



Press Release

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Immediate Release

Small steps go a long way towards improving energy efficiency

Energy efficiency plays a fundamental role in South Africa's strides toward establishing an economy that is built on sustainable and environmentally conscious practices. However, improving energy efficiency is more than just using less energy, it requires you to become aware of how it is used, where it's wasted and how it can be utilised effectively and efficiently in everyday life.

Barry Bredenkamp, General Manager for Energy Efficiency at The South African National Energy Development Institute (SANEDI) recommends starting with a few attainable steps that will go a long way in establishing an energy efficiency environment in your home or business.

Windows, sun and light

"We encourage both consumers and small businesses, to start with low-cost steps such as improving their homes or facilities' insulation. Sealing leaking windows for example, will prevent air coming in through little cracks and openings. It will also prevent cool or warm air leaving the home or office. If the power does go off in your home or business, it won't become exceedingly hot or cold, which will also mitigate the unnecessary use of air conditioning or heaters.

Bredenkamp also recommends planting deciduous trees in front of windows, ensuring that it provides some shade in summer, cooling down the home or office, whilst warming it in winter when the trees shed their leaves. It is an inexpensive and eco-friendly solution.

Another inexpensive step would be to take stock of lighting throughout the building and replace it with energy saving LED options. "Whether you're a low- or high-income consumer or business, lighting is important - we all need light. Today there are so many energy-

efficient and cost-effective LED technologies available that one can easily convert from inefficient, energy-hungry lighting,” explains Bredenkamp.

Gas and technology provide answers

“Another practical step is converting your cooking to LPG, (liquefied petroleum gas). A lot of restaurants have already switched over to gas and it is equally practical in the home. Traditional cooking methods drains power which is why gas is the cleaner and more energy efficient option. Also, you can continue cooking when the power is off,” he adds.

From a business perspective, investing in technologies such as energy efficient printers and desktops go a long way in optimising energy usage. “Most ICT vendors have major drives to go green, