

The Impact of Digitalisation and IoT on the African Energy Sector

Leading figures within the African energy space will assemble at the [Africa Energy Indaba](#) to discuss the significance of digitalisation and IoT at a time when the energy sector is experiencing a major transition.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Johannesburg, 28 January 2019: The upcoming [Africa Energy Indaba](#) will host various forums on digitalisation and its implication on the continent's energy space. Well-versed industry leaders will impart their knowledge on developing opportunities and how to manage challenges while proactively exploring strategies to fortify their competitive advantage. Panel discussions focused on this theme have been devised to educate and encourage attendees to investigate the application of digitalisation along with why a nation should embrace this revolutionary technology.

Digitalisation within the African energy sector is accelerating at a rapid pace, creating a demand for innovation adaptation to new market technologies and the development of new skill sets within businesses. By 2026, \$300 billion could be added to the continent's economy if countries decide to adopt digitalisation. However, emphasis should be placed on an African approach in order to implement disruptive technologies in an appropriate way. It's essential that aspects specific to the African continent be well-defined within its unique context prior to developing and executing a relevant digital strategy. "There are so many areas that digital opportunities can enable and influence. It remains critical that energy leaders map out digital opportunities, determine the priority areas in their countries' own context and how to

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develop talent to leverage those opportunities,” explained **Dr Christoph Frei**, Secretary General of the World Energy Council.

The digital realm represents both an opportunity and a challenge to the African energy sector. Digitalisation contributes to job creation and opportunities. Advancements, such as renewables, clean coal and nuclear, energy storage, off-grid technologies and smart grids make allowance for new investment and development opportunities. Furthermore, it has the capacity to upskill workers, improve capital productivity and labour efficiency as well as bring about better energy security, accessibility and affordability, thereby promoting economic and societal benefits. Moreover, digitalisation can equip Africa with a multitude of innovative solutions for its people. In addition, it has the capacity to collect data used to gain insights to further boost efficiency and productivity.

According to **Dr Frei**, “Digital solutions help energy systems to be more effective in different ways:

- They assist in managing the intermittence issues of renewables;
- They support predictive supply chain management, thereby minimising the number of blackouts from technical reasons;
- They’re a method of sharing data. For instance, enabling rural entrepreneurs to monitor technology, thereby empowering them; and,
- They enable systems through blockchain.”

Conversely, this new-wave revolution also brings with it a host of risks and challenges amongst which is the preparedness of Africa in embracing digitalisation as the continent will be exposed to increasing threats related to data security and ownership, server locations and cybersecurity. Another barrier to adoption that Africa faces is connectivity. IoT requires efficient internet connections, creating a need for available resources such as network capacity and bandwidth. It remains essential to evaluate the digital infrastructure, technology and skills involved to connect devices and to analyse the data obtained. In addition, training and skills development in order to retain and create jobs as the energy transition unfolds is imperative.

Digitalisation and the declining costs of associated new technologies are driving factors of the major transformations transpiring in the energy space. Policy-makers in the African energy sector need to take the implications of these changes into account for their national energy security and energy systems planning.

Leading figures within the African energy space will convene at the 11th annual [Africa Energy Indaba](#) to discuss the magnitude of digitalisation at a time when the energy sector is undergoing a major transition. Dialogues will focus on African energy sector innovations investigating near and long-term prospects for technological advancements such as blockchain, where decentralisation and digitalisation play a more pronounced role within the continent.

Press Release Ends



ABOUT AFRICA ENERGY INDABA

An African Energy event for Africans and by Africans

2019 Theme: Africa's Energy Future

Africa's power and energy sector is a critical driver of growth and development across the continent. With vast natural energy resources ranging from coal, oil, gas, hydro, solar, wind and geothermal, there is ample choice for the discerning energy investor. Lack of access to electricity means that there is an opportunity for regional governments, energy businesses, organisations and financiers to unlock electricity access to millions of people who have don't have power. **The Africa Energy Indaba** is the continent's premier energy conference and exhibition: bringing together leading African and global energy players to unlock energy and business opportunities across the African continent. The event is the World Energy Council (WEC) regional event for Africa and has strategic partnerships with the South African National Energy Association (SANEA) and the NEPAD Planning & Coordinating Agency (NPCA).

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