

News Bulletin

Sunday 4th October 2015



SAIREC 2015
South African International Renewable Energy Conference

SAIREC Doors Open

Sunday provided an opportunity for delegates to register and attend a range of stimulating side events to prime them for the formal conference proceedings on Monday

Exhibition

The conference exhibition provides delegates with an opportunity to view a diverse array of RE technologies, and approaches to increasing renewable energy uptake. UN Women showcases technologies that have a positive impact on women's lives, especially those technologies that will improve the living conditions of rural and peri-urban women and their households. Delegates can engage with providers on specific technologies including LED lighting, RE-powered pumps and electricity mobility. Government stands such as the German Pavilion and Austrian Development Agency illustrate national approaches to renewables. Delegates can also collect information on renewables including the latest status report on renewables from the REN21 networking area. The *SADC Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Status Report* will be launched Monday evening at a REN21/UNIDO side. It is available at: www.ren21.net.

Side Events

Over 15 side events were held over the course of the day, highlights of which are summarised here.

Renewables and the Carbon Tax

Promethium, in partnership with zaRECS and Nano Energy presented their research on opportunities afforded by the South Africa's Carbon Tax to stimulate the market for renewables. There is already a self-regulating voluntary market for Renewable Energy Certificates (RECs) that have the potential to be traded as offsets under the carbon tax. The JSE has tested a trading platform. Progress is being made in defining types of projects that would qualify for automatic additionality, a key factor in determining eligibility for carbon offsets. The key message of the session is that, particularly for community-based projects, IRECs can provide an affordable, practical mechanism for ramping up the availability of carbon offsets under the Carbon Tax.

IRENA Marketplace

The IRENA Virtual Sustainable Energy Marketplace in Africa is a virtual database of projects, service providers and technology suppliers, host governments and financiers. It already contains over 300 renewable energy projects in development stages totalling 57 GWs as well as information on policy and regulations. The marketplace is intended to support initiation, development and financing of sustainable



One of the winners of the RE-Energising Africa Art Competition

energy markets by improving market transparency and providing powerful search tools to help stakeholders find each other and make contact. www.irena.org/marketplace

REIPPPP

The IPP Office of SA's Department of Energy (DoE) side event showcased the country's REIPPPP programme; South Africa's flagship programme for renewable energy implementation that provides lessons learned and best practice models of global relevance. In 5 bidding rounds, 92 projects have been awarded to a value of over R192 billion, bringing a total of 6328 MWs on-stream. The programme also stimulates the local RE Industry: 48% of IPPs are supplied by local companies, and 47% of the programme is owned by South African citizens. The programme has proven to be a constructive strategy for transitioning to a greener economy. Since its inception, 19,000 job years have been created and R19.1 billion has flowed to socio-economic development and enterprise development activities. It has established the Northern Cape as home to the world's largest solar projects.

Biomass Action Plan

BAPEPSA is an initiative of the Dutch and South African governments to develop an action plan for increasing the utilisation of biomass for electricity generation. It was explained that biomass can perform as a base load power generator, contributing to the electricity grid during peak consumption times, and as a result can address South Africa's load shedding challenges while mitigating GHG emissions. Eskom will burn 110 million tonnes of coal in 2016, but has set a target for biomass to displace 10% of future coal use. Biomass projects are still a relatively small component of the REIPPPP programme, with only two projects totalling 40 MWs being successful bidders to date.

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In purely economic terms biomass makes sense, and sustainable implementation is needed for this sector to realise its potential.

Rooftop Solar

SAPVIA hosted a side event highlighting the potential for rooftop PV to provide base load electricity. Rooftop PV prices have reached grid parity, and is being implemented although not necessarily through formally registered projects. The challenge in SA is to establish a legal and technical framework governing the generation and sale of electricity into the grid that is practical for rooftop PV and can help achieve scale. Cape Town City is piloting a model that allows small-scale rooftop PV electricity generators, such as home-owners, to feed into the grid.

Small Hydro

UNIDO International Center for Small Hydro Power (ICSHP), hosted a side event that explored the huge – and as yet largely untapped potential for small-hydro electricity generation in Africa. Opportunities range from small projects involving rural farmers, to projects involving municipal water infrastructure in urban centres.

Rural and Off-Grid Electrification

The Alliance for Rural Electrification hosted a side event in which a variety of approaches that demonstrate the viability of innovative approaches to financing and developing rural electrification projects. These included fee-for-service models where communities pay a tariff for solar PV electricity.

Africa Clean Energy Corridor

IRENA and the OAU commission are driving the Africa Clean Energy Corridor (ACEC) process with NEPAD implementing on behalf of the OAU. ACEC involves 21 countries in East Africa and has recently been extended in a similar programme to the ECOWAS (West African countries). ACEC drives energy cooperation between countries and facilitates the exchange of information and ideas to help create much-needed harmonisation of energy policy. The OAU Commission Infrastructure program supports ACEC projects involving transmission lines to connect power pools and a range of RE projects, including an East African \$140 million geothermal development programme to generate 1,540 MWs by 2020. Through this initiative, African government ministers are starting to discuss truly ambitious regional energy programmes on the order of 100-300 Gigawatts by 2030.

SANEDI Investor Forum

The forum kicked off with a presentation delivered on behalf of, South African Minister of Energy, Ms Tina Joemat-Pettersson. Among other issues, the presentation spoke to the need for integration of regional electricity grids to accelerate the take-up of renewable energy. Representatives from the French Development Agency (AFD) and the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Partnership (REEEP) provided insight into the investment and policy environment. The AFD has invested more than USD 2 billion in sustainable energy projects that mitigate climate change and address energy access needs in Africa. The REEEP programme regards small, medium and micro-sized enterprises as vital agents for change in this sector.

The forum provided a platform for companies engaged in innovative RE projects to provide short, direct presentation on investment opportunities and challenges, with questions and answers directed at the panel and presenters. Among the projects presented was the business case for energy from anaerobic digestion of bio-energy crops grown on mining-degraded land. Projects like these have the potential to convert environmental liabilities into assets, generating affordable electricity and reducing the carbon footprint of mining companies – and therefore, potentially, their liability in terms of South Africa's proposed carbon tax.

Cocktail Reception

A cocktail reception was held on Sunday evening at the CTICC to welcome delegates to the conference. At the event, the winners of the RE-Energising Africa Art Competition were announced by the Head of the Independent Power Producers office at the South African Department of Energy, Karen Breytenbach. This competition was held amongst primary schools from areas in which projects under South Africa's REIPPP programme have been established. Another highlight was the announcement of the winners of the small projects bidding round of South Africa's Renewable Energy Independent Power Producers Procurement Program (REIPPP).

Each evening of the conference, a **daily news bulletin** providing a high-level summary of proceedings will be available for download at the **SAIREC website**: www.sairec.org.za.

You can also access the news bulletin from the **conference app** on your mobile device – go to the relevant App store and download the “My Event” app. In the app, enter the Event ID: SAIREC2015.