

# Generating A More Sustainable Future

Our contribution to the UN Sustainable Development Goals

January 2021



As the world accustoms itself to living with a modern-day pandemic, we have learnt just how responsive and adaptable governments, businesses, communities and individuals can be in the face of such a crisis.”

**Michael Bonte-Friedheim**

Founding Partner and Group CEO



The development of reliable, sustainable and resilient infrastructure is at the core of the recovery plan and at NextEnergy Capital Group we have the technical experience to play an instrumental role in this transition.”

**Giulia Guidi**

Head of ESG

We are publishing this second edition of the NextEnergy Capital Group’s SDG Brochure in the midst of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, which has enveloped the globe and has reinforced the criticality of the UN SDGs to the future health of the planet and its people.

As the world accustoms itself to living with a modern-day pandemic, we have learnt just how responsive and adaptable governments, businesses, communities and individuals can be in the face of such a crisis. It is this responsiveness which is necessary to re-double efforts to achieving the 17 UN SDGs, progress against many of which has been detrimentally affected by COVID-19. As the UN

Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has noted, *“We need to turn the recovery into a real opportunity to do things right for the future”*.

The development of reliable, sustainable and resilient infrastructure is at the core of the recovery plan and at NextEnergy Capital Group we have the technical experience to play an instrumental role in this transition. Our commitment to our Mission of generating a more sustainable future is unwavering, and the UN SDGs remain core to our Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) approach and operational practices. This, coupled with evolving our framework for managing, measuring,

and reporting our contribution to the UN SDGs, as well as evaluating our impact on the world around us, is central to guiding our sustainable investment strategy and approach to ensure we continue to do things right for the future.

The analysis on the following pages provides a non-exhaustive update on the work we are undertaking, and the progress we have made, at a corporate level, within the funds we manage and on NextEnergy Foundation. We will continue to provide periodic updates on these and other metrics, and we look forward to engaging with you on our framework in the months and years ahead.

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### Who we are?

**NextEnergy Capital Group is a leading investment and asset manager in the international solar sector.** We are on a Mission to generate a more sustainable future by leading the transition to clean energy. Since our founding in 2007, we have built a strong track record, investing in over

200 utility-scale solar projects for an installed capacity in excess of 1,000MWp across Europe, North America and Asia; establishing Wise Energy, the biggest solar operating asset manager globally; and, creating the largest listed solar investment company and the first truly international solar infrastructure

investment vehicle.

Since 2016, the Group has pledged 5% of its annual corporate profits to the NextEnergy Foundation, which acts to provide energy and light from renewable energy sources to underserved regions, as well as to benefit the local communities in which NEC is present, and beyond.



## Sustainability Framework

Being sustainable and responsible is a mindset. We are committed to integrating sustainability into all of our activities because the privilege we have to generate clean energy for the planet demands nothing less of us. NextEnergy Capital's Sustainability Framework cements this commitment, and it begins with our Mission: to generate a more sustainable future by leading the transition to clean energy.

Our Sustainability Framework is aligned with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and is based on the Three Pillars of Climate Change, Biodiversity and Human Rights. We are seeking to address these global challenges because we recognise that our role in society goes beyond increasing access to clean energy. This is why we have implemented our Sustainability Framework throughout both our sustainable investing (ESG) and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities.

NEC's Sustainable Investment (SI) Policy and Procedures support our Sustainability Framework. We are guided by five Corporate Values, one of which is to Be Responsible. This Value is at the heart of our SI Policy and Procedures, which together provide a framework for integrating our analysis of potential ESG risks and opportunities into our decision-making. We believe that this framework contributes to mitigating investment risks and improves longer-term returns, thus acting as a source of innovation and competitive advantage for our core business.

The importance of our Corporate Values as a common thread throughout our business is further exemplified by the significance we attribute to stakeholder engagement. The Value of fostering relationships by Building Trust is another fundamental mainstay of our Sustainability Framework. We believe that regularly mapping our stakeholders not only allows us to better understand and manage investment and operational risks, but also to contribute to the well-being and development of the

communities surrounding our assets. To this extent, we also pride ourselves on our approach to transparency and reporting, both at the Group and Fund levels.

### Material SDGs

NEC has adopted the SDGs as the underlying framework to identify, manage and measure our impacts on the environment and society. Our ESG Team has been working with the Green Investment Group since 2018 to map the key impacts of our investments against 12 SDGs which we have identified as material to our business and NextEnergy Foundation.

