



February 24, 2022

European Union Partners with BEL to fund \$11 Million Project for Mini-grid Electricity Schemes in Unserved Villages

The European Union (EU) signed an agreement today with Belize Electricity Limited (BEL) for a grant of 4.5 Million Euros and a BEL contribution of 0.5 Million Euros equivalent to 11 Million Belize Dollars to fund a Rural Electrification Project for five remote villages in Belize.

Over the next three years, BEL, as the implementing partner, will construct the mini-grids in villages that are currently not served with electricity. The project will provide more than 550 households, businesses and public services with access to safe, reliable and sustainable energy services.

Once commissioned, BEL will operate and maintain the mini-grid schemes that will be supplied with electricity that is generated and stored using hybrid solar, diesel and battery technologies. Customers will be served via standard BEL metered networks.



The Rural Electrification Project will benefit five remote villages in Belize.



EU Ambassador Marianne Van Steen and BEL CEO John Mencias sign the agreement.

EU Ambassador Marianne Van Steen says, *“Access to electricity is an opportunity for isolated communities to develop agricultural transformation activities and generate additional income sources. For households, access to electricity will improve the quality of family life by providing lighting, alternative cooking, access to information and communication. Particularly to women, access to energy means a direct effect on their living conditions and an opportunity for their economic and political empowerment”*.

In preparation for this project, BEL, Government of Belize representatives and other stakeholders visited and consulted with residents and leaders in remote and developing communities across the country to take into consideration their unique needs and distance from the national electricity grid. The project builds on the experience with the mini-grid technology pilot project in La Gracia village and the mini-grid projects that are underway in Indian Creek and Corazon Creek.

This initiative is based on a national framework for providing access to electricity for all unserved villages in Belize and is aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 7 “Affordable and Clean Energy for All”.

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