



ISA announces winners of the SolarX Startup Challenge: Boosting Solar Innovation in Africa

- *ISA's SolarX Startup Challenge focuses on developing scalable and replicable business models to accelerate the global transition towards clean energy. The first edition of the initiative provisions for successful solar projects and solutions to be first launched in Africa and subsequently replicated in different regions and contexts.*

20 July | Goa, India – At a side-event of the G20 Energy Transitions Working Group meeting in Goa, the International Solar Alliance, announced the 20 winners of its SolarX Startup Challenge. 20 companies from 10 African countries were declared winners, who will work to increase solar deployment in the Africa Region. Out of the 20 winning companies, 7 are led by women entrepreneurs. Maximum number of winning companies (4) belong to Kenya, and Nigeria, Rwanda, Uganda have 3 winning companies each.

Along with a cash grant of USD 15,000 each, the winning startups will receive support from ISA, Invest India, WAIPA, GOGLA and other partner organisations. They will benefit from mentorship programmes, investor connections, and market access programmes, enabling them to implement their innovations on a larger scale.

Congratulating the winners and sharing his delight at the successful conclusion of this first leg of the Challenge. **Dr Ajay Mathur, Director General, ISA**, said, "Entrepreneurship and finance will be essential drivers of progress in the solar sector. They are crucial for fostering technological advancements, cost reductions, market growth, job creation, energy independence, environmental sustainability, and scalability. By encouraging innovation and supporting entrepreneurial ventures, ISA will facilitate the unlocking of the full potential of solar energy, facilitating the transition to a sustainable and low-carbon future."

The SolarX Startup Challenge is a pioneering initiative by the International Solar Alliance (ISA) aimed at stimulating entrepreneurship and driving solar energy deployment in African ISA Member Countries. A total of 182 start-ups applied from 28 countries, including Botswana, Burundi, Cameroon, Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, Egypt, Ethiopia, France, Ghana, India, Israel, Kenya, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, Tanzania, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, United Kingdom, United States of America, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. The problem statement, technical and financial innovations to accelerate the deployment of off-grid solar applications (mini-grids and SHS) received the maximum number of entries capping at 109.

The ten problem statements focused on accelerating the deployment of off-grid solar applications, enhancing cost competitiveness for solar drying and other productive use applications, supporting grid integration for rooftop solar systems, combining solar with other applications to boost smallholder incomes, lowering the cost and improving the efficiency of solar equipment, exploring innovative solar business models for emerging use cases, leveraging AI and IoT for solar energy applications, developing an ecosystem for manufacturing balance of system components, creating practical

business models for high-efficiency DC pumps, and utilising services or software for land mapping.

The SolarX Startup Challenge invited applicants to submit innovative, cost-effective, and scalable solutions to tackle persistent challenges in the solar sector. The initiative aimed to promote the solar energy industry, bridge the energy crisis gap, and foster the growth of the solar startup ecosystem.

The journey of the SolarX Startup Challenge began on 10 November 2022 at COP27 in Sharm-el-Sheikh, Egypt, where it was officially launched. Following a rigorous evaluation and shortlisting process conducted through April-June 2023, the winners have now been selected. The winning startups are:

1	Musana Carts Uganda Limited
2	HELLOSOLAR TECHNOLOGY PLC
3	Kuza Coolers Limited
4	Ecobora
5	Centennial Power Ltd
6	INNO-NEAT Energy Solutions
7	Urban Greens Ltd
8	STES GROUP LTD
9	Green Scene Energy PLC
10	Salpha Energy Ltd
11	OffGridBox Rwanda Ltd
12	Bako Motors
13	Arinifu Technologies Ltd
14	Momint
15	NoorNation
16	ASACCOV GLOBAL NIGERIA LIMITED - A6GNL
17	PHOTONS ENERGY LTD
18	NorthLite Solar Limited
19	Uwana Energy
20	EG Platform Ltd. (Energrow)

About International Solar Alliance: The International Solar Alliance is an international organisation with 116 Member and Signatory countries. It works with governments to ease solar deployment and promote solar power as a sustainable transition to a

carbon-neutral future. ISA's mission is to unlock US\$ 1 trillion of investments in solar by 2030 while reducing technology and its financing costs. It promotes the use of solar energy in the agriculture, health, transport, and power generation sectors. ISA Member Countries are driving change by enacting policies and regulations, sharing best practices, agreeing on common standards, and mobilising investments. Through this work, ISA has identified and designed and tested new business models for solar projects; supported governments to make their energy legislation and policies solar-friendly through Ease of Doing Solar analytics and advisory; pooled demand for solar technology from different countries; and drove down costs; improved access to finance by reducing the risks and making the sector more attractive to private investment; increased access to solar training, data and insights for solar engineers and energy policymakers. ISA is one of the first international intergovernmental organisations headquartered in India. It is partnering with multilateral development banks (MDBs), development financial institutions (DFIs), private and public sector organisations, civil society, and other international institutions to deploy cost-effective and transformational solutions through solar energy, especially in the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and the Small Island Developing States (SIDS). More information at <https://isolaralliance.org/>

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