Of the 169 specific Targets to be achieved by 2030 across all 17 SDGs, NEC has elected to track and report on those which are consistent with our Mission and Sustainability Framework, and with the NextEnergy Foundation. Some of the Targets were also selected as aspirational goals to ensure that we live our Mission of generating a more sustainable future by leading the transition to clean energy.

### Key

Outlined SDGs: Mitigative/responsible investment measure

1 NO POVERTY



## Overview

NextEnergy Foundation's Mission is to participate proactively in the global effort to reduce carbon emissions, provide clean power sources in regions where they are not yet available, and contribute to poverty alleviation. Since its establishment in 2016, the Foundation has supported projects in low-income and developing countries primarily in Sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia and Latin America.

### UN SDG Target 1.2

**By 2030, reduce at least by half the proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions.**

### Contribution/Alignment

Most of the projects supported by the Foundation thus far have centred on the use of renewable energy and related technologies to benefit underserved regions, local communities and beyond. Some projects have focused on addressing the intersection between poverty and other human or environmental emergencies, such as access to education, food security and reforestation. We have tracked the impact of these projects through qualitative and quantitative metrics that reflect these intersections. Moreover, in 2020, the Foundation expanded its remit to support those communities which have been most adversely affected by the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19.

### Case Study

**Founded in 1965, Cooperazione Internazionale (COOPI) has since helped more than 100 million people across over 1,700 projects in 65 countries.**

NextEnergy Foundation has partnered with COOPI since 2019. Our first project together involved the installation of a 70kWp solar mini-system in the Port Loko District of Sierra Leone, increasing access to energy for approximately 25 households, one school, the local market, a healthcare clinic and a bank. The daily energy generated by the mini-grid system is up to 277kWh.

For more information on NextEnergy Foundation's projects and activities please go to [www.nextenergyfoundation.org](http://www.nextenergyfoundation.org)

3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING



## Overview

Generating clean energy for the planet is a responsibility we are privileged to hold. We also recognise that, through our Corporate Value to 'Be Responsible', this responsibility extends from our planet's health to that of its inhabitants.

### UN SDG Target 3.9

**By 2030, substantially reduce the number of deaths and illnesses from hazardous chemicals and air, water and soil pollution and contamination.**

### Contribution/Alignment

There are more harmful air pollutants in our atmosphere than ever before as a result of burning fossil fuels. According to the World Health Organisation, ambient and household air pollution are responsible for 7 million deaths across both developed and developing countries every year.

As one of the most powerful and plentiful energy sources in the world, solar is key to accelerate the transition to clean energy and avoid relying on fossil fuels for electricity generation, and thus the generation of harmful air pollutants.

We have calculated avoided emissions to the atmosphere and our health for the NextEnergy Solar Fund, NextPower II and NextPower III funds. The Foundation has also contributed to this SDG Target with two new partnerships this year.

### Case Study

**NEF has partnered with Renewable World to develop and roll-out energy efficient cookstoves with the aim of halting the preventable deaths, predominantly of women and children, caused by the effects of inefficient and polluting traditional cooking stoves, and improve the health of the inhabitants in two extremely poor, off-grid communities in the Surkhet District of Nepal.** The Project will also equip local health posts with solar power and electrical equipment for lighting fans, nebulisers and refrigeration for medicines and vaccines to ensure that health care centres have the necessary equipment to treat victims of the long-term effects of the hazardous pollutants released by traditional cookstoves.

### Emissions to air avoided in FY19/20 (plus difference from 18/19<sup>1</sup>)



**429** tonnes NO<sub>x</sub>  
↑ 72 from 18/19



**33** tonnes PM<sub>2.5</sub>  
↑ 6 from 18/19

**869** tonnes SO<sub>x</sub>  
↑ 151 from 18/19

**9** tonnes PM<sub>10</sub>  
↑ 1 from 18/19

<sup>1</sup> Emissions to air avoided data provided by Green Investment Group calculated using their Green Impact methodology (see <https://www.greeninvestmentgroup.com/who-we-are/measuring-our-impact.html>) based on information provided by NextEnergy Capital for the year ending 31 March 2020



## Overview

Solar photovoltaic (PV) plants require water for activities such as cleaning PV panels. This creates potential negative impacts on the environment and communities surrounding the plants if not adequately managed.

