

Reliable electricity is sustained collectively

Over the years, Uganda has made significant investments in the power sector through capital expenditure (Capex), financing the construction of power plants, expansion of transmission networks, and upgrading of distribution systems. These investments have strengthened the grid, reduced outages, and improved voltage stability across many parts of the country.

However, infrastructure alone does not guarantee reliable supply. Behind the scenes, utilities incur continuous operational expenditure (Opex) to maintain the system repairing faults, replacing ageing equipment, and ensuring that electricity flows smoothly every day. Without adequate resources for these ongoing operations, even the most advanced infrastructure can fail to deliver consistent service.

Modern systems such as automated fault detection, remote monitoring, and smart grid solutions are helping utilities detect and respond to outages faster than ever before. But reliability is not determined by technical factors alone. Electricity networks are highly interconnected; a single act such as vandalising a transformer, tampering with a meter, or making an illegal connection can disrupt supply.

Reliable electricity supply is sustained by a network of actors, each playing a distinct but interconnected role.

The regulator, particularly the Electricity Regulatory Authority (ERA), plays a su-

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pervisory and oversight role. ERA develops and enforces technical and service quality standards, approves tariffs, licenses sector players, and ensures that utilities operate efficiently, fairly, and in the public interest. It does not operate the infrastructure but ensures accountability and compliance across the sector.

Utilities, on the other hand, are responsible for the actual delivery of electricity services. Generation companies produce power, transmission companies transport it across high-voltage networks, and distribution companies deliver it to end users. They are directly responsible for infrastructure development, maintenance, fault response, and day-to-day system operations that keep electricity flowing reliably. The private sector and financiers support the system by providing critical investment and innovative technologies that enhance efficiency, expand capacity, and modernise the grid.

Finally, communities and electricity users play an essential role in safeguarding infrastructure, using electricity responsibly, and reporting faults. Their actions directly impact system stability and reliability at the grassroots level. This is where public responsibility becomes essential.

Beyond institutions, the public plays a direct and influential role in ensuring reliable electricity supply. Protecting infrastructure by avoiding vandalism, meter tampering, and unsafe connections helps prevent unnecessary disruptions. Responsible electricity use guided by safety practices at home, in schools, and in workplaces reduces risks and supports system stability.

Prompt reporting of faults such as outages, damaged poles, or unusual power fluctuations enables faster response and restoration. In addition, timely bill payment supports the financial sustainability required for maintenance and network upgrades. Rejecting illegal connections is equally critical, as such practices strain the system and compromise reliability for entire communities.

A stable power supply attracts investment, creates jobs, and strengthens economic productivity. When all stakeholders—from institutions to individual consumers act responsibly, the electricity system becomes more resilient, efficient, and capable of meeting Uganda's growing energy needs.

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