

Developing agricultural and energy security in rural Africa

Moore Stephens Africa Advisory (MSAA), together with technical partners, is assisting rural communities and private developers to own and operate their own renewable energy farms. Developing renewable energy and bringing power to small and medium-size businesses in rural areas holds many opportunities for investors.



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Gareth Pollit, Africa technical advisor at MSSA, said there was great potential to implement a variety of renewable technologies across Africa, from solar to biomass together with associated industries such as wood briquetting and pelleting.

He said Moore Stephens was working on two market and technical surveys for \$30 million wood pelleting and solar projects in Southern Africa which would generate export opportunities as well as create jobs and local industrialisation capabilities. “The approach has been developed to meet local and national development guidelines in South Africa and other African countries,” said Pollit.

MSSA has assessed the potential for developing market opportunities in rural areas and is seeking and developing financial partners to help develop Rural Community Energy farms across Africa. MSAA is able to tap into its global network, as it forms part of Moore Stephens International.

Agricultural and energy security

Jeff Blackbeard, Africa Strategy Advisor for MSAA said there was a great need to develop renewable energy, particularly for small and medium-size enterprises in the agricultural and agro-processing industries.

Blackbeard has travelled to Cameroon, Sierra Leone, Ghana, Nigeria, Kenya and Tanzania to identify opportunities across the spectrum from solar, wind and biomass to mini-hydro schemes. These opportunities could dovetail with the projects their clients are involved in – from real estate, agri-processing, retail and distribution to financial services and telecoms projects throughout Sub-Saharan and West Africa.

Blackbeard said agricultural and energy security were key sectors of interest to MSSA. “In respect of energy security we are not targeting supplementing the main grid, but rather working with anchor tenants in rural areas, whether it be a sawmill, a dairy or a tomato plantation where renewable energy provides just part of a holistic solution”

Benefitting rural communities

Blackbeard says he envisages the surrounding community would also be able to benefit from the development. “MSAA has undertaken a uniquely proactive approach in identifying project opportunities, technical partners, and funders from its Africa and global network of clients,” said Blackbeard.

Though working with its global partner firms, Moore Stephens has identified opportunities for collaboration on funding models as well as new technologies. “We want to find cost-effective renewable energy solutions that meet the demands of our client,” said Blackbeard.

“We’ve also met with developers and local partners in countries such as Kenya, Nigeria, and Tanzania, who are involved in housing developments, factories, retail operations and small mines. There is potential for them to develop renewable energy projects around their existing businesses.” MSAA can provide those linkages and solutions that assist in providing energy security.

According to the World Bank, ten million small and medium-size enterprises in Africa have no access to electricity. Those that do pay three times as much as in the United States and Europe and routinely endure power outages that cost their countries between one and four percent in lost GDP every year.

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