

**May 2025; Issue 5**

## **IGEN-EA CLEAN ENERGY HUB: TURNING WASTE INTO GREEN GOLD WHILE REVOLUTIONISING LIVES**



A group photo of members from oil-affected communities, Bugoma forest host communities, cocoa women farmers, IGEN-EA and AFIEGO staff during the clean energy exchange learning to Rwenzori sub-region.

### **In this newsletter:**

- IGEN-EA clean energy hub: Turning waste into green gold while revolutionising lives
- Pictorial of our activities
- Lobbying
- In the media
- Upcoming events

Dear reader, welcome to AFIEGO's May 2025 newsletter.

Between May 15 and 16, 2025, AFIEGO and our partners under the Inclusive Green Economy Network–East Africa (IGEN-EA) organised an exchange learning visit to an IGEN-EA clean energy hub in Kitumba town council, Fort Portal city, Kabarole district in Western Uganda.

The team also visited briquette-making sites in Kibaale and Bundibugyo districts.

The learning trip brought together people from oil-affected areas from the Bunyoro and Greater Masaka sub-regions, communities living near Bugoma forest and Murchison Falls National Park as well as women cocoa farmers. IGEN-EA members also participated in the exchange learning.

During the exchange learning, the participants drew lessons on how to set up and operate clean energy hubs. They also learned how to make briquettes using simple techniques that do not harm nature.

The clean energy hub was established in 2024 to create awareness about the existing clean energy technologies, address climate change concerns by driving clean energy uptake

and create clean energy entrepreneurs, especially women and youth.

At the heart of the hub's mission is helping people understand the benefits of clean energy.

So far, over 700 people have visited the hub, and more than 4,000 others have learned about its work through radio talk shows, social media, exhibitions, conferences and community gatherings.

The hub showcases useful, affordable technologies like:

- Clean and energy-saving cookstoves;
- Solar and ethanol stoves;
- Briquettes made from natural waste;
- Solar lighting solutions;
- Energy-saving brooders for poultry; and
- Volcanic stones for cooking among others;

The hub also offers services such as information sharing on available clean energy alternatives, training and entrepreneurship support, community awareness sessions, as well as research and partnerships.

Clean cooking contributes to environmental conservation by



decreasing deforestation. It also leads to lower greenhouse gas emissions, and improved air quality, while also empowering communities and boosting local economies through fuel savings, reduced healthcare costs, and new business opportunities.

In our **Word from CEO and IGEN-EA**, we discuss how clean energy is driving efficiency and effectiveness in communities. We also share inspiring testimonies from beneficiaries of the clean energy hub.

In this newsletter, we also bring you our **pictorial** section through which we share the activities that AFIEGO and our

partners implemented this month (May 2025).

In the **lobbying** section, we share some of the lobby and advocacy products that we produced and disseminated in May 2025.

Finally, in **in the media** section we bring you some of the newspaper articles written by our staff and partners that were published in the leading newspapers in May 2025.

We hope that you will enjoy the newsletter.

**Editorial team:**

**Diana Nabiruma**

**Babra Kembabazi**

**Rachael Amongin**



### IGEN-EA clean energy hub: Turning waste into green gold while revolutionising lives

In April 2024, Africa Institute for Energy Governance (AFIEGO), together with its partners, carried out a community energy visioning exercise in the Bunyoro and Greater Masaka sub-regions.

The goal of the exercise was to better understand the energy needs, preferences, and challenges faced by local communities.

The clean energy visioning exercise by AFIEGO and our partners confirmed that the majority of households rely on biomass to cook. Indeed, the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development (MEMD) **confirms** that just 15 percent of Ugandans use clean cooking technologies, while over 90 percent still depend on biomass fuels.

Further, the exercise showed that while communities aspire to engage in clean cooking, their awareness of clean energy options is limited.

To bridge this information gap, AFIEGO and our partners under the Inclusive Green Economy Network East Africa (IGEN-EA) established a clean energy hub in Fort Portal city, Kabarole district. Plans are also underway to set up similar hubs in Hoima district and the Greater Masaka sub-region.

The existing hub is already making a difference. It showcases clean

cooking options such as energy-saving stoves, briquettes, and solar appliances. Furthermore, it provides training, increases public awareness, and supports entrepreneurship.

