



## SEED Initiative

promoting entrepreneurship for sustainable development

Founding Partners



## LOW CARBON WINNER 2014

The enterprise overcomes the obstacle of last-mile distribution of solar energy products by providing solar energy solutions to rural communities using a full service distribution infrastructure. Through partner collaboration, the enterprise trains rural entrepreneurs, funds innovative development projects and provides after-sales services to customers.



## Switch ON – ONergy, India

### BUSINESS MODEL

Through the establishment of Renewable Energy Centres (REC), the enterprise increases awareness on solar power and sells its own affordable solar energy products like solar micro-grids and lanterns. Rural entrepreneurs are trained at the centres to market the products to off-grid village households. Product financing is facilitated through national banks, MFIs and credit co-operatives.

The enterprise nurtures the development of solar energy products, rural development and the creation of a strong service and after-sales infrastructure. Below-the-poverty-line households are provided with these products free of charge.

### ENTERPRISE FAST FACTS

Location	West Bengal, Jharkhand and Odisha
Year founded	2008
Sector	Energy / Renewables
Product / Service	Solar energy products

### Social impacts:

- Increasing access to clean energy for 2,500 households living below the poverty line.
- Increasing entrepreneurial opportunities for 500 rural community members, including 100 women.
- Reducing health risks due to decreased use of kerosene as a fuel source.

### Environmental impacts:

- Reducing three tonnes of carbon dioxide by decreasing fossil fuel use.
- Preserving biodiversity by reducing dependence on firewood.

### Economic impacts:

- Creating direct employment opportunities for 200 individuals.
- Increasing farmers' agricultural yields and hence income by 20–35 % through solar irrigation.
- Reducing health care costs by preventing respiratory illnesses.
- Fostering an income generation in the range of USD 17–200 per month and entrepreneur.

### Contact

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” Our programme has allowed rural entrepreneurs find self-employment. They are now earning Rs. 1,000–8,000 per month.

### Scaling up activities:

- Develop new technologies, including a solar irrigation pump set, solar computers and energy-efficient industrial lighting. The pump set is being developed in collaboration with local governments and non-profit organisations. The solar computers will utilise low-energy monitors. The industrial lighting system would decrease consumption by 60 %.
- Expand operations to the state of Bihar.
- Set up 35 more Renewable Energy Centres (REC) in the three states the enterprise currently operates in and potentially Bihar.
- Increase training activities on the installation and repair of solar solutions, mostly for trained electricians to become solar energy technicians, while also providing training on the marketing and maintenance of solar products solely for entrepreneurs. A special programme, called Solar Didis, specifically targets the training of women entrepreneurs.



” We have trained over 1,000 rural entrepreneurs, including 200 women, and have forged partnerships with 250 NGOs, 4 MFIs and 2 credit co-operatives.



### Partnership

• **Switch ON** conducts impact assessments, advocates at the national and state level, raises awareness on renewable energy in the intervention areas, nurtures innovation projects and builds capacity through the training of rural entrepreneurs.

• **The Orissa Tribal Empowerment and Livelihoods Programme**, coordinated by the government of Orissa, seeks to improve the livelihoods of marginalised groups living below the poverty line, like women and tribal communities. It helps to integrate women into the production and distribution of solar products.

• **The World Wildlife Fund India (WWF India)** promotes renewable energy solutions in order to mitigate climate change, and collaborates with the enterprise to raise awareness about climate change risks in West Bengal and Odisha.



Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety

The 2014 SEED Low Carbon Awards are largely supported by the International Climate Initiative (ICI) of the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety (BMUB).

### About the SEED Initiative

The SEED Initiative identifies and supports promising small scale social and environmental entrepreneurs around the globe, entrepreneurs who while working towards a greener economy also tackle poverty, marginalisation and social exclusion. SEED provides these entrepreneurs with know-how and networks, taking the lessons learnt at local level up to decision-makers to promote evidence-based policy making. For more information please write to [info@seedinit.org](mailto:info@seedinit.org) or visit:

[www.seedinit.org](http://www.seedinit.org)

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