



# Solar South Africa

19-20 June 2012, Johannesburg, South Africa

## 60 second interview with **Ansgar Kiene**, Coordinator, **African Renewable Energy Alliance (AREA)**

- **What is your role in the South African solar market?**

The World Future Council (WFC) brings the interests of future generations to the centre of policy making. We inform policy makers about future just policies and advise them on how to implement these.

Political solutions for the challenges of our time exist. As the Director of the WFC Africa I supervise all advocacy activities of the WFC Climate/ Energy programme in Africa. We've been engaging with Parliamentarians from southern African countries since 2007 and highlighted the advantages of renewable energy for building sustainable societies with a focus on Feed-in Tariffs.

The World Future Council initiated the African Renewable Energy Alliance (AREA) in 2009. This independent voice for the acceleration of sustainable, renewable energies in Africa facilitates knowledge & information exchange across sectors (policy, business, civil society & academia) and country borders. Since the foundation of AREA I serve as its coordinator.

- **What is the biggest challenge facing the South African solar industry in the short term (1-3 years)?**

Well, I would say that the requirement of 40 per cent local content for renewable energy developments in the third bidding round is quite a tough one to achieve. Where should that come from? Before industries from abroad would consider setting-up a production plant in South Africa they have to have confidence in the market and its sustained growth. Until then, the technology will come from outside South Africa.

A stable policy environment is key! We've seen how nervous the business community reacted during the amendments of the tariffs in the past 12 months. The society needs to see the benefits, short, mid and long term. Then the support will be there by the whole country.

- **What are the key factors holding investors back and how can they be overcome?**

A truly **supportive legislative framework** is needed in order to attract project developers and investors. The Renewable energy Feed-in Tariff policy is the most successful example for a policy to boost renewable energy production.



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A Feed-in Tariff **requires utilities to purchase** power from a variety of different renewable electricity producers at **fixed prices** in **long-term contracts** lasting 15-25 years. A FIT allows producers of various sizes, from the small homeowner producer to large developers to participate. Multiple proven technologies such as solar and wind are eligible. Feed-In Tariffs serve to accelerate the production of renewable energy, reduce CO2 emissions and help solve climate change.

It all starts with the guaranteed access of IPP to access the national electricity grid without having to negotiate at length complicated contracts with government departments or the often monopolistic utilities.

Access to the grid would enable, e.g. roof top solar PV to be feed into the grid during the day and in the evening the house would receive electricity from the grid, this is called net-metering.

**Mr Kiene will be discussing the future of small scale PV projects at Solar South Africa 2012**