### UN SDG Target 6.4

**By 2030, substantially increase water-use efficiency across all sectors and ensure sustainable withdrawals and supply of freshwater to address water scarcity and substantially reduce the number of people suffering from water scarcity.**

### Contribution/Alignment

The solar industry is associated with negative impacts on both the quality and availability of water. These impacts are exacerbated by the fact that those areas with the highest solar energy potential often also experience high water scarcity. For this reason, and aligned with our Sustainable Investment Policy, NEC takes into full account the water source, water consumption, water intensity, and possible water scarcity or water-stress concerns of any new investment. During the acquisition phase, we also consider what measures are required to monitor and/or reduce consumption and improve the efficient use of water. Such measures are typically included into a broader ESG action plan for each acquisition. This is particularly true for the most recent investments in the NextPower III fund where most acquisitions have been in areas of high water stress.

### Case Study

During the due diligence undertaken on an operating solar PV plant, some issues related to water extraction and inadequate record keeping were identified. As the plant was located in a Priority Hydrological Region and the Project's approach to module cleaning throughout operation relied on regular rainfall, NextEnergy Capital's ESG Team worked with the O&M Contractor to closely monitor and ensure acceptable levels of water consumption throughout operation.



### Mitigation and Proactive Management

**We aim to track water consumption per MWh renewable energy generation across our portfolios and, where possible, add this specific KPI as a clause in the contract with Operations and Maintenance Contractors. This will be used as a baseline to drive performance going forward and support our objective to mitigate the impact of our activities on water resources.**

**Note**  
Outlined SDGs: Mitigative/responsible investment measure



## Overview

Solar energy has always been the most plentiful and sustainable source of energy available in the world. Now, it is also the most economic and powerful way to mitigate climate change.

### UN SDG Targets 7.1, 7.2, 7.3

**By 2030, ensure universal access to affordable, reliable and modern energy services**

**By 2030, increase substantially the share of renewable energy in the global energy mix**

**By 2030, expand infrastructure and upgrade technology for supplying modern and sustainable energy services for all in developing countries, in particular least developed countries, small island developing States, and land-locked developing countries, in accordance with their respective programmes of support.**

### Contribution/Alignment

As a leading specialist investment and asset manager in the solar sector, providing affordable and clean energy is our raison d'être. According to the IEA (2020), global solar PV generation increased by 22% in 2019, representing the second-largest absolute generation growth of all renewable energy technologies. We launched the NextPower III fund in 2019 and are setting up a new fund, NextPower UK ESG, both of which will contribute to the exponential growth in solar PV energy generation envisaged between 2000-2030.

Our funds' contribution in 2019/20 to SDG 7 is set out below.

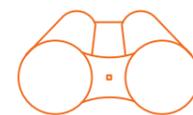
### In FY19/20



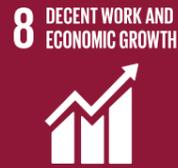
### Case Study

In 2016, Acumen launched the \$20M Pioneer Energy Investment Initiative (PEII) to ramp up their investment in off-grid energy companies between 2017-2020. NextEnergy Foundation first contributed to the PEII in 2018. The aim is to reach 2.8 million people with affordable, renewable energy sources by 2026 through three focus areas: solar home systems in new markets; solar and hybrid mini-grids, and innovations for energy use.

Since launching the PEII in 2017, the eight pioneering companies into which Acumen has invested have together reached more than 675,000 people.



**Since the end of the 2019/20 financial year, NextPower III has added 151 MW capacity with investments in India, Portugal and the US, adding an estimated 238 GWh of clean energy generation each year, which will be reported in our figures next year.**



## Overview

As the solar industry expands, the potential for decent employment rises throughout the renewable energy supply chain, and the development, construction and operational stages of solar PV plants.

### UN SDG Target 8.5

By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value.

### Contribution/Alignment

Solar PV remains the top employer among renewable energy technologies globally. Important socio-economic opportunities are arising from the diverse skill set required by the global energy transformation which is underway. These are key considerations for achieving the lasting and inclusive growth necessary to achieve sustainable development.

