

The Clean Energy Challenge in 2020

In the first of its 10-year ambition, the [Clean Energy Challenge \(CEC\)](#) was transformed from aspiration to mechanism for implementation. It is now one step further towards its goal to bring affordable, reliable, and sustainable energy to all settlements of forcibly displaced people and nearby host communities by 2030. This aligns UNHCR and partners with SDG7 of the 2030 transformative Agenda (the Decade of Action). The 2020 has seen an increase in membership from 30 to 250 stakeholders and concrete progress on three workstreams of the CEC: data, financing, and clean energy project development. The CEC is essentially the externalization of UNHCR's [Global Strategy for Sustainable Energy](#), having recognized that partnerships are key to achieve the goals. UNHCR has therefore taken on the role as catalyst among other UN agencies, NGOs and private sector actors to realize the ambitious goals and co-facilitate the Challenge with the [UNITAR's GPA secretariat](#) and support from Deloitte as pro bono strategic partner.

Key Moments in 2020

CEC Members Meetings

The CEC kicked off the year 2020 with a hybrid (in-person and virtual) meeting with the CEC members at the UNHCR premises. The CEC secretariat presented the structure of the challenge and introduced the three workstreams (data, financing, and project pipeline) as a driver of the challenge. Several governments, private companies, international NGOs, academic institutions and UN agencies participated the meeting and acknowledged the need for collective actions to provide clean energy solutions to the forcibly displaced population. In the subsequent action group meeting in April, CEC members together discussed the governance structure and entry points for the different stakeholders, and set the key priorities for three workstreams in the year 2020.

Establishing the CEC Marketplace

In the event of COVID-19 pandemic, increased demand for clean energy services to improve the health situation was observed. The CEC responded immediately by launching a [Marketplace event](#) to match-make the demand of energy needs and emerging projects from implementing partners to the supply of resources existing in the action group (including funding, financing, technical expertise, project development expertise, in kind support, equipment/transport support, etc).



Several organizations pitched their projects for support and collaboration. These projects were focused on electrifying health care centers, solarizing boreholes and water pumps, providing clean cooking facilities in the refugee camps, etc.

The marketplace successfully opened the opportunity to different stakeholders to discuss and participate in providing support and suggestions on the methodologies for sustainable energy interventions. To utilize the potential for increased collaboration and facilitate the match-making processes, three more marketplace events were organized over the year where more than 15 different organizations pitched dozens of project proposals/ideas for clean energy interventions in displacement settings. [In collaboration with the Dutch Coalition for Humanitarian Innovation](#), 13 Netherlands based organization presented energy project ideas for comments and support to the members in a special 'Laboratory' edition of the Marketplace. Along with the rising awareness of the clean energy solutions, these marketplace meetings have successfully brought different sectors in the field together in one platform and created a channel for improved cooperation.

Activities on Data Workstream

The CEC has also been working together on harmonising data collection and analysis processes and coordinate energy needs assessments to deliver a set of investable energy programmes that enable cleaner cooking and electrification for displaced and host communities. In conjunction with this harmonisation process, the UNHCR is working on mapping energy needs to refine the initial baseline and identify sites for integrated energy programmes with WASH, Shelter, education and health sectors. As the importance of the humanitarian energy data has been discussed in a great number of occasions, the CEC organized an event to share information of data availability, discuss data indicators and build partnership in harmonizing the data. More than 55 personnel from different organization participated in the meeting.

Member States Briefing

To discuss the actions necessary for achieving the goal, the member states including the donor governments and the refugee hosting governments had come together in a meeting organized in September, hosted by Norway. Call to action for both short-term and long-term were expressed in the meeting and willingness for contributions was shared by different government officials. More than 80 individuals participated in the meeting consisted of government officials and personnel from the permanent missions to the UN in Geneva. The recording, [factsheet](#) and readout can be found [here](#).



[Find more about the CEC and its activities here.](#)

Support from Partners

Contributions from Private Sector

Private sector partners Borealis and Deloitte have invested significant resources, while Schneider Electric and Victron Energy have, among others, contributed expertise to help develop prospects for clean energy access in displacement settings. Mercy Corps, as part of the Smart Communities Coalition GRF pledge, is developing a project to bring market-based clean energy solutions to refugee camps, where the Government is making strides to fulfil its own GRF pledge to support such solutions for both refugees and host communities. SELCO Foundation has been proving expertise in project development and idea generation through this platform.

