

Manufacturers Brace for Blackouts

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

9th April 2019, Johannesburg; In response to South Africa's recent power outages brought about by electricity public utility, Eskom, major concerns have surfaced amongst manufacturers regarding the sustainability of their operations along with the ripple effect it will have on the country's economy. The **Manufacturing Indaba 2019** is the premier manufacturing event in Sub-Saharan Africa and as testament to this accolade, the conference will host discussions on the prevalent outcomes of the nation's blackouts and provide industry players the opportunity to prevail over the associated challenges.

Uninterrupted and sufficient electricity supply is imperative to yield successful manufacturing output in any economy. It therefore goes without saying that intermittent power supply compromises productivity as manufacturers are forced to stop production because of power cuts. This in turn, affects gross domestic product (GDP) as production stops or becomes more expensive.

The negative impacts of load shedding on manufacturers are extensive. They span from loss of material; downtime to reheat machines; damages to mechanical and electrical systems of machines owing to sudden power loss as well as maintenance call-outs after hours.

Additional issues emerging for the energy-intensive manufacturing units as a result of rolling black outs include loss of sales and customers due to delayed delivery stemming from interruptions in production; time wasted as machines need to be restarted, opportunity costs associated with increased development lead times, the fact that 2 hours of load shedding translates to 5 hours of downtime along with the significant loss of income. Furthermore, there is the issue of worker compensation for idle time. Workforces are required to make up for lost production, so overtime is a necessity and the associated costs inevitably accumulate.

However, amidst all these setbacks, South African manufacturers have proven resilient, time and time again when confronted with electricity challenges. In the past, they have turned to back-up generators, transformers and the like. However, the advent of this recent power crisis and the new digital age have presented manufacturers and businesses with a multitude of new solutions. An innovative long-run battery pack integrating 'smart' technology is amongst one of these solutions. The use of smart technology ensures longevity of the battery as it automatically distributes load between individual batteries in the pack and accurately determines the status of batteries in terms of their duty cycles and load.

Modern, eco-friendly long-run UPS systems reduce environmental impact by minimising a user's carbon footprint while saving on electricity costs. The efficiency of this latest generation of UPS systems technology enables on-line monitoring and control functionality which allows for small daily cost savings that essentially accumulate to a significant amount in the long term.

Moreover, an environmentally-savvy and cost-effective alternative is solar. These decisions are being supported by developments in rooftop solar photovoltaic (PV) technology, examples of which include

new-generation utility grid-connected, hybrid solar PV power systems. These hybrid systems serve as back-up as well as complementary power sources which separate them from conventional solar PV power systems.

The **Manufacturing Indaba 2019** is set to unpack the promising solutions industry players can fall back on in an attempt to recover their losses and ensure security of supply. Attending this conference is critical for anyone vested in the manufacturing industry to stay abreast of how they can best protect themselves from the nation's load-shedding struggle.