

Unlocking the energy sector for economic growth

Access to energy is among the highly transformative interventions for the African continent. This is in conjunction with an integrated agenda, leveraging the continent's agricultural wealth and accelerating its industrialisation capacity for an improved quality of life for all its citizens.



Sandisiwe Ncemane, Coega Development Corporation (CDC) business development manager: energy projects

"This, of course, is prioritised towards achieving the goal of universal access in Africa, through harnessing the aspirations to solve Africa's energy challenges, whilst establishing strategic and transformative partnerships," says Sandisiwe Ncemane, Coega Development Corporation (CDC) business development manager: energy projects.

Leveraging synergies

It requires the mobilisation of diverse and innovative capital financing for the continent's energy sector, complemented by strengthened energy policy regulation and sector governance by the various African states. "Access to energy in Africa can be accelerated by using existing initiatives to leverage synergies, overcome barriers, improve quality, reduce costs and increase impact," she says.

Existing regional and international programmes as well as initiatives can be better utilised and coordinated to attract private sector involvement, improve continental energy access and thereby the prosperity through economic development prospects both on the continent and globally.

“An example of this would be the initiation of transmission inter-connection projects on the eastern and western borders of the region. This will advance the integration of the Southern African Development Community (Sadc) economies,” says Ncemane.

Despite the rich natural resources and advantageous natural conditions, there is a perception that African countries have yet to be adequately mobilised across all the relevant aspects in order to position the continent as an investment location of choice for the energy sector.

Harnessing capabilities

“This requires critical factors and focus areas that seek to advance the realisation of maximised benefits through energy focused frontiers. Included in this, is the holistic value proposition of addressing a market need positioned at affordable levels for meaningful uptake. Plus an integrated configuration of legal, technical and environmental aspects, supported through capable networks and partnerships.”

One of the perfect opportunities poised by the energy transition is for the continent to harness its capabilities. Second to this is the support to implement the strategic transformative interventions through holistic benefits management focused on maximising the value to the project investor, while agile to the broader developmental benefits of the country hosting the project.

For Africa, it is imperative that the objectives of regional integration, incorporate the Asian learning on self-reliance as well as the central role of the developmental state that prioritises investment in human capacity, while realistically factoring of the position on free-market, free-trade, strategic partnerships, and enhancing the role of the private sector.

“In closing, it’s important to highlight that, whilst Africa remains well endowed with possibilities and resources for a diverse energy mix, in order to be relevant to the development trajectory of Africa, access to energy must be accelerated. The continent needs to gain momentum through strategic collaborations and partnerships, as well as leverage the experience and learnings from recent mega infrastructure programmes,” concludes Ncemane.

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