



electricity & energy

Department:
Electricity and Energy
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Concept Note: Women in Energy Conference

Theme: Advancing Women's Leadership and Participation

Venue: The Venue, Melrose Arch

Date: 29 August 2025

1. Context & Background

South Africa's energy sector is crucial for economic development; it is the engine of economic growth of the country and creates opportunities for both employees and businesses. The sector remains heavily male-dominated. Historically, women have faced significant barriers to entry and advancement in this field, reflecting broader societal inequalities. Despite these challenges, the role of women in energy is evolving, driven by national policies aimed at promoting gender equality and sustainable development. South Africa commemorates Women's Month in August as a tribute to more than 20,000 women who marched to the Union Buildings on 9 August 1956 in protest against the extension of Pass Laws to women. Women's Month is an opportunity to celebrate and reflect on women's achievements, the problems they have faced in the struggle to be free and the important role they continue to play in society.

Women's Month/Day seeks to acknowledge and celebrate the achievements of women throughout the country and various sectors. This day aims to promote women's equality by showing appreciation for women and encouraging support for repressed women.

The 2025 National Women's Month will be celebrated under the main theme "Building Resilient Economies for All". The sub-themes for each week in August are (1) Digital Finance and Bridging the Credit Gap for HER, (2) Support of women-led enterprises, (3) Investment in Care Infrastructure, and (4) GBVF Prevention Through Education and Community Engagement. The theme and sub-themes are linked to the G20 priorities on women's empowerment working group, as led by the Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities (DWYPD).

As a norm, the Department of Electricity and Energy (DEE) is expected to commemorate Women's Month in line with the department and sector's mandate. The department will host the Women in Energy Conference in partnership with stakeholders. The conference will be held under the theme "**Advancing Women's Leadership in the Energy Sector**". The theme is aligned to the G20 agenda and national

goals for gender-responsive development, just and inclusive transition and will highlight the essential role women play in combating energy poverty and promoting energy security across South Africa. As energy poverty continues to be a critical challenge, directly impacting the well-being and economic opportunities of millions, women are emerging as powerful leaders and change-makers in this sphere.

The event will take stock of the journey of women in the energy sector, their achievements, and challenges and map the way forward. The South African government has enabled women's participation in the economy and achieved significant milestones, but this is not sufficient. Women need to reflect on what needs to be done to ensure that women at all levels are included in the energy sector.

The department will reflect on the success and challenges of implementing the Energy Sector Women Empowerment and Gender Equality (WEGE) Strategy. In addition, there will be a launch of the Gender Diversity in the RE Utilities in South Africa study and the C-Suite women in the energy empowerment programme in South Africa, in partnership with SAGEN-CET/ GIZ SAWEA and SAPVIA. It has been clear over the years that most women who get to the top have not been able to hold on to the top job for long, reflecting the need for mentorship and executive coaching at that level. The event will also serve as a platform to integrate the G20 priorities and how this impacts women and solicit comments from women.

2. Objectives

- **Amplify Women's Voices in Global Platforms** - Use the event as a platform to reflect women's perspectives in the G20 discourse, guiding the Minister's engagement globally.
- **Empower Women at All Levels** - Promote inclusive participation by both professionals and grassroots women, particularly in areas like clean cooking, energy access, and health, recognising their unique roles in the energy landscape.
- **Reflect and Reposition** - Review progress made over the past five years of the Energy Sector Women Empowerment and Gender Equality (WEGE) Strategy, identify successes, challenges, and recalibrate efforts going forward.
- **Drive Strategic Action and Collaboration** - Facilitate new action-oriented commitments, partnerships, and opportunities across government, private sector, and civil society to advance women's leadership and innovation in the sector.
- **Champion Gender-Sensitive Policies and Innovation** - Advocate for the integration of gender-responsive energy policies, with a focus on enabling innovation, sustainability and inclusive growth.
- **Celebrate Women's Contributions in Energy** - Recognise and spotlight the achievements of women driving change, innovation, and leadership in the energy sector, inspiring future leaders through storytelling and awards.
- **Launch of Gender Diversity in the RE Utilities in South Africa study**
- **Launch of the C-Suite women in the energy empowerment programme in South Africa.**

