

Nepoworx, MerSETA sign MoA to implement green skills programme

Nepoworx Renewable Energy Institution (Nepoworx) and the Manufacturing, Engineering and Related Services Seta (MerSETA) have signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) to implement a nationwide green skills programme.



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The programme's objective is to upskill learners to potentially be employed either at photovoltaic farms or rooftop solar PV installations. Upon the completion of the programme, qualified learners will be able to plan, design and install a photovoltaic system and learn about the operation and maintenance of such a system to ensure its continued operation.

The programme is important to build the required solar PV skills capacity that is critical to implement South Africa's plans to accelerate the increase in generation capacity and to enable businesses and households to invest in rooftop solar, as announced recently by President Cyril Ramaphosa in his address on the energy crisis.



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Alleviating youth unemployment

"With a staggering youth unemployment rate of 63.9% (first quarter 2022) for those aged 15-24, and energy supply shortages that are constraining economic growth, we believe the programme will be a catalyst towards alleviating these challenges. As an institution, we advocate for a just transition that is focused on social inclusion and the creation of decent work and quality jobs," said Nonjabulo Sokhela, CEO of Nepoworx.

Considering the recent removal of the licensing threshold for new embedded generation projects and the imminent introduction of net metering by a number of municipalities, there will be an increased demand for solar PV technicians. It is, therefore, important that the youth are capacitated to take advantage of such opportunities. The programme will encompass knowledge, practical and work experience components. During the work experience component, the participants will gain the requisite exposure needed to qualify as solar PV technicians which will assist them in securing employment in the renewable energy sector.

“We, therefore, call upon renewable energy independent power producers, advisory companies, engineering procurement and construction (EPC) companies, operations and maintenance companies and solar photovoltaic installation companies to collaborate with us in providing work exposure to the learners enrolled into the programme,” said Sokhela.



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Accelerating renewable energy procurement

The programme complements the recent announcement by the minister of the Department of Mineral Resources and Energy that a Section 34 ministerial determination will be published to accelerate the procurement of renewables capacity in accordance with the Integrated Resource Plan of 2019. This determination speaks to the procurement of 14,400MW of wind and 6,000MW of utility-scale solar photovoltaic by 2030.

“The programme will unlock job opportunities in the renewable energy sector. Nepoworx’s mission is to develop green skills that are required to contribute towards the implementation of renewable energy targets under the Renewable Energy Independent Power Producers Programme (REIPPP) and the private sector-led embedded generation renewable energy projects,” said Sokhela.

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