EIT InnoEnergy launches the European Solar Academy to skill 65,000 workers over the next two years

Mandated by the European Commission as one of their Net-Zero Academies, the Academy will skill workers across the entire solar photovoltaic value chain

Munich, 20th June, 2024: Today, EIT InnoEnergy, the leading innovation engine in sustainable energy, supported by the European Institute of Innovation & Technology (EIT), a body of the European Union (EU), announces the launch of the European Solar Academy. Mandated by the European Commission as one of its Net-Zero Academies, the Academy will be run by the InnoEnergy Skills Institute, which will develop tailored training services to reskill and upskill 65,000 workers across the entire European solar photovoltaic (PV) value chain within its first two years.

As the European Union pursues 2030 targets to install almost 600 GW of solar photovoltaic panels and supply 40% of EU demand for net-zero technologies, with products made in Europe, a growing number of skilled workers is urgently needed.

Downstream, installation is estimated to require up to 400,000 additional trained workers by 2030, and to meet the goal of producing 30 GW of solar energy domestically, an estimated additional 50,000 trained workers will be needed in manufacturing upstream. New market research* from EIT InnoEnergy found skills gaps in training electricians on safe grid connection and construction workers certified for installation. Specific skills gaps for process engineers, technicians, and operators to produce cells, modules and ingots and wafers were also identified by InnoEnergy's research.

The Academy will address these skills shortages, particularly for the growing number of solar SMEs. Working in close collaboration with industry, the InnoEnergy Skills Institute will build a robust library of more than 40 courses with industry-recognised certifications across the value chain. Leveraging the InnoEnergy Skills Institute's successful training and skilling model, the Academy will certify over 80 local training providers and mobilise a network of industry and workforce partners to deliver courses to learners at scale.

Commissioner for the Internal Market, Thierry Breton, *said: "Boosting solar PV manufacturing in Europe is vital for our energy security, competitiveness and resilience. Today's Solar Academy launch proves the Commission is committed to reducing emissions while creating quality jobs in the EU. The launch of the Academy even before the entry into force of the Net Zero Industry Act will help address the urgent skills gap in Europe's solar PV sector and train a new generation of workers for our solar industry, in line with our objective to manufacture by 2030 at least 40% of our net-zero technology needs."*

Commissioner for Energy, Kadri Simson*, said: "Solar power is at the heart of our energy transition in Europe, with the potential to create thousands of jobs across our continent, at all stages of the industrial supply chain, from design through to manufacturing, installation and maintenance. The Net*

Zero Academy created by the Commission will help our European workers to embrace this exciting opportunity, and offer further support to meet our ambitious REPowerEU goals."

Oana Penu, Director of the InnoEnergy Skills Institute said: *"To meet the dual challenge of deploying solar PV at speed and boosting resilience of domestic manufacturing capacity, the current skills gaps in the workforce must be addressed. The Solar Academy will do just that, based on model that is tried and tested. Our Battery Academy, which has trained 67,000 workers to date, has set a standard for excellence in training and serves as a successful blueprint for the Solar Academy going forward. We look forward to working closely with businesses across the solar PV value chain to develop personalised learning journeys that fit their workforce needs."*

The European Solar Academy was announced today at the European Solar Photovoltaic Industry Alliance (ESIA) PV Forum at Intersolar Europe in Munich.

**Market research undertaken by EIT InnoEnergy is based on interviews from a representative sample of companies across the entire solar value chain in Europe. Principle respondents to the interviews are HR Managers and Learning and Development (L&D) staff to greater understanding of needs in terms of workforce gap, critical job roles and skills. The research and mapping of key job roles in the European solar industry will be released later this year.*

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About EIT InnoEnergy

EIT InnoEnergy operates at the centre of the energy transition and is the leading innovation engine in sustainable energy. It brings the technology, business model innovation and skills required to accelerate the green deal, progress towards Europe's decarbonisation and re-industrialisation goals, whilst also improving energy security.

Recognised as Europe's top Cleantech and Blue Economy venture capital firm and investor in 2023 by Startup Genome, one of Europe's top 10 most active deeptech investors by Sifted in 2023 and the most active investor in the energy sector in 2022 by Pitchbook, InnoEnergy backs innovations across a range of areas.These include energy storage, transport and mobility, renewables, energy efficiency, hard to abate industries, smart grids and sustainable buildings and cities.

InnoEnergy has a portfolio of more than 200 companies, which are estimated to generate €110 billion in revenue and save 2.1G tonnes of CO2e accumulatively by 2030. Collectively, these companies have raised more than €9.7 billion in investment to date.

InnoEnergy is the driving force behind three strategic European initiatives which include the European Battery Alliance (EBA), the European Green Hydrogen Acceleration Center (EGHAC) and the European Solar Photovoltaic Industry Alliance (ESIA).

InnoEnergy was established in 2010 and is supported by the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT), a body of the European Union. Since its inception, InnoEnergy has screened more than 7,000 start-ups, launched more than 300 products to market and overseen its portfolio companies filing 370+ patents. Today, InnoEnergy has a trusted ecosystem of 1200+ partners and 35 shareholders and a 200+ strong team with offices across Europe and in Boston, US.

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