As a result of AFIEGO and IGEN-EA's awareness-raising efforts and clean energy trainings, communities in both the Rwenzori and Bunyoro sub-regions are adopting clean energy options. This is demonstrated by the testimonies below.

#### BENEFICIARIES' TESTIMONIES

##### WINNIE KABAHWEZA



My name is Winnie Kabahweza. A few months ago, I made a decision that completely changed my life.

I bought a six (6) litre electric pressure cooker (EPC). Before that, cooking beans used to take me up to three hours over a charcoal stove or firewood. The smoke irritated my allergies, and the process was time-consuming and exhausting.

Now, with just one unit of electricity that costs about UGX 850, I can cook a full pot of beans efficiently. The EPC is not only cost effective, but it has

also made my daily life much easier and healthier.

I first learned about the IGEN-EA clean energy hub from a friend, and I'm so grateful I followed up. The hub introduced me to affordable and environmentally friendly cooking solutions that I had never imagined using before.

To my fellow Ugandans, I say this, life is precious, and we must do what we can to make it easier and healthier. Choose clean cooking. It saves time, money, and your health.

#### **KAHUMA MUTEGEKI**



My name is Kahuma Mutegeki. When I first visited the clean energy hub in Fort Portal city, I didn't expect it to change the way my family cooks but it did. I met a clean cooking officer who took the time to explain how briquettes work, their benefits, and how much money I could save by using briquettes.

That conversation opened my eyes. Back home, we used to spend UGX 6,000 on a basin of charcoal every week. But with briquettes,

the same amount lasts two to three weeks, depending on the food we cook like bananas, beans, posho, and groundnuts. It's not just cheaper, it's efficient and better for the environment.

I first heard about the hub from my brother, who bought an electric pressure cooker after attending a sensitisation session there. That's what inspired me to go.

I encourage other young people to visit the clean energy hub. You'll not only save money but also help protect our environment through smart cooking choices.

#### **SYLVIA KOBUSINGYE**



My name is Sylvia Kobusingye, a resident of Kachwamba. Just a few kilometers away from my home stands the clean energy hub, a place that changed my life.

I first visited the hub out of curiosity, not knowing how much I would learn. While there, I met the CEO of Toro Initiative for Social Economic Development (TISED-U), an organisation under IGEN-EA. He introduced me to several clean cooking technologies.



Some were out of my reach financially, but I was able to afford an improved cookstove that uses both charcoal and briquettes.

Before getting the stove, I relied on the traditional charcoal stoves, which consumed a lot of fuel and cost me a lot of money.

Since I switched, I now use stick briquettes that burn longer and retain heat. I spend much less and cook faster.

I am truly grateful for the knowledge I gained from the hub. I now cook in a cleaner, safer, and more affordable way.

I urge the government to support youth and women groups that are making and promoting clean cooking products. These solutions are not just good for the environment but they are good for our homes and pockets too.

#### **NICHOLAS BASAIJA**



My name is Basaija Nicholas, and I live in Nyakagongo, Fort Portal. Like many families here, we used charcoal and gas for cooking at home. But I knew we needed something better, cleaner,

healthier, and more affordable. That's what led me to the clean energy hub.

At the hub, I discovered the bio stove, which uses ethanol and even comes with a pressure cooker. What stood out to me was how cost-effective it is. A five litre jerrycan of ethanol costs just UGX 3,000 to 4,000 and lasts a while. It's cleaner, quicker, and safer to use.

I was so impressed that I recommended it to my friends and many have now embraced the bio stove too. I encourage the public to visit the clean energy hub. There is so much to learn.

#### **TURNING WASTE INTO GREEN GOLD**

In addition to operating a clean energy hub, IGEN-EA members are supporting the production of briquettes with materials that could have been left as harmful waste.

For instance, key IGEN-EA members have partnered with Kenganzi Agencies in Budibungyo district, which neighbours the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), to manufacture briquettes from cocoa pod husks.

Left unused, the pod husks are harmful, and hurt cocoa plant health. In using the cocoa pod husks to manufacture briquettes, IGEN-EA is not only set to encourage clean cooking but is also set to contribute to improved cocoa plant health

and livelihoods.

During the exchange visit, communities that live near Murchison Falls National Park (MFNP) and Bugoma Central Forest Reserve (CFR) that participated in the visit were also shown that they can partner with relevant government agencies to turn invasive species into useful briquettes.