3. Proposed Key Topics

- **Bridging the Gender Gap:** Charting a Roadmap for Women in Leadership and Innovation in Energy
- **“The Future of Energy is Female”:** This session will spotlight the pivotal role women play in shaping a sustainable, inclusive, and technologically advanced energy future, aligned with South Africa’s G20 priorities. As global and national agendas emphasise innovation, re-industrialisation, and the development of inclusive green economies, women must be recognised not just as participants but as architects of this transformation. Discussions will explore how increasing women’s participation in energy-related innovation, entrepreneurship, and leadership strengthens national development goals. The session will also highlight the importance of mentorship, capacity-building, and cross-sector partnerships in unlocking the full potential of women as drivers of energy security, economic resilience, and industrial progress, especially in underserved communities. By linking gender equity to G20 objectives, this conversation will ensure that women’s leadership is central to policy shifts, industrial investment, and inclusive innovation in the energy sector.
- **The Role of Women in Renewable Energy and Technological Innovation**
- **Entrepreneurial Women in Energy:** Unlocking Funding, Networking and Growth Opportunities
- **The Power of Clean Cooking:** A Gendered Approach to Health, Safety and Energy Justice.
- **Transforming Legacy - What We’ve Learned from 5 Years of WEGE Strategy Implementation:** This session will reflect on the Department of Electricity and Energy’s five-year journey in implementing its strategy for advancing gender equality in the energy sector. It will examine key milestones, policy shifts, implementation gaps, and tangible outcomes related to empowering women, from boardrooms to rural communities. Panellists will unpack lessons learned, spotlight success stories, and discuss how to recalibrate the strategy to meet current challenges and future ambitions. With South Africa hosting the G20, the session will also explore how insights from this journey can inform global best practices and position South African women as innovation leaders in the global energy landscape.

4. Target Audience

- Minister of Electricity and Energy
- Deputy Minister of Electricity and Energy
- Women in Energy Professionals
- Energy Sector Entrepreneurs, Innovators, and Academia
- Government Representatives and Policy Makers
- Media Representatives
- Gender Empowerment Stakeholders
- Energy Associations.

5. Proposed Programme

Time	Items	Responsibility
	Programme Director: Ms Sophie Masipa	
15h00	Registration	All
16h00	Opening and Welcome	Ms Samantha Graham-Mare: Deputy Minister, Electricity & Energy
16h20	A Perspective on the Past 5 Years of transformation of the energy sector	Ms Elizabeth Marabwa, Chief Director, DEE
16h30	A story of transformation in the energy sector in South Africa	Ms Meta Mehlari, Chairperson, BEPA
16h40	Unlocking women's participation in the Renewable Energy Sector	Mr Niveshen Govender, CEO, SAWEA
16h50	Panel: A CONVERSATION: “THE FUTURE OF ENERGY IS FEMALE”: Future women leaders in Energy conversation	<p>Moderator: Ms Bertha Dlamini, President, African Women in Energy and Power (AWEaP)</p> <p>Panelists:</p> <p>Ms Refilwe Sebothoma, CEO, Hakem Energies</p> <p>Ms Mpho Mookapele, CEO, EWSETA</p> <p>Mr Thabo Kekana, DDG, DEE</p> <p>Ms Linda Mabhena Olagunju, CEO, DLO Energy Resources Group</p> <p>Dr Ramatsemela Masango, CEO, Mzesi Academy</p> <p>Ms Fumani Mthembi, Co-Founder, Pele Green Energy</p> <p>DBSA (TBC)</p> <p>IDC (TBC)</p>
18h00	Q & A/ Engagements	All
18h30	Minister's address Launch of Gender Diversity in the RE Utilities in South Africa study Launch of the C-Suite women in the energy empowerment programme in South Africa	Dr.Kgosientsho Ramokgopa: Minister, Electricity and Energy
19h00	Vote of thanks	Ms Tsakane Khambane: Department of Electricity and Energy
19h20	Dinner and networking	All