

Minister Piyush Goyal, Dr Rajiv Kumar, and H.E. Damilola Ogunbiyi launch Powering Livelihoods

The six core enterprises under the initiative collectively have the potential to generate more than 10 lakh new livelihoods for women and men in rural India.

New Delhi, 26 August 2020: In line with Prime Minister Modi's call for *Atma Nirbhar Bharat*, **Shri Piyush Goyal**, Hon'ble Minister of Commerce and Industry, and Minister of Railways, along with, **Damilola Ogunbiyi**, CEO and Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Sustainable Energy for All, and Co-Chair of UN-Energy; and **Rajiv Kumar**, Vice Chairman, NITI Aayog, launched Powering Livelihoods, an initiative by the Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW) and Villgro Innovations Foundation, to boost India's rural economy. The INR 22 crore initiative provides capital and technical support to Indian enterprises working on clean energy-based livelihoods solutions. The initiative also recently offered a cumulative emergency funding of INR 1 crore to six selected enterprises to help them tide over the current crises caused by COVID-19.

The six core enterprises announced at the launch today include Resham Sutra, Greenwear Fashion, Dharambir Food Processing, Khethworks, Devidayal Solar Solutions, and Hydrogreens Agri Solutions. While these enterprises operate out of Delhi, Lucknow, Yamuna Nagar, Pune, Mumbai and Bengaluru, respectively, their customers are spread across the country. The selected enterprises are deploying a wide variety of solar-powered livelihood solutions including water pumps, multipurpose food processors, commercial refrigerators, and textile machinery (reeling, spinning and weaving) and fodder growing stations.

Two of the six enterprises, Dharambir Food Processing and Greenwear Fashion, have also contributed to India's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. While Dharambir Food Processing has been supplying aloe vera gel for manufacturing hand sanitizers, Greenwear has supplied over 400,000 reusable cotton masks to corporates and local government departments in Uttar Pradesh.

These enterprises collectively have the potential to generate more than 10 lakh new livelihoods for women and men in rural India. The initiative also has a special focus on encouraging the enterprises to adopt gender-inclusive strategies to enhance women's participation across the value chain. Powering Livelihoods is currently supported by IKEA Foundation; Shell Foundation (UK Registered Charity); DFID (UK Government); Good Energies Foundation; and DOEN Foundation. The initiative has also onboarded 15 investors and financiers including Acumen, Beyond Capital Fund, Caspian Debt, and Upaya Social Ventures.

At the launch, Shri Piyush Goyal, Hon'ble Minister of Commerce and Industry, and Minister of Railways, said "I would like to compliment CEEW for completing 10 years of servicing the nation. Institutions like CEEW are helping the country to move forward in its endeavour towards clean energy. India is making rapid strides in using clean and renewable energy. We should look at leveraging modern technology and see how we can power livelihoods in villages. I also congratulate CEEW and Villgro for their initiative Powering Livelihoods which could have a multidimensional impact in our villages. The initiative could also fulfill the Prime Minister's vision of being vocal for local and also helping local go global. The collective work of innovators & startups, industry, and government will improve the livelihoods of people."

At the launch, Shri Rajiv Kumar, Hon'ble Vice Chairman, NITI Aayog, said, "I would like to congratulate CEEW for this remarkable feat to help in raising 22 crore for the six enterprises. One of

NITI Aayog's mandate is innovation, and I am glad that your initiative Powering Livelihoods is supporting such innovative enterprises. There are more than 3.5 crores microentrepreneurs in rural India who have huge potential for contributing to India's growth. Despite their potential, they suffer because of certain constraints like access to infrastructure and credit that hinders their growth. We're committed to a self-reliant India and Powering Livelihoods programme will certainly contribute to the *Atma Nirbhar Bharat* - by addressing the major constraints for growth among rural micro-entrepreneurs and ensuring that our need for fossil fuels and its imports are reduced."

Kunal Vaid, Founder of Resham Sutra, said, "We are very excited to be a part of Powering Livelihoods. There are more than 15 million unemployed or underemployed rural women in India. The initiative would help us expand the market and provide livelihoods to the poorest of the poor. This is an opportunity for us to hit the sweet spot of sustainability, affordability, and performance to appeal to the rural customer."