Near Kibaale National Park is a community that is using *Acanthus* (Bear's Breeches), locally known as *Matovu* in Luganda or *Amatojo* in Runyakitara, to manufacture briquettes.

*Acanthus* is not eaten by any species in the wild, and the Kibaale National Park authorities uproot it to provide space to grow more needed species.

The neighbouring park communities turn the weed into briquettes.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

To promote clean cooking, the following interventions are recommended:

**i). In December 2023, the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development (MEMD) launched the Energy Transition**

**Plan (ETP).** Through the plan, the MEMD is seeking to promote clean cooking for all by 2050. While implementing the ETP the MEMD should involve women, youth and communities that live around forests and national parks. This can be done by supporting communities to partner with Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) and National Forest Authority (NFA) to enable the communities access organic waste material from forests and national parks for briquette production.

**ii). Further, the MEMD, civil society organisations (CSOs) and development partners should support trainings targeted** at women, youth and forest as well as national park host communities. The trainings should enhance the community members' capacity to manufacture clean energy technologies such as briquettes.

**iii). In addition, government, CSOs and development partners should support** communities to set up clean energy hubs and demonstration centres to increase awareness and uptake of available clean cooking options.

**iv). Finally the MEMD should put in place a Solar Energy Policy** to guide solar energy access and promote clean cooking.

**By AFIEGO's CEO and IGEN-EA**

## Pictorial of our activities

### AFIEGO AND IGEN-EA ORGANISE A FIELD VISIT TO CLEAN ENERGY HUB AND A BRIQUETTE MANUFACTURING SITE



On May 15, 2025, AFIEGO and our IGEN-EA partners organised an exchange learning visit to the IGEN-EA clean energy hub in Fort Portal City in Western Uganda.

The visit was participated in by oil-affected community members, forest host communities members, national park host communities and IGEN-EA members.

During the visit, participants explored clean cooking solutions that promote economic resilience, social inclusion, and climate action.

In addition, the participants visited a briquette making site in Bundibugyo district.

### AFIEGO AND PARTNERS ORGANISE AN EXCHANGE LEARNING TO KIBAABLE FOREST HOST COMMUNITIES



On May 16, 2025, AFIEGO supported IGEN-EA members as well as oil, forest and national park host communities to visit a briquette making site near Kibale Forest National Park.

The visit demonstrated clean energy livelihood alternatives for communities living around forests, national parks, and protected areas.

### AFIEGO AND ITS LEGAL TEAM MEET A JUDICIAL OFFICIAL OVER DELAYED HEARING OF COURT CASES



On May 14, 2025, AFIEGO's legal team and representatives of oil-affected communities met with Justice Douglas Singiza at the Judicial Service Commission offices in Kampala.

The purpose of the meeting was to ask the judge to deliver rulings in key cases such as the one seeking cancellation of the Tilenga Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) certificate of approval.

The case was filed by AFIEGO and youth groups in 2019. While court heard and concluded the case, no ruling as been delivered todate.



## AFIEGO SUPPORTS OIL AFFECTED PEOPLE TO PARTICIPATE IN THEIR COURT CASE HEARING



On May 22, 2025, AFIEGO supported its legal team and some members of the oil refinery-affected community to take part in their court case hearing at the Hoima High Court.

The affected people filed the case in March 2014 challenging the unfair compensation that the government had allocated to them after their land was compulsorily acquired for the oil refinery project.

The presiding judge expressed concern over the prolonged compensation case. He directed the government and oil refinery-affected persons to urgently conduct a joint valuation exercise and submit a harmonised report as well as consent agreement to court within two months.

## AFIEGO SENSITISES COMMUNITIES ON EACOP AND TILenga ESIA COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS DURING CONSTRUCTION PHASE



Between May 26 and 27, 2025, AFIEGO organised community sensitisation meetings on the Tilenga and EACOP Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) compliance requirements during the construction phase.

The meetings took place in Buliisa and Hoima districts.

During the meetings, the community members were trained on key environmental and social safeguards that the EACOP and Tilenga project developers must comply with during the construction phase.



## AFIEGO ORGANISES MEETINGS WITH WOMEN AFFECTED BY OIL RPROJECTS



Between May 27 and 30, 2025, AFIEGO held meetings with women affected by oil projects in Hoima, Buliisa, Lwengo and Kyotera districts.

