

Solar energy research and development gitega

An international jury of experts selected Gigawatt Global as the 2020 EEP Africa Project of the Year for its 7.5 MW grid-connected solar PV plant in the Gitega province of Burundi.

Gigawatt Global has secured a 25-year Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) with the Government of Burundi for the project, becoming the first non-diesel Independent Power Producer (IPP) in the country. This is the first power plant to be built in Burundi for more than 30 years and will increase installed capacity by 15%.

EEP Africa provided financing to Gigawatt Global in 2015 for the feasibility study for the solar power plant. This early-stage financing for an ambitious project in a challenging market was crucial to reducing risks and allowing the project to move forward.

Gigawatt Global completed the financial close for the plant in January 2020, with backing from Inspired Evolution, REPP, the US DFC, and the new Regional Liquidity Support Facility (RLSF) of the African Trade Insurance Agency (ATI). Through close collaboration with partners, including the public utility Regideso, Gigawatt has managed to continue construction on the plant during the COVID-19 pandemic, creating over 250 jobs for local labourers. The plant is expected to be completed by the end of this year.

Foreign investment in Burundi has been extremely low, but this project demonstrates that the country is open for business. Songa Energy, which is currently conducting a study for a 1.1 MW hydropower plant in Burundi with EEP Africa financing, has highlighted the importance of Gigawatt's success for other clean energy developers in the country.

Burundi is one of the world's poorest countries and 92% of the population live without electricity. Expanded access to electricity will provide desperately needed economic growth and opportunity.

The Project of the Year award recognizes outstanding achievement by an EEP Africa portfolio company during the past year. Five finalists were selected to present their projects to the jury panel and the winner was announced during the EEP Africa Knowledge Week.

The jury members for 2020 were: Aleksi Lumijarvi of the Nordic Development Fund, Michael Kiza of EACREEE, Jeffrey Prins of IKEA Foundation, and Nishdeep Sethi of the African Guarantee Fund.



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Contact us for free full report

Web: <https://sumthingtasty.co.za/contact-us/>

Email: energystorage2000@gmail.com

WhatsApp: 8613816583346

