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Africa (and South Africa) is often considered a laggard when it comes to many things, in your opinion, where are we as a continent in comparison to other markets, in particular emerging markets, when it comes to the uptake and implementation of renewable energy projects?

The development and implementation of Renewable Energy across the continent has been slow, although Africa presents a significant opportunity given its resources (wind, solar and hydro) combined with low electrification rates (except for South Africa).

Historically, renewables were criticised as being too expensive. However, we have seen a significant decline in cost due in large part to advancements in technology making renewables more efficient and affordable. Technological advances have made it possible to advance the transition away from non-renewable energy sources over time, with Africa being rich in untapped renewables. Most countries in Africa are currently implementing energy transition initiatives, through a combination of technologies (mainly gas and renewables) with a strong focus on renewable energy towards a diversified energy mix targeting net zero commitments.

When it comes to energy projects, can you please elaborate on what some of the challenges are when looking at who to partner with on these types of projects? (Has the due diligence process changed / evolved with the growth of ESG in investing?)

The main driver towards efficient and effective project development and implementation is the quality of bankable projects which includes:

- An enabling environment through a robust and holistic policy framework to support the investment case;
- The commitment made by governments towards climate change to advance investor confidence and alignment with ESG and growth targets;
- Objective to drive the transition through a diversified energy system; and
- Focusing on regional opportunities within the broader context of growth will also be important.

Some of the challenges include adequate risk allocation, the importance of multilateral partnerships and an efficient implementation framework.

Strong sponsors, with the relevant track record aligned with a long-term approach to risk and reward, towards sustainable commitments and ESG is important.

Standard Bank has recently announced a number of renewable energy deals, can you tell us more about how these deals help with ensuring energy security across the continent?

Since 2012, 86% of the bank's new energy lending has been to renewable energy. Most notably is the Kenhardt projects in South Africa, 540MW of solar PV combined with 1,1GWh of Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) where Standard Bank was the sole Mandated Lead Arranger, hedge provider and account bank for the R18bn project. The project reached financial close in July 2022. Also worth noting is Standard Bank's role in initiating, facilitating and advising Seriti Resources in its acquisition of wind-powered renewable energy





company, Windlab Africa through Seriti Green.

Furthermore, in unlocking growth and reliable power supply towards ESG goals for clients, Standard Bank also closed a 200MW solar PV project supplying solar power to a mining client through wheeling, the first sizeable project of this nature in South Africa.

These projects do not only support sustainable green power supply, but also enhance energy security for the broader community.

What do you believe is the role of governments / regulators in enabling the speed of implementation of these renewable projects? Please give examples.

Both governments and regulators have an important role to play in creating and facilitating the development of robust investment frameworks by supporting an enabling environment to attract foreign direct investment. The Renewable Energy Independent Power Producer Procurement Programme (REIPPPP) in South Africa is a clear example of how various government departments collaborated with the regulator (NERSA) in developing a programmatic approach to procure renewables in line with government commitments and the broader Integrated Resource Plan. The programme was launched in 2011 and has successfully procured more than 9GW of which around 6GW is operational.

How can Public-Private Partnership (PPP) deals benefit skills development/transfer and job creation in Africa (and South Africa)?

A key objective in Africa remains development, support and social upliftment through project development and implementation to ensure sustainable long-term success. Through a public-private partnership transaction, partnerships can be facilitated to support skills transfer, upskilling and development with impact. It will remain important to agree the framework and key deliverables in terms of skills development and job creation up front, followed through with a diligent monitoring system to track progress and impact.

Which types of renewable and zero-carbon energy sources will see accelerated development due to the currently developing energy crisis both in SA and Globally?

The current energy crises, driven by significant power shortages, impacted by supply challenges, especially through limited investment in new generation, transmission and distribution infrastructure, support a framework to fast-track investment. Renewables have been at the forefront of the development with solar PV and wind leading the way in new project development and investment. However, it has also been evident that decarbonisation initiatives through digital innovation, as well as decentralised power solutions, have developed and advanced. Policies, regulatory frameworks, and generally more openness to support the development through power sector reforms towards a merchant-type market has started to develop.

These initiatives will assist in accelerating the development and implementation of projects to address the current challenges and the current developing energy crisis.

What does your current role entail, and tell us about your journey to this position?

I am Head of Power, CIB at Standard Bank. In this role I lead the sector strategy and approach for the power sector, through strategic enhancement, opportunity development and identification in line with group objectives and commitments.

My journey to date includes various positions. I started my early career at another commercial bank before moving to a Development Finance Institution as an industry analyst, project financier and heading up various sector business units and establishing a specialised unit, focusing on financing Green Industries which included renewable energy.

What words of advice do you have to the next generation of bankers?

Commitment to making an impact, combined with hard work and passion will translate into success. 