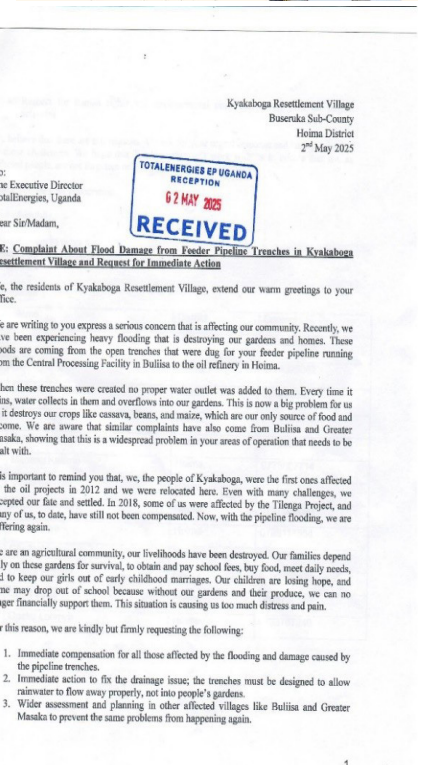
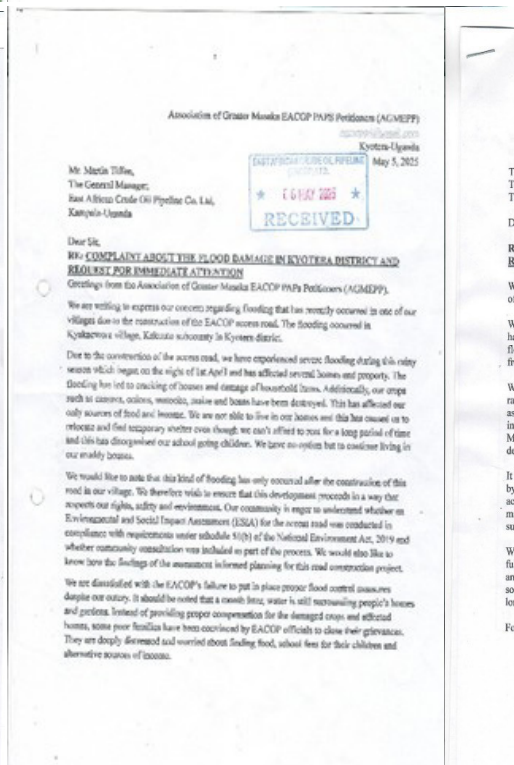
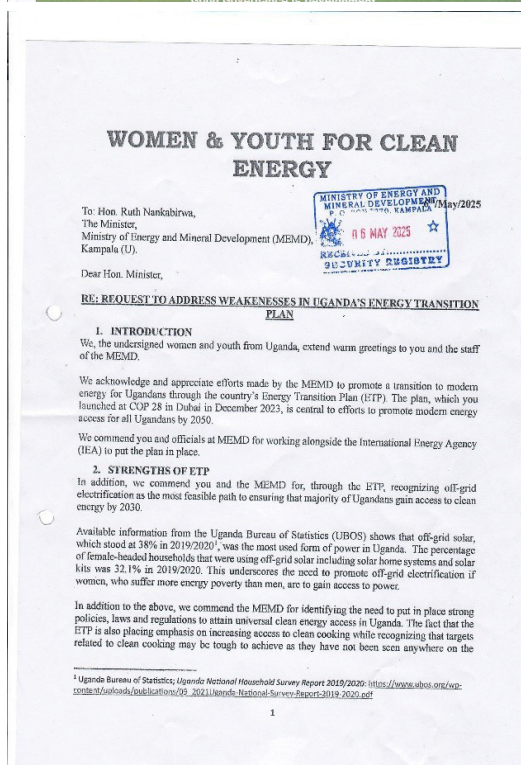
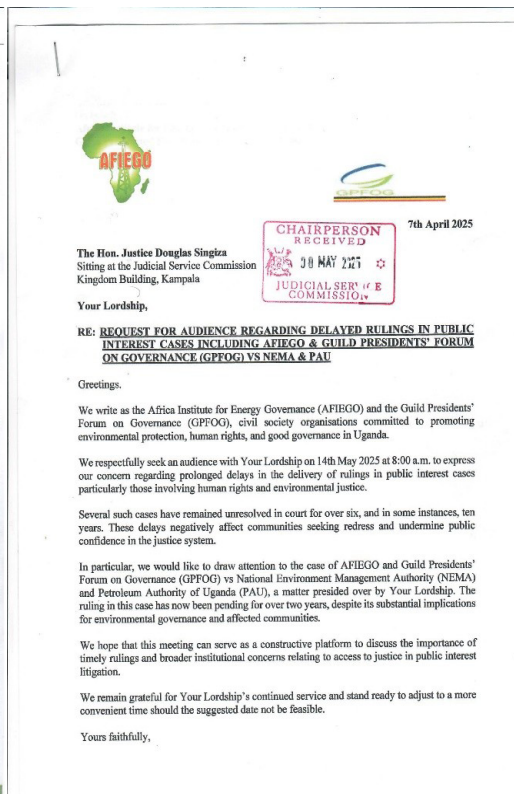
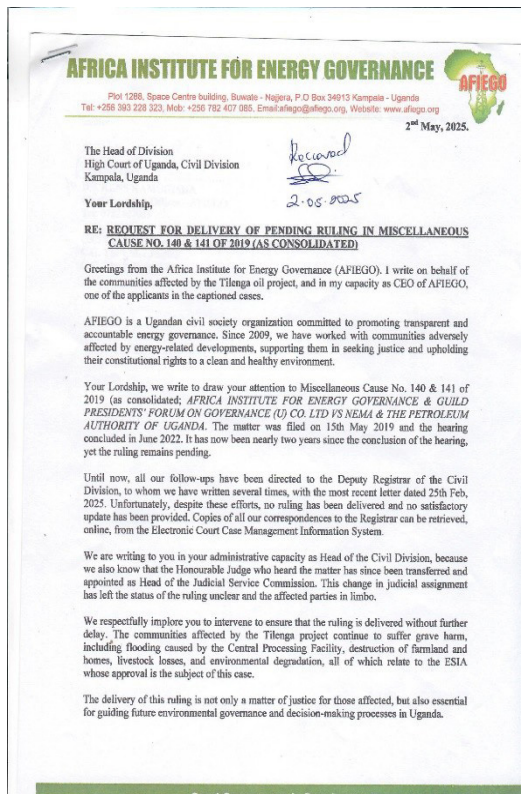
During the meetings, the women shared deep concerns over the poor implementation of the Livelihood Restoration Plan (LRP) for the EACOP and related oil projects.