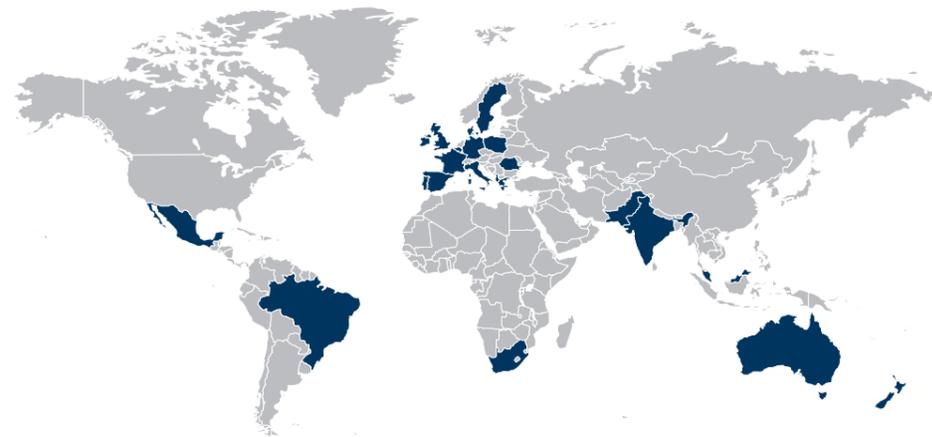
In addition, NextEnergy Foundation is supporting BrightLife's Continuity of Operations plan in Uganda to ensure that decent employment and renewable energy access continue to grow hand-in-hand, notwithstanding the COVID-19 pandemic.



**181**  
Employees<sup>2</sup>

**36.5%**  
Identify as female

**22**  
Nationalities<sup>3</sup>



With regard to our existing portfolio, we have started collecting data on the gender and nationality compositions of our funds' Engineering, Procurement, and Construction (EPC) and Operations and Maintenance (O&M) Contractors. We aim to track labour-related KPIs across our portfolios and, where possible, add them as a clause in the EPC and O&M contracts. As our international fund, NextPower III, expands into new markets, we will continue mapping the impact of our projects on the creation of decent employment opportunities worldwide.

We expect this to be an evolving process where we will work hand-in-hand with our business partners to educate them on the importance of productive employment, decent work and diversity, amongst other topics.

<sup>2</sup>Including those on fixed term contracts and apprenticeships but not including interns

<sup>3</sup>'Nationality' data which HR holds refers to the citizenship that allows the individual to work in the UK, although their nationality may actually differ from their citizenship



## Overview

Resilient infrastructure and sustainable technologies are essential starting points for business and societies to thrive.

### UN SDG Target 9.1

Develop quality, reliable, sustainable and resilient infrastructure, including regional and transborder infrastructure, to support economic development and human well-being, with a focus on affordable and equitable access for all.

### Contribution/Alignment

As a leading specialist investment and asset manager in the solar sector, NEC's key activities provide industries and communities with sustainable, low-carbon electricity infrastructure.

We currently have operational plants across the UK, Italy, the US and India. The energy generated by these plants is not only affordable and reliable, but also contributes to the decoupling trends between CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and economic growth. Of particular importance to Target 9.A, our NextPower III fund's global reach will help to address the current imbalance between investment in and access to renewable energy across developed, developing and emerging markets.



**204** operating solar plants

↑46 from 18/19

**90**  
NextEnergy  
Solar Fund

**98**  
NextPower II

**1**  
NextPower III

**1**  
NextEnergy  
Capital<sup>4</sup>

**14**  
NextPower  
Holding<sup>4</sup>



As global economies respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and governments focus on recovery plans, there is a renewed drive to tackle the climate crisis and move towards a greener, more sustainable and low carbon economy. The development of reliable, sustainable and resilient infrastructure is at the core of the recovery plan and at NextEnergy Capital we have the technical experience to play an instrumental role in this transition. In response, NextPower III's objective is to achieve a portfolio of between 2.5 GW and 3.0 GW in operating solar projects internationally upon full capital deployment.

<sup>4</sup>Divested



## Overview

Our investment decision process begins with a commitment to safeguard communities and cultural and natural heritage because we recognise that development should not be extricated from traditions and sites of socio-environmental importance.

### UN SDG Target 11.4

**Strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage.**

### Contribution/Alignment

NEC's Sustainable Investment Policy sets out our commitment to not knowingly invest in solar PV plants where there is evidence of adverse impacts to cultural and natural heritage sites. We undertake an extensive due diligence to ensure that all of our projects are in line with local regulation and applicable international standards, such as the IFC Performance Standards.

