

Berlin/Arusha February 6th 2019

PRESS RELEASE

Launch of the Access to Energy Institute (A2EI – www.a2ei.org) – First collaborative research and development platform in the solar offgrid industry

The launch of the Access to Energy Institute was announced today by its founder, Thomas Gottschalk, jointly with its four funders, the IKEA foundation, DOEN foundation, Good Energies Foundation and the Dutch development bank FMO.

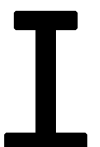
The A2EI is a new organization form in the access to energy space. The A2EI strives to become the first charitable and collaborative research and development platform in the solar offgrid industry.

Millions of households have been equipped with innovative solar solutions developed by the fast growing solar home system industry. However, productive use appliances and larger solar solutions that can empower small businesses and small scale agriculture, create jobs and generate income are still mostly missing. The team at A2EI, which is composed of seasoned solar offgrid pioneers and based both in Berlin and Arusha, is convinced that a non-for-profit and co-development environment, in which commercial returns are not the main rationale, is ideal to invent/develop, build and pilot these solutions.

Next to own R&D projects, the A2EI is putting its technical, personnel and financial resources to the disposition of entrepreneurs who may need a nurturing environment to get from the ideation to the execution phase.

The intellectual property developed within and together with the A2EI will be accessible to the whole sector. Sharing innovation rather than privatizing it seems a prerequisite to foster a much faster adoption and scaling of solar solutions in order to achieve the sustainable development goal number 7 from the United Nations "access to energy for all".

The team around Thomas Gottschalk will strive to forcefully make the point that collaboration can be an important complement to the innovation which emanates from competition. Together with entrepreneurs, inventors, researchers and



A2EI

customers, the A2EI believes it can be much faster when it comes to building the much needed solar generators, solar welding machines, solar agricultural tools and machines, solar cooling solutions and many more.

Thomas Gottschalk, founder and managing director of the A2EI explained: *"Our intended offer, in particular within the A2E Lab in Arusha, is to provide a shovel and bucket in a sandbox to entrepreneurs, inventors and organizations to support the development and research around appliances and energy related service solutions for off- and bad-grid populations and businesses."*

Jolanda van Ginkel, programme manager, IKEA foundation, the main sponsor of the A2EI, said: *"IKEA foundation is supporting the Access to Energy Institute because we believe that a strong non-for-profit R&D hub that concentrates on the development of bold productive use solutions will ultimately empower millions of families living in vulnerable communities afford a better everyday life while protecting the planet."*

Saskia Werther from the DOEN foundation explained: *"The DOEN foundation has made numerous grants and investment decisions in the offgrid space already. The A2EI is a very complementary and new form of organization and will help deliver collaborative solutions to the whole sector that can impact millions of people."*

Stephanie Jones from the Good Energies Foundation added: *"Good Energies Foundation is excited to support the Access to Energy Institute as an independent, non-profit organisation driving technology innovation across the entire small-solar market. It is rare to have an opportunity to support a proven team to launch a new effort with such large potential for impact."*

Idsert Boersma, Director Partnerships for Impact at FMO emphasized: *"The ability of the A2EI to not only pool the innovation and R&D capabilities in the sector, but also to pursue new product development should massively decrease the time to market. It will also enhance the bandwidth of the portfolio for solar solutions and thereby deliver meaningful impact"*.

Stay tuned. And visit our website www.a2ei.org

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IKEA Foundation



IKEA Foundation

The IKEA Foundation (Stichting IKEA Foundation) works to create a better everyday life for the many people. As the philanthropic arm of INGKA Foundation, the owner of the IKEA Group of companies, we focus on improving the lives of vulnerable children by enabling their families to create sustainable livelihoods, and to fight and cope with climate change. Learn more at www.ikeafoundation.org and www.facebook.com/IKEAfoundation



DOEN Foundation

The DOEN Foundation (Stichting DOEN) is a Dutch fund that receives its revenues from three Charity Lotteries. Stichting DOEN supports green, socially-inclusive and creative initiatives that contribute to a better and cleaner world. These initiatives are characterized by their enterprising approach: people, organizations and enterprises that dare to take risks, that are creative and innovatory and thus effectively contribute to our mission. DOEN offers these people financial support, connects them and communicates about their initiatives. www.doen.nl

FMO

Entrepreneurial
Development
Bank

FMO

FMO is the Dutch development bank. As a leading impact investor, FMO supports sustainable private sector growth in developing countries and emerging markets by investing in ambitious projects and entrepreneurs. FMO believes that a strong private sector leads to economic and social development and has a more than 45-year proven track-record of empowering people to employ their skills and improve their quality of life. FMO focuses on three sectors that have high development impact: financial institutions, energy, and agribusiness, food & water. With a committed portfolio of EUR 9.2 billion spanning over 82 countries, FMO is one of the larger bilateral private sector development banks globally. For more information: please visit www.fmo.nl



Good Energies
POWER FOR A BETTER WORLD

Good Energies Foundation

Good Energies Foundation works to prevent climate change and mitigate its harm, especially to people who live in poverty. We focus on two levers that can reverse climate change: clean energy and forest protection. Backed by a family of entrepreneurs, Good Energies Foundation invests in early-stage market solutions and funds efforts to bring successful approaches to scale.