Transforming rural Malaysia's water access with solar power

Project duration: 11 months

Photo: Tonibung

In April 2024, EKOenergy granted €27,500 from its Climate Fund to the Malaysian nonprofit organisation Tonibung. This contribution enabled the installation of a solar-powered water pumping and filtration system in a remote village in Sabah, Malaysia, thereby improving the livelihoods of 200 residents.

Previously, the village of Kampung Mangkapon Darat, located in Sabah, Borneo, East Malaysia, faced severe challenges in accessing clean water. The community was mainly dependent on harvesting rainwater, fetching it from ponds and old wells, or had to purchase bottled water from the nearest town. The use of unfiltered water from polluted sources posed increased health and safety risks. And the purchase of bottled water resulted in a plastic waste problem within the community, while simultaneously imposing a financial burden on residents, as water procurement made up 20% of households' total income.

To tackle these problems, Tonibung, a Sabah-based indigenous-led non-profit organisation applied for financial support from EKOenergy's Climate Fund. Tonibong focuses on developing sustainable alternatives for rural electrification, while advocating for indigenous rights and supporting local entrepreneurship.

After being selected for a €27,500 grant, they successfully installed a solar-powered water-pumping and triple-stage filtration system, as well as a vending machine dispensing clean drinking water. The facility now provides safe drinking water, readily available to 200 villagers.

Improved water access has brought positive changes in several areas.Household spending on bottled water has decreased by 75%, and plastic use in the community has dropped significantly since the refill option was introduced. In general, village residents now face less inconvenience in meeting basic needs: they no longer have to spend extra time and effort fetching water from unsafe sources and boiling it before consumption. The installation has passed the Ministry of Health's water vending compliance testing and has submitted a permit application for public sales.

The successfully implemented clean energy and water project in Kampung Mangkapon Darat demonstrates how concrete actions can lead to impactful and wide-ranging results. The project directly contributes to several United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, including SDG 3 (Good health and well-being), SDG 6 (Clean water and sanitation), SDG 7 (Affordable and clean energy), and SDG 13 (Climate action).

We would like to acknowledge everyone involved in the project, with special thanks to EKOenergy sellers and users. It is through your support that initiatives like this become possible.

EKOenergy's Climate Fund

- Focus on energy poverty and multiple Sustainable Development Goals
- New projects annually in low- and middle-income countries
- Projects run and monitored by trusted NGOs
- Selected through a transparent process
- In 2024, EKOenergy approved grants for 23 new projects
- All EKOenergy users contribute 0.10 € / MWh to the Climate Fund

EKOenergy - the global ecolabel for renewable energy

EKOenergy is the global ecolabel for energy (electricity, gas, heat and cold). We are a non-profit initiative working to fight climate change, protect biodiversity and realise the Sustainable Development Goals.

Energy with the EKOenergy ecolabel fulfils additional sustainability criteria. Through our ecolabel we also raise money for our Climate Fund, which is used to finance new renewable energy projects in low- and middle-income countries.

EKOenergy's network of authorised sellers makes EKOenergy-labelled energy easily available in over 80 countries worldwide. Many consumers of EKOenergy-labelled energy choose to use our ecolabel on their website or products to demonstrate their commitment to a 100% renewable and sustainable world.

EKOenergy users include large international businesses such as Microsoft, SAP, Pampers, Mercedes-Benz, SCHOTT and the Iliad Group, as well as cities, public organisations and individual households.

Sustainability criteria: additional value for our planet

	EKOenergy	Other renewable energy	Grid mix
Recommended by environmental organisations	✓	?	-
Extra criteria to minimise the impact of energy production on nature. For example, hydropower installations with fish passes and wind turbines outside important bird areas	✓	?	-
Renewable energy tracked by EACs, such as GOs and I-RECs (In line with Greenhouse Gas Protocol Scope 2 Guidance)	✓	✓	-
Contributes to renewable energy projects in developing countries, advancing the realisation of multiple Sustainable Development Goals	✓	-	-
Available and recognised worldwide	✓	-	-
Supports the promotion of a transition to renewable energy worldwide	✓	-	-

Endorsed by global standards

EKOenergy is recommended by many international environmental standards such as CDP, the Greenhouse Gas Protocol, Greenkey for hotels and LEED-certification for buildings.

"A growing number of hotels in Europe have already switched to EKOenergy and include the EKOenergy logo in their communication with their guests. Follow their lead and go the extra mile."

Green Key

"Ecolabels are a way for companies to do more with their purchases. EKOenergy, mentioned by the GHG Protocol Scope 2 Guidance, is such an option: it is a mark of quality which comes on top of tracking certificates."

CDP

"EKOenergy represents the best available option for the sustainable and additional consumption of renewable electricity within Europe."

U.S. Green Building Council LEED USGBC

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info@ekoenergy.org | www.ekoenergy.org