

GFSE Newsletter

Dear Friends of GFSE,

We are pleased to send you our May 2025 edition of the GFSE newsletter, which contains updates and news on the GFSE event on energy poverty, and green skills, in the energy sector.

Enjoy reading!

The Global Forum on Sustainable Energy

1. GFSE Event: Innovative solutions to tackle energy poverty

GFSE held the bilingual event Innovative Solutions to combat Energy Poverty / Innovative Lösungen zur Bekämpfung der Energiearmut on Tuesday, 1 April 2025 at the Austrian Energy Agency in Vienna, Austria. This event addressed current critical challenges of energy poverty in two European Union countries (Austria and Slovakia) as well as featuring examples of renewable energy solutions in Africa. The purpose was to facilitate an exchange of perspectives and experience of solutions to energy poverty in Europe and developing countries.

The event featured the following speakers:

- Mr Hannes Velik from *Jugend eine Welt*,
- Ms Aglaë Hagg-Thun of *Oikokredit*,
- Mr Clemens Griesauer of Horizont3000,
- Ms Anna Breuer of klimaaktiv,
- Ms Dušana Dokupilová of the Slovak Academy of Sciences

A [summary of the event and the presentations](#) can be found at the GFSE website:

2. Horizon 3000: Solar Pledge East Africa

The Solar Pledge East Africa is a collaborative initiative aimed at improving the services provided by Catholic dioceses in Uganda and Kenya through the adoption of renewable energy solutions, in particular solar photovoltaic technologies. Recognizing the Catholic Church's significant role as a service provider in East Africa, the program seeks to enhance energy access in church-run health and educational facilities.

Key Objectives:

- Establish 15 new energy officers within dioceses.
- Develop 15 renewable energy development strategies within dioceses as well as operations & maintenance (O&M) strategies in order to guarantee the sustainability of the solar PV systems.
- Subsidize the installation of 50 new solar systems.
- Support the repair and upgrading of 250 existing solar systems.

Core Activities:

1. **Capacity Building:** Training diocesan personnel to analyse energy needs, plan interventions, and manage renewable energy projects as well as adopt and apply gender-sensitive guidelines.
2. **Awareness Raising:** Promoting climate action and understanding the link between energy access and development.
3. **Technical Support:** Providing assistance for the installation, repair, and maintenance of solar systems.

The programme is implemented by Horizont3000. It collaborates with various stakeholders, including donors, private sector entities, academic institutions, government bodies, and financial organizations. The partner network includes Windkraft Simonsfeld AG, Drekönigsaktion, the Schwarzenegger Climate Initiative, missio, misereor, mission Club der guten Offnung and caritas. The project is co-funded by the Austrian Development Agency.

For more information, you can visit the official website of the [Solar Pledge East Africa](#).

3. Support programmes for off-grid solutions in Mozambique

The article "Perspective | The Energy Divide: Who Gets Left Behind in the Global Transition?" by SNV, authored by Vassilca Jeremias highlights the affordability challenges of solutions to energy poverty: While off-grid solutions like solar home systems and mini-grids are expanding, their affordability remains a significant barrier. Pay-As-You-Go (PayGo) models offer flexibility but are often still out of reach for those with unstable incomes. Energy access should not be viewed solely as an infrastructure issue but also as a matter of economic justice. Policies must thus prioritize inclusion of marginalized communities.

The article features the BRILHO program, a seven-year programme (2019 – 2026) to catalyse Mozambique's off-grid energy market. The programme is financed by the UK department for international development (DFID), which was replaced in 2020 by the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida). BRILHO is implemented by a consortium led by SNV Netherlands Development Organisation. Other partners are Practical Action Consulting (PAC) and MARGE. GreenLight and Catalyst act as service providers. It focuses on renewable mini-grids, clean cooking solutions and solar home systems. BRILHO offers selected companies a mix of non-reimbursable funding and specialised support, to de-risk business initiatives that aim to achieve competitive commercial returns in low-income markets.

The following grant-based mechanisms are offered to companies:

1. Catalytic Grants (CG), to help subsidize the direct costs and risks associated with start-ups and/or scaling business in the market. The grants cover setup costs and working capital. They can be disbursed in advance.

2. Results Based Financing (RBF), to provide incentives to businesses to deliver energy services to more challenging markets and further leverage private sector investment. RBF grant incentives are disbursed after verification of the sales results.

Combinations of the above-mentioned mechanisms are possible. However, results-based financing (RBF) is required in all cases with exception of mini-grids.

A successor program +SOL has been newly signed, with focus on green mini-grids and solar home systems. +SOL consists of four components:

1. Project Pipeline Development in priority communities according to the National Electrification Strategy for Off-Grid Areas
2. The Clean Energy Fund (CEF) focusing on Results Based Financing,
3. The Climate Asset Aggregator (CAA) to give part of the proceeds from carbon credit sales by the companies that own assets supported by +SOL back to the Clean Energy Fund (CEF).
4. Technical Assistance & Sector Strengthening (TASS) to improve the process of private sector engagement, by providing advice and support to nascent domestic and international ventures in navigating the business creation process in Mozambique.

