

Academic partnership brings Pan-African training programme for clean energy leaders to SA

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A total of 11 South Africans among record number of participants selected for Open Africa Power, a programme aiming to forge a new generation of African leaders deeply engaged with a clean energy future for their countries.



This February, the University of Cape Town's Graduate School of Business (UCT GSB) will host the third edition of Open Africa Power (OAP) – a novel academic partnership that seeks to train a new generation of leaders to drive Africa's energy transition. This is the first time the programme has come to South Africa.

With Africa's population expected to more than double by 2050, from 1.2 billion to 2.5 billion, there is an urgent need for additional power generation capacity, particularly since 600 million Africans still lack access to electricity.

"To ensure that Africa makes concrete progress on its path to a clean energy future and that we deliver on the sustainability development goals, capacity-building projects such as Open Africa Power are crucial," says Emeritus Professor Anton Eberhard, director of the Power Future Lab at the UCT GSB.

OAP is an education venture initiated by Enel Foundation in 2018 in partnership with leading academic institutions including [Strathmore University](#) from Kenya, the [University of Addis Ababa](#) from Ethiopia, and Italian institutions such as [Politecnico di Torino](#), [Politecnico di Milano](#), [Bocconi University](#), [Florence School of Regulation](#) and [Venice International University](#).

[Carlo Papa](#), director of Enel Foundation, commented: "We are extremely happy to host the African residential module in partnership with the University of Cape Town, one of the most prestigious and top-ranked academic institutions on the continent. Education is crucial for Africa's sustainable development and OAP demonstrates that the international academic cooperation between Italian and African institutions can help win the race from poverty to prosperity for all."

The programme seeks to empower and retain African talent to enhance the technical, regulatory and business skills needed to work in the private and public sectors towards the electrification of Africa. It offers knowledge on all aspects of sustainable electricity production and distribution, to the best and most motivated PhD Master's and MBA students and alumni. The programme also aims to create a networking platform for participants in order to provide ongoing support to participants.

"Leaders and managers in the fast-changing energy sector face complex new challenges and require specialised skills and support to navigate this terrain with confidence," explains Professor Eberhard. "2020 is a crucial year for Africa's energy security. If we don't act now, we risk being left behind as the world's transition from fossil fuels to renewable sources gains

momentum. We therefore urgently need more African clean energy leaders who understand these shifts and are capable of providing the private and public sectors with the expertise needed to benefit from rather than be disadvantaged by them.”

Each OAP lasts six months with two residential training modules (one opening week in Africa and two closing weeks in Italy) and an online learning module in-between. Rolled out in 2018, the first edition of Open Africa Power attracted over 140 applicants from nine African countries while in 2019 the number of applications grew to more than 400 from 37 different nations. This year’s programme, which will take place from 10 to 14 February in Cape Town, received a record number of applications with more than 750 applications from 41 African countries. The number of South Africans on the programme since its inception, has increased from four in each of the first two editions, to 11 of this year’s 61 participants.

One of the key aspects of the programme is to focus on geographical as well as gender diversity. With a high percentage of female participants, the programme is providing a concrete demonstration of African women’s role in pushing forward a new generation of African leaders deeply engaged with their respective country’s clean energy future.

About...

The **Power Futures Lab** at the UCT Graduate School of Business is a leading centre of excellence and expertise for Africa and other emerging and developing economies. It aims to enhance understanding and build capacity in infrastructure investment, reform and regulation, in support of sustainable development.

Enel Foundation is non-profit organisation focusing on the crucial role of clean energy to ensure a sustainable future for all. By developing partnerships with pre-eminent experts and institution across the globe, leveraging on the vast knowledge of its founders, Enel Foundation conducts research to explore the implications of global challenges in the energy domain and offers education programmes to the benefit of talents in the scientific, business and institutional realms.

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