

Mulilo-Sonnedix-Prieska PV project nearly complete

The 125ha solar Mulilo-Sonnedix-Prieska PV project, valued at R1.3bn and situated 50km south-west of Prieska in the Northern Cape, is nearing completion. The project, said to be on schedule and on budget, will connect to the grid in the third quarter of this year.

The 86MW project, which covers an area equal to 125 football or rugby fields, is expected to power 86,000 homes.

Farid Mocer, Sonnedix country manager, said that the project, which is being developed under the renewable energy independent power producers programme (REIPPPP), will be run under the auspices of the Department of Energy. “The project will connect to the grid later this year and has an expected 20-year lifespan, which we will operate with a local team.”

275,000 PV modules

juwi Renewable Energies, the South African subsidiary of the international juwi group, is building the Mulilo-Sonnedix-Prieska PV solar park in the Northern Cape Province for independent power producer (IPP) Sonnedix. When complete the site (approximately 2km x 1km) will host 275,000 PV modules, connected by 990km of cable. Even if the technology is not complicated, the logistics behind coordinating such a project are tremendous.



“As the EPC, we do the design and the engineering - we procure all of the materials and services, every single thing down to the last nut and bolt, and we put it all together on site. So we have integrated a lot of services and a lot of functionality to deliver a project that performs at a guaranteed level for the investor,” said Greg Austin, MD of juwi.

The RE industry has made a considerable impact on the Northern Cape region in terms of job creation and opportunities for South African suppliers.

Procured locally

“For us it is important to use as many South African suppliers as possible. Most of our large equipment, solar modules, the mounting structures, the inverter station, are all procured through a local South African entity. Some of the components are imported as they are not manufactured in South Africa, but our full supply base is South African for this project,” said Austin.

According to Mocer, 850 jobs have been created on the Prieska project, with over 500 going to local people living in the region.

“The lifestyle of the many people has really changed. Many came with nothing and are now supervisors, junior supervisors, team leaders, forklift drivers. This solar project gives the community of the Siyathemba area a lot of hope,” said Piet Olyn, project community liaison officer.

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