



# NIRAS supports SDG 7

**7** AFFORDABLE AND  
CLEAN ENERGY





## NIRAS – engaging with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Owned by a foundation and a portion of its employees, NIRAS is an international multidisciplinary consultancy firm with Scandinavian roots and values. For more than 45 years, NIRAS International Consulting has been committed to the development of innovative and sustainable solutions for our clients and society. In the more than 300 projects we help implement in Africa, Asia Pacific, Europe, and Latin America annually, the SDGs and their individual targets guide our activities in development cooperation.

Our values and continued focus on delivering sustainable solutions for people, the environment and society are embraced by the UN Global Compact. We consider the Compact's ten universal principles as a natural way of doing business. These principles steer our actions in respecting fundamental human and labour rights, showing responsibility towards the environment, and resisting all forms of corruption.

NIRAS's continued efforts to ensure sustainable development are in line with the SDGs and support Agenda 2030. In every sector we ask ourselves if we can introduce new services where we – together with our partners and clients – can contribute to this global development agenda.

**NIRAS's solutions are addressing the major societal challenges of our time and are directly contributing to the UN's 17 SDGs.**



Today, we deliver technical assistance to over 100 countries annually – a project portfolio managed by more than 400 permanent staff. Our network of external experts approaches 25,000 development professionals worldwide, and our 51 offices in 27 countries support long-term partnerships and build local capacity in the countries where we work.

**In every sector we ask ourselves if we can introduce new services where, together with clients, we can contribute to the development goals.**

Through our work, we aim at visibly improving livelihoods and developing resilient future societies that are inclusive, stable, well-governed, and climate-smart.

The green growth and circular economy initiatives we work on with our partners address climate change through adaptation, mitigation, and building of resilience. At the same time, they also promote job creation and generate wealth. We integrate human rights-based approaches and structured capacity-development and skills transfer into our projects and work closely with institutions to develop expertise within agricultural sector reform, private sector development, and peace, security and governance processes.

We incorporate the UN SDGs in all our activities and measure their impact on society and the environment. We believe that aligning our work with the SDGs enables us to identify and deliver solutions that contribute to a more sustainable and equitable world – a fundamental objective of NIRAS employees.



## Fuelling human development in a smart and sustainable way

Since introducing the historic Paris Agreement in 2015, the international community has been coming together to take concerted and more urgent action towards addressing climate change and supporting sustainable development. This commitment can be seen in public and private sector efforts to reduce emissions and mitigate the negative environmental and socio-economic effects of human activity. The complex structure of the present global interlinkages and interdependencies amongst nations poses both a challenge and an opportunity to find unifying solutions to some of the world's most pressing problems. When the United Nations' General Assembly defined the most important fields within its Sustainable Development Goals, some were undoubtedly on the top of the list, among them was *Sustainable Energy for All*.

The presence of energy in its various forms, particularly since industrialisation, has been a key driver of change in modern society. Continuous advancements in this sector enable nations to progress from developing to developed status. However this growth and advancement has come at a significant cost to our natural resources, and immediate and urgent corrective action needs to occur to ensure we stop depleting these precious resources while supporting the vision of prosperity for all.

NIRAS has been playing an increasingly important role in this transition story. Acting on a truly global scale for almost 50 years, we offer tailored solutions to and collaborate with governments in their pursuit of a cleaner, more efficient, and informed energy sector management.

Bearing in mind the SDGs' intention to foster global partnerships and eventually engage the entire world - regardless of an economy's state of development - the challenge of delivering sustainable energy constitutes one of the predominant opportunities for the human race.

