

INDUSTRY SPOTLIGHT



Profile: South African Photovoltaic Industry Association (SAPVIA)

The South African Photovoltaic Industry (SAPVIA) was formed to represent the collective voice of the Solar PV industry in South Africa. Its vision is to ensure that solar PV becomes the electricity generation technology of choice in both South Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa, in support of the country's socio-economic development targets. Its mission is to mobilise support for the sustainable growth of solar PV in South Africa and beyond, while staying true to its values of consistency, cohesion and collaboration.

SAPVIA's mandate is to represent the PV industry in government on a regional and international level, and advise key decision-makers on the best policies to develop a sustainable PV market. It promotes a higher penetration of the technology by mobilising and supporting the sector, organising conferences and facilitating networking.

SAPVIA currently has over 170 members, operating across the entire value chain. They include PV manufacturers, renewable energy solutions providers, weatherproofing cable equipment providers and financiers. Members are encouraged to network and form strategic partnerships at networking events. This year, during the coronavirus, SAPVIA has helped facilitate this through arranging digital networking events and virtual conferences.

Helping Aspiring Developers

As well as working with established organisations, SAPVIA is also keen to expand the field and attract aspiring solar developers, making the sector more inclusive. It recently partnered with SAWEA (South

SEVEN REASONS TO BECOME A MEMBER OF SAPVIA

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1. Access to key up-to-date information
2. Networking opportunities
3. Invitations to SAPVIA workshops
4. Benefit from the off-spin of SAPVIA's PR campaigns
5. Access to the Global Solar Council
6. Improve profile and visibility in the industry
7. Opportunity to influence policy

African Wind Energy Association), BEPA (Black Energy Professionals Association), IPPO and Reef SA to deliver a seven-part webinar series addressing key areas that aspiring developers need to know about.

The webinars - sponsored by Standard Bank - focussed in on topics such as 'Bankability to Financial Close', 'Solar Energy Financing' and 'How high-powered modules enhance your solar investment'. The events involve speakers who are key players in the field, and are available to view after the fact, ensuring maximum participation.

ASSOCIATION



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SAPVIA'S WORKING GROUPS

SAPVIA has four working groups to help drive different focus areas within the solar PV value chain:

Embedded Generation Subcommittee (EGS): Established to drive market access and the creation of a viable and sustainable embedded PV market in South Africa, through working with relevant stakeholders including government, local municipalities, Eskom and NERSA.

Manufacturer's Subcommittee (MS): Set up to engage with relevant stakeholders (such as the IPP Office) on SAPVIA's behalf around specific issues relation to development of local PV value chains. It also aims to contribute to meaningful positioning of local content relating to government procurement programmes.

Grid Access Subcommittee (GAS): Tasked with engaging with stakeholders such as Eskom and Nersa, and local municipalities, to promote viable and sustainable grid access for PV plants. It has a specific focus on the large-scale market segment and mid-scale projects in the 5-50MW range.

Socio-Economic Development – Enterprise Development Subcommittee (SED-ED SC): Established to provide a platform to help coordinate members' socioeconomic development initiatives. It helps monitor, evaluate and report on SED projects, establishes and administers community trust funding and sets out industry best practices. It also ensures success stories are communicated to relevant audiences.

Ensuring safe solar

Solar PV in South Africa is in the process of transitioning from the utility-scale market into the residential, commercial and industrial (RCI) market segments. SAPVIA is supporting the development of mechanisms ensuring a responsible and sustainable transition into these markets. One such initiative is the PV GreenCard, which SAPVIA is developing



The PV GreenCard aims to improve the safety and quality of installations

in partnership with the German Solar Association (BSW-Solar) and the German International Corporation (GIZ).

The PV GreenCard aims to improve the safety and quality of installations by providing a comprehensive documentation of solar PV systems, which includes details of the installation such as what sort of PV modules and PV inverters were used, as well a checklist of all of the necessary installation steps that have been safely completed. It is presented to clients by the installer once installation has been completed, and can be used by the installer to show compliance with relevant standards. This will uplift the industry in line with global best practice and promote investor confidence.

The PV GreenCard Programme also focusses on education, training and skills development. This helps improve installer capacity and confidence, and thereby improve the industry.



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