



CENTRAL AFRICA  
BUSINESS ENERGY  
FORUM



# UNLOCKING AFRICA : A NEW ERA OF ENERGY AND OPPORTUNITY



MAY 8, 2025  
8 MAI 2025



GEORGE R. BRONW  
CONVENTION CENTER

PANEL 5

TERMS OF REFERENCE

HOUSTON - TEXAS



## PANEL 5: Powering Communities: Ensuring Sustainable and Equitable Access to Clean Energy

### Panel Objective:

To examine the importance of community engagement, local capacity building, and equitable distribution in ensuring the long-term sustainability and social impact of clean energy projects in Central Africa. The discussion will focus on strategies to empower local communities, promote inclusive development, and ensure that the benefits of clean energy and access to clean cooking reach the most vulnerable populations.

### Moderator:

- **Ms. Lady BE BLESS** - Co-Chair at African & Caribbean Energy network.

### Panelists:

1. **Ms. Ileana FERBER** – Colibri Business Development LLC – Local Content Expert USA
2. **Ms. Yolanda ASUMU** - CEO of iCUBEARM and Founder of the Africa HR Forum
3. **Mr. Madingue Djasro** – CEO Tawara Energy Canada
4. **Mr. Jean-Paul Beleshay** – Founder and CEO, of Great Heart Global

### Panelists Talking Points :

1. Frameworks for community engagements which have been proven most effective in Central Africa for ensuring that clean energy projects reflect local priorities, secure genuine community buy-in, and maintain support throughout the project lifecycle.
2. Highlight how clean energy initiatives in Central Africa can be specifically designed to address the distinct energy needs and challenges faced by women, and metrics to be used to measure success in gender-inclusive energy access.
3. What innovative financing mechanisms and business models are showing the most promise in making clean energy solutions affordable and accessible to lower-income communities in Central Africa, particularly in rural and peri-urban areas.
4. How local capacity building programs can be structured to create sustainable employment opportunities while ensuring the long-term operational sustainability of clean energy systems in communities with limited technical expertise.
5. Practical approaches which have proven successful in transitioning communities from traditional biomass cooking to cleaner alternatives, and how these solutions can be scaled while respecting cultural preferences and economic realities.
6. Highlight equitable benefit-sharing mechanisms which can ensure that communities hosting energy infrastructures receive tangible economic advantages, and how these arrangements can be structured to provide long-term, sustainable benefits.



7. What digital technologies and innovative payment systems can be leveraged to expand energy access in remote communities while ensuring that technological solutions remain appropriate and manageable for local contexts.
8. Mention how Policy frameworks have successfully balanced investor needs with community interests in Central African energy development, and how can these can be strengthened to better protect vulnerable populations while still attracting necessary investment.
9. How clean energy initiatives can be integrated with broader community development goals such as improved healthcare, education, and economic opportunities to create holistic development impacts.
10. Roles of traditional community leadership structures in the governance of local energy systems, and how these can be effectively integrated with formal institutional arrangements to ensure sustainable community ownership.

## Expected Outcomes:

1. Framework for integrating meaningful community engagement and participatory decision-making throughout the clean energy project lifecycle
2. Identification of best practices for local capacity building programs that create sustainable employment while ensuring long-term operational sustainability
3. Actionable strategies for targeting energy access initiatives toward marginalized and vulnerable populations, particularly women and rural communities
4. Models for equitable benefit-sharing mechanisms that ensure community economic empowerment through clean energy deployment
5. Recommendations for policy frameworks that balance investor needs with community interests in Central African energy development
6. Commitment to follow-up multi-stakeholder working group focused on implementing community-centered energy solutions in the CABEF region.