In line with the SDGs, our services focus on three key intervention areas: access to energy, renewable energy, and energy efficiency. Access to energy in particular has a strong developmental impact as it deals with the realities of society and people on the ground. It demands a high level of analysis, understanding and sensitivity to carry out successful missions that have a lasting impact. NIRAS utilises its interdisciplinary strength from a variety of related competences to apply the right mix of considerations when executing such projects. The cross-cutting SDG targets of 'investment' (SDG 7A) and 'technology' (SDG 7B) play a crucial role in this respect. One of our key capabilities is the management of investments in clean energy initiatives - an important service that has become one of the most effective approaches for stimulating the growth of the sustainable energy sector.

Bolstered by our vast network of offices across the globe, our expertise in investment planning, green financing, and policy analysis has been used to support various multi- and bilateral development agencies, national and subnational governments and private players in a variety of countries to mainstream clean energy planning and decision-making into their development roadmaps and strategies. This form of capacity development in the energy sector gains importance as more and more governments aim to shift from fossil fuels to clean energy.

Besides effecting the transition to clean energy, another key pillar of SDG7 is increasing investment in energy efficiency. With the focus on energy efficiency in buildings and industry, NIRAS can help clients tap into the opportunities that energy efficiency brings, particularly in new and emerging markets, offering technical support for the retrofitting of buildings, the development of building codes, or the training of officials.

In this booklet we highlight six examples covering the different SDG7 areas of energy access, renewable energy, and energy efficiency that also showcase our spread of clients and geographic locations. The selected projects further document NIRAS's commitment to be active in underserved and burgeoning markets, being flexible and acting according to our clients' needs.

# 7

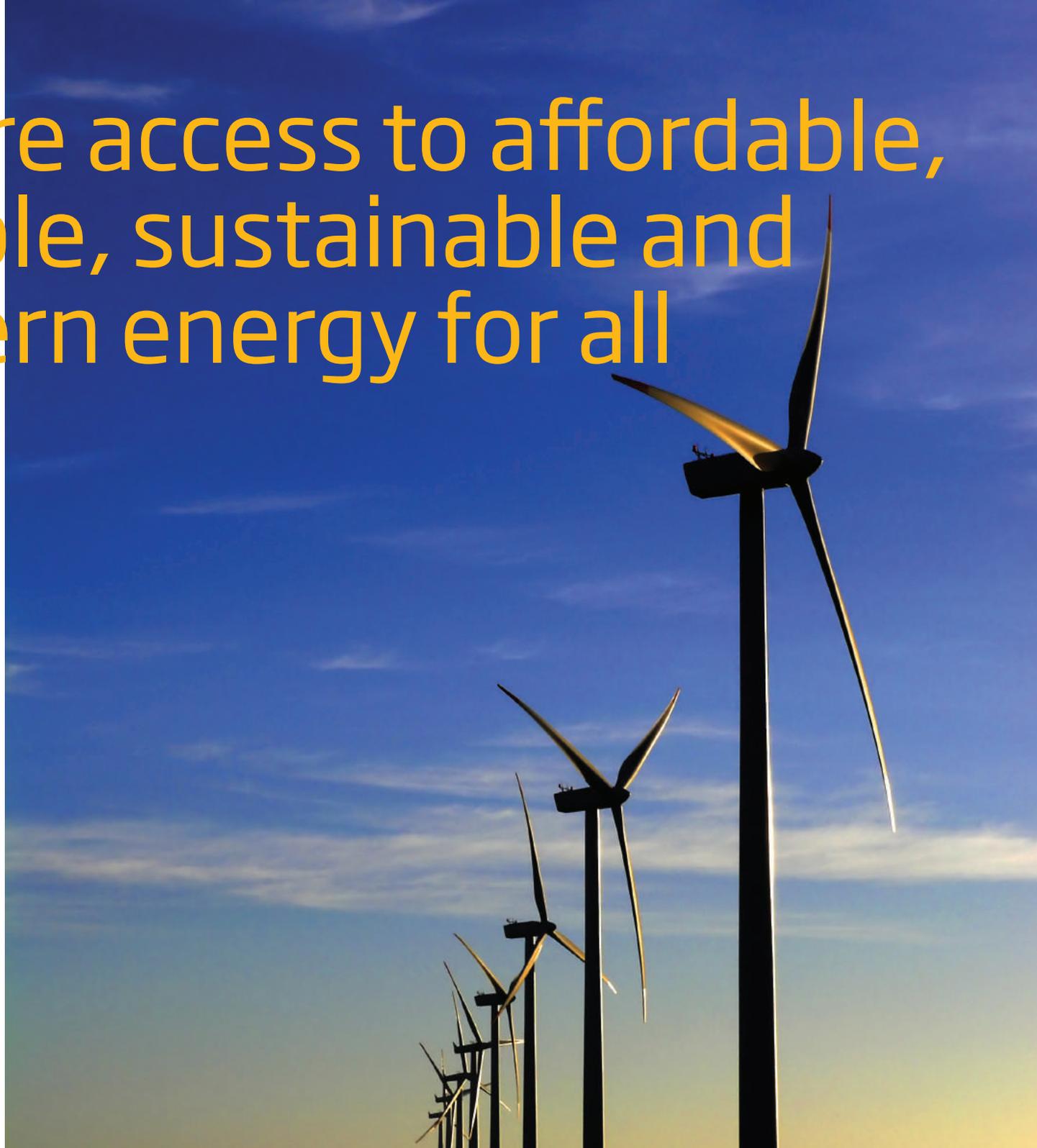
Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all