As sustainability rests upon the three pillars of economy, environment and society, community engagement and a commitment to contribute to their development forms a key part of our investment decision-making process. To this extent, for any new acquisition, we seek to avoid or minimize the relocation of individuals and/or communities without an adequate consultation and engagement plan in place. Where resettlement has already occurred prior to our acquisition, we strive to establish a longer-term community engagement strategy.

## Governance



One of the Excluded Activities in NextEnergy Capital's Sustainable Investment Policy is investing in areas of cultural and natural heritage, such as UNESCO World Heritage Sites. We are working with local communities to significantly contribute to their development and ensure that they continue to thrive.

## Case Study

Dealing with minority groups: during the due diligence for one of the operating projects acquired in India the ESG Team found out that some minority groups had been involved in the land acquisition undertaken by the Seller from whom NEC acquired the project. To this extent, we are in the process of developing and implementing a comprehensive Community Engagement Plan to ensure that the needs of the community are adequately considered and addressed.

### Note

Outlined SDGs: Mitigative/responsible investment measure



## Overview

Solar is one of the most powerful and plentiful energy sources in the world. It also reduces the need for fossil fuel combustion. Our projects promote the consumption and production patterns which form the basis of sustainable development trajectories.

### UN SDG Targets 12.2, 12.4

**By 2030, achieve the sustainable management and efficient use of natural resources.**

**By 2020, achieve the environmentally sound management of chemicals and all wastes throughout their life cycle, in accordance with agreed international frameworks, and significantly reduce their release to air, water and soil in order to minimize their adverse impacts on human health and the environment.**

### Contribution/Alignment

NEC's Sustainable Investment Policy forms part of our broader Sustainability Framework. The Framework cements NEC's commitment to integrating sustainability into all of our activities.

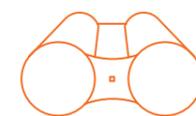
We have quantified our contribution to the sustainable management of natural resources by using a 'fossil fuel use avoided' metric for our NextEnergy Solar Fund, NextPower II and NextPower III funds.

With the launch of our new NextPower III fund, we are also tracking the waste management and sustainability practices of the EPC and O&M Contractors of the fund's assets.

### In FY19/20<sup>5</sup>



**1.3 million barrels**  
of oil equivalent avoided  
↑0.2 from 18/19



**We aim to track waste management across our portfolios and, where possible, add waste-related KPIs as a clause in the contracts with the EPC and O&M Contractors. We will use the data collected as a baseline from which to encourage regular reporting on waste management and sustainability practices regarding the disposal and recycling of solar panels.**

<sup>5</sup>Barrels of oil equivalent data provided by Green Investment Group calculated using their Green Impact methodology (see <https://www.greeninvestmentgroup.com/who-we-are/measuring-our-impact.html>) and the conversion factors provided by the Society for Petroleum Engineers (<https://www.spe.org/industry/unit-conversion-factors.php>) based on information provided by NextEnergy Capital for the year ending 31 March 2020



## Overview

Tackling climate change is an integral part of our Mission and core business. Solar has emerged as one of the key technologies to support the transition away from carbon-intensive fossil fuels towards clean energy.

### UN SDG Target 13.3

Improve education, awareness-raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning.

### Contribution/Alignment

Transitioning from a dependency on carbon-intensive fossil fuels towards clean energy is vitally important in tackling climate change and in reducing the associated harmful environmental and social effects. Together with other renewable energy sources, solar energy reduces the world's reliance on fossil fuels, it avoids harmful air pollution and can transform energy generation globally by making it cheaper and more distributed.

As a company, we specialise exclusively in solar. But we are also committed to awareness-raising and improving education through activities such as producing this Brochure and publishing Green Impact Reports for the NextPower III fund.

