

# Empower a Billion Lives 2025: Global Competition to Accelerate Scaling of Energy Access Solutions

*We are inviting teams worldwide to Empower a Billion Lives 2025, the competition to develop solutions to the lack of energy access impacting billions of people.*

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-- Teams from around the world are

invited to register for and participate in Empower a Billion Lives 2025 (EBL), the biennial global competition to develop and demonstrate viable, holistic, and scalable solutions to the challenging problems of energy poverty and lack of energy access that impact billions of people around the world. EBL is organized by the IEEE Power Electronics Society (IEEE PELS) of the

Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) and its partners.



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*Brad Lehman, President of  
IEEE PELS*

EBL 2025 launched today at the IEEE Energy Conversion Congress and Expo—Europe at the Darmstadtium Center in Darmstadt, Germany. From January 7 to 9, 2025, EBL will also have team activities, special panels, sessions, and an energy access program at the IEEE-PELS International Decentralized Energy Access Solutions (IDEAS) Conference in Bali, Indonesia.

Three billion people live in energy poverty, including 675

million who live without electricity access. This is not just a statistic but a pressing issue that demands immediate attention. With current policies and solutions, it is predicted that by 2030, there will still be a shortfall in achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG7) targeted in the Decade of Action. Providing affordable and sustainable energy access can dramatically impact living standards, health, education, productivity, and the ability to be a part of modern society. Solving energy poverty using 21st-century technology would also reduce 3.8 gigatons of carbon emission per year compared to traditional 20th-century methods. The need for new



solutions that can scale is clear; this is our competition's purpose.

EBL 2025 is a testament to the success of EBL 2019 and 2023. These competitions saw over 550 teams from 70 countries participate in events, field demonstrations, and the global finals in Baltimore, Maryland, US, and Orlando, Florida, US. EBL 2025 aims to engage teams once again to develop solutions in new and challenging tracks, including energy resiliency, local entrepreneurship, energy supply, end-use, productive-use, clean cooking, enabling technologies, and a track for student teams. The solutions that will have a significant impact on energy access will have sound business plans, are regionally relevant, and will scale.

In EBL 2019 and 2023, over 1 million USD was provided in awards and team support, including a \$100,000 USD grand prize to team SoULS from IIT Bombay, India, in 2019 and a \$150,000 USD grand prize to team Nanoe from Madagascar. Since EBL's inception, there have been 25 other global winners, including SolarWorx from Germany, D-Olivette from Nigeria, Standard Microgrid from Zambia, Green Empowerment from Malaysia, Atutu from Myanmar, all in 2023 and XPower from Rwanda, Reeddi and Havenhill Synergy from Nigeria, Entrepreneurs du Monde and Okra from Cambodia, and SolarWorx from Germany in 2019. These success stories are a testament to the potential impact of this competition and the innovative solutions it fosters.

The EBL competition is a platform that encourages multi-disciplinary teams to unleash their creativity and inspires them to innovate. It invites innovators, entrepreneurs, researchers, and student teams from colleges and universities to develop and demonstrate innovative, cost-effective solutions based on fast-moving 21st-century technologies with rapidly declining prices. A primary focus of EBL 2025 is to reduce technology and market risk and achieve scale and impact with robust, economically viable, environmentally sustainable, and affordable solutions for those who live on less than \$2.15 USD per day.

Brad Lehman, President of IEEE PELS, states that "EBL is an innovative program that integrates cutting-edge technology with the capacity for rapid scaling. By harnessing IEEE's global presence, its leadership in technology, and its extensive volunteer network, EBL can implement a wide-reaching program effectively. This initiative aligns seamlessly with IEEE's mission to advance technology for the benefit of humanity. EBL exemplifies how the latest advancements can address energy equity and access issues while ensuring that solutions are sustainable and environmentally friendly, ultimately benefiting the planet." Teams from small and large companies, entrepreneurial start-ups, research institutions, and university students from different parts of the world will provide regional and cultural relevance to the solutions, and all will be invited to participate.

Participation is crucial to the success of Empower a Billion Lives. Please visit [www.empowerabillionlives.org](http://www.empowerabillionlives.org) for more about the competition, view the past winners, and learn how to compete or become a sponsor. We look forward to your involvement in this global initiative.

The Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) is the world's largest technical organization, with over 450,000 members/volunteers in 160 countries. The IEEE Power Electronics Society has over 30 years of experience in facilitating and guiding the development and innovation in the control of electrical power for a wide variety of consumer, commercial, industrial, utility, transportation, and renewable energy applications.

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