

EWSETA and CSIR collaborate to grow much-needed skills in the renewable energy sector

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The EWSETA (Energy and Water Sector Education and Training Authority) and the CSIR (Council for Scientific and Industrial Research) recently entered into a funding agreement with a value of just over R9m, over the 5-year period, to launch the Energy Industry Support Programme (EISP).



Mpho Mookapele, chief executive officer of the EWSETA

The Programme launch event was held on 17 November 2022 at CSIR International Convention Centre, and was attended by SMMEs and other programme stakeholders.

The EISP will equip 75 SMMEs with the relevant skills and knowledge, technology know-how and necessary resources to participate in the demanding energy sector, as well as encourage innovation and empower innovators to contribute to the country's economic development through the energy sector.

It is expected that the EISP will also drive the use of developed intellectual property (IP), through commercialisation of identified technologies that are relevant and that will bring solutions to the current social challenges.

"We are honoured to partner in such an impact-driven capacitation programme that will provide the much-needed skills and support in the energy sector and drive inclusive economic participation of SMEs in the energy value chain. The Programme will also provide an opportunity to empower women and persons living with disabilities, to realise our inclusion objectives," said Mpho Mookapele, chief executive officer of the EWSETA.

Unemployment remains a big challenge among youth and one of the key solutions to addressing the high unemployment rate is through the creation of sustainable SMMEs. It is through building and supporting job creators that the country will see increased economic activity that will create employment opportunities and better livelihoods for our people. However,

the current challenges many SMMEs face when entering the energy industry, are inadequate skills and support (predominantly renewable technologies) and the EISP will seek to address these challenges.

Said Bernard Magoro, head of Independent Power Producers Office, a procurement vehicle for delivering on the national renewable energy capacity-building objectives, “This exciting EWSETA/CSIR initiative, aimed at developing SMMEs to participate in our country’s energy transition, is timely and welcomed. It was wonderful to see so many SMMEs in attendance today and to see first-hand the benefits of this new initiative, one that the IPP Office would be proud to partner with in the future.”

This collaboration between CSIR and EWSETA will undoubtedly have far-reaching effects of providing capacity-building opportunities and access to technical capacity in the renewable energy sector. This will assist with South Africa meeting its commitment to reduce its carbon emissions under the Paris Agreement on Climate Change.

With the 11GW of coal-fired power stations expected to be decommissioned by 2030, the EISP will contribute to the energy generation plans and contribute to economic activities in the areas affected by the decommissioning.

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