### In FY19/20<sup>6</sup>



**410** kilotonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e avoided  
↑55 from 18/19



410 kilotonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e avoided by the funds is equivalent to removing **131,339** cars off the road<sup>7</sup>



967 GWh generated by the funds is equivalent to the energy consumption of **386,800** homes<sup>8</sup>



For any funds launched after Nov 2018, including NextPower III, we have committed to publishing regular Green Impact Reports to provide a consistent impact reporting approach to stakeholders and investors. The first Green Impact Report to mark the acquisition of the first two assets can be found here, <https://www.nextenergycapital.com/sustainability/transparency-and-reporting>

<sup>6</sup> GHG emissions data provided by Green Investment Group calculated using their Green Impact methodology (see <https://www.greeninvestmentgroup.com/who-we-are/measuring-our-impact.html>) based on information provided by NextEnergy Capital for the year ending 31 March 2020

<sup>7</sup> Data provided by Green Investment Group calculated using UK Government conversion factors based on information provided by NextEnergy Capital for the year ending 31 March 2020

<sup>8</sup> Calculated by NextEnergy Capital based on average UK domestic electricity consumption



## Overview

As the number of solar farms grows around the world, we see it as our duty to promote their use as safe harbours for nature to thrive undisturbed by human activity. NEC is committed to leading best practices in biodiversity in the solar industry.

### UN SDG Targets 15.2, 15.5, 15.8

By 2020, promote the implementation of sustainable management of all types of forests, halt deforestation, restore degraded forests and substantially increase afforestation and reforestation globally.

Take urgent and significant action to reduce the degradation of natural habitats, halt the loss of biodiversity and, by 2020, protect and prevent the extinction of threatened species.

Mobilize significant resources from all sources and at all levels to finance sustainable forest management and provide adequate incentives to developing countries to advance such management, including for conservation and reforestation.

### Contribution/Alignment

According to the United Nations (2020), two billion hectares of land are degraded, affecting 3.2 billion people, driving species to extinction and intensifying climate change. To this extent, we must ensure that any negative effects from the development and operation of our solar projects are minimised.

At NEC, we understand that solar plants have the potential to adversely impact biodiversity and ecosystems. However, we believe that, managed appropriately, solar farms present a key opportunity to create a web of protected hubs throughout the world, which is why biodiversity forms one of the Three Pillars of our Sustainability Framework. As per our Sustainable Investment Policy, we have established an internal pre-acquisition process to identify and understand the impacts of our investments on local biodiversity, and to define the necessary actions to mitigate, restore and enhance conservation.

### Case Studies

NextEnergy Solar Fund (NESF) has developed a Universal Biodiversity Management Plan (UBMP). The UBMP will allow non-site-specific biodiversity measures to be introduced throughout the entirety of NESF's portfolio over time. Each site may then have its own additional site-specific measures. The aim is to achieve biodiversity net gain within the portfolio. The UBMP was rolled out in September 2020 on 15 sites. Approximately 4.8 hectares of native wildflower were planted and 16 hibernacula, 101 bird/bat boxes, and 15 bug hotels were installed.

NextEnergy Foundation has been supporting One Tree Planted, a non-profit organisation on a mission to reforest our planet and provide education, awareness and engagement on the importance of trees and our ecosystem, since 2019. In 2019, we planted 12,000 trees in the Madre de Dios region of Peru to offset NextEnergy Capital's 2018 CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. In 2020, NEF has planted 37,916 trees across three new projects in Odisha (India), the west coast of the USA between Northern Carolina and British Columbia, and the Andes in South America.



Whilst solar plants contribute to GHG emission reduction, they occupy a sizeable area of land globally and poorly sited developments can have an adverse impact on biodiversity. We will continue to engage with industry associations, conservation groups, NGOs and academia to actively contribute to enhancing biodiversity, not only at our assets but also for the solar sector more broadly.

Note  
Outlined SDGs: Mitigative/responsible investment measure



**Flavia Galdiolo**

ESG Analyst



**At NextEnergy Foundation, our mission is, inter alia, to contribute to poverty alleviation by both addressing energy access deficits and participating in the global effort to reduce carbon emissions”**

**Flavia Galdolo**  
ESG Analyst

**At NextEnergy Foundation, our mission is, inter alia, to contribute to poverty alleviation by both addressing energy access deficits and participating in the global effort to reduce carbon emissions.**

Since the Foundation's establishment in 2016, we have focused our efforts towards increasing access to renewable energy in underserved regions, and to marry this ambition with education, health and wider renewable-enabled infrastructure projects.

At the time of writing, it is clear that the COVID-19 pandemic has hampered progress towards many of the SDGs. The International Energy Agency's recent SDG 7: Data and Projections Report, for example, predicted that in 2020, the population without access to

electricity in sub-Saharan Africa would increase for the first time since 2013. Since a lack of energy access and security are impeding efforts to contain COVID-19 across many parts of the world, at NextEnergy Foundation we remain fully committed to our mission as we believe that it is more critical than ever.