## Presenting

Six projects

Six countries

Six ways towards a more sustainable future





## Unleashing funding beyond the grid in a young West-African energy sector

The francophone country of Benin is rather a late-comer to the international industry of sustainable energy. The Millennium Challenge Account in Benin contracted NIRAS to implement the Off-Grid Clean Energy Facility (OCEF), funded by the Millennium Challenge Corporation. Through the Facility, NIRAS contributes directly to SDG 7.1, 7.2, 7.3, 7.A, and 7.B, helping to provide clean, affordable electricity - in a country where only 17% of the rural population has access to electricity - as well as more energy efficient buildings and production.

NIRAS implements two calls for proposals to award a total grant amount of more than US\$32 million. The efficient management of the calls and the grants is ensured via innovative fund management practices using our in-house fund management and monitoring and evaluation software, SmartME. The Challenge Fund addresses viable projects that can contribute at least 25% of the project costs themselves and guarantee an economic rate of return of at least 10%. The funding is linked to a results-based payment scheme to engage projects to meet their goals. Therefore, for each project, individual milestones are set to take into account all project specifics.

OCEF has four windows targeting different needs:

**Window 1:** Essential public infrastructure, such as water treatment and pumping facilities, street lighting, hospitals, public health clinics, courts, universities, schools, and other community infrastructure.

**Window 2:** Decentralised generation and distribution of electricity, via mini-grids or micro-grids for community and / or productive uses.

**Window 3:** Household energy systems: Support to businesses that import, sell, distribute, install and repair household-level photovoltaic (PV) technologies, such as solar home-systems.

**Window 4:** Energy efficiency measures: Support to companies that supply energy efficient appliances and equipment to reduce lifecycle costs for electricity customers and energy demand both on and off the grid.

**CLIENT**  
Millennium Challenge  
Account - Benin II

**COUNTRY**  
Benin

**LOCATION**  
Cotonou

**DURATION**  
2017-2022



In an effort to ensure off-grid development, the eligible projects in Windows 1-3 must be located at least 7 kilometres from the existing electricity grid.

With successful implementation of the shortlisted projects, we are expecting to see the development of mini grids in 128 villages and the deployment of 65,000 solar home systems, allowing more than 700,000 people to access affordable and reliable electricity. The total costs of the projects amounts to US\$86 million, meaning that the OCEF funds have contributed to leveraging a significant private sector investment (over US\$52 million)."

