



energy

Department:
Energy
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

cennergi
POWERING PROGRESS

**CENNERGI CELEBRATES COMMERCIAL OPERATIONS at its TSITSIKAMMA
COMMUNITY WIND FARM with jubilation & restitution in the air
WITTEKLEIBOSCH, EASTERN CAPE
16th September 2016**

Cennergi - the cleaner energy company started by Exxaro and Tata Power yesterday formally celebrated the commencement of operations at its 95MW Tsitsikamma Community Wind Farm with the local AmaMfengu community in Wittekleibosch. The ribbon cutting ceremony brought dignitaries from far and wide to mark the completion of the dream of the father of the Mfengu community, the late Mcebisi Msizi, who dreamed of his people having a wind farm on the hills of the Mfengu land.

After years of planning and construction, towering giants of engineering excellence can now be seen 30km west of Humansdorp, next to the N2 National Highway in the Koukamma Local Municipality where 31 Vestas turbines gracefully turn their 58 metre blades against a backdrop of rolling green hills. There is the sound of closure and restitution in the air, as dairy cattle graze on the land where formally displaced rural communities now also enjoy their place in the sun.

The Deputy Minister of Energy, Ambassador. Thembisile Majola, the CEO of Cennergi, Mr Thomas Garner, the CEO of Exxaro, Mr Mxolisi Mgojo and the CEO of Tata Power, Mr Anil Sardana (from India), the Speaker of the Eastern Cape Province, Ms. Noxolo Kiviet, the Mayor of the Koukamma Local District, Mr Mpumelelo Vuso and the Msizi family all attended the celebration.

The Deputy Minister lauded Cennergi for running a project that has managed to create a balance between profit and people. She emphasised that now that the wind farm is operational that she was hopeful of Cennergi's continued contribution to the community, because the people on the ground felt part of the project.

"This is a particularly special day for me because this is one of those projects that one believes is close to where Mike Msizi imagined it, where it's not just a project about profit, about who can get wealthier than the other, but a project that is about making a difference," said Ambassador Majola.

The Department of Energy's REIPPP Programme has attracted 190 billion rand investment to date and it's hardly 5 years old, with roughly 80% of that investment from South Africa. Since 2011, there have been a number of renewable projects procured with 2000MW installed so far from wind and solar projects, mainly in the Eastern and Northern Cape.

“We want to contribute to a better tomorrow and a sustainable future for our children. Can you imagine having to walk for an hour to charge your cellphone, or you have to go outside to the toilet in the dark. Electricity makes a difference in the lives of many women and children, because it provides security. With electricity, you can now use the time to bring change in your life – to read, to listen to the news, to find job opportunities on the internet. Electricity has that capacity to transform lives. I have seen how people have been able to say ‘this little budget I have can now stretch because I can now buy meat for the week instead of every day and I now put it in the fridge. I save money on transport costs and I also save time’... Women particularly feel the impact of having electricity more than others. When you have modern forms of energy, you can really play a meaningful role in society,” said Ambassador Majola.

Cennergi CEO, Thomas Garner, dressed in traditional attire, said: *“TCWF is Cennergi’s second wind farm that has reached its operational phase and marks the company’s start in growing its vision to be a leader in cleaner energy in Africa. It has been an immense privilege to have community partners that have joined hands with Cennergi to write a new narrative for development in South Africa. We will continue to assist and support the Tsitsikamma Mfengu community to use this project to further determine their ideal future.”*

Cennergi is a 50:50 joint venture between South Africa’s Exxaro and India’s Tata Power. Exxaro’s CEO Mxolisi Mgojo said, *“The commissioning of the Tsitsikamma Community Wind Farm fulfils Exxaro’s vision of extending its position in the energy value chain beyond coal. In addition, it is a tangible commitment to our environmental stewardship to reduce the impacts of carbon emissions in the medium-to-long term, while addressing the country’s short-term electricity needs.”*

Anil Sardana, Managing Director and CEO of Tata Power, a global company with assets in 180 countries, said, *“I’m happy to be here and happy to be partnering with Exxaro in building classic wind farms, which have been scientifically developed and which are environmentally benign. We have done careful bird and bat studies to ensure we don’t entrap the paths of birds and bats. And we will make sure that this wind farm will actually deliver on the promises made.”*

“We are also very happy to have partnered with the community, because community is the mainstay of Tata’s existence...We are business houses, which exist because the communities embraced us. We have earned the right of co-existence and we should be happy to deliver on our promises and the community should enjoy the prosperity of these assets,” said Sardana.

Sindiswa Speelman, herself from Wittekleibosch and now an employee of the project, said, *“Who would have thought that today, 20 years after Mcebisi Msizi’s vision that people as far as India and Denmark would come to this place – to Wittekleibosch. We have learned that your future is not*

determined by your background, your situation today, no matter how bad; you have all the power to change that.”

Ambassador Majola summed up the communities sentiments when she said, *“Thank you to Cennergi. You have walked with us through a number of projects, from learners doing science and maths and technology, to seeing what career guidance advice you can provide. You have carried the message, ‘Where you come from must not determine where you’re going to’.”*

Garner sees a further opportunity for uplifting the Tsitsikamma community and other wind farm communities with turbines being manufactured and produced in South Africa in the decades to come.

“I think there’s a possibility of that happening, although it’s not going to be soon – it’s going to be 10 years plus. We first need to get economies of scale and we need to sort out our competitiveness in terms of capital- and labour productivity.”

PRESS RELEASE ENDS

Issued by:

Siyenza Management

Julie Cunningham

Julie@siyenzaevents.co.za

083 295 0526

For Departmental enquiries, please contact:

Mediadesk@energy.gov.za