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CAPACITY TO GROW TOGETHER: Windaba to seek solutions to grid constraints

If we want to end power shortages through sustainable energy sources then we must as a matter of urgency address the biggest stumbling block to bringing renewable energy onstream - grid capacity.

That is the call from the South African Wind Energy Association (SAWEA), as they prepare for Windaba - Africa's premier wind energy conference and exhibition.

The conference, which takes place from the 3rd of October to 5th of October 2023 at the Cape Town International Convention Centre (CTICC), will shine a spotlight on the importance of investing and developing a stable grid that can receive the large amounts of wind, and other renewable, energy available.

This will be welcome news to stakeholders from across the wind energy value chain who were frustrated by the disappointment of none of the 23 wind projects submitted during round six of REIPPPP being announced as preferred bidders due to lack of grid capacity to accommodate them.

“SAWEA, together with our members, have taken a proactive and positive approach towards building resilience, enhancing grid integration and future-proofing the energy sector,” says Niveshen Govender, SAWEA Chief Executive Officer (CEO).

It is vital for industry to continue to work closely with government, investors and project developers to create the right conditions that will enable the energy sector to flourish.

“As a priority, industry requires a favourable regulatory environment for the rollout of renewable energy. Windaba will provide stakeholders from across the energy sector the opportunity to come together and coalesce around a coordinated approach that will strengthen or expand the grid infrastructure build as quickly and efficiently as possible.”

Organised by SAWEA and supported by the Global Wind Energy Council (GWEC), Windaba will feature a roster of local specialists and international

experts who will explore and recommend the best path to delivering a sustainable energy supply to the nation.

Day 1 of the conference will feature three (3) informative and engaging sessions that will help attendees understand the current constraints and potential mitigation routes as well as how to ensure grid code compliance. There will also be an in-depth presentation from Eskom representatives outlining how they will implement their elaborate Transmission Development Plan (TDP) and address insufficient transmission infrastructure.

“There are enough renewable energy projects to resolve South Africa's energy crisis before 2030. However, these shovel ready projects require allocation on the grid, which is currently unable to accommodate all the available projects,” adds Govender.

Attendees at Windaba will also explore international best practice, looking to other countries that have experienced similar grid capacity issues. Options to be discussed will include the implementation of battery storage projects as well as the co-location of wind and solar PV projects at the same grid connection points.

“We cannot afford any further delays in the deployment of new generation capacity. However, we must not just think of short-term fixes. Together with government we need a long-term strategy that will enable us to meet current and future energy needs in a sustainable manner,” concludes Govender.

Windaba is a key date for the diary for anyone interested in Africa's energy transition. Set to bring together key players from both the public and private sector, there will be a packed schedule of engaging talks, informative panel discussions and excellent networking opportunities.

Year-on-year, the conference brings together more than 600 delegates and industry exhibitors. The conference will continue to provide the most relevant and current wind sector information to aid and influence strategic decision making.

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Notes to Editors:

Windaba is the flagship industry conference of SAWEA bringing together key stakeholders including professionals, policymakers, academics, government representatives and civil society. It aims to facilitate strengthened partnerships for the on-the-ground implementation of renewable energy projects, to influence energy policy, and provide a framework to aid strategic decision-making.

SAWEA is an industry association representing the Wind Energy Industry in South Africa. SAWEA is a non-profit entity. Members include both national and international actors who are active in the entire Wind power supply chain.

