

Sawea takes its transformative vision forward

By Brenda Martin

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As a young Industry growing rapidly within South Africa's transition away from coal, the wind energy sector has recognised the need to be transformative from the outset. Having designed a collectively-agreed Industry vision that goes beyond compliance, along with the means to achieving that vision, the South African Wind Energy Association (Sawea) will establish a baseline in 2019 against which it can measure the progress.



Brenda Martin, CEO of Sawea

Due to the inherently long-term nature of its business, with power purchase agreements extending over a 20-year time horizon, the Industry has set an agenda for utilising this time effectively. The core purpose: to make a measurable contribution to South Africa's socio-economic development via five considered pathways.

These pathways are:

1. Management and employment

Through sound employment policies and practice, creating a safe, ethical and enabling workplace culture and environment, developing industry-relevant skills and creating opportunities for youth and women in particular to enter and thrive in the industry. Our aim over time is to transform and indigenise leadership at all levels in the South African RE sector.

2. Value chain

Through the way we set up and manage our procurement systems, how we treat our suppliers and service providers in our Industry's value chain and how we help emerging enterprises to become high-performing businesses.

3. Local community development

Through our contractual and voluntary contributions to local social and economic development and the way we manage our local environmental impact. Our intention is long-term, strategic, communally-beneficial impact.

4. Access to finance

Through our efforts to enable relevant emerging entrepreneurs to access their own finance and play a growing

independent part in our industry's high-performance value chain.

5. Ownership

We undertake to collaborate with government and other stakeholders in making the policy framework, as it evolves, enable the best possible outcomes in terms of ownership, all in support of the growth of a successful, transformed and transformative national renewables industry.

The overarching statement and its five stated key pathways is underpinned by practical statements of support from each of Sawea's six working groups:

- Wind for communities
- Manufacturers & local content
- Environment
- Technical
- Policy & markets
- Operating assets

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Brenda Martin is the CEO of the South African Wind Energy Association. She has worked as a senior practitioner in the Southern African development, education and energy policy sectors for over 15 years. After implementing small-scale energy, water and food security projects in Southern Africa between 2011 and 2016, she conducted interdisciplinary applied research on energy policy at the Energy Research Centre, UCT. She has an MPhil in Energy & Development (mechanical engineering, UCT). Her dissertation focused on the politics of electricity planning in South Africa.

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