

# A thirst for transformation and sustainability within the energy sector

By [Kelly Sin Hidge](#), issued by [SAICA](#)

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With a passion for sustainable economic growth and a vision for transformation, Saica Enterprise Development remains committed to many customised enterprise and supplier development projects within various industries in South Africa. Saica ED forms part of the nation building division under the South African Institute of Chartered Accountants (Saica) and one of our key projects, the EneGro project - which plays an active role within the energy space.



## What is the EneGro Project?

The project was birthed in 2018 in partnership with Avon and Dedisa Peaking Power, South Africa's first large privately owned power generating plants initiated by the Department of Energy. The project was launched as an enterprise and supplier development small business programme, aptly named EneGro, meaning *energy growth*. To date the purpose of the programme was to provide a customised incubation programme aiming at developing a network of energy-focused small and micro enterprises (SMMEs) in support of economic growth and transformation in the energy sector in SA.

The programme itself is tailor-made to empower and equip the SMME owners with financial and industry related expertise. The introduction of industry professionals as well as personal one-on-one coaches alongside business and finance mentoring has created great impact for the programme entrepreneurs.

"Avon and Dedisa Peaking Power remain committed to transforming the energy sector in South Africa, and each enterprise and supplier development initiative we participate in is a testament to this," says Ajay Brijmohan, chief operations officer, Avon and Dedisa Peaking Power.

## EneGro stats and impact 2017 to 2020

- **14** SMMEs impacted since project inception
- **50%** woman-owned entrepreneurs impacted
- **79%** youth-owned entrepreneurs impacted
- **three** programmes with successful graduations
- **six** new businesses created from the group of 14 successful programme graduates

### Let's hear from Sibongiseni Gaqa one of our 2019 alumni graduates

Sibongiseni Gaqa is the director of **Africa Green Energies**, which is a start-up biogas production company. Her company utilises organic waste to produce an environmentally-friendly fuel that can be used for cooking, heating and can also be used to generate electricity.

Gaqa commented: "Everything started for me when I joined the EneGro programme. All I had was an idea, an idea that needed to be nurtured and that is what the programme did for me. By the end of the programme I not only had the business development plan and company registration complete but I also secured some operational gear – which included my prototype *biodigester* as well as the *gas analyser* to be able to test the gas."

Saica ED along with Avon and Dedisa Peaking Power are so excited to see the progress and growth of Africa Green Energies. Currently, Gaqa and her team are busy with tests, using fruit and vegetable waste as their feed. They are also working on their own *household bio-digester* design. Some wins include the successful testing of cooking with their produced gas. And furthermore they also found another income stream of selling the organic fertiliser, which is a bi-product of the biogas production.

The EneGro project is one of the few enterprise development programmes that are in operation in the energy space at the moment. Enterprise development is a crucial area of development within the energy space for SA, noting the current hot topics of localisation versus foreign usage of power as well as the inclusion of local enterprises into supply chains, especially within the tier one to four companies. Transformation and enterprise development within this sector requires strategic partnerships, such as our partnership with Avon and Dedisa Peaking Power, as well as the willingness of the private sector to support this type of development within the SMME space, says project manager Darren Ryder, Saica Enterprise Development.



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### Where to from here for 2021 and beyond?

Saica ED is proud and excited to announce that we have an on-going partnership with Avon and Dedisa Peaking Power that will carry over into 2022. We will be continuing with two intakes of energy-focused entrepreneurs for the EneGro programme, supporting 17 SMMEs this year.

### Meet Thembani Marhanele

Thembani Jeffrey Marhanele is a current SMME on the EneGro programme this year. He is the proud owner of Jeka Energy – which generates renewable energy power as well as energy demand side-management solutions.

When asking Marhanele about what he is most excited about this year on the programme he says: "I am most excited about growing my business structure to gear up and scale to employ more people to contribute to South Africa's future sustainable economic growth."

Already Marhanele has seen the difference that the EneGro programme will have and has shared his current experience

with us: “Darren Ryder’s programme approach and personal encouragement has already empowered me to implement some of the immediate changes after reflecting on our conversations. I reviewed our social media presence and we have recently started implementing a B2B digital media strategy that was developed by a consultant. I am fully confident that he understood my vision, passion and commitment. I look forward to the rest of the year on the programme with excitement and anticipation.”

Just like Thembani Marhanele, we look forward to hearing more impact stories from the SMMEs on our 2021 programme. Watch this space!

*Saica Enterprise Development aims to grow South Africa's entrepreneurial ecosystem through advancing the sustainable growth of small Black businesses, which, in turn, will create employment opportunities. Partner with us for all your enterprise and supplier development scorecard needs, we have a relevant and meaningful solution for you.*

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