

Solar project for rural communities in South Africa



In 2017, EKOenergy paid €18,000 to a project of African Conservation Trust. The Finnish Siemenpuu Foundation donated another €17,000. The money has been used to bring solar energy to rural communities in South Africa.

Text: Anna Kokareva & African Conservation Trust

Picture: African Conservation Trust

In the rural areas of KwaZulu-Natal, fewer than 50% of households have access to electricity. The remaining families meet their energy needs by using coal, gas, paraffin and/or biomass (wood, cow dung and crop waste). Burning of these fuels releases substances that are harmful. Providing universal access to electricity in rural communities is a key element of poverty eradication.

With the donation from EKOenergy and the Siemenpuu Foundation, African Conservation Trust is promoting the use of renewable energy in the Kwadlakuse and Esikhuthwaneni communities, in Zululand. 130 households now have access to solar lighting. The systems are produced by Tundra Force, a company located in the same province where the project takes place. The solar lighting systems are developed to sustain harsh weather conditions and do not require specific technical skills for installation.

“The majority of the local population is appreciative and eager to adopt the system”, says **Nomfundo Phewa**, project coordinator from African Conservation Trust. “And there are more communities

in the area that lack access to electricity, which indeed should be considered as a basic human right.”

A small refund to the households will ensure that all expired batteries are returned and safely recycled. African Conservation Trust also provides training to promote long term sustainability. And together with the installation of the solar lighting system, they have distributed information also about water saving techniques.

EKOenergy's Climate Fund supports projects that contribute to the realisation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, especially goals 7 (access to clean energy) and 13 (combatting climate change). In this case, also goal 15 (the protection of biodiversity) is very prominent. The communities are located immediately adjacent to the Somkhanda reserve, which is a key biodiversity area. The reserve is home to a high density of leopards and white rhinos, as well as endangered black rhinos, wild dogs and Jozini cycad species. The communities who live adjacent to the reserve play a vital role in the safeguarding of the area.

Climate Fund Projects



Focus on Sustainable Development Goals (7, 13 & 15)



New projects annually in developing countries



Ran and monitored by trusted NGOs



Selected by an independent jury



In 2017, the Fund granted €190,000 for nine new projects



All EKOenergy users contribute €0.10 / MWh to the Fund

EKOenergy - the international ecolabel for renewable energy

EKOenergy is [the international ecolabel](#) for energy. We are a non-profit organisation working to fight climate change, protect biodiversity and realise the Sustainable Development Goals.

Energy sold with the EKOenergy-ecolabel fulfils strict [sustainability criteria](#). Through our ecolabel we also raise money for our Climate Fund, which is used to finance new renewable energy projects in developing countries.

EKOenergy-labelled energy is sold by licensed energy companies and is [available in over 40 countries worldwide](#). Many of the consumers of EKOenergy-labelled energy choose to use our ecolabel on their website or products to demonstrate their commitment to a 100% renewable and sustainable world.

EKOenergy users include large international businesses such as SAP, Tetra Pak, VMware, Workday and Genelec, as well as cities, public organisations and individual households.



Sustainability criteria: additional value for our planet

	EKOenergy	Other renewable	Grid mix
New renewable energy production via our Climate Fund	✓	?	-
Only the most climate-friendly bioenergy	✓	?	-
Wind power outside bird and nature areas	✓	?	-
Hydropower takes into account migratory fish. River restoration projects via our Environmental Fund .	✓	?	-
Renewable energy tracked by EACs, such as GOs and I-RECs. (in line with Greenhouse Gas Protocol Scope 2 Guidance)	✓	✓	-
Wind, solar, hydro, geothermal, bioenergy	✓	✓	?
Fossil fuels, nuclear, possibly renewables	-	-	✓

Endorsed by other standards

EKOenergy is recommended by many international environmental standards such as CDP, the Greenhouse Gas Protocol, Greenkey for hotels and LEED-certification for buildings.

"A growing number of hotels in Europe have already switched to EKOenergy and include the EKOenergy logo in their communication with their guests. Follow their lead and [go the extra mile](#)."

"Ecolabels are a way for companies to do more with their purchases. EKOenergy, mentioned by the GHG protocol Scope 2 guidance, is such an option: it is [a mark of quality](#) which comes on top of tracking certificates."

"EKOenergy represents the [best available option](#) for the sustainable and additional consumption of renewable electricity within Europe."