Source:

[Perspective | The energy divide: Who gets left behind in the global transition?](#)

[The BRILHO program](#)

[+SOL programme](#)

4. Meeting Skill Needs for the Green Transition: Skills Anticipation and VET for a Greener Future" (Cedefop Practical Guide 4)

The publication "Meeting Skill Needs for the Green Transition: Skills Anticipation and VET for a Greener Future" (Cedefop Practical Guide 4), released in April 2025 by Cedefop in collaboration with UNESCO-UNEVOC, serves as a guide for policymakers, vocational education and training (VET) providers, and stakeholders aiming to align skills development with the objectives of the green transition.

Key Highlights:

- **Purpose and Scope:** The guide underscores the role of skills intelligence and effective governance in facilitating the shift towards greener economies. It provides actionable insights on how VET systems can adapt to meet emerging environmental challenges. Among others, key trends and demands in the labour market need to be identified and skills anticipated and forecasted. Key skill anticipation methods include skills forecasts, skills foresights anticipating skills supply and demand, skills surveys, information from job descriptions in online advertisements, tracking the career of graduates,

- **Strategies for Implementation:** It explores various approaches such as apprenticeships, upskilling, reskilling, validation of non-formal learning, and the use of microcredentials to equip individuals with the necessary competencies for green jobs. The guidelines highlight the importance of collaboration between schools and companies and engaging chambers and professional associations to tailor apprenticeships programmes to the local market needs.
- **Good Practice Examples:** The publication includes case studies from across Europe and beyond, illustrating successful integration of green skills into VET programs and policies.

For a more detailed exploration of the strategies and examples presented, you can access the full publication here: [Meeting Skill Needs for the Green Transition](#).

5. Vocational Training in Renewable Energy in Burkina Faso

Burkina Faso has insufficient technical and vocational education and training (TVET) programmes. There is also a lack of courses for women, people in the countryside and marginalised groups. There is little practical education in the courses and almost no dual vocational education and training (which combines apprenticeships in a company and vocational education at a vocational school in one course).

The project "Vocational Training in Renewable Energy in Burkina Faso," co-financed by the Austrian Development Agency (ADA) and the state of Vorarlberg, aims to enhance energy access in Burkina Faso by improving vocational education and employment opportunities in the renewable energy sector, particularly solar energy. Beneficiaries include students, teachers, SMEs, government agencies and the Coalition Nationale des Organisations de la Société Civile (OSC) pour la Promotion des Energies Renouvelables et l'Accès à l'Energie Durable au Burkina Faso (CNPDER-BF). TVET is an important cornerstone of Austrian development cooperation.

Objectives:

- Integrate a high-quality "Renewable Energy" specialization into vocational high schools.
- Enhance the quality of vocational training, focusing on solar PV.
- Improve access to training and employment in renewable energy, especially for girls and disadvantaged groups.

In the first phase, solar PV systems were installed at four partner schools, providing technical equipment, training teachers, and developing/certifying practice-oriented curricula. A specialisation in electricity and installation of solar systems (BEP Électricité et installation des équipements solaires) was introduced in 8 vocational high schools in the 2021/22 school year.

In the second phase, implemented as of 2022, the programme was extended to other schools but the focus has shifted toward building partnerships between schools and businesses to improve students' access to internships and jobs. Vocational orientation, labour market integration and entrepreneurship Since the first half of 2023, a school development process has been underway to further improve education quality. Training programs are offered not only for teachers but also for employees from the renewable energy sector. Students also receive an introduction to

entrepreneurial skills alongside their technical training. Moreover, additional topics have been covered such as dismantling and recycling old solar PV systems.

75% of the project is funded by the state of Vorarlberg and 25% by the Austrian Development Agency (ADA). This initiative is part of a planned 10-year program, with the first two phases running from 2018 to 2026. The FH Vorarlberg is involved in formative evaluation activities in the project.

For more details, you can visit the following resources: [Austrian Development Agency – Vocational Training in Renewable Energy in Burkina Faso](#).

<https://vorarlberg.at/-/kooperationsprojekt-mit-der-austrian-development-agency-berufsbildung-erneuerbare-energie-burkina-faso>

https://www.gfse.at/fileadmin/user_upload/02_robert_moosbrugger_fh_vorarlberg.pdf

We hope you enjoyed reading our news updates and look forward to staying in touch with you within the GFSE community. We highly welcome reactions and suggestions!

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The Global Forum on Sustainable Energy is a neutral multi-stakeholder platform facilitating international dialogue on energy for sustainable development by considering the special interests and challenges of developing countries. GFSE aims to establish a sustainable world energy system from a social, economic, and environmental perspective.

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