

## Benin industrial microgrids

The project represents an investment of EUR8.5 million, co-financed by NéoT Offgrid Africa, as a financial partner of the project, and MCA Benin II. The goal is to install 1.7 MW of photovoltaic capacity and 3 MWh of battery capacity in all 12 localities, supplying more than 5,000 homes and businesses with electricity. The project has been developed by GDS International, and will be co-constructed by GDS International and ARESS. ARESS will also be the project operator.

NéoT Offgrid Africa is an investment platform founded by Meridiam and EDF to support and accelerate the energy transition in Africa, and which has already committed more than 30 million euros investment to electrify more than 44,000 homes and businesses in Côte d'Ivoire, Sierra Leone, Uganda, and Nigeria. NéoT's aim is to multiply investment projects with the best technological and operational partners in the field of off-grid energy in order to build the largest mini-grid portfolio in sub-Saharan Africa.

GDS International, subsidiary of the Générale du Solaire group, is one of the main French players in solar energy, an independent electricity producer with more than 200 MW of solar power plants in operation and a portfolio of more than 1 GWp projects under development in France, Italy, West Africa, and the Middle East.

ARESS is an energy transition leader in Benin and West Africa. With a versatile team built around several business segments, since 2012 ARESS has deployed more than 5 MWp distributed throughout more than 50,000 decentralized and hybrid solutions, with a strong presence in 4 West African countries.

The combined expertise of these three partners will enable them to create autonomous, connected, and environmentally friendly power grids intended to improve the availability of electric current and access to electricity for public infrastructures, SMEs, communities, and households.

In order to complete this transaction, NéoT Offgrid Africa has received support from leading players in the field of rural electrification in Africa: Altai, for the commercial side, DNV for the technical side, Royal Haskoning for the environmental and social sides, and Trinity for the legal side.

Idris TAYEBI, Director of NéoT Offgrid Africa: "NéoT Offgrid Africa is very proud to participate in this ambitious project alongside GDS International and ARESS. This MCA-Benin II program, in collaboration with local authorities in Benin, provides a structured regulatory framework to promote investment from private players such as NéoT Offgrid Africa. We hope that this initiative will give rise, in Benin and elsewhere in the region, to other electrification programs using decentralized solar energy as an energy solution for isolated or landlocked regions."

Daniel BOUR, President of the Générale du Solaire Group: "We are proud to participate in this innovative and promising project. The success of this partnership encourages us to develop similar actions in

the region. The MCA-Benin II program is an exemplary initiative which we hope will inspire other development agencies and other countries to replicate this experience and further mobilize the private sector. This is a unique way to deploy solar energy quickly and massively enough to meet the needs of populations, and meet the challenges of climate change."

L?onide Michael SINSIN, Managing Director of ARESS: "This innovative project allows us to address one of the many facets of energy access: mini-grids. It helps us strengthen the footprint of our group in the sub-region, and to explore new know-how to ensure the energy supplied is sustainable and competitive. This project will be a great opportunity to reduce inequalities and reinforce the attractiveness of the regulatory framework and structural reforms underway in Benin."

NEoT Offgrid Africa (NOA) is an investment platform designed to support the energy transition in Africa by responding to energy access issues. Founded and owned by Meridiam (as majority shareholder) and EDF, NOA develops innovative financing solutions for its partners to remove obstacles related to initial investments, the deployment of new technologies, and the management of commercial risk. .

NOA is managed by NEoT Capital, which has assembled a team experienced in financial structuring and clean energy solutions to work together with international strategic partners to provide the financial and operational support necessary for the development of a carbon-free world.

Created in 2012, ARESS is a subsidiary of the MYJOULEBOX group specializing in the marketing of solar systems. ARESS is currently operating in 4 West African markets, and aims to become one of the main private energy operators on the continent.

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