

R2m grant for SU renewable energy research centre

A R2m grant from a UK body will contribute substantially to building a strong community of African renewable energy researchers to build the sector and address socioeconomic challenges on the continent.



Image: Arua Centre of Excellence

As part of the African Research Universities Alliance (Arua), Stellenbosch University's (SU) Centre of Excellence (CoE) in Energy is to benefit from the large financial awards from UK Research and Innovation (Ukri).

The CoE aims to develop renewable energy solutions to address challenges such as disease, poverty, climate change, fragile states and food insecurity. One part of the project will be to strengthen young African researchers' capabilities through structured courses presented by SU's acclaimed African Doctoral Academy, while the other part will create the opportunity to tackle real world problems through collaborative research projects with SU's research partners.

The awards being made through this research programme are a key part of Ukri's three-year partnership with Arua, developed through the Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF), to strengthen pan Africa-UK collaborations across all disciplines, mobilise excellence and build robust research ecosystems across Africa.

Network

Arua, launched in 2015, is a network of 16 research intensive African universities from different countries and different historical backgrounds, with the common vision of enhancing research and graduate training in member universities through a number of channels, including the setting up of centres of excellence to be hosted by member universities.

"The Arua CoE in Energy at Stellenbosch University is very pleased to receive this grant. It will allow the centre to identify and engage talented early career African academics, and help to establish a multidisciplinary African community of collaborators around renewable energy issues," says Dr Neill Goosen of the SU Department of Process Engineering and director of the Arua CoE in Energy.

The centre will receive the R12m over a two-year period.

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