

Biogas National Conference 2013

Press release

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Biogas National Conference set to heat up renewable energy debate

Bright future for biogas industry as underutilised alternative energy source offers solutions to South Africa's energy challenges

JOHANNESBURG, October 25, 2013 –The Department of Energy (DoE), Southern African Biogas Industry Association (SABIA) and Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA) will host a National Biogas Conference from 30th – 31st October 2013 at the DBSA campus in Midrand. The conference will bring together government policy makers, local and international industry experts who will debate challenges and opportunities in the biogas industry and exchange solutions.

Tremendous potential exists in advancing the use of renewable energy in South Africa with the Biogas industry in a favourable position to provide energy solutions for a sector that has had challenges in South Africa in the past.

“Biogas is the most sustainable source of alternative energy today, with a large potential, offering many exciting possibilities that have yet to be exploited optimally in South Africa,” says Mark Tiepelt, the chairman of SABIA. “This alternative source of energy has the potential to minimise greenhouse gas emissions by reducing reliance on fossil fuels. However, sectors such as the agricultural and food producers can use the electricity produced from biogas systems to meet their operations’ energy demands and sell excess electricity to the electrical grid.”

The biogas industry has the potential to generate 2 500 megawatts of power. This unexploited renewable source of energy could complement the government's Independent Power Producer programme that aims to produce 3 725 megawatts of power from wind, concentrated solar energy, biogas, biomass and landfill gas by 2016. With the potential to develop a domestic industry in excess of R10 billion, the importance of harnessing renewable energy sources such as biogas is critical for South Africa's development.

“Developing renewable energy resources is an important part of the government's plan to improve national energy security. Examining barriers to adoption, policy and legal limitations, standards and legislation are part of government's mandate, and we will continue to explore sustainable energy initiatives that mitigate climate change. This will assist in meeting targeted infrastructure investments to create jobs, support rural economic development and partnerships, usher in renewable technologies and break the cycle of energy exclusion which perpetuates poverty,” says Deputy Minister of Energy, Ms Barbara Thompson.

The conference will highlight:

- Biogas technology and the benefits of the industry with a focus on added benefits of waste management
- The production of free surplus thermal energy
- Reduction in greenhouse gas emissions and the sale of carbon credits
- Exciting prospects around job creation in manufacturing
- Green skills development and skills transfer
- Financing the biogas industry
- Supplying sustainable energy to the rural, municipal, agricultural and commercial sectors

One of the key outcomes of the conference will be the creation of the Southern African Biogas Steering Committee which will comprise key stakeholders to facilitate biogas mainstreaming that will seek to support market research and workshops and conduct case studies that showcase the benefits of biogas.

Ends.

This media Invite is issued by the Development Bank of Southern Africa and the Department of Energy

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Notes to Editors

Kindly see the attached National Biogas Conference Programme

About The Department of Energy

The Department of Energy was established in May 2009 as a result of the decision of the President to separate the Department of Minerals and Energy into two independent departments. This restructuring was informed by the increasing recognition of the importance of achieving energy security in a world dominated by varying and different interests. The aim of the Department of Energy is to formulate and exercise oversight on the implementation of overall energy policies and to ensure access to affordable and reliable energy by all South Africans and to promote environmental friendly carriers.

About Southern African Biogas Industry Association

Southern African Biogas Industry Association was launched in December of 2012 as a representative body for the biogas industry in South Africa. Membership and participation in SABIA covers a wide spectrum from both the private sector, as well as organizations such as the IDC, CSIR, SAEAA and universities. SABIA's basic mandate is to promote the establishment of a viable biogas industry in South Africa through educating all sectors about the benefits of biogas and what contributions a new biogas industry can make to the SA economy. SABIA will further focus on identifying barriers and opportunities and find ways to overcome and promote these.

About Development Bank of Southern Africa

The Development Bank of Southern Africa is a leading Development Finance Institution (DFI) in Africa, playing the roles of Financier, Advisor, Partner, Implementer and Integrator. The Bank maximises its contribution to sustainable development in the region by mobilising financial, knowledge and human resources to support Government and other development role-players in improving the quality of life of people in the region through funding infrastructure projects; accelerating the sustainable reduction of poverty and inequity; and promoting broad-based economic growth and regional economic integration.