

Green tech future for Atlantis a step closer

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Cape Town's "lost city" of Atlantis is a step closer to becoming a green technology hub.



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Trade and Industry Minister Rob Davies confirmed on Wednesday, 2 August, that he had received a recommendation from the special economic zones advisory board to designate Atlantis as an SEZ so that it could offer incentives to attract foreign and domestic investment.

Once Davies' announcement about the Atlantis SEZ is gazetted, a 30-day public participation exercise will begin.

If the SEZ gets the green light, it is expected to create thousands of jobs in an area plagued by unemployment for much of the time since it was built 40km north of Cape Town for coloured people removed from their homes in the 1970s under the Group Areas Act.

Western Cape Economic Opportunities MEC Alan Winde said investments worth R1.8bn were already in the pipeline if the SEZ was approved.

"South Africa is the world's fastest growing green economy, and in partnership with GreenCape we are establishing the province as the hub of this growth," he said.

"The Western Cape is home to 60% of the country's green project developers, and two-thirds of South Africa's green manufacturing happens in this province.

"To take advantage of this growth and to support a manufacturing economy, we applied for this national government policy instrument."

Mike Mulcahy, chief executive of GreenCape - set up by the provincial government in 2010 to support the development of the green economy - said: "This is a big first step towards unlocking the full potential of a green tech-focused SEZ, but there remains a formidable amount of work to do."

More than R600m has already been invested in Atlantis green tech businesses.

The biggest investment is the GRI South Africa factory which manufactures wind turbine towers and employs 230 people.

Source: Herald

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