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BOIKANYO SOLAR COMES ON LINE TO POWER UP THE NORTHERN CAPE

August 2021.

Boikanyo Solar, situated in the Siyancuma Local Municipality, close to Douglas in the Northern Cape, commenced its Commercial Operations earlier this year, having reached grid code compliance on 9 April 2021. This project, which took just a year to construct, is now producing enough clean energy to power some 62 000 South African homes each year.

Boikanyo Solar is part of a portfolio of six projects owned by the same shareholders under the REIPPPP Window 4, and is the last of the six to come online. The shareholders are African Infrastructure Investment Managers (AIIM, a member of Old Mutual Alternative Investments) through its IDEAS Fund, Reatile Solar Power (RF) (Pty) Ltd, Phakwe Solar (RF) (Pty) Ltd, AREP (African Rainbow Energy and Power) and Cicada Community Trust.

As reported by the Department of Mineral Resources and Energy's Independent Power Producer Office (IPPO), the Northern Cape Province boasts the highest number of clean power-generating facilities in the country, with some 59 renewable energy projects across a range of clean energy technologies, including solar, wind, and hydro.

With over 184 000 solar modules harnessing the Province's intense sun, the 55MW PV project will supply the national grid with 152 GWh/year of green energy, thereby helping to improve the country's security of supply," explained Isaac Mmushi, CEO of Boikanyo Solar.

The project is located on 168-hectares of low value agricultural land, and connects to the close-by Siyancuma 132 kV switching station.

The surrounding communities of Douglas, Bongani, Breipaal, Campbell and Griekwastad benefited directly from 450 jobs over the year of construction. In addition more employment and opportunities were created through the sub-contracting of various services. Such direct benefits will continue throughout the 20-year operations period.

Furthermore, over its 20-year operations period, the project will continue to ensure participatory inclusion of local communities in the design and implementation of Socio-economic and Enterprise Development initiatives. These programmes are aimed at building economic and social resilience, as well as increasing access to the local economy.

“Although economic development funding only officially commences once the PV project begins its 20-year operations period, the Shareholders chose to initiate beneficiary programmes a year in advance so as to begin to provide community support as soon as possible. Hence funding was secured in advance to provide support for various health and education projects,” explained Nomzamo Landingwe, Chief Community Operations Officer for Boikanyo Solar.

“This solar facility is 100% South African-owned, a significant positioning for renewable energy projects in South Africa, and proof that the green power sector is an attractive option for local investors,” concluded Mmushi.

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