Abhishek Jain, who is leading the initiative at CEEW, said, "Powering Livelihoods is committed to making rural India Atma Nirbhar by creating new livelihood opportunities, especially for women, and helping raise rural incomes. Under Powering Livelihoods, we will help enterprises in the clean energy-based livelihoods sector to get better support from financiers, investors and policymakers. This will help them scale up and achieve meaningful impact."

Ananth Aravamudan, who is leading the initiative at Villgro, said, "As India rebuilds its rural economy post-COVID, Powering Livelihoods will provide evidence that new livelihoods can be created and rural communities made resilient, using clean energy."

Over 40 lakh (4 million) microenterprises in India indicate lack of electricity as the top bottleneck to their business. While about 60 clean energy innovations for livelihoods exist, their deployment on the ground is limited to hundreds, at best. India has a market of more than INR 3.7 lakh crore (USD 50 billion) for clean energy-based livelihood solutions. By enabling commercial deployments of these solutions, Powering Livelihoods aims to unlock finance, investment and policy support for the sector.

About Powering Livelihoods

[Powering Livelihoods](#), a CEEW-Villgro initiative, aims to boost India's rural economy by scaling up the penetration of clean energy-powered appliances for livelihoods. Over three years, the initiative will support six enterprises to undertake large-scale commercial deployment of their solutions and use the generated evidence to catalyse the sector. The initiative also provides explicit financial and technical support to enhance gender-inclusion in the clean energy for livelihoods ecosystem. Learn more about Powering Livelihoods [here](#).

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About the six enterprises

Resham Sutra (Delhi)

Resham Sutra provides solar-powered machines for the rural textile production value chain – providing livelihood opportunities primarily for women. They have commercialised 9 different machines for various activities including silk yarn production and weaving.

Greenwear Fashion (Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh)

Greenwear undertakes selling and decentralised manufacturing of renewable energy-based fabrics and garments. The organisation currently supports ~1700 artisans, primarily women. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Greenwear has supplied over 400,000 reusable cotton masks to corporates and local government departments in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh.

Dharambir Food Processing (Yamuna Nagar, Haryana)

Dharambir provides a compact and portable food processing machine, which can perform multiple activities—cut, juice, heat, and extract the essence of fruits, herbs, medicinal plants, and seeds. In response to the pandemic, Dharambir Food Processing has been supplying aloe vera gel to sanitizer manufacturers and sugarcane mills, for manufacturing of hand sanitizers.

Khethworks (Pune, Maharashtra)

Khethworks provides micro solar pumps for marginal farmers. The solar pump system is efficient, portable and open-well submersible.

Devidayal Solar Solutions (Mumbai, Maharashtra)

Devidayal Solar Solutions provides an energy-efficient DC refrigerator and deep freezer that can be used for retail, restaurants, dairy, fisheries and healthcare.

Hydrogreens Agri Solutions (Bengaluru, Karnataka)

Hydrogreens provides a low-cost climate-controlled fodder growing station that can operate in up to 50°C, with half a bucket of water. The product also offers the possibility of growing other products such as mushrooms and herbs during the lean period.

About IKEA Foundation

The IKEA Foundation is funded by INGKA Foundation, owner of the Ingka Group of companies. The IKEA Foundation is independent from the retail business with a sole focus on creating brighter lives on a liveable planet through philanthropy and grantmaking. Learn more at www.ikeafoundation.org

About Shell Foundation

Shell Foundation (SF) is an independent UK-registered charity that creates and scales business solutions to enhance access to energy and affordable transport for low-income communities.

About DFID (UK Government)

The Department for International Development (DFID) India is a United Kingdom government department responsible for fostering development partnership between the UK and India. The goal of the department is to eliminate world poverty and promote sustainable development.

About Good Energies Foundation

Good Energies Foundation is a Swiss-based private foundation. It was established in 2007 as an integral part of Good Energies Inc., a private equity company specialised in investing in the

renewable energy and energy-efficiency industries. The foundation's goal is to help prevent climate change and mitigate its harm, especially to people who live in poverty. It focuses on two levers that reverse climate change: clean energy and forest protection. The foundation invests in early-stage market solutions and funds efforts to bring successful approaches to scale.

About DOEN Foundation

The DOEN Foundation, based in the Netherlands, supports pioneers that strive to create a greener, more socially-inclusive, and more creative society. Under its sustainable energy initiatives, the Foundation supports innovative enterprises in East Africa and South East Asia dedicated to facilitating access to sustainable energy, enabling consumers themselves to generate sustainable energy and save energy.