

Calling all energy sector technology disruptors and start-ups to African Utility Week's Initiate! forum

Celebrating 2020 by introducing 20 SMMEs @ 20th edition

"**Initiate!** has proven to be a powerful platform for new talent and innovation in the power and energy sector and this year's edition in Cape Town in May during African Utility Week and POWERGEN Africa, will once again not disappoint. Watch this space: we'll celebrate the new decade of 2020 by introducing 20 exciting SMMEs during the 20th edition of the event!" This is according to Nazlee Fredericks, head of the Initiate! programme, which will take place as part of this year's **African Utility Week & POWERGEN Africa** at the CTICC in Cape Town from 12-14 May.

"**Initiate!** is the beating heart of innovation and the very essence of African Utility Week and POWERGEN Africa" an energetic Nazlee explains, adding: it's part of a global movement that breeds talent, empowers next-gen energy entrepreneurs and creates impactful programmes to move our industry forward. Founded in 2014, it brings together startups, graduate students, corporate executives, public sector innovators and investors from around the world."

"We are dedicated to accelerating change and growth within the global power and energy industry" she enthuses, "and high-potential students and SMMEs have the opportunity to play a part in this inevitable change. **Initiate!** assists in bridging the gap in the industry by creating a platform allowing the industry's future leaders, innovators and stakeholders to connect and be part of creating a sustainable power and energy ecosystem."

Initiate! Impact Challenge

Last year, four university teams also participated in the first **Initiate!** Young Talent Challenge to take place in Africa. The team of students from Strathmore University in Nairobi, Kenya won the ZAR20,000 in prize money for an innovative concept to provide equitable energy access to remote villages based on, among others, ['Uber\(ising\)' solar energy](#).

This year the challenge will be back again with the objective to engage and inspire the next generation of engineers and power professionals, showcase young talent from Africa's leading universities and tailor an experience for students to learn and network at Africa's largest energy and water event.

Nazlee adds: "the SMME programme on the **Initiate!** Hub will also be back with a few of last year's participants and additional free exhibition space. We will also have a few dedicated Initiate! conference tracks in the Hub. This is certainly the year of plenty!"

Enel Foundation as Global Knowledge Partner

The Enel Foundation, which earlier this month hosted the initial stage of Open Africa Power 2020 Programme at the University of Cape Town, is **Initiate!**'s Global Knowledge Partner. Says João Duarte, Deputy Director of Enel Foundation: "Initiate! provides a great platform to bridge the gap between the energy industry and young generations, both in the academia and research space as well as the innovation and start-up space. As Global Knowledge Partner of Clarion Events for their power and energy events series, we are proud to contribute to Initiate!, sharing our research and connecting with alumni from our education initiatives."

Roughly 150 alumni of Enel Foundation's Open Africa Power Training Programme will have access to the main events at African Utility Week and POWERGEN Africa, and a selection of them will be invited to mentor the university students participating at the **Initiate!** Young Talent Challenge as part of their commitment to give back.

Application for SMMEs and students

SMMEs and students who believe they have what it takes in the sphere of innovative tech or service solutions for the energy and power sectors, can apply online to be part of Initiate! at African Utility Week and POWERGEN Africa in May.

- Students for the Initiate! Young Talent can apply [here](#).
- SMMEs wishing to exhibit can apply [here](#).

Industry partners and former participants of **Initiate!** include:

- Rachel Aron, Principal Social Development Specialist, African Development Bank:

"I'm committed to ensuring that Initiate! results in socially inclusive and gender responsive interventions across Africa and for the actual benefit of Africans."

- Nontlanhla Nkosi, Uketshezi (Pty) Ltd:

"Good experience, it helped me to grow my business and be exposed to the industry."

- Banele Manana, Energy Dots (Pty) Ltd:

"I would definitely recommend Initiate! at African Utility Week. The information gathered and the relationships formed at the event are not the kind one gets by surfing the net. That certainly was of great benefit to me and my business."

To download this year's programme for **Initiate!** at African Utility Week and POWERGEN Africa click here: <https://www.african-utility-week.com/whats-on/initiate>