Robert van der Plas, OCEF team leader

OCEF also provides technical assistance to applicants, both during the submission process and after award, to strengthen the planning, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation of the projects. Overall, the Facility generates important trickle-down effects contributing to economic development (SDG 8) and a technological and innovative step forward (SDG 9) for Benin. Furthermore, the Facility supports SDG 1 (coverage of basic needs for light, security and information), SDG 3 (provision of better health servicing through light, cooling of vaccines, instrument sterilisation, and retention of health staff), SDG 4 (increasing quality of education thanks to light for evening and night classes), and SDG 6 (co-financing of projects for electric-powered water pumps and drip irrigation). Projects that use electricity to better store food (cooling, drying) and solar PV projects that are required to ensure safe handling of used batteries contribute to SDG 12 (responsible consumption and production). NIRAS has designed the Facility so that proposals that place women in leadership positions or specifically address women's needs are given additional points in the evaluation process (SDG 5 on gender equality).

**CLIENT**

Ministry for Foreign Affairs Finland

**COUNTRIES**

Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, Vietnam, and Myanmar in phase 2

**LOCATION**

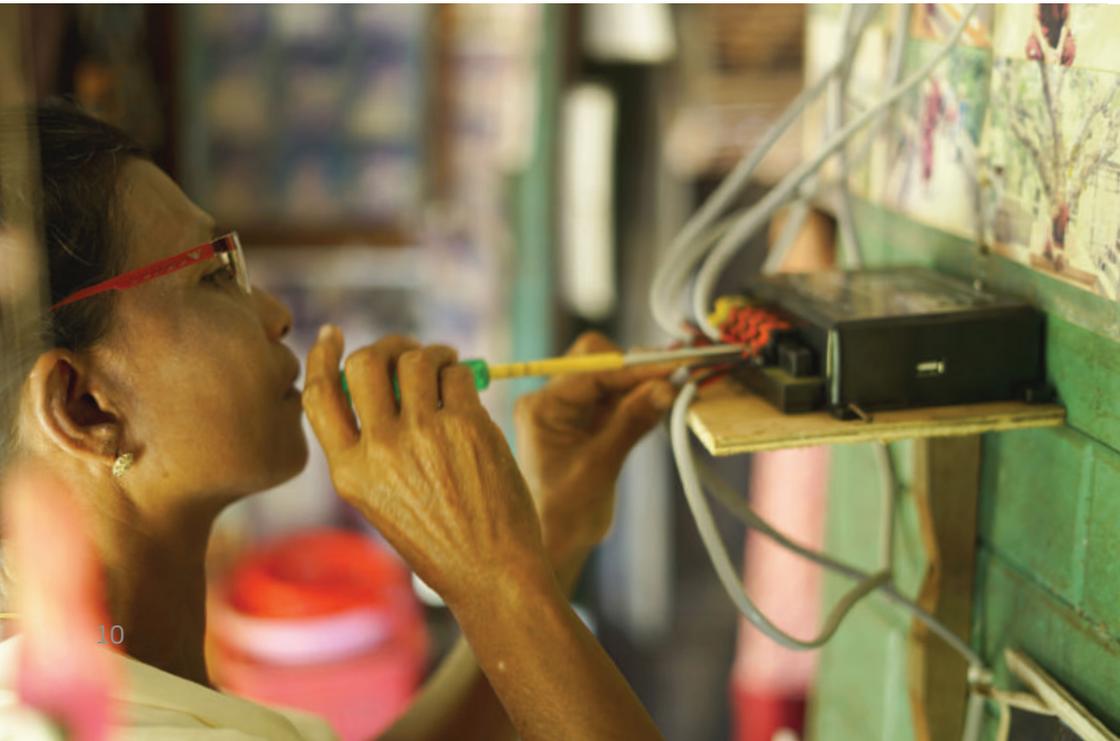
Mekong region

**DURATION**

Phase I: 2009–2012; Phase II: 2014–2019



# Catalysing public and private finance to energise the development of a multi-country region



“The EEP Mekong Programme not only contributed to the success of several landmark projects but was the catalyst that made them happen.”

