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Press release

Collaboration agreement firmed between EU-funded LoCEL-H2 project and International Cocoa Initiative

Facilitated by LoCEL-H2 partner RHYDE, the partnership secures the deployment of the clean energy and cooking fuel solution in development by the project to a community in Côte d'Ivoire.

[Brussels, January 2024] - A major step forward was taken towards one of the main goals of the LoCEL-H2 project to deploy its novel energy system for a pilot demonstration in Côte d'Ivoire.

LoCEL-H2 (or Low-cost, Circular, plug & play, Off-grid Energy for remote Locations including Hydrogen) is an ongoing project co-funded by the European Union through Horizon Europe that is designing and developing a renewable, low-cost energy system for isolated communities. The solution comprises a microgrid to provide electricity from 100% renewable solar energy and a modern energy storage system with advanced lead batteries. The main technological innovation within the LoCEL-H2 energy solution is a first of its kind lead acid battery-electrolyser that uses excess solar power to produce green hydrogen gas, which will be used as clean cooking fuel.

In December 2023, a memorandum of understanding was signed between RHYDE, a French project development company positioned in the renewable energy chain and part of the LoCEL-H2 consortium, and the International Cocoa Initiative (ICI), a Swiss-based, non-profit foundation that works to eliminate child labour and forced labour in cocoa-growing communities. Through the established partnership, ICI will support the installation of LoCEL-H2's technology in one energy-deprived community in the Brousse area, located in southwestern Côte d'Ivoire.

Euphrasie Aka, West and Central Africa Director of ICI, and Jean Michel Meunier, Executive Director of RHYDE, sign a collaboration agreement to deliver LoCEL-H2's clean energy solution to a remote community in Côte d'Ivoire.

The agreement was signed between Euphrasie Aka, West and Central Africa Director of ICI, and Jean Michel Meunier, Executive Director of RHYDE, with the support of Matthias Lange, executive director of ICI.

Jean Michel Meunier said: “Thanks to this partnership, we will enable this remote community to escape energy poverty by making a technological leap.”

“Energy poverty is a human development issue that affects the quality of life of isolated communities such as rural populations. By providing clean, affordable energy access, LoCEL-H2 also helps to implement the conditions to fight against the worst forms of child labour.”

The LoCEL-H2 team will move forward with preparatory work with the community during 2024. By the end of the project in 2026, the team plans to deploy two full-scale pilots of this pioneering energy solution, one in Côte d'Ivoire and one in Zambia.

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The members of the partnership are CEA, Consortium for Battery Innovation, HOPPECKE, Hollingsworth & Vose, Loughborough University, LUMS, RHYDE, Sunkofa, UNINA, and University of Gabes.

Media contact: Renata Barros, Science Communications Manager at Consortium for Battery Innovation – renata.barros@batteryinnovation.org