

Press Release

Brussels, 18 May 2020

ARE unveils the winners of the ARE Awards 2020

The ARE Awards 2020 pay tribute to the most effective initiative and/or project implemented across [six categories](#), as a means to highlight the clean energy access results achieved by the most passionate and innovative actors in the sector, as well as to further increase their impact by sharing latest knowledge to new stakeholders. Universal, reliable, affordable, and sustainable energy access for all is essential to empower people worldwide to decide the course of their lives – be it through education, health and socio-economic development.

After careful analysis of the 77 applications received, the ARE Jury, formed by volunteering experts from AfDB, IRENA, GET.invest, REEEP, REN21, SACREEE, SEforALL TAF and UNIDO) and led by Claudio Pedretti (ARE President) as chair, is delighted to make the final results public to the world.

The ARE Awards 2020 Ceremony will take place at the [6th ARE Energy Access Investment Forum](#) in Lusaka (Zambia). Originally planned for 18-19 March 2020, the event will now take place on 23-24 September 2020 in response to COVID-19.

Category 1. Multilateral / International Organisations

IDCOL - Solar Mini-Grid Projects (Bangladesh)

Bangladesh's national strategy calls for universal access to electricity by 2021. In order to achieve this goal, IDCOL introduced their solar mini-grid initiative for the off-grid coastal islands and floodplain settlements which will not be serviced by the central grid for the next five to 10 years. Since 2016, IDCOL has overseen and financed the installation of 19 solar mini-grid projects, generating 4 MWp grid-quality electricity to 16,000 people living in last-mile communities and allowing for a reduction of 1,250 tonnes of CO₂/year. IDCOL plans to install 50 additional solar mini-grids by 2025.

Category 2: Public Bodies & Non-Profit Organisations

We Care Solar - Light Every Birth (Liberia, Uganda, Zimbabwe, Sierra Leone)

We Care Solar's Light Every Birth initiative is ensuring that every health centre has access to clean energy for safe childbirth by making solar power simple and accessible to last-mile health centres. We Care Solar has already equipped more than 5,200 health centres serving 5.6 million mothers and newborns with their Solar Suitcases, providing medical lighting and power for communication and medical devices and preventing 41,319 tonnes of CO₂. We Care Solar aims to reach 8,300 health facilities in five countries in the next five years, serving 17 million mothers and newborns.

Category 3: Win-Win Partnerships

Mlinda - Rural Electrification Project (India)

Mlinda's Rural Electrification Project (REP) involves installing solar energy based mini-grids in rural and tribal areas, ensuring sustainable rural socioeconomic development and livelihoods. Mini-grids

can power productive loads which contribute to increased income, along with domestic loads. Productive uses of clean energy can also support the financial sustainability of the mini-grid business models as they enhance economic and social development impacts and lowers payment risks from customers. Mlinda has commissioned a total of 40 mini-grids, powering over 5,407 households and 1,090 productive loads.

Category 4: Best De-Risking & Finance Scheme

EDFI - EDFI ElectriFI (multiple countries)

The EU launched ElectriFI, the Electrification Financing Initiative, as an innovative financing tool to respond to the climate financing challenges by bridging the gaps in structuring and financing, stimulating the private sector and mobilising financiers. ElectriFI is an impact-investing facility with a mandate to invest in early stage, private companies and projects that increase/improve access to and supply of sustainable energy in developing countries. After four years of operation, ElectriFI manages EUR 220 million.

Category 5: Best Start-Up

ANKA Madagascar - Agribusiness Energy Nexus Business Model (Madagascar)

ANKA carries a business model that integrates PV powered mini-grid electrification with the development of commercial-scale agribusiness opportunities. AgriGrid is meant to span the enhancement of yields, creation of new food and agricultural products through value-addition, creation and facilitation of market linkages and optimise PV mini-grids across Madagascar until 2022, empowering more than 220,000 people.

Category 6: Best Women Empowerment Initiative

EarthSpark International - Scaling Smart, Solar, Energy Access Microgrids (Haiti)

EarthSpark's ecosystem has paved the way to the commercialisation of Haiti's first privately owned, PV smart grid, avoiding around 13.9 tonnes of CO₂/grid/year, displacing hazardous household air pollutants and improving access to education and other community services. The grid model involves women in infrastructure planning, employment and training, local SME support, domestic energy use, and community resource availability. EarthSpark has two live grids directly benefiting 3,000 people and plans to scale its micro-grid portfolio to 24 grids over the next four years.

Mr. Marcus Wiemann, Executive Director of Alliance for Rural Electrification: *"We would like to thank all applicants, which have made this year's ARE Awards a real competition amongst the most important players committed to making universal energy access a reality by 2030 for the remaining 840 energy deprived people, mostly living in rural communities. Once more, and in respect of the new-established categories covering Women Empowerment, De-Risking and Financing Schemes and Win-Win Partnerships, we have been really impressed by the passion expressed and quality of the applications received from all Awards participants from all around the world. We are hopeful that these award-winning solutions will serve as solid best practice examples for new projects coming in the near future!"*

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For further information or request images please contact:

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Note to the editor

The [Alliance for Rural Electrification \(ARE\)](#) is an international business association representing the decentralised energy sector working towards the integration of renewables into rural electrification markets in developing and emerging countries. ARE enables improved energy access through business development support for more than 100 members along the whole value chain for off-grid technologies.