Yet, we are also acutely aware that the SDGs require a holistic response to COVID-19, one that recognises the multidimensional nature of poverty. Indeed, we have expanded our remit this year to reflect this. The case studies on the following pages highlight the variety of the projects we have supported to respond to the socio-economic issues that have worsened due to the pandemic.

## COVID-19 Response Case Studies

### FINCA: BrightLife

In order to respond to the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19 in Uganda, NextEnergy Foundation (NEF) has partnered with FINCA to support BrightLife, a social enterprise which provides first-time clean energy to poor and low-income households, to resume its operations. In 2019, through its agent model, BrightLife provided first-time clean energy access to 7,000 poor and low-income households in Uganda, where 73% of the population rely on firewood, kerosene and charcoal for lighting and cooking. BrightLife is also undertaking the Lamp Library Project which NEF is supporting in Uganda.

As well as recruiting and training new BrightLife agents, additional safety supplies will be provided, and BrightLife's communication channels will be leveraged to disseminate accurate COVID-19 health information. This all makes part of BrightLife's Continuity of Operations Plan to ensure that the business and distribution network can resume in a safe and responsible manner as lockdown eases in Uganda. The aim has ultimately been to ensure that BrightLife could continue to be on track to meeting its target for 2020 to provide 80,000 Ugandans with first-time access to clean energy. This will avoid over 14,000 metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions<sup>9</sup>, create over GBP 1 million in savings on energy expenditures by BrightLife clients, and over GBP 3 million in additional income generating opportunities by BrightLife clients.

### Open Kitchens

NEF partnered with Open Kitchens to respond to the increase in food poverty brought about as a side-effect to COVID-19. We supported their Holiday Hunger Programme in Nottingham. Overall, the Programme provided 10,000 children across Nottingham with two meals per week for five weeks across their summer holidays (27th July-31st August 2020). With the Foundation's donation, eight Nottingham-based restaurants and hotel kitchens cooked 10,000 meals for children.

<sup>9</sup> Calculation provided by FINCA International

## Contribution/Alignment



**1.2** By 2030, reduce at least by half the proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions



**3.9** By 2030, substantially reduce the number of deaths and illnesses from hazardous chemicals and air, water and soil pollution and contamination



**7.1** By 2030, ensure universal access to affordable, reliable and modern energy services



**2.1** By 2030, end hunger and ensure access by all people, in particular the poor and people in vulnerable situations, including infants, to safe, nutritious and sufficient food all year round

**Note**  
For further information on the Foundation and its activities, please visit <http://www.nextenergyfoundation.org/>

# SDG-Aligned COVID-19 Response

## COVID-19 Response Case Studies

### Empower Malawi

Three years ago, Empower Malawi set out with a goal to install solar lighting systems on every one of the 193 primary schools in the Nkhata Bay District, Malawi. NextEnergy Foundation has been supporting Empower Malawi since 2017 to make significant strides to achieve this goal. Thus far, four rounds of grants have been made, of which the most recent one (November 2020) will allow Empower Malawi to reach a minimum of 140 primary schools in the District. This is over 70% of the ambitious target and will ensure that children can pick up their studies effectively following the school closures due to the pandemic.

Since December 2020, solar lighting systems have been installed on 51 new schools. For many communities this is the first time they have seen electricity in their village, and the arrival of these small-scale solar systems is an important event. Due to the large number of children in each classroom, the 51 new installations will expose 22,326 students to solar energy for the first time. Based on data collected from a sub-set of schools, this will increase study time for 4,500 children in these schools each year, allowing them access to critical teaching time prior to their examinations, and helping them graduate to secondary school.

## Contribution/Alignment



**1.2** By 2030, reduce at least by half the proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions



**4.1** By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes



**7.1** By 2030, ensure universal access to affordable, reliable and modern energy services



**13.3** By 2030, improve education, awareness-raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning.



### Paddington Academy

Paddington Academy is a co-educational secondary school in inner-West London. It is an Outstanding (Ofsted-rated), non-selective Academy with 1,200 students from ages 11-18. However, 36.6% of children are on free school meals and many of the students did not have laptops on which to attend their online lessons during the pandemic. NEF has supported Paddington Academy to purchase and distribute 50 laptops to students from low-income backgrounds and support their studies at home during the pandemic.



**4.1** By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes



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