

EDF announces the winners of the 3rd EDF Pulse Africa Competition

In Paris on Thursday the 21st of November 2019, EDF awarded prizes to five winners of the 3rd EDF Pulse Africa competition, which seeks to spotlight and assist African innovators committed to helping the continent grow its energy industry. In addition to start-ups, the competition has been opened up to African SMEs with less than 50 employees, preceded by a pre-selection campaign in 7 African countries. With a 24% increase in the number of applicants, EDF Pulse Africa has confirmed the pace at which African entrepreneurship is growing.

The EDF Pulse Africa 2019 competition attracted 536 projects from 26 African countries as against 434 projects from 24 countries last year. Among the 10 finalists, the multi-disciplinary Grand Jury awarded prizes to the following projects:

1st prize: LIFILED (Category Electricity uses & services, Ivory Coast - Côte d'Ivoire)

LIFILED is a 3-in-1 package designed for rural communities. It combines access to off-grid electricity and to Internet with a supply of educational content on farming know-how. The electricity generated by off-grid solar panels powers a LIFI network comprising LED lamps, which uses light for data-transmission purposes. The photons emitted by LED lamps open a passband that can transmit any type of message that is compatible with all commercially available telephones. The start-up already has several BtoB customers in Côte d'Ivoire.

2nd prize: Energy Cycle (Category Electricity uses & services, Togo)

The innovation developed by *Energy Cycle* uses the energy generated by two-wheeled vehicles to recharge small appliances like cell phones by means of a USB cable or to power rechargeable lamps. The device designed by *Energy Cycle* can be attached to any type of motorcycle, scooter or moped. The start-up is targeting two-wheeled vehicle users in rural areas as well as transport companies in urban areas, thereby offering their customers an additional service.

3rd prize: Hydrobox (Category Off-Grid electricity generation, Kenya)

The Kenyan start-up *Hydrobox* manufactures and installs small standard and modular hydro-power plants (so called because they fit into containers) with a generation capacity ranging from 100 kW to 5MW depending on the flow of the river and the slope of the site. Easy to transport and install, *Hydrobox* can be connected to conventional grids or can power off-grid networks in Kenya's most remote areas. The electrical output generated by *Hydrobox* enables remote villages to enjoy the benefits of a constant power supply, thereby stimulating local economic growth.

ESCP Europe "coup de cœur" prize: Clean Energy Services (Category Electricity uses & services, Cameroun)

The Côte d'Ivoire start-up *Clean Energy Services* markets off-grid power generation packages designed for freezers and fridges on isolated sites. Kits sold by *Clean Energy Services* comprise solar panels, a modified fridge and LED lamps. All of this has been made possible through the sale on credit in exchange for an initial deposit amounting to 20% of the kit's value. The package is specifically designed for users on isolated sites whose work requires cold storage: catering, sale of fresh produce (meat, fish, etc.)

Special prize Boost by EDF: Plentify (Category Electricity uses & services, South Africa)

Plentify has come up with the clever idea of rationalising power distributed by national companies through the conversion of urban apartment boilers into smart batteries which are recharged when there is a lot of power and which redistribute electricity during peak demand periods, thereby cutting down on the use of polluting energy sources. This solution has helped households to save more than 50% on their electricity bills.

Supporting growth

The five prize-winners have been awarded endowments ranging from 5 000 to 15 000 Euros, as well as comprehensive support including:

- Operational and financial advice
- Project development partnerships with incubators based in African countries
- Access to EDF's innovation ecosystem including R&D, EDF's own creativity labs and EDF Pulse Croissance (EDF's start-up incubator and investment fund)

EDF Pulse Africa: a unique initiative

In Africa, EDF is developing low-carbon energy solutions whilst at the same time helping to power the continent. Through its EDF Pulse Africa prizes, the Group is seeking to sustain the pace of African entrepreneurship with two goals in mind:

- Identifying potential new partners for developing energy projects in Africa
- Stimulating the development of innovative offerings that meet the continent's energy challenges

In 2019, the competition was opened up to SMEs with less than 50 employees. Often a source of innovative projects, African SMEs face the same challenges as start-ups, including access to the funding and operational support required for moving from the project phase to marketing and sales.

Another innovation in 2019: In order to proactively verify compatibility between the projects' nature, the needs of the local economic fabric and EDF's business activities in the region, a national pre-selection campaign called EDF Pulse Africa Tour was arranged in 7 African countries (South Africa, the Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Morocco, Senegal and Togo). Winners of the national finals were awarded a place in the final phase of the competition held in Paris.

Marianne Laigneau, Group Senior Executive Vice President in charge of International Affairs and Chair of the EDF Pulse Africa jury: *"Three years after its launch, the success of EDF Pulse Africa cannot be denied, attracting increasingly more innovative projects which, I am convinced, will form part of tomorrow's energy solutions. The final is just the start of an exciting journey as our ambition is to support project owners over the long term and where appropriate, to forge collaborative ties that are aligned with our business portfolio development in Africa"*.

Partnerships with local incubators

EDF has started working together with **4 local incubators in Africa**: *Boukarou* in the Cameroon, *Motion* in Senegal, *Impact Hub* in Ghana, and *Energy Generation* in Togo. The latter has already supported EDF Pulse Africa winners via training programmes. EDF is also partnering *Energy Generation* as part of a programme called "Women and Solar Entrepreneurship", which seeks to train women in techniques for installing and maintaining off-grid solar systems and in entrepreneurial aspects relating to this line of business.

A key player in energy transition, the EDF Group is an integrated electricity company, active in all areas of the business: generation, transmission, distribution, energy supply and trading, energy services. A global leader in low-carbon energies, the Group has developed a diversified generation mix based on nuclear power, hydropower, new renewable energies and thermal energy. The Group is involved in supplying energy and services to approximately 39.8 million customers, including 29.7 million in France. The Group generated consolidated sales of €69 billion in 2018. EDF is listed on the Paris Stock Exchange.

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