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6th International Conference

8—10 April 2026 | Mallorca, Spain

SIDE EVENT 2:

Energy Access Innovation Lab Session

Waterloo Institute for Sustainable Energy/
Affordable Energy for Humanity (AE4H) Program (Canada)
& Reiner Lemoine Institute (Germany)

WISE WATERLOO INSTITUTE FOR SUSTAINABLE ENERGY

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AE4H Global Change Initiative

AE4H.org

REINER LEMOINE INSTITUT

https://reiner-lemoine-institut.de/en/

When: *Wednesday, April 8th, 2026, 9.00 – 12.30 hrs*
Where: *University of the Balearic Islands (UIB) Carretera de Valldemossa, km 7.5, 07122 Palma, Illes Balears |* **Gaspar Melchor de Jovellanos Building** *(Carrer d'Eivissa s/n)*
Room: *AB03*
Registration: *Open to all conference participants (Limited space). Reserve your place for this workshop when completing your conference registration.*

OBJECTIVE OF THE SIDE EVENT:

The Energy Access Innovation Lab is designed as an interactive, solutions-oriented session that shifts the focus from presenting past work to collaboratively developing future energy access initiatives. Instead of asking "what has been done before," the lab creates space for participants from academia, industry, government, and civil society to explore practical pathways for advancing sustainable and inclusive energy systems.

FORMAT:

In this edition, the Innovation Lab takes the form of a simulation-based role-playing exercise. Participants assume the roles of different stakeholders involved in the development of a renewable mini-grid project, such as government authorities, private developers, and community representatives. Through structured negotiation, participants must jointly design a project that is technically feasible, financially viable, and socially inclusive while responding to policy and budget constraints.

The lab will essentially take place in three parts, running for a total of about three hours:

Part 1 – Introduction to the Simulation
The facilitator introduces the fictional community case study, the objectives of the exercise, and the rules of the simulation. Participants are assigned stakeholder roles and receive short role briefs outlining their priorities, incentives, and constraints.

Part 2 – Negotiation and Co-Design
Participants work in stakeholder groups to develop their negotiation strategies and then engage in facilitated negotiation rounds with other groups. Together they explore technology choices, financing options, tariffs, governance structures, and social inclusion measures while responding to evolving conditions in the scenario.

Part 3 – Plenary and Reflection
Participants converge on a joint mini-grid project proposal and briefly present their outcomes in plenary. The session concludes with a moderated discussion reflecting on the trade-offs, negotiation dynamics, and lessons for real-world energy access projects.

About the AE4H Program at the Waterloo Institute for Sustainable Energy (WISE), University of Waterloo:

The Affordable Energy for Humanity Initiative (AE4H) was founded in 2015 as a collaboration between the University of Waterloo (Canada) and the Karlsruhe Institute for Technology (Germany) with the aim of accelerating research and development of clean energy solutions to alleviate energy poverty. The initiative has become a global network encompassing 140+ expert innovators from academia, the private and public sectors, and civil society organizations in 20+ countries. AE4H is managed out of the Waterloo Institute for Sustainable Energy (WISE) at the University of Waterloo.

One of the primary mechanisms through which AE4H works is to bring together our expert members in unique forums that allow for deep knowledge exchange and catalysis of new collaborations and projects. AE4H also manages an international internship program that provides funded student interns to energy access enterprises and is active in a number of other projects made possible through member collaboration.

About Reiner Lemoine Institute:

The Reiner Lemoine Institute (RLI) is an independent non-profit research institution that contributes to a transformation towards a sustainable energy supply based on 100 % renewable energy. For more than ten years, we have conducted applied research to scientifically support the long-term transition of the energy supply system towards renewable energy. Open-source models developed here have firmly established themselves in energy system modeling. The Off-Grid Systems research unit develops electrification strategies based on renewable energy for developing regions and optimizes hybrid mini-grids with the help of simulation models and geographic information software. By this we especially support the UN Sustainable Development Goal for affordable and clean energy (SDG7) as well as climate action (SDG13).

Co - Directors of the Innovation Lab are:

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