Toward universal electrification in Ghana

In 1989, the government of Ghana set in motion an electrification plan that aims to provide universal access to electricity within a 30-year period, from 1990 to 2020. About 25 years down the line, Ghana seems to be inching closer toward universal electrification. However, a number of challenges remain. As is the case in many other countries, urban communities have greater access to the national electricity grid than rural communities. Also, electricity generation in the country has not matched demand. This has resulted in load shedding/powers rationing that has become the bane of the power sector in Ghana, negatively impacting all sectors of the economy and leading to economic losses. The low generation capacity is partly due to poor fuel supply to existing thermal power plants, meaning that installed capacity is often not available for use. This is coupled with low investment in transmission and distribution systems’ infrastructure.

Going forward, the government of Ghana would have to explore alternative ways of obtaining fuel, such as regasification, to solve the chronic issue of poor fuel supply for electricity generation. Distributed generation systems, using community mini-grid and off-grid systems are other alternatives that could be explored within the framework of the access agenda in order to reach the unserved poor located in remote rural communities.