

Girl power: Solar plant opens with all-female crew

Cape Town welcomed the opening of Africa's first all-female workforce solar panel manufacturer in Ndabeni last week. The facility is also the only German-certified tier-one small solar panel manufacturer in the world.



Alderman James Vos, Mayoral Committee Member for Economic Growth with employees of the company displaying an example of the solar panels manufactured.

Ener-G-Africa (EGA), an energy company that has a presence in South Africa and Malawi, invested a total of \$2.1m (R36m) in EGACQuest to set up the 20MW per annum solar panel assembly plant in the Cape's industrial suburb, which will be operated by women technicians only.

According to Alderman James Vos, Mayoral Committee Member for Economic Growth who officiated at the opening, this plant will focus on servicing the local market as well as exporting to the rest of Africa. He explains that the City government is pushing ahead with projects that seize energy supply opportunities to create a more economically sustainable present and future.

Vos welcomed this company's investment in Cape Town and describes it as taking place at a crucial time when South Africa is battling its worst electricity blackouts, forcing many businesses and homes to turn to renewable energy, including solar.

"With an increased demand for solar panels, we can create job opportunities for the millions of currently unemployed South Africans. One report showed that the solar PV industry alone could create up to 30,000 jobs per year," said Vos.



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The City of Cape Town's strategic business partner, GreenCape, was responsible for assisting with the facilitation of this significant investment. The Economic Growth Directorate provides funding to GreenCape to help the City attract investors in the green economy sector while unlocking the potential of this industry in various fields.

"The time is now for renewable manufacturing... There is a growing appetite to invest in renewables amid the energy crunch with multi-year investment opportunities arising. These opportunities stem from the convergence of several factors such as international shifts to clean energy, the focus on energy security globally as an outcome of the impact of the Russian-Ukraine conflict, the load-shedding crisis in South Africa and the consequent policy shifts at a national government level to deregulate the energy sector. Wesgro will continue to support Ener-G-Africa. We are excited by the prospects that this new facility will bring," said the City and the Western Cape Trade and Promotion Agency, Wesgro's CEO, Wrenelle Stander.

"Cost-effective energy efficiency improvements can have positive macro-economic impacts that boost economic activity and lead to increased employment. There has never been a more critical point to make real commitments towards moving away from fossil fuels and turning towards the vast energy opportunities of renewables," said Vos.

"Investment in these sectors is good for business, people, and the planet, and therefore the City and our partners stand ready to work with industry so that we can make Cape Town the easiest place to do business in Africa."

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