

Smart Energy Solutions for Africa and uYilo e-Mobility Programme commission Alicedale Living Lab

Gqeberha, South Africa 1 November 2023 - SESA, Smart Energy Solutions for Africa, the European commission-funded 30-partner strong consortium officially launched the Alicedale Living Lab yesterday with SESA partner uYilo e-Mobility Programme and the South African implementing partner GREEN Solar Academy. The living lab installation is designed and implemented to provide positive benefits to the Alicedale community, with a strong focus on renewable energy and creating entrepreneurship opportunities.

The SESA Living Lab installation includes a shipping container converted to serve as a Solar hub for the centre, solar panels to provide renewable energy, internet access, and two electric vehicles suited for rural conditions to provide local transportation. The centre, with the associated technologies, aims to test and validate a containerized off-grid renewable energy system including second-life electric vehicle batteries for energy storage with the hope that the outcomes and learnings will lead to further replication of these solar hubs across rural Africa.

The uYilo e-Mobility Programme of the Nelson Mandela University is the SESA partner in South Africa facilitating the Alicedale living lab in close coordination with GREEN Solar Academy, a local venture that was selected as part of the first SESA Call for Entrepreneurs in 2022. GREEN Solar was selected for their expertise in solar power training and their mission to make renewable energy accessible to all.

Alicedale, a quaint village in the Sarah Baartman District Municipality, is located some 100km from the coastal city of Gqeberha (Port Elizabeth) in the Eastern Cape, on the banks of the Bushmans River. The population numbers around 4,000 people, and Xhosa is the most-used language in the area.

"The solar container was designed and installed by the GREEN Solar Academy as a centre for community exchange, training and empowerment. GREEN and uYilo want to further test and validate the financial benefits and improved affordability of solar energy provided by the Solar Hub." says uYilo Programme Manager, Edem Foli.

"The groundwork for this project saw a great contribution from Shamwari Game Reserve and CARE Alicedale. They proved instrumental in successfully identifying the community needs to be addressed by this SESA project."

CARE is part of the international Social Change Assistance Trust.

"There has been great excitement and anticipation around this living lab installation," says Foli. "The combination of renewable energy, the entrepreneurship opportunities, the electric vehicle transport options and internet access serve to make this an invaluable contribution to life in Alicedale. It has been an incredibly opportunity for the uYilo e-Mobility Programme to work with the community of Alicedale as part of the Smart Energy Solutions for Africa SESA project on this living lab and make a tangible difference to the people of Alicedale."

About SESA

SESA is a collaborative project between the European Union and nine African countries (Kenya, Ghana, South Africa, Malawi, Morocco, Namibia, Tanzania, Rwanda, and Nigeria) that aims at providing energy access technologies and business models that are easily replicable and generate local opportunities for economic development and social cohesion in Africa.

Through a series of local living labs, the project will facilitate the co-development of scalable and replicable energy access innovations, to be tested, validated, and later replicated throughout the African continent. These solutions will include decentralised renewables (solar photovoltaics), innovative energy storage systems including the use of second-life electric vehicle batteries, smart microgrids,



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waste-to-energy systems (biomass to biogas), climate-proofing, resilience and adaptation, and rural internet access.

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