

SA cleantech represented at Vienna Energy Forum

Five South Africans will be representing South African cleantech initiatives at the Vienna Energy Forum (VEF) in Austria next month, including two top performers from the Global Cleantech Innovation Programme for SMEs in South Africa (GCIP-SA), who will have the opportunity to pitch their innovations to an audience of venture capital, impact investors and crowd funding platforms at a side event as part of the VEF.

Martin Ackermann of Thevia, developer of a lighter and stronger roof tile made 99% from waste materials, was a runner-up in the 2016 GCIP-SA programme and also the winner of the green-building category at the Global Forum of the 2017 Cleantech Week in San Francisco.

Dr Corinne Greyling of Coco's Solutions is the developer of a super-hydrophobic and self-cleaning coating that increases the lifespan of components on a high-voltage power lines that also makes the grid more efficient. She was a finalist in the 2016 GCIP-SA programme.

They will be joined by Berenice Marais, executive for innovation enabling and support at the Technology Innovation Agency (TIA), Gerswynn Mckuur, national programme manager of the GCIP-SA, and Petro de Wet, also from the GCIP-SA.

The GCIP-SA combines an annual competition and a business accelerator programme where cleantech SMEs and start-ups are continuously trained, mentored and assessed on their business models, investor pitches, communication and financial skills for the development of a more marketable and investor-attractive product and business. Participants are also offered opportunities to showcase their innovations to potential partners, clients and investors, both locally and internationally.

The Vienna Energy Forum (VEF) is a biennial, global and multi-stakeholder forum that explores 21st century developmental challenges from the perspective of sustainable energy. It provides a platform for debate on practical solutions to these challenges and brings together all sectors of society and participants from all over the world, thereby paving the way for tangible partnerships on the ground. VEF 2017 will focus on "Sustainable Energy for the Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement," and will be held in Vienna, Austria, from 11 to 12 May, with side events taking place on 9 and 10 May.

The Vienna Energy Forum was established in 2008 of a joint initiative by the Austrian Government, the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO).

The GCIP-SA is part of a global initiative with the goal of promoting clean technology innovation and supporting SMEs and start-ups. In South Africa, UNIDO and TIA jointly

implement the programme, with funding from the Global Environment Facility (GEF). US-based Cleantech Open serves as the main knowledge partner of the global programme.