

Solar and wind plants add 212MW to national grid

The Sishen solar plant and the recently completed Gouda wind plant are collectively contributing approximately 212MW of power capacity to South Africa's national grid.



Gouda wind farm

These two renewable energy projects were completed by infrastructure group Aveng and its partner, Acciona Energia of Spain.

The 138MW Gouda wind facility in the Western Cape became fully operational last week and is equipped with 46 3MW wind power turbines which will generate approximately 400 gigawatt hours (GWh) of electricity. It is capable of powering around 200,000 homes a year.

Located in the sun-drenched Northern Cape, the Sishen plant was completed in December 2014. The 250ha facility consists of approximately 320,000 solar photovoltaic panels with single axis tracking for greater efficiency. The plant will produce 216GWh of electricity, equivalent to the consumption of around 100,000 South African households a year and has a peak capacity of 94.3MW and 74MW nominal.

Operation and maintenance

Through its construction and engineering divisions Aveng Engineering, Aveng Grinaker-LTA Coastal, Aveng Grinaker-LTA Ground Engineering and Aveng Grinaker-LTA M&E, Aveng was responsible for the construction works and will also play an ongoing role in operating and maintaining both the Gouda and Sishen projects. It brought specialist capabilities in engineering, procurement and project management, as well as site clearing, bulk earthworks, construction of site roads, buildings and installations.

Aveng Capital Partners, the group's investment and structured financing arm, was primarily responsible for project development and capital raising and remains responsible for project ownership and on-going asset management for both projects.

"Aveng has over the past few years invested significant resources into the renewable energy independent power producer (IPP) sector and has earmarked the sector as a key growth area. Both the renewable energy projects are part of a larger portfolio of private infrastructure and concession type projects delivered and partially owned by Aveng," MD of Aveng Capital Partners, Dharmesh Kalyan, explained.

Exiting time

"We have also played a leading project sponsor and developer role on transport (rail and road) and social infrastructure public private partnerships (PPPs). This is an exciting time for Aveng Capital Partners and we welcome the opportunity to work with developers and investment partners to deliver IPPs and PPPs across South Africa and selective markets in Africa."

"We are delighted to have successfully delivered these two strategically important projects. South Africa is blessed with an abundance of sunshine and areas of high wind capacity. With South Africa targeting significant new renewable energy capacity by 2030, we now have the proven track record to deliver on future renewable energy projects, which will help address our country's energy needs," Chris Botha, MD of Aveng Grinaker-LTA, added.

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