Contributions from Governments

Several governments have made marked efforts to [fulfil their pledges](#). For example, Uganda is progressing on their pledge to promote inclusive and sustainable management of natural resources and ecosystems through integrating the refugee settlements into the national Sustainable Energy Response plan and Water and Environment Sector Response Plan for Refugees and Host Communities.

Norway, for example, continued in 2020 its role as instrumental driver of the Clean Energy Challenge, providing political, technical, operational and financial support, and hosted a virtual briefing for Member States this September to review progress since the CEC's launch. Norway also fulfilled its GRF pledge to support innovation for the greening of humanitarian responses by contributing 29 million NOK out of a total of 52 million to this end through its Humanitarian Innovation Program and is continuing to finance NORCAP

deployments of energy experts to humanitarian operations. In addition, Norway also kindly provides the core funding for the Coordination Unit of the Global Plan of Action (see below).

Germany is fulfilling its pledge to the GRF through financial and technical resources provided in the multi-year Energy Solutions for Displacement Settings program in Kenya, Uganda and Ethiopia, delivering on the humanitarian-development-peace nexus.

Canada has also achieved its goal to update their humanitarian assistance funding application guidelines for 2021 onwards to clean energy options in line with UNHCR's sustainable energy strategy and the Clean Energy Challenge.

Contributions of the Joint CEC Secretariat: UNHCR and UNITAR-GPA

UNITAR, in its role as the Coordination Unit of the [Global Plan of Action for Sustainable Energy in Displacement Settings](#), is fulfilling its GRF pledge to manage inter-agency processes towards the development of a de-risking finance mechanism for the decarbonization of humanitarian energy infrastructure, and towards streamlining the way energy data is reported across agencies. Seven knowledge-sharing webinars were hosted in 2020 despite challenges presented by the global pandemic. UNHCR as co-lead of the Clean Energy Challenge served as a catalyst and facilitator of initiatives such as these that are in the spirit of the Global Compact on Refugees, which includes advocacy, fundraising, communication, partnership, legal and technical support.

Looking Forward into 2021

The Clean Energy Challenge will only be delivered through deliberate, multi-stakeholder action to meet the energy demands of forcibly displaced and hosting communities. Building on the foundations laid in 2020 in which the CEC has grown as a campaign, movement and marketplace for multi-stakeholder collaboration, the CEC focus in 2021 will shift from supporting ad hoc projects to a more systematic country led approach aiming to increase investment in clean energy access for displacement contexts. In this regard, governments, the international community and private sector are called on to get involved in the CEC and adopt the Challenge goals in order to accelerate progress and meet the energy demands of forcibly displaced communities across the globe. Please contact the CEC Secretariat if you are interested in learning more on how to get involved by emailing energy@unitar.org.

Clean Energy Challenge

Canada

REPÚBLICA PORTUGUESA

Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF DENMARK

The Federal Government

Netherlands Enterprise Agency

WORLD BANK GROUP

endev

UNHCR

World Food Programme

unitar

United Nations Institute for Training and Research

GPA

GLOBAL PLAN OF ACTION

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

IOM

UN MIGRATION

WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM

MECS

Modern Energy Cooking Services

Schneider Electric

SNV

Deloitte

ENERGY FOR ALL

IKEA Foundation

NRC

NORWEGIAN REFUGEE COUNCIL

CLEAN COOKING ALLIANCE

ICVA

International Council of Voluntary Agencies

WORLD RESOURCES INSTITUTE

KUBE ENERGY

DRC DANISH REFUGEE COUNCIL

accenture

actalliance

UNEP DTU PARTNERSHIP

Practical ACTION

MERCY CORPS

MILLENNIUM WATER ALLIANCE

SAFE

SMART COMMUNITIES COALITION

OXFAM

THE GLOBAL LPG PARTNERSHIP

SOLIDARITÉS INTERNATIONALES

CRS

CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES

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The Clean Energy Challenge is a campaign and joint challenge launched to accelerate progress toward the goals of the Global Plan of Action Sustainable Energy Solutions in Situations of Displacement (GPA) <https://www.humanitarianenergy.org>, which catalyzes actions to achieve energy access for all displaced populations and their hosts by 2030.