Gustaf Godenhjelm, the RE Power Group



The Energy and Environment Partnership (EEP) with the Mekong region was one of NIRAS's flagship projects in the sustainable energy sector. With a wide palette of actions, it touches on all SDG7 goals (SDG 7.1, 7.2, 7.3, 7.A, 7.B). Covering the five Greater Mekong Subregion countries - Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam - it primarily focused on financing energy initiatives in both renewable energy and energy efficiency.

In the short- and medium-term, EEP Mekong supported mostly SDGs 7, 11, and 13. Over time, the impacts from the provision of renewable energy and the mitigation of climate change will contribute to other SDGs, especially SDG 1, 2, 3, 5, and 8. This will be facilitated through the catalyst effect of the financing achievements with a grant average of €6.2 million to projects valued at €14.1 million in Phase I (ratio of 2.3) and even increasing to a ratio of 3.6 in Phase II, granting €4.1 million to projects with an overall value of €14.8 million.

In line with EEP Mekong's overall objectives, the funded projects contribute to significant reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. Some of EEP Mekong's supported projects also demonstrated how air pollution from decomposing waste - particularly from agro-industrial production - can be reduced in an economically feasible way. About 190,000 people benefited directly or indirectly from project activities, for example through access to renewable energy, employment, training, and health benefits from a cleaner environment. The array of undertaken feasibility studies in the countries predominantly focused around waste-to-energy (W2E) and biomass technology. Overall, 7 MW of electricity and biogas was generated throughout Phase II, and 141,000 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>e was avoided annually.

Besides the technical achievements that the EEP supported, the initiative strived to create lasting partnerships and dialogue in the region. Via capacity-building activities, high-level meetings and study tours, the EEP Mekong project built skills and expertise among project developers and sectoral agencies, and it will remain a reference point within the NIRAS portfolio.

**EEP Mekong Objectives**

- To deploy sustainable and affordable clean energy solutions while mitigating climate change
- To support access to clean energy and thereby improve quality of life in rural and semi-urban areas
- To help start-up initiatives and those that are close to commercial maturity reach viability and scale-up
- To promote innovation in renewable energy and energy efficiency
- To build partnerships between Mekong region countries and Finland (amongst others)
- To encourage knowledge exchange and build skills in developing sustainable clean energy projects

# Enhancing Turkey's institutional capacity in energy efficiency

## CLIENT

European Commission

## COUNTRY

Turkey

## LOCATION

Ankara

## DURATION

2019–2021



Two NIRAS offices in Poland and Norway have combined their expertise in energy efficiency to strengthen staff capacity at Turkey's Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources (MENR) Department of Energy Efficiency and Environment (DEEE) to support implementation of EU Directive 2012/27/EU on energy efficiency. Funded by the EU, this €3.5M project is a jewel in NIRAS's energy portfolio and an important step for Turkey in its effort to create a more efficient and sustainable economy.

The project focuses on three key pillars: (1) strategy development for energy efficiency interventions, (2) data collection and modelling skills, and (3) performance monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. Through the revision of the National Energy Efficiency Action Plan (NEEAP) and the provision of large-scale trainings - based on a thorough needs-assessment - to increase practical skills among MENR personnel and other relevant bodies, the project will enhance the capacity of the DEEE to implement energy efficiency strategies across the country. It further seeks to develop a methodology to calculate energy-saving potentials and a model for energy efficiency projections as well as improving measuring, monitoring and evaluation infrastructure to create a sound energy performance monitoring mechanism. Introducing modelling software helps to achieve goal SDG 7.B, the use of innovative technology for sustainable development.

The increase in energy savings effectively has a knock-on effect, and the project has contributed to skills transfer for savings in the infrastructure, transport and agricultural sectors (SDGs 2, 9, 11 and 12).