# Lobbying

In May 2025, AFIEGO supported oil-affected persons to write to TotalEnergies seeking redress for the ongoing flooding that has destroyed their homes and gardens as a result of open trenches that were dug for Total's oil activities.

Further, with our legal team, we engaged Hon. Justice Douglas Singiza over the delayed delivering of rulings regarding cases filed by AFIEGO and partners against government and oil companies. We also issued other lobby and advocacy materials as can be seen below.





In May 2025, AFIEGO staff and research associates wrote newspaper articles that were published in the leading newspapers. Some of the published articles are captured below.

LETTER OF THE DAY

### Bridge the protection gap in the green, agricultural economy

It is noted that Uganda's continued struggle with the challenges of standardization in its green energy and agricultural sectors, despite the initiatives aimed at improving products quality and consumer protection, challenges persist due to enforcement gaps, regulatory delays, and limited consumer awareness of their rights and responsibilities. This hinders Uganda's efforts towards clean energy access and sustainable growth.

According to the Uganda National Bureau of Standards (NBS) data, approximately 25 percent of goods on the Ugandan market were substandard. This figure represents an increase of 7 percent from the previous year. This year's annual report also raised the flag on the ineffective and insufficient implementation by the government of standards agency to uphold the quality of goods produced in Uganda, which has turned the standard goods affecting trade and rising costs.

In March 2024, private sector and civil society groups that are promoting green economic alternatives for sustainable development, which addresses human rights concerns in Uganda and East Africa at large, submitted a petition to the Speaker of Parliament to ensure the Consumer Protection and Management Bill timely presentation to Parliament for debate and enactment.

This was followed after the endorsement of proposals presented to the Minister of Trade, Industry and Cooperatives by civil society organizations highlighting the urgent need to enact the consumer protection and management bill in June 2025.

There is growing concern about the quality of goods produced in Uganda, which has turned the standard goods affecting trade and rising costs. This is due to the ineffective and insufficient implementation by the government of standards agency to uphold the quality of goods produced in Uganda, which has turned the standard goods affecting trade and rising costs.

