

PRISTINE VET Newsletter #2

August 2026

Renewable Energy Projects Accelerating Across West Africa

West Africa continues to strengthen its position as one of Africa's most dynamic clean energy frontiers. Building on the record solar additions recorded in 2025, the first half of 2026 has seen concrete project milestones, hybrid plants moving into construction, and green hydrogen frameworks advancing from policy to implementation.

In Mauritania, construction has begun on a landmark 220 MW hybrid power plant combining 160 MW of solar PV and 60 MW of wind, supported by a 370 MWh battery energy storage system. Developed by Istithmar Green Energy (Istithmar West Africa) under a 15-year public-private partnership with the Government of Mauritania and SOMELEC, the plant is fully privately financed and is scheduled to enter commercial operation in the fourth quarter of 2026. The project is expected to improve grid stability, lower generation costs and create local technical employment.

Mauritania's green hydrogen ambitions also advanced significantly. In April 2026 the African Development Bank supported the validation of a national green hydrogen auction framework, while developers continue to progress the multi-gigawatt pipeline (including Project AMAN, Project Nour and Megaton Moon) that underpins the country's target of 12.5 million tonnes of green hydrogen annually by 2035. These developments reinforce the urgent need for a skilled local workforce in solar, wind, hybrid systems and emerging hydrogen technologies.

In Ghana, the Bui Power Authority has expanded its operational solar capacity to 105 MWp (including the region's first floating solar plant on the Bui Reservoir) and is advancing further expansions of both floating and land based solar together with battery storage. Parallel large-scale initiatives such as the Buipe Solar Project have moved into implementation, signalling sustained demand for technicians able to install, operate and maintain modern renewable assets.

Across the broader region, a July 2026 IRENA report highlighted the critical role of decentralised renewable energy in strengthening climate resilience for essential services in Francophone West Africa, while regional power trade and mini grid programmes under the Mission 300 initiative continue to create practical employment pathways in solar PV and hybrid systems.

Progress in Renewable Energy VET Projects Across Africa

Erasmus+ Capacity Building in Vocational Education and Training continues to generate concrete results for green skills development across Sub Saharan Africa. New projects selected in recent calls are moving into implementation, while earlier initiatives report measurable progress in curriculum modernisation, teacher training and industry linkages.

In Sierra Leone, the EREVETS project (Empowering the Renewable Energy Sector through VET Support), launched in January 2026, is strengthening the capacity of technical universities and polytechnics to deliver quality training in renewable energy technologies, entrepreneurship and inclusive workforce development. The consortium includes European and Sierra Leonean partners and works closely with the Renewable Energy Association of Sierra Leone to ensure labour-market relevance.

In Nigeria, President Tinubu commissioned Africa's first dedicated renewable energy vocational college the Barefoot Renewable Energy College (BARECKS) in Osara, Kogi State together with a green hydrogen research and demonstration pilot plant on 4 August 2026. Modelled on practical vocational approaches that have proven successful elsewhere, the college is designed to train technicians, installers, operators and maintenance professionals and to help close the continent's most critical skills gap in the energy transition.

Elsewhere, Erasmus+ CB-VET and related capacity building projects continue to deliver competency-based modules, trainer upskilling and stronger education industry partnerships. These complementary initiatives underscore the growing recognition that a skilled local workforce is indispensable for the successful deployment of solar parks, hybrid mini grids and emerging green hydrogen infrastructure across West Africa and beyond.

More information here:

- [Solar Perspective / Prospect – Mauritania 220 MW hybrid solar-wind + storage plant \(construction launch, commercial operation Q4 2026\)](#)
- [African Development Bank – Mauritania Green Hydrogen Auction Framework validation workshop, April 2026](#)
- [Energy Capital Power / MSGBC – Mauritania green-hydrogen pipeline targeting 12.5 Mt by 2035 \(AMAN, Nour, Megaton Moon\)](#)
- [Bui Power Authority – Floating and land-based solar expansion to 105 MWp and further capacity under construction \(2026\)](#)
- [Graphic Online – Buipe Solar Project first phase advancing in Ghana](#)
- [IRENA – Powering climate resilience in Francophone West Africa: the role of decentralised renewable energy \(July 2026\)](#)
- [Maastricht School of Management – EREVETS project launch \(Sierra Leone, January 2026\)](#)
- [ThisDay / Nairametrics / Tribune – Commissioning of Barefoot Renewable Energy College & green-hydrogen pilot plant, Kogi State, Nigeria](#)

Project progress:

The PRISTINE VET consortium is pleased to report solid advances across all work packages in the months following Newsletter #1. Since the official project start on 1 January 2026, partners have moved from planning into concrete delivery of key deliverables while maintaining close alignment with the five core objectives of the Grant Agreement and the national renewable-energy strategies (PANER) of the partner countries.

Gender analysis completed and women's partnerships advancing. Deliverable D2.1 (Gender Analysis) has been finalised. Building on its findings, partners are actively establishing formal collaboration agreements with women's organisations in Burkina Faso, Ghana and Mauritania (Deliverable D2.2). Outreach activities, information days and recruitment campaigns are under way, with the target of securing a critical mass of partnership agreements by the end of August 2026. These agreements will support greater female enrolment and retention in renewable energy VET programmes.

Educational materials for Work Package 3 finalised. Comprehensive competency based educational materials covering Solar PV, Wind, Biomass and Hydrogen technologies have been developed and refined following intensive partner feedback. Particular attention was given to practical, hands-on content suitable for technician level learners (assembly/disassembly procedures, grounding and measurement protocols, maintenance instructions and technical diagrams). The confirmed two tier curriculum structure: a Basic Track providing essential foundational knowledge for all participants, followed by an Advanced Track leading to a recognised diploma aligned with EQF Level 4/5 or equivalent national TVET standards is now ready for pilot testing. A self-paced Training-of-Trainers programme on a Moodle platform will commence shortly after final publication.

Cross-cutting plans and coordination frameworks in place. The Dissemination, Communication and Exploitation Plan (WP6) and the Data Management Plan have been completed and are guiding project activities. All partners continue regular coordination meetings and are preparing intensified monthly exchanges from September 2026 onward.

A dedicated [Project Documents](#) section has also been made available on the project website (pristine-vet.eu), offering public online access to key project outputs and other publicly available documents.

Implementation on the ground. African partners are recruiting 20–40 trainers (electrical and mechanical instructors from universities, technical and vocational schools and colleges of education) to pilot the new materials.

USTED is advancing procurement of small-scale laboratory equipment (panels, inverter, battery and associated components) to support practical Solar PV training sessions. Industry Memoranda of Understanding are progressing well; Ghana has already secured a substantial number of signed MOUs and is targeting approximately twenty, creating pathways for work-based learning. Parallel efforts continue in Burkina Faso and Mauritania.

These concrete steps confirm the consortium's determination to deliver high quality, inclusive and labour market relevant vocational training that will contribute meaningfully to the green energy transition across Ghana, Mauritania and Burkina Faso. All work packages remain on track with the agreed timeline.

Stay tuned for more updates. We encourage all stakeholders to follow the project on the PRISTINE VET website and LinkedIn page.