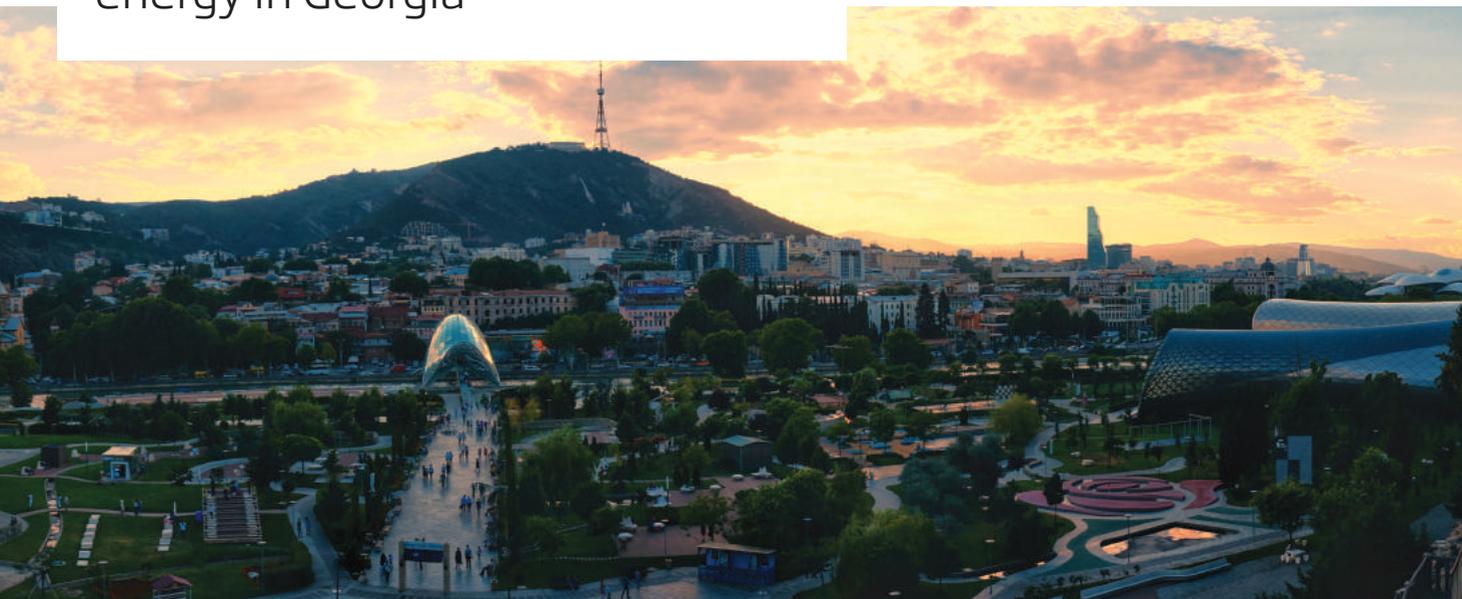
The project is filled with ambitious activities including 17 training sessions of 3–4 days each, ten onsite trainings, covering various sectors of the economy, and five study visits to EU member states to make full use of international best practice. It also involves awareness raising, stakeholder engagement and interdisciplinary action.

Besides achieving the project's intrinsic goals, NIRAS supports in the adoption of a wide set of regulations, paving the way for convergence with EU law. The project is an important one for Turkey, as it addresses the burning issues of its growing economy, and a key one for NIRAS as it strengthens our long-established and well-recognised position as a top contractor for the Turkish authorities, successfully implementing large and complex technical assistance projects.

Turkey is the world's sixteenth largest economy and the sixth largest economy in Europe. Its energy demand increased the most among the OECD countries in the last ten years. After China, Turkey has had the second biggest demand increase in electricity and natural gas since 2002. Projections indicate that this trend will continue in the medium- and long-term as well. In the short-term, Turkey aims to reduce primary energy consumption by 14%.



