

Etango

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INTERNATIONAL SOLAR AWARD FOR SOLTRAIN PROJECT





NOBLE PROJECT ... The Orange River Vineyards Investment (ORVI) social housing project which is this year's the winner of the International Energy Agency Solar Heating and Cooling Programme Solar Award

SOLTRAIN funded ORVI Social Housing Project Wins IEA SHC 2022 Solar Award

The Orange River Vineyards Investment (ORVI) social housing project in Aussenkehr, in southern Namibia, is the winner of the prestigious International Energy Agency Solar Heating and Cooling Programme (IEA SHC) Solar Award.

The SHC Solar Award recognises an individual, company, or private/public institution that has shown outstanding leadership or achievements in solar heating and cooling.

Through the Southern African Solar Thermal Training and Demonstration Initiative (SOLTRAIN) a regional program on capacity building and demonstration of solar thermal systems, funded by the Austrian Development Agency and implemented by AEE INTEC, the Austrian institute for applied research, all the 58 houses at ORVI which are made from precast concrete bricks, were equipped with solar thermal systems in September 2021.

The installation of the thermosyphon systems was supported by the SOLTRAIN project, both technically and financially.

In Namibia the SOLTRAIN local partner is the Namibia Energy Institute (NEI), at the Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST), with the Southern African

Development Community Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (SACREEE) being the regional partner.

Helvi Iлека, Centre Head for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency at NEI and Leonhard Eins, Managing Director of Solsquare Energy, the company that installed the solar thermal systems at ORVI, received the award on behalf of the ORVI social housing project during EuroSun 2022. EuroSun is the International Conference on Solar Heating and Cooling for Buildings and Industry and was this year held in Kassel, Germany.

"The 2022 SHC Solar Award celebrates the substantial achievement and measurable impact of a social housing project using solar thermal to reduce energy consumption and costs. The recipient, the ORVI social housing project, is a perfect example of affordable housing that improved residents' standard of living, supported a national solar company, and annually saves energy and cuts greenhouse gas emissions – in this case, 120,000 kWh of electricity otherwise produced by old coal-fired plants thus avoiding the release of 36 tons of CO₂ annually," said Tomas Olejniczak, IEA SHC Chairman.

ORVI's housing project provides a simple, affordable, sustainable solar water heating option for the beneficiaries.

NEI supervised the installation of the solar thermal systems at ORVI's housing development and conducted a successful quality inspection.

With 40-50% of electricity consumption in low-cost housing projects used for water heating, thermosyphon systems for hot water preparation (2.1 m² flat plate collector area and 160-liter hot water tank) were supplied and installed on every home by Solsquare Energy. The hot water is used mainly for showers, washing clothes and cooking.

Ileka was delighted that Namibia's ORVI social housing project won international recognition.

She said the over 1,500 employees at ORVI never had a decent housing prior to the development and were living in poor traditional reed huts with no sanitation. ORVI's social housing project has provided its employees with affordable and yet sustainable energy efficient accommodation, and it demonstrates how simple and affordable houses can be built locally and equipped with sustainable solar technologies.

"This project is not only a success on the ground, but demonstrates how a long-standing, comprehensive training program such as SOLTRAIN can bring together local and international solar industries, research institutions from Europe and Southern Africa, and policymakers to create a framework for the widespread application of thermal solar systems," said Ileka.

The NEI Acting Head said through awareness raising, ORVI came to know about the existence of SOLTRAIN funding and Solsquare Energy had also attended training programs offered by the project and were therefore aware of the SOLTRAIN financing options for solar thermal demonstration systems.

SOLTRAIN started in 2009, and is currently at the end of its fourth phase of cooperation with Botswana, Lesotho, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Zimbabwe and SACREEE.



WE DID IT ... Helvi Ileka from the Namibia Energy Institute and Leonhard Eins from Solsquare showing off the award for the ORVI project



PROUD MOMENT ... (from left) Tomas Olejniczak, SHC Chair and Dutch SHC member, Werner Weiss, Austrian SHC member, Leonhard Eins from Solsquare Namibia and Ken Guthrie, Solar Award Committee Chair & Australian SHC member.

SOLTRAIN is designed to support and contribute towards the implementation of different energy policies of the target countries that enhance the use of solar thermal systems. Energy poverty negatively affects the circumstances of large numbers of people generally and particularly in the SADC Member States.

SOLTRAIN's key focus is to contribute towards reducing energy poverty by improving access to sustainable energies, specifically solar thermal solutions, and thus directly contributing to the realisation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 7 (SDG 7) and indirectly to SDG 1, SDG 12 and SDG 13.

In order to support broad rollout programmes of solar thermal systems in all six participating countries, Solar Thermal Roadmaps and Implementation Plans were developed in broad stakeholder processes in close cooperation with policy (ministries and governmental bodies).

The implementation of these roadmaps was one of the focal points of SOLTRAIN IV.