



Grantee Spotlight: Duke University

The [Giving Green Fund](#) is awarding a restricted grant to [Duke University](#) for its [State-Owned Enterprises & Energy Transitions](#) initiative, which helps state-owned power companies in low- and middle-income countries transition aging thermal power generation to clean energy. The grant supports two connected efforts: (1) expanding an existing partnership among state-owned utilities in South Africa and Indonesia to two new countries, Mexico and Vietnam, and (2) supporting a state-owned enterprise in India with repurposing its mining assets, planned for closure, for renewable power. Duke University is a private U.S. research university based in Durham, North Carolina.

Duke's work falls within our philanthropic strategies of [derisking clean electricity investments in LMICs](#) and [decarbonizing India's power sector](#). Please see Giving Green's strategy reports for more information, including potential risks and co-benefits, recommended sub-strategies, theory of change, funding need, and key uncertainties.

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What Is Duke University?

Duke University is a private research university based in Durham, North Carolina. Through its Nicholas Institute for Energy, Environment & Sustainability, Duke runs a State-Owned Enterprises & Energy Transitions initiative. The initiative works directly with state-owned power and mining companies as they transition aging thermal power generation and mines. Duke's team works with each utility's and mining company's own planning process, co-developing frameworks the organization can act on. As a result, it has close working relationships with senior utility and government leaders that most international research groups do not have.

The initiative has already built formal partnerships with South Africa's Eskom and the Mpumalanga Green Cluster Agency, and secured the participation of Indonesia's state utility, PLN, to co-develop plans for transitioning thermal power assets. Its audiences are the leadership and planning staff of state-owned utilities and the government ministries that oversee them. Duke reports that partner utilities have helped connect it to others facing similar challenges, and it expects that pattern to continue as new partners join.

What Are We Funding, and How Could It Help Address Climate Change?

We are funding Duke to expand its State-Owned Enterprises & Energy Transitions initiative along two tracks.

Bringing Mexico and Vietnam into a shared learning platform for state-owned utilities.

Duke will bring Mexico's Comisión Federal de Electricidad (CFE) and Vietnam Electricity (EVN) into its existing collaboration with Eskom, the Mpumalanga Green Cluster Agency, and PLN. Together, these state-owned utilities will co-develop guidance for transitioning thermal power generation and share what works across borders. Funded activities include:

- Convening multi-country workshops and virtual consultations so utility staff, policymakers, and technical experts can exchange lessons across borders
- Co-developing technical and financial frameworks each utility can use to plan the transition of its own generation assets
- Publishing and disseminating practical guidance so utilities and governments beyond the initial partners can adopt it

By building this shared playbook and network among state-owned utilities, Duke's work will help utilities in Mexico and Vietnam plan a faster shift away from fossil fuel resources to clean energy, and ultimately reduce emissions.

Supporting a state-owned enterprise in India to plan the repurposing of mining assets for clean energy. Separately, we are funding Duke to work with a state-owned enterprise in India to plan the repurposing of mining assets scheduled for closure. The work will help the enterprise identify viable options for repurposing legacy assets for renewable power generation and other uses, and design plans that support the workers and communities affected by the change. Funded activities include:

- Conducting technical and economic analysis to identify sites with commercial potential for renewable energy development and surveying affected communities to understand impacts and inform locally appropriate plans
- Providing guidance to implement low-carbon redevelopment and community-centric principles into mine closure planning
- Supporting capacity building and internal alignment efforts, including co-hosting workshops with the state-owned enterprise to validate findings and build support for adoption
- Publishing guidance to help inform how the transition is implemented

Through this work, Duke will provide the state-owned enterprise with technical assistance to design and implement economically viable repurposing options. More broadly, it will

support the repurposing of mining sites identified by the Indian government for closure toward clean energy uses, while addressing local socioeconomic vulnerabilities, community needs, and reduced dependence on conventional energy sources.

Why Do We Think Duke University Will Use This Funding Well?

Duke's energy transitions team has already built the kind of access this work requires. In South Africa, it has formal partnerships with Eskom and the Mpumalanga Green Cluster Agency, and in Indonesia, it has secured PLN's participation in co-developing transition frameworks. In India, Duke has signed a multi-year partnership with a state-owned enterprise, giving it a direct channel to help shape how the enterprise plans its own transition.

Given Duke's demonstrated ability to earn the trust of state-owned utilities and mining companies, its hands-on approach to co-developing plans utilities can actually use, and its team's experience working directly with governments and state-owned enterprises, we think it is well suited to help these organizations turn stated clean energy ambitions into concrete transition plans.

We publish grant spotlights to offer transparency to [Giving Green Fund](#) donors and resources for those interested in the impact strategies each grant supports. Giving Green believes our [Top Climate Nonprofits](#) have the greatest impact potential for large, unrestricted gifts. [For several reasons](#), we also disburse and recommend grants to other organizations surfaced through [our research process](#) for work that we believe is at least as impactful as grants to our top recommendations.

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