



The Low Carbon Enterprise Fund



[See more images of the venture](#)

Dear Friends, Colleagues and Supporters,

I am writing to let you know that our Low Carbon Enterprise Fund has just invested in an African venture that supplies solar powered mobile phone chargers for villagers in Burkina Faso.

When I first heard about this project, it seemed to me that there were many more important needs that we should be supporting – making mobile phones available to impoverished villagers did not appear to be a priority! For us, mobile phones are a convenience – but for these villagers they are an essential element in helping them build their businesses and manage their day-to-day affairs – arranging transport for their produce, enabling the market to respond to their advertised service and in many other ways helping them to grow their small businesses.

What we really liked about this enterprise was the model that the local owner had developed whereby the charging station was available on a long lease to a trained villager – and those villagers then had their own businesses charging their community's mobile phones.

Before we became involved with the entrepreneur, he had already managed to fund twenty three village charging stations. With our investment we hope that he will be able to roll out about one hundred more next year and once he has demonstrated that he can scale the business up, we plan to make a further investment.

We now have invested in nine small low carbon businesses in the developing world. Our [Low Carbon Enterprise Fund](#) has been generously supported by a number of donors and the management, technical and on-going business support has been provided through the ERM Foundation by ERM, the global consulting firm.

Many thanks for your continuing support.

Best wishes,



Robin Bidwell, Chairman ERM Foundation

Find out more about some of the ventures we have already invested in:



Tanzania: Fuel efficient bricks.

A high quality low carbon alternative to concrete bricks, designed to build affordable housing for rural Tanzanians and provide much needed local employment.



India: Low carbon burners.

In a region where kerosene use remains high, these energy efficient burners reduce dependency of this carbon-emitting fuel source among some of India's poorest communities



Indonesia: Pico hydro turbines.

Designed to reduce dependency on diesel generators in off-grid Indonesian villages, these mini hydro turbines harness the country's plentiful water resources to generate electricity in a clean, sustainable fashion.



Nepal: Solar lamps.

Highland communities in Nepal exist far from the electric grid. These innovative solar lamps can transform lives by bringing light to remote communities, enabling children to study after dark and fostering greater productivity.
