



## Call for Applications: ProGREEN Virtual Advanced Institute on Renewable Energy in West Africa

### **Background:**

Renewable energy, such as solar photovoltaic and biogas, presents a clean and affordable means for increasing access to household electricity in West Africa. Energy access is a critical challenge given that only 20 percent of the region's population has access to electricity, with rural areas having far lower rates of access than urban areas. With the region's population projected to double by 2050 and energy demand expected to increase fivefold by 2030, the energy access gap is expected to worsen in coming decades.

Strengthening knowledge of important enabling and constraining factors associated with the growth potential of renewable energy is critical for ensuring a viable path towards increased access. In response, [START International](#), with support from the [Research Fund of Quebec \(FRQ\)](#), is implementing the Promoting Gains in Renewable Energy ([PROGREEN](#)) – West Africa project. The project aims to strengthen understanding of transitions to renewable energy and the impacts of these transitions on development, especially related to food and water security and the well-being of the population. During Phase 1 of the project, START assembled multi-disciplinary and cross-sectoral teams of experts in Burkina Faso and Senegal to conduct in-depth assessments of key enabling and constraining factors for advancing renewable energy transitions in both countries. The project has also engaged with renewable energy experts in Morocco through the Royal Institute for Strategic Studies in Rabat to explore and identify key dimensions of the country's renewable energy landscape as well as potential synergies with the broader work in West Africa.

### **Opportunity:**

START is now building on the knowledge and learning achieved in ProGREEN Phase 1 to further advance capacity development of early and mid-career researchers and professionals that emphasizes learning into action during Phase 2. A key part of this effort will be the convening of a virtual Advance institute (AI) focused on renewable energy themes that emerged as priorities in the Burkina Faso and Senegal assessment reports.

**This AI is open to early and mid-career researchers and professionals from Senegal, Burkina Faso and Morocco.** In addition to strengthening knowledge on multiple facets of renewable energy, the AI will also serve as the foundation for developing proposals for subsequent ProGREEN 'Action Awards' that integrate learning into action to inform progress towards expanding renewable energy affordability and access in Burkina Faso and Senegal.

### **Dates and Connectivity Requirements of the Advanced Institute:**

**Dates:** The AI will be held online from June 7-11 with once-daily sessions lasting 2-3 hours each.  
**Connectivity Requirements:** Participants will need to be able to connect virtually to Zoom and to have generally stable internet to participate in the daily sessions.

### **Language:**

All sessions and activities will be in French, however some knowledge in English will be beneficial.

### **Eligibility Requirements:**

This call is open to early-career researchers (Masters students, PhD candidates and those with advanced degrees who have less than 5 years of post-graduate work experience) and professionals (with less than 5 years of work experience) as well as mid-career researchers and professionals in fields related to renewable energy (specifically solar and bioenergy) with



expertise related to one or more of the following areas: water, land use, food and agriculture, health, youth, gender, socio- economics, and small and medium enterprise development. Applicants must be citizens of Burkina Faso, Senegal or Morocco and currently living in those countries.

### **Curriculum Themes :**

- Climate and sustainability-linked motivations for renewable energy expansion with a special focus on West Africa
- In-depth exploration of solar energy in West Africa
- Examining the role of bio-digesters and biogas in West Africa
- Investigating financing for renewable energy initiatives in West Africa , accessing financing and key challenges.
- Learning more about impact-focused research and why this is essential for greater uptake and expansion of renewable energy technologies

### **Follow-on opportunity:**

Following the AI, an opportunity will be opened (**currently only to Burkinabe and Senegalese participants**) to form teams and submit impact oriented proposals for ProGREEN Action Awards (of up to \$25,000 USD). These awards will focus on translating learning into action around key renewable energy issues in Burkina Faso and Senegal. Prior to proposal submission, teams will participate in a virtual accelerator workshop to help progress initial ideas and to enhance dimensions of research for impact and communications in the draft proposals. More details and updates will be provided during the AI itself.

### **Anticipated outcomes:**

Through completing this course, AI participants will:

- strengthen their understanding of the renewable energy landscape in West Africa, the linkages to regional and global governance frameworks and financial schemes, and the necessity for closely aligning research and action.
- become well versed on the contributions of renewable energy to development and synergies with other sectors important for achieving the SDGs
- expand their network of peer researchers and professionals from which future partnerships and knowledge sharing can build.
- be better equipped to lead and contribute to concrete actions on renewable energy and to articulate that work to broader audiences.

### **How to apply:**

Individuals whose expertise matches the description above are invited to apply. Women and those from marginalized groups are highly encouraged to apply. Applications will be reviewed rigorously and transparently by START under the supervision of the project's Advisory Group.

### **Complete the following two steps to apply:**

1. **Complete and submit the AI Application form by April 30, 2021 at the following link: [AI form](#)**
2. **Submit a current Curriculum Vitae or résumé (maximum 2 pages) to Dr. Mariama Camara at [mcamara@start.org](mailto:mcamara@start.org) by April 30, 2021 with the subject: ProGREEN Advanced Institute (Your Name) .**

Applications received after the deadline will **not** be considered for participation.

For further questions regarding the Promoting Gains in Renewable Energy (ProGREEN) – West Africa project or this call for applications, please contact Mariama Camara at [mcamara@start.org](mailto:mcamara@start.org) or visit <https://start.org/programs/progreen>.