

MEDIA RELEASE: EMBARGOED UNTIL 00:01 FRIDAY 4 SEPTEMBER

New microgrids initiative launched today at international business roundtable in Johannesburg, South Africa

WBCSD partners with seven of the world's leading energy and technology companies to launch innovative, low carbon microgrids program in South Africa

- Program is part of WBCSD's Low Carbon Technology Partnership initiative (LCTPi), which is testing high-impact plans to develop and deploy low-carbon technologies, at a series of international roundtables in the lead-up to COP21 in Paris
- Eskom, South Africa's national provider joined by ABB, Alstom, EDF, Engie, First Solar and Schneider Electric to drive the program forward and plan the scale-up of the technology
- The microgrids program aims to provide a low-carbon solution to communities where energy supply can be either erratic or non-existent

JOHANNESBURG [FRIDAY 4th SEPT] - Today, the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD) launches an innovative microgrids program, highly relevant to Africa, as part of its Low Carbon Technology Partnerships initiative (LCTPi). The launch takes place at the first of a series of national dialogues known as the Action2020 Climate Dialogues, taking place across the world during September and October.

The meeting in Johannesburg, South Africa, will be opened by Peter Bakker, President and CEO of the WBCSD. The dialogue brings together leading business figures and South African policymakers to drive low carbon technology solutions forward ahead of COP21, the UN's global climate negotiations in Paris this December.

During the South African Action2020 Climate Dialogue, WBCSD will launch the latest program in its Low Carbon Technology Partnerships Initiative (LCTPi): Microgrids.

The new Microgrids working group is focused on developing and delivering this innovative new technology. It brings together some of the world's leading energy companies including **ABB, Alstom, EDF, Engie, Eskom, First Solar and Schneider Electric.**

Speaking at the launch, WBCSD President and CEO Peter Bakker said:

"We're proud to launch this new Microgrids work stream as part of the Low Carbon Technology Partnerships initiative. Ahead of the UN climate conference in Paris this year, we are working with the world's most forward-thinking companies to develop new and innovative low carbon solutions that can address the climate challenge.

"Today's announcement shows that businesses around the world are taking decisive steps to combat climate change, and that they see the commercial value of investing in the low carbon world."

It is estimated that 1.3 billion people across the globe are without access to energy. The companies and partners in the LCTPi microgrids program believe that low carbon microgrids are an essential solution in areas where centralised grids do not meet customer needs, are not available or rely on high-emission alternatives.

Mandy Rambharos, Head of Climate Change and Sustainable Development for Eskom Holdings said:

“As we transition to a lower carbon future, the availability and accessibility of all technological solutions is crucial. Microgrids will play an important role in the suite of technologies available to developing countries especially as the distributed and embedded generation market grows in South Africa.”

The working group brought together as part of the LCTPi program contains some of the leading innovators in the main solution areas for delivering microgrids. By working together, the group will develop action plans and firm policy recommendations designed to enable accelerated and scaled-up deployment of low-carbon microgrid solutions.

Leon Viljoen, ABB South Africa Managing Director said:

“Microgrids can help provide access to electricity, contributing to social development and economic growth while enhancing the integration of renewable energy and lowering environmental impact. This is very much in line with ABB’s vision of “Power and productivity for a better world. A supportive regulatory framework can help to create the right investment climate and accelerate the deployment of microgrid technologies.”

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Supporting quotes

“Microgrids offer customers the opportunity to take advantage of localized modern energy generation, enabled by resilient, customizable and fully-scalable photovoltaic solutions. While the technology is field-proven, large scale implementation will be driven by commercially-sustainable business models that can aggregate significant demand and, as a result, leverage economies of scale. It is in this context that First Solar supports WBCSD’s efforts to respond to this global challenge in partnership with some of the world’s leading energy innovators.” Marc van Gerven, Vice President Global Marketing, First Solar.

Notes to Editors

About WBCSD & the Low Carbon Technology Partnerships Initiative (LCTPi)

At COP20, WBCSD launched the Low Carbon Technology Partnerships initiative (LCTPi) with SDSN (Sustainable Development Solutions Network) and IEA (International Energy Agency). Supported by the French Presidency of COP21, the LCTPi is part of the Lima-Paris Action Agenda. It aims to present a series of concrete action plans at COP21 for the large-scale development and deployment of low-carbon technologies.

LCTPi is a collaborative platform that brings together WBCSD’s Action2020 Business Solutions, SDSN’s Deep Decarbonisation Pathways and IEA’s Technology Roadmaps to:

- Accelerate the diffusion of existing technologies by removing technological, market and social barriers and introducing required policy and financial instruments
- Develop Public Private Partnerships (PPPs) on the Research, Development, Demonstration and Deployment (RDD&D) of potentially game changing new technologies

About Peter Bakker

Peter Bakker is the President and CEO of the World Business Council for Sustainable Development. Mr. Bakker is a distinguished business leader who, until June 2011, was the CEO of TNT NV, the Netherlands-based holding company of TNT Express and Royal TNT Post. Under his leadership TNT rose to the forefront of Corporate Responsibility via a ground-breaking partnership with the UN World Food Program and ambitious CO2 reduction targets from its Planet Me initiative, holding multiple-year top-ranking positions in the Dow Jones Sustainability Index.

Mr. Bakker is the recipient of Clinton Global Citizen Award (2009); SAM Sustainability Leadership Award (2010); and has been an Ambassador Against Hunger for the UN World Food Programme since 2011. In addition he is the Chairman of War Child Netherlands.

About Mandy Rambharos

Mandy Rambharos is the Head of Climate Change and Sustainable Development for Eskom Holdings. She is responsible for all Sustainable Development and Climate Change policy and strategy development for Eskom, including climate change and related strategies and the incorporation of sustainability issues in corporate strategy. She is also responsible for providing assurance on all sustainability related key performance indicators for the company's Integrated Report.

Mandy is a member of the South African delegation to the UNFCCC. She is also an NBI Board member and sits on the JSE SRI Advisory committee. Mandy is also involved with a number of international business initiatives in which Eskom actively participates including the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD) and the UN Global Compact.

About Leon Viljoen

Leon Viljoen is the ABB Managing Director for Southern Africa since February 2013. In his current position at ABB he is responsible for executing the ABB vision and strategy within Southern Africa.

Leon boasts 27 years of experience within the power and technology industry and more than 18 years in senior management positions. He started his career in 1986 at Brown Boveri Technologies as a project manager. He worked his way through the ranks moving into a sales and marketing function before becoming a senior manager within the Powertech Group in 2000. In 2002 he was appointed as Managing Director of Desta Power Matla and then Chief Executive of Powertech Transformers in 2006. He then became Chief Operating Officer of Powertech in 2012.

Leon holds a B.Eng (Electric and Electronic) from RAU and an MBA from Henley Management College in the UK. He brings in-depth knowledge of the power and energy sectors of Southern Africa, with extensive experience in managing large groups of diverse employees and complex operations.