

Case studies: Renewable energy & human rights

Solar energy

Mexico: Farmers and academics denounce Nueva Xcala de Engie solar park

Country: Mexico	Company: Engie (formerly GDF Suez)
<p>Peasants, ejidatarios and academics denounced negative impacts of the Engie Company's Nueva Xcala Photovoltaic Park Project, which is being built in the San Antonio Calpulalpan ejido, in the state of Tlaxcala, and Emiliano Zapata, state of Hidalgo. Impacts include damage to the environment and cultural and historical heritage, as well as irregularities in land acquisition.</p> <p>Mount Malpaís of the ejido of San Antonio Calpulalpan which preserves Teotihuacan and Acolhua cultures, as well as remains of what may have been the first churches in the evangelization process, has been greatly affected by the construction of these solar parks. From an environmental perspective too, it has been detrimental to the community(s).</p>	
Response: Engie Responded	Source: Business and Human Rights Resource Center

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Mexico: Locals claim lack of access to information about new solar farm projects

Country: Mexico

In 2017, Mexico was among the top 10 countries in terms of renewable energy investment, recording \$6bn USD, an increase of 810% on the previous year. There has been particularly rapid expansion in the Yucatan peninsula, with 10 solar farms currently at different stages of development.

As projects develop, local communities have alleged lack of adequate access to information, disregard for indigenous rights (including self-determination and autonomy), and threats against human rights defenders. In the case of a solar farm in Valladolid, a judge suspended the project, due to alleged human rights violations, including that the company did not take a Sacred Cenote into account.

In the case of SunPower's Ticul A and Ticul B solar farms, which entail deforesting 603 hectares, there have been continuous allegations of death threats, attacks, and defamation against community members. There are also allegations that the consultation process was deceitful regarding the use of land, that there were no independent specialists involved, and that opposing opinions were not adequately recorded. In 2018, the UN Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples reported the initial contracts "... undermined the freedom of the consultation process and caused divisions and tension within the community."

The planned renewable energy projects in Yucatan are estimated to require more than 12,000 hectares of land close to protected areas, local populations, or sacred and archaeological sites. Many projects are on social property land, or ejidos. Although environmental and social assessments have been conducted for individual projects, there is not a Strategic Impact Assessment for such a concentrated installation of multiple energy projects.

Source: [Fast & fair renewable energy: A practical guide for investors](#)

Categories: [Indigenous peoples](#) [Intimidation & threats](#) [Access to information](#) [Free, prior & informed consent](#) [Beatings & violence](#) [Mexico](#) [Solar energy](#) [Renewable Energy](#)

USA: Solar installation company facilitates creation of sustainable jobs

Country: USA	Company: Solar Holler
<p>Solar Holler is a solar installation company that helps train solar installers in West Virginia in the United States, a region known for the dominance of coal mining in its economy. The company works with an NGO called Coalfield Development, which sends trainees to Solar Holler through a direct employment programme. Through this arrangement, Coalfield Development aims to mitigate the social and economic hardships the region's residents face with shrinking jobs in the coal sector. This community outreach and training also helps mitigate potential conflicts between the company and residents. Solar Holler benefits by cultivating a willing workforce that contributes to a just transition to a low-carbon economy.</p>	
Source: Fast & fair renewable energy: A practical guide for investors	

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