

SA Solar Energy Industry Body appoints first CEO

2 October 2014 – Four years since its inception in 2010, the South African Photovoltaic Industry Association (SAPVIA) announces the appointment of its first Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Moeketsi Thobela. The appointment became effective from 1 October 2014.

Welcoming his appointment SAPVIA's Chairperson for the third year running, Davin Chown, states: "I am pleased to welcome Mr. Thobela as the CEO of SAPVIA at this particular juncture in the growth and development of both the Association and of South Africa's solar photovoltaic (PV) industry. His appointment reflects SAPVIA's commitment to expanding its capabilities, better serving its members, furthering the objectives of the industry and helping to constructively engage with Government around the escalated deployment of PV and the growth of our industry in South Africa. Moeketsi will play a critical role in shaping the future of this industry and his appointment is an extremely valuable addition to the seasoned and committed Management Committee leadership team and secretariat in SAPVIA."

Thobela, who holds electrical engineering and MBA degrees, brings with him a wealth of experience spanning more than 18 years, in such diverse areas as power station operations, electricity pricing and trading, industry restructuring, regulatory policy development and implementation, renewable energy market development, as well as integrated energy modelling and planning.

Reflecting on his appointment, Thobela says: "Given the phenomenal growth in the membership of SAPVIA, spurred to a large extent by South Africa's Renewable Energy Independent Power Producer Programme (REIPPPP) and the commercial and industrial rooftop market, consolidation of the gains that have been made so far is paramount. As part of efforts aimed at addressing our nation's energy security challenges, I look forward to working with the membership of SAPVIA and stakeholders in support of the further sustainable growth of both the utility-scale and roof-top solar PV sub-sectors, including associated local value-chains. "

Thobela's appointment comes at a time when 1484MW of utility-scale solar PV projects have been awarded in the first 3 REIPPPP bidding windows, resulting in investments amounting to more than R40 billion. The majority of the projects awarded in the first bidding window are operational, while those from the second bidding window are under construction. Further progress will depend on the resolution of issues related to the grid-connection of utility-scale plants, supportive regulatory framework for roof-top solar PV and sustainable growth in local value-chains.