.

NOTES

