

# WIND POWER AND RENEWABLES ECO-SYSTEM IS READY FOR GROWTH

***Atlantis: wind-whipped west coast place of unemployment and job insecurity - or place of hope? The creation of a Green Technology Special Economic Zone (SEZ) was a "deliberate attempt to create manufacturing, broadly in the green economy, and specifically in renewables," says Mike Mulcahy, Chief Executive of GreenCape.***

Renewables have a proven track record globally of job creation – 8.1 million jobs by 2015, with the promise of much more. In South Africa, the Independent Power Producers' Implementation Agreements (IPAs) were designed from the outset to turbo-charge both job creation and manufacturing capacity, with some "fairly ambitious localisation targets," says Mulcahy, to generate a vibrant industry, creating both manufacturing capacity and jobs.

The first round of REI4P attracted ten times the interest expected; by the second round, the localisation benefits really began to show. Each major manufacturing initiative seeded an entire ecosystem around it, which included small and medium-sized enterprises making ancillary components, as well as training facilities to grow the necessary skills – one such is SARETEC, the South African Renewable Energy Technology Centre housed in the Cape Peninsula University of Technology.

By 2015, the overall industry was employing some 28,000 people, according to the Atlantis SEZ Project Officer, Thabo Thulare. In Atlantis alone, over 220 jobs were created by an international company investing in manufacturing wind towers here.

Recent uncertainty about the future of the REI4P stalled progress. But the lessons learnt mean renewables can leapfrog straight into action. Renewables, and the wind power industry in particular, has a demonstrated alignment with President Cyril Ramaphosa's national agenda of growth in manufacturing and jobs.

***Some skills may have been lost to other countries, some may be "idling outside the economy", some ground-up skills training may once more be needed, but, says Thulare, "our technical institutions have the ability to provide this training", and private companies add extra training capacity.***

With targeted support and well-thought-out, consistently implemented procurement policies, the wind power and related renewables eco-system is ready to go for growth.