# Supporting engagement in energy efficiency and sustainable energy in Georgia



## CLIENT

Danida

## COUNTRY

Georgia

## LOCATION

Tbilisi

## DURATION

2016–2020



## 7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY



In support of Georgia's continued membership of the Energy Community – an international organisation which brings together the EU and its neighbours to create an integrated pan-European energy market – NIRAS advises the government on energy policy. With the underlying objective to achieve its climate goals, the Georgian national plan aims to raise sustainable energy and energy efficiency standards.

The four major intervention areas of the innovative plan concern the (1) formulation of a new national energy efficiency building code, (2) legislation on labelling of energy-related products and its delegated acts, (3) methodology for monitoring and reporting, which is compliant with national and EU standards, and (4) a national grid code regulation and standards that enable electricity from renewable energy sources (particularly wind energy) to feed into the national power grid. Based on lessons learned throughout the project and the client's flexible approach, adjustments were made to the plan and three additional components were introduced: (5) project management (Steering Committee function), (6) climate change mitigation and financing (support to the implementation of the Paris Agreement), and (7) an ecodesign law based on the EU's Ecodesign Directive. The additions have proven successful and are based on best practice from other European countries.

Besides fulfilling policy goals, the project has effectively achieved reduced energy consumption and operating costs. The energy labelling component is enhancing awareness among consumers of product efficiencies, which will lead to an expected reduction in energy consumption at the national level. Thanks to a thorough building sector analysis by the NIRAS team, indoor comfort in public buildings was improved, directly leading to increased productivity of users. An Energy Efficiency Law is expected to be adopted to secure these outcomes, all of which contribute to SDG 7.3 (double the global rate of improvement in energy efficiency by 2030).

The energy statistics component of the plan, which was completed in 2019, has led to better forecasting and evidence-based decision-making. The newly developed grid code will play a crucial role in decreasing reliance on imported energy and pave the way for renewable energy – especially wind – development in Georgia.

Despite the many dependencies on subordinate laws in legislative activities, the project involves an even wider range of impacts that will help Georgia maintain its upward trend in sustainability.



## Developing and deploying bio-energy solutions across Africa

LTS International, part of the NIRAS Group, has teamed up with Aston University, E4tech, and Aiguasol (Spain) to implement phase 2 of the DFID-funded Bio-energy for Sustainable Local Energy Services and Energy Access in Africa (BSEAA2) academic research project. BSEAA2 is a two-year project that follows a phase 1 (2016–2017) scoping study. It is designed to investigate the challenges and opportunities affecting the adoption and commercial roll out of bio-energy technologies with a focus on ten priority countries across sub-Saharan Africa, namely, Kenya, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Rwanda, Uganda, Ghana, Nigeria, Mozambique, South Africa, and Zambia.

This research will support the development of innovative, commercial bio-energy pathways and technologies that will accelerate the successful production and use of bio-energy in the region. The investigation of these pathways will include an assessment of various economic, technological, financial, supply chain, institutional, market, and regulatory factors thus taking a holistic approach towards increasing the attractiveness of bio-energy-based technological solutions under local conditions.

Overall, this project aims at improving energy access, promoting economic development and prosperity, and supporting climate change mitigation and adaptation thus contributing not only to SDGs 7 but also SDGs 8, 9, 11 and 13.

The project will also undertake specific research into gasification, a technology that has largely failed in the region, seeking to understand the key barriers that have constrained success and identify solutions to support the adoption of this technology in sub-Saharan Africa.