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Service Quality Efficiency Reliability Customer

farmers face limited access to quality seeds, particularly hybrids and are frequently exposed to fake agro-chemicals and substandard chemicals. This impacts their ability to boost yields, save livestock and control weeds and pests. With no strong consumer law to protect farmers, fraudulent agro-dealers continue to operate freely which leads to low yields, financial loss and increased food insecurity.

Additionally, high-interest rates hinder their ability to access finance, affecting productivity and environmental conservation efforts.

Without the enactment of the Consumer Protection and Management Bill, assurance of agricultural products and clean energy are likely to continue suffering.

All in all, the above mentioned law is essential to safeguard consumer rights, ensuring access to affordable and high-quality products, promoting fair competition among suppliers and protect consumers from false advertisement and predatory pricing. Hence, leading to improved products and services to the market. The law will also help protect consumers from fraudulent and deceptive commercial practices, ensuring their well-being and economic security.

Government needs to prioritize the enactment of this critical bill to address consumer challenges in the clean energy and agricultural sectors to enhance the quality of life for millions of Ugandans.

Ashante Obila, Environmentalist, obilashante@gmail.com

10 Letters

### Uganda's energy transition plan leaves women behind

Uganda's Energy Transition Plan (ETP), launched as a blueprint for guiding the country towards a low-carbon energy future, promises increased access to electricity, industrialization, and a shift from reliance on fossil fuels. But behind this seemingly progressive agenda is a huge omission, the plan's failure to address the gendered nature of energy poverty. For thousands of Ugandan women like 35-year-old Sarah, Kyomuhendo (not real name) of Hoima district, the ETP risks leaving millions of Ugandan women behind in the journey towards sustainable development.

Kyomuhendo, a farmer and mother of four, relies on firewood for cooking, spending hours daily gathering fuel. Her community like many rural areas across Uganda, is not connected to the national grid, and solar systems remain unaffordable. "We hear about energy plans on the radio, but we don't think we will ever benefit from them," Kyomuhendo says. The reality she describes is not unique. Women disproportionately bear the burden of energy poverty which affects their health, safety, and economic productivity. Yet, Uganda's ETP does not include any gender-specific targets or measures to ensure equitable access to energy for women.

The plan emphasizes exploiting Uganda's oil and gas reserves as part of the transition strategy, overlooking the negative impacts such projects have on women. In all-host communities, land loss, displacement, and environmental degradation have deepened poverty among women, many of whom lack formal land rights. Moreover, fossil fuel-related climate impacts like longer droughts and food insecurity excessively affect women. Surprisingly, the ETP does not acknowledge these gendered harms nor does it prioritize a shift away from fossil fuels towards renewable energy that could empower women economically.

Another major flaw in the plan is its over-reliance on grid expansion and large solar systems, which are largely unaffordable for poor, rural women. The absence of emphasis on small, off-grid solar solutions means women like Kyomuhendo, who earn less than a dollar a day remain excluded. The ETP also fails to explore how energy can be a tool for women's entrepreneurship or address energy-related gender-based violence, such as sexual abuse near extractive sites. These gaps not only reflect a lack of gender integration but threaten to perpetuate existing inequalities.

Therefore, to make the ETP inclusive and transformative, reforms must be urgently made. The Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development (MEMD) should prioritize renewable energy over fossil fuels, introduce gender-responsive targets, subsidize off-grid options, and decentralize energy services to local governments. Also, the creation of a dedicated energy transition unit would also help coordinate these efforts.

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10 Letter

### Why PDM beneficiaries will struggle to adopt solar energy

The government wants solar power to be a means to generate income and transform people's lives. Solar energy has recently been used for lighting in homes, schools, hospitals and other commercial enterprises.

The commissioner for renewable energy at the Ministry of Energy while giving remarks recently during a district dialogue in Waliso on the productive use of solar energy in the agriculture value chain urged beneficiaries of the Parish Development Model (PDM) to adopt solar energy as a tool to fight poverty in their households.

While this call is timely and constructive, it overlooks the significant challenges that continue to hinder the adoption of solar energy in Uganda, especially among rural communities that the PDM programme seeks to empower.

Uganda undoubtedly has the potential for solar energy, which is a clean and sustainable option to the traditional sources used, especially in these communities.

Solar energy offers immense economic benefits to individuals and is environmentally safe. It has the potential to enhance productivity and economic participation in rural and underserved communities.

