



Press release
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ENGIE Africa powers Rwanda with clean energy through ENGIE Energy Access and OffGridBox innovations



ENGIE is supporting the Rwanda government's goal to achieve 100% access to electricity for its people by 2024 through pioneering innovations. ENGIE Energy Access (formerly ENGIE Mobisol) is the leader in Rwanda's solar home systems market, having installed a capacity of 3.3MW in the country that brings power to 162,500 rural beneficiaries. ENGIE Africa is putting in place a pilot with OffGridBox to provide purified water, power and Wi-Fi to offgrid communities in Kigali.

ENGIE Energy Access is a result of the successful integration of ENGIE Mobisol, Fenix International and ENGIE PowerCorner into a single entity; which is now one of the leading off-grid, Pay-As-You-Go (PAYGo) and mini-grid solutions provider in Africa, bringing decentralized electricity to more than five million people in nine countries – Rwanda, Uganda, Zambia, Kenya, Tanzania, Nigeria, Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, and Mozambique.

With 11 shops spread throughout Rwanda that have sold almost 40,000 SHS since 2014, ENGIE Energy Access implements effective last-mile distribution. It employs 325 people in Rwanda, both directly and indirectly, and maintains excellent after-sales service through its all-in-one PAYG (Pay-As-You-Go) software solution, Paygee. This inhouse-designed innovation helps the underserved to create valuable credit history through affordable Mobile Money payments, leading to a more positive socio-economic future.



Almost 50% of ENGIE Energy Access's customers in Rwanda are Small Business Enterprises. In a country where it is dark from 6pm to 6am, having power means that these businesses have been able to flourish in the evenings. SHS sizes range from 40W to 200W and product offerings include TVs (24", 32", 43"), stereo radios, torches, flat-iron boxes, hair-cutters and Mobichargers.

Every year since 2015, ENGIE Energy Access's Rwanda team have trained more than 250 young entrepreneurs in the productive use of SHS and products to support their businesses.

ENGIE Africa is now implementing a pilot scheme with **OffGridBox**, which provides purified water, electricity and Wi-Fi to about 200 offgrid families in Kigali, saving 15 tonnes of CO2 emissions per year.

This pilot, successfully launched early October, provides a powerful solution to the 2 main basic needs for communities in Africa: access to clean water and sustainable energy. It will cater to the 18% of households in Kigali that currently do not have access to power, as well as serve as a backup system for lighting and phone charging in the area. It will also produce the branded *Ayacu* purified water, which has received the S-mark certification by the Rwanda Standards Board. The OffGridBox is a mobile and modular 2x2x2m container with solar panels on top and a water purification system inside and it can provide connectivity through a Wi-Fi hotspot. The box can be easily transported anywhere in the world and set up on the spot within 4 hours.

Once installed, households are provided with a solar-powered battery pack, 3 LED lights, a phone charger and a jerry can. For a small fee, customers can recharge their 40Wh power-bank to power 3 lights for 4 hours, charge their phones or run small electronic equipment, plus collect 10 liters of purified water each time. By means of a micro-grid connected to the box, power can also be supplied to a school or a clinic, or for agricultural productive use, such as drip-irrigation, cold storage, welding or milling.

Through this initiative, local women are employed and trained to run the box with the OffGridBox mobile application, thereby generating income and employment. For its nationwide operations, OffGridBox is creating a network of female box-keepers who are regularly trained in technical, bookkeeping, sales and marketing skills. In addition, OffGridBox is collaborating with Women in Rwandan Energy Network to provide internships to female engineers who have just graduated.

ENGIE strives to support innovation and entrepreneurship across Africa by promoting innovative solutions and disruptive ideas and transforming them into business opportunities that help serve millions of communities getting access to energy.

Sylvie Kanimba, Managing Director of ENGIE Energy Access Rwanda, says: "We are proud to be changing lives by providing sustainable solar energy to remote areas of Rwanda that have no access to grid electricity. ENGIE Energy Access Rwanda is making a remarkable contribution to increasing access to energy for all, including improving educational facilities for children and supporting small business creation, hence building a sustainable energy future."

OffGridBox says: "We are delighted to be the winners of the call for urban power and clean water solutions and to start this pilot with ENGIE in Kigali. Our 3-year experience providing safe water and clean energy to rural communities in Rwanda will help us in implementing this project, and we aim to scale up our activities in other parts of the country."



About ENGIE Energy Access:

ENGIE Energy Access is the leading Pay-As-You-Go (PAYGo) and mini-grids solutions provider in Africa, with a mission to deliver affordable, reliable and sustainable energy solutions and life-changing services with exceptional customer experience. The company is a result of the integration of Fenix International, ENGIE Mobisol and ENGIE PowerCorner; and develops innovative, off-grid solar solutions for homes, public services and businesses, enabling customers and distribution partners access to clean, affordable energy. The PAYGo solar home systems are financed through affordable installments from \$0.14 per day and the mini-grids foster economic development by enabling electrical productive use and triggering business opportunities for entrepreneurs in rural communities. With over 1,700 employees, operations in nine countries across Africa (Benin, Cote d'Ivoire, Kenya, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia), over 1 million customers and more than 5 million lives impacted so far, ENGIE Energy Access aims to remain the leading clean energy company, serving millions of customers across Africa by 2025. www.plugintheworld.com

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About ENGIE in Africa:

ENGIE is the largest independent electricity producer in the world, and one of the major players in natural gas and energy services. The Group has more than 50 years of experience on the African continent and has the unique ability to implement integrated solutions all along the energy value chain, from centralized electricity production to off-grid solutions (Solar Home Systems, Mini-grids) and energy services. ENGIE Africa employs nearly 4,000 people, and has 3.15 GW of power generation capacity in operation or construction. It is a leader in the decentralized energy market, providing clean energy to more than five million people through domestic solar installations and local microgrids.. www.engie-africa.com

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About OffGridBox:

OffGridBox, Inc. is a company founded in 2016, with offices in Cambridge (US) and Kigali (RWA) and manufacturing in Arezzo (IT), employing around 50 people. It is an all-in-one sustainable solution, providing clean water and solar power to people in remote areas. The company has been selling and installing about 80 boxes in 13 different countries (Rwanda, Madagascar, South Africa, Somalia, Colombia, Puerto Rico, Italy, US, Philippines, Nigeria, Tanzania, DRC and the British Virgin Islands). It sells to international organizations, NGOs and businesses that want to fund projects with an impact and it also operates the boxes themselves in a Pay-As-You-Go set up. Recently, the company has expanded into Tanzania, where a UNDP project for 4,000 households has been implemented. A pilot with responsible mining communities in DRC is also being carried out. www.offgridbox.com

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