**CLIENT**  
DFID

**COUNTRIES**  
Kenya, Ethiopia,  
Tanzania, Rwanda,  
Uganda, Ghana, Nigeria,  
Mozambique, South  
Africa and Zambia.

**LOCATION**  
Sub-saharan Africa

**DURATION**  
2019–2021



Work will be carried out in four key stages:

- Inception stage: elaboration of the research methodology, workplan, quality processes, gender and inclusion plan, and the risk management plan for the project.
- Stage 2 - Top-down assessment of bio-energy pathways. For each pathway, this involves an assessment of biomass resources, status of technological development, economic potential, applicable business models and institutional frameworks linked to the most promising bio-energy pathways in the ten target countries.
- Stage 3 - Bottom-up evaluation of five promising bio-energy pathways in at least five countries. This process will involve a deep-dive assessment into each pathway, developing solutions, designing tools, and providing recommendations across different thematic areas to support uptake and commercialisation of these pathways.
- Stage 4 - Reporting and dissemination of results to key stakeholder groups.

The project will work closely with participants and partners engaged with the Transforming Energy Access (TEA) programme, Energy Catalyst, Innovate UK and others who are either already active or interested in becoming active in the region's bio-energy field. Stakeholder engagement will be managed via participation through key expert interviews, workshops and communication tailored for different stakeholders.

The research will have a practical focus. It is designed to lead to the development of practical resources and tools that will assist industry and investors to assess the feasibility, use and applications of bio-energy technologies.

# Engaging women in support of a more energy-efficient Bolivia

## CLIENT

GIZ

## COUNTRY

Bolivia

## LOCATION

La Paz

## DURATION

2017-2021



*NIRAS-IP Consult Senior Advisor for Energy Efficiency, Patricia Durán facilitating the debate in the Gender and Energy community sessions.*



*Carlos Ormachea (in white hard hat), our Senior Advisor for Training & Knowledge Management, regularly moderates the “Communities of Practice in Gender and Energy” workshops. This approach allows for knowledge sharing between different actors in a non-hierarchical way and is geared towards generating more practical knowledge in a specific area of concern (in this case gender and energy).*



In Bolivia, NIRAS-IP Consult is providing technical support for a comprehensive reform of the energy efficiency sector. Financed by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, the Renewable Energy Programme kicked off its 2<sup>nd</sup> phase in 2019 and focuses on institutional and planning fundamentals for the implementation of the National Energy Efficiency Strategy and the development of energy efficiency (SDG 7.3) and renewable energy (SDG 7.2) curricula in technical schools and universities.

Targeting yet another core expertise of NIRAS, the project aims to promote women’s participation in the energy sector, helping to achieve SDG 5. It is expected to foster greater participation of women in activities such as European energy manager courses.

Since March 2018, NIRAS-IP Consult has supported GIZ Bolivia in the organisation of seven workshops on the crucial topic of gender and energy. The “Community of Practice in Gender and Energy” has been consolidated as a meeting space for professional women working in the area of energy. It allows them to analyse the situation facing professional women, such as access to work in the technological field and the professional development of women in the field of electrical engineering. Until now, women from nine allied institutions (private and public) working in the area of energy management have participated.

Project beneficiaries agree that the community of practice approach has helped their understanding of pressing issues. To have continuity of meetings however there must be financial support - yet another hurdle in the gender and energy debate!

Following the workshop, NIRAS-IP Consult has provided additional support to GIZ Bolivia to strengthening the gender and energy community through various conferences prepared and moderated by Mr. Carlos Ormachea, a Senior Advisor for Training & Knowledge Management, debating different topics and creating knowledge together for the benefit of the women in the community.

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[www.niras.com/locations](http://www.niras.com/locations)

## **NIRAS offices around the world**

Our decentralised structure ensures we are always close to our projects. With 51 offices in 27 countries, we maintain strong local ties to clients, experts and organisations in all of our key markets. Building on our motto “we listen, we learn, we deliver”, NIRAS is proud to be a long-term partner in the pursuit of growth and prosperity for the countries in which we work. We are committed to building partnerships and local capacity beyond the lifespan of individual projects to achieve sustainable, inclusive and equitable future societies.



# The next generation consultancy

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