



# **GIGAWATT GLOBAL SIGNED PPA FOR A 7.5 MW SOLAR FIELD IN BURUNDI**

Burundi is a relatively small country with low electricity production capacity. Only 2% of the population has access to electricity in their homes. The Government of Burundi has set an ambitious target to reach 20% residential electrification by 2020. One of the more specific goals is to electrify at least 80% of health centers and secondary schools in off-grid areas using photovoltaic.

EEP supported the Dutch-American Project Developer Gigawatt Global (GWG) in Burundi to carry out a feasibility study for the development of a 7.5 MW grid-connected solar photovoltaic field on Mirama hill in Mubuga, Gitega province. With the help of EEP grant GWG conducted a grid study, a site access and topography study, a geotech study and a hydrology study and secured the required land use permits. Furthermore, the Environmental and Social Impact Assessment is completed and awaiting official approval to complement the feasibility study.

In May 2015 GWG reached an important achievement when it signed a 25-year Power Purchase Agreement (PPA), Concession Agreement and Government Guaranty with the Government of Burundi. According to estimates, when completed the solar field is expected to increase Burundi's electricity generating capacity by approximately 14% and supply 70 000-80 000 households with electricity. The significant increase in the electricity supply will be much needed to reduce cost and business interruptions for businesses connected to the grid, as it will reduce the frequent black-outs in Burundi. GWG was also the first successful developer of an 8.5 MW solar PV in the neighboring Rwanda.

The political situation in Burundi during the course of the project has been very challenging and turbulent. Despite the unrest and a travel ban following a coup attempt GWG has managed to keep up their work and believe in the accomplishment of the project. The project financing is nearing completion and the construction phase of the project is expected to start in the beginning of 2017.

In terms of employment opportunities, the project is expected to contribute to creating 200 jobs in the plant construction phase, 50 permanent jobs and at least 5,000-6,000 indirect jobs across the country from increasing Burundi's industrial production capacity.

In November 2015 GWG organized a local kick-off event for the community living around the site. The event contained a soccer game and GWG's Vice President Finance, Michael Fichtenberg, was also present as the master of ceremony for the event. In June 2016 GWG started their Corporate Social Responsibility program by sponsoring health insurance for the communities surrounding the future plant.

Learn more about Gigawatt Global's projects on their [website](#).