Despite the potential for solar to transform people's lives through various income-generating activities, the reality for consumers is different.

Even though solar energy might be affordable to maintain in the long run, the initial investment costs are high for most households. The cost of a basic solar home system that can be used for lighting, phone charging and a few more appliances may not be affordable for many intending consumers.

According to Easy Power, a solar power solutions provider, a basic solar system that can sustain lighting, phone charging and a personal computer costs approximately Shs 5 million and one that can sustain up to a television set and radio costs Shs 6 million, meaning that a system that can be used for commercial purposes is more expensive.

This cost is prohibitively high for a small-scale farmer or a small business owner, depending on the PDM funds for these economic activities.

Many rural areas in Uganda lack infrastructure in terms of technical support for both proper solar installation and maintenance services and as a result even those who manage to purchase the solar systems experience challenges of poor installation, making the maintenance costs even higher. With the availability of unregulated and substandard solar products on the market, which fail after a few months, uninformed buyers from rural communities stand a risk of being exploited.

The above limitations, coupled with a lack of awareness on the available options, benefits and functionality of solar energy systems keeps away potential users.

The government, through the Ministry of Energy must therefore address these challenges that hinder the adoption of solar energy for it to be a tool for economic transformation.

The government should conduct awareness campaigns targeting rural and off-grid communities on the use, benefits, and practicality of solar energy. Solar equipment and technicians should be regulated to ensure that buyers receive standard and lasting products and that installation and maintenance are done by verified technicians at regulated prices.

Additional efforts to increase adoption: The government

Uganda undoubtedly has the potential for solar energy, which is a clean and sustainable option to the traditional sources used, especially in these communities.

By Main Courtsins and Gaspar Ndjock (drawings)

May 22, 2025 at 9:39 a.m.  
Updated May 23, 2025 at 1:22 p.m.  
Reading time: 11 minutes  
World Major projects imposed Energy

Reporting— World

## Total pipeline threatens Africa's largest freshwater lake



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f i o u s and Gaspar Ndjock (drawings)

May 21, 2025 at 9:45 a.m.  
Updated May 22, 2025 at 2:07 p.m.  
Reading time: 8 minutes  
World Energy

Investigation— World

## "I'm afraid my house will collapse": Nakintu, 80, will live 4 meters from the Total pipeline



f i o u s and Gaspar Ndjock (drawings)

May 20, 2025 at 9:57 a.m.  
Updated May 21, 2025 at 3:33 p.m.  
Reading time: 7 minutes  
World Energy

Investigation— World

## Eacop: Total evicts Ugandans... to flood zones



f i o u u

May 23, 2025 at 10:10 a.m.

Updated May 24, 2025 at 9:30 a.m.

Reading time: 12 minutes

World Struggles Energy

## Threats, arrests... The daily life of Ugandan students opposed to Total





## Upcoming events

June 05, 2025; Online: Dissemination of messages in celebration of World Environment Day

June 13, 2025; Kampala: Dissemination of a story booklet about aggrieved oil sector workers

June 21, 2025; Bunyoro and Greater Masaka: Screening of documentary to raise community awareness on how to turn waste into briquettes for clean cooking

June 25, 2025; Kampala: Dissemination of research report on Tourism Vs Oil: Stakeholders' Views, Perceptions and Recommendations

June 27, 2025; Hoima: Establishment of a clean energy hub

June 28, 2025; Kikuube: Engagement with district leaders on influencing the effective implementation of the EU-Uganda forest partnership

June 30, 2025; Online: Court ruling on a case filed by StopEACOP activists against police officers and the Attorney General (AG)

## About AFIEGO

Africa Institute for Energy Governance (AFIEGO) is a non-profit company limited by guarantee that was incorporated under Uganda's Companies Act. AFIEGO undertakes public policy research and advocacy to influence energy policies to benefit the poor and vulnerable. Based in Kampala-Uganda, the non-profit company was born out of the need to contribute to efforts to turn Africa's clean energy potential into reality and to ensure that the common man and woman benefits from this energy boom. Through lobbying, research and community education, AFIEGO works with communities and leaders to ensure that clean energy resources are utilised in a way that promotes equitable development, environmental conservation and respect for human rights.

### Our Vision

A society that equitably uses clean energy resources for socio-economic development

### Our Mission

To promote energy policies that benefit poor and vulnerable communities