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## **AFD and Investisseurs & Partenaires launch the program *I&P digital energy*, with a €4 million funding by the European Commission**

The Agence Française de Développement (AFD) and Investisseurs & Partenaires (I&P), in partnership with Gaia Impact Fund, are announcing the launch of *I&P Digital Energy*, a program designed to support the growth and development of a dozen start-ups and SMEs that offer solutions combining new digital technologies and access to energy in Sub-Saharan Africa.

*I&P Digital Energy* is the seed financing component of the Digital Energy Facility, a programme funded by the European Commission and implemented by the French Development Agency. Through the financing of innovative digital projects and products, the Facility aims to support the integration of renewable energy sources into the grid, increase access to energy, improve the performance of public services and reduce technical and commercial losses.

### **Financing and supporting the energy transition in Africa**

The program *I&P Digital Energy* targets start-ups and SMEs that **provide digital-based solutions for affordable, modern and stable energy access** for the greatest number of people. The program will address the challenges of financing, capacity building and structuring of these enterprises, so as to promote **job creation, investment-readiness and scaling-up**.

This ambitious €4 million program will benefit **a dozen start-ups and SMEs** operating in Sub-Saharan Africa and South-East Asia.

This initiative will help to **accelerate growth and support innovation** for start-ups and SMEs in the energy sector. Ultimately, it should generate a financing leverage effect for start-up companies and offer new access to energy to 150,000 people, thus contributing to the emergence of new energy consumption habits.

*“The energy sector, especially electricity, is facing fundamental changes, which have disrupted the structure of the network: from a centralized to a decentralized power grid, mono-directional to multi-directional, carbon-based to decarbonized, production-centered to a consumer-centric network. Digitalization is crucial in this new flexible and decentralized energy network”* -- Excerpt from AFD's *Digital Energy Facility* program

*I&P Digital Energy* has been designed around **two complementary components**:

- ▶ **Seed financing with an average amount of €300,000 per company**, in the form of reimbursable loans, to meet its financing needs during the acceleration phase
- ▶ **Strategic support** and capacity building

### **A committed implementation consortium with strong local roots**

*I&P Digital Energy* is the seed financing component of the **Digital Energy Facility programme, funded by the European Union and implemented by the French Development Agency**. Its deployment in the target countries is ensured by **Investisseurs & Partenaires (I&P)**, a group specializing in financing and supporting SMEs in Sub-Saharan Africa.

*I&P Digital Energy* will be locally deployed by I&P in 10 African countries. **Gaia Impact Fund**, a venture capital firm specializing in renewable energy in Africa and Asia, will also participate in the implementation of this program as an expert in the sector.

## About



**Investisseurs & Partenaires** is a pioneering impact investment group, created in 2002 and entirely dedicated to Sub-Saharan Africa. It targets the "missing link" of the African economic fabric and provides small and medium-sized enterprises with flexible financing solutions covering their needs, which vary from a few thousand euros to several million euros. The program will be coordinated by **I&P Entrepreneurs et Développement**, a non-profit organization launched and managed by I&P, which aims to encourage and support entrepreneurship in sub-Saharan Africa and which is aimed at entrepreneurs in the earliest stages of their entrepreneurial adventure as well as at those still in the acceleration or incubation phases. [Learn more.](#)

**Agence Française de Développement Group** (AFD Group) implements France's policy in the areas of development and international solidarity. It finances, supports and accelerates transitions towards a more coherent and resilient world. AFD teams are active in more than 4,000 projects in the field – in overseas France, in some 115 countries and in crisis areas, working to promote the "common goods" that are climate, biodiversity, peace, gender equality, education and health. It's our way of contributing to the commitment France and the French people have made to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. [Learn more.](#)

**The Digital Energy Facility** is a program funded by **the European Union** and implemented by AFD. It aims to finance digital innovation projects and products in the energy sector. The Facility offers a full range of complementary instruments to support energy operators and start-ups in their digitalization process: technical assistance projects, calls for projects, networking opportunities and seed/pre-seed funding. [Learn more.](#)

**Gaia Impact Fund** is a venture capital firm specializing in renewable energy. It invests and builds long-term partnerships with start-ups and SMEs operating in Sub-Saharan Africa and South-East Asia with a strong environmental and social focus, alongside the renewable energy value chain: small decentralized solar systems, productive uses of energy, solar mini-grids, commercial and industrial solar installations, clean tech, etc. Gaia Impact Fund was created by a team of entrepreneurs specialized in renewable energy and social impact investing. Since 2017, it has invested in 12 innovative companies and is actively pursuing its investment strategy with a high social and environmental impact. [Learn more.](#)

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