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ARC Power and Volkswagen Mobility Solutions Rwanda Unveil Rwanda's First Empowerment Hub to Transform Agriculture and Energy Access

Groundbreaking solar-powered E-HUB to support agriculture mechanisation, sustainable mobility, and local entrepreneurship, advancing Rwanda's Vision 2050.

Kigali, Rwanda – 8th November 2024 – ARC Power and Volkswagen Mobility Solutions Rwanda (VWMSR) have partnered to launch Rwanda's first **Empowerment Hub**, a solar-powered platform designed to revolutionise agriculture and energy access. The project is driven by VWMSR on behalf of Volkswagen Group Africa and was initiated by Volkswagen Group Innovation in Germany. The Gen Farm project addresses the potential of renewable energy and a sustainable mechanisation of agriculture, to shape mobility in Africa for generations to come. Advancing Rwanda's Vision 2050 to transform the economy into a high-income nation by 2050.

This pilot E-HUB will be managed by ARC Power for two years to ensure its feasibility and success, serving as a model for future expansion across Africa.

The Empowerment Hub, powered by ARC Power's advanced solar grid systems, will supply clean, reliable energy for essential services like electric tractors (e-tractors) and e-scooters, contributing to mechanised farming and sustainable mobility. The hub will also provide a flexible business and training space for entrepreneurs, empowering local startups to thrive within the clean energy ecosystem.

Rwanda's Agricultural Transformation

Rwanda's agricultural sector is at a crucial juncture, with only 5% of the country's 1.4 million hectares of arable land currently mechanised. The Gen Farm project directly aligns with the **National Agriculture Policy**, which emphasises the need for mechanisation to increase productivity and reduce labour-intensive practices. By providing renewable energy to power farming technologies, the Empowerment Hub will support the country's ambitions for **market-oriented, climate-resilient agriculture**.

"This partnership marks a new chapter for the potential of sustainable energy and agricultural innovation in Africa," said Karl Boyce, CEO of ARC Power. "With our solar energy and the ongoing management of the hub, we are confident this project will not only increase agricultural productivity in this area of Rwanda, but also prove the viability of a sustainable model to inspire further investment in the region."

Empowering Local Communities

The Empowerment Hub is designed to foster local economic self-sufficiency by addressing specific needs within the community. In particular, the initiative will reduce the workload of women, allowing them more time for other productive activities. Additionally, the E-HUB will serve as a centre for the operation and maintenance of mechanised farming equipment, linking farmers to essential tools and support.

“Our vision is to use this Empowerment Hub as a pilot that will demonstrate the positive impacts of renewable energy and mechanisation in Africa’s rural communities,” said Serge Kamuhinda, Managing Director of VWMSR. “This hub is not only about providing energy; it’s about creating a sustainable, scalable business model for agriculture mechanization in Africa..”

A Blueprint for Future Development

By serving as a platform for innovation, the Empowerment Hub is expected to lead to significant positive impacts on agriculture and local entrepreneurship, helping Rwanda achieve its long-term agricultural and economic goals. VWMSR’s Gen Farm project is a key part of this initiative, and the insights gained from this pilot will help shape the company’s future in emerging markets.

About ARC Power

ARC Power provides affordable, reliable, and clean solar electricity to communities across Sub Saharan Africa. The company designs, pre-finances, and constructs both grid-tied and off-grid energy systems, delivering first-time energy access at scale. ARC Power has received recognition for its innovative work, including the Queen’s Award for Sustainable Development in 2022 and the Energy Globe Award in 2023.

About VWMSR

VWMSR’s ambition is to shape mobility in Africa for generations to come. VWMSR serves as innovation hub for the Volkswagen Group Africa. The Empowerment Hub project represents Volkswagen’s first step into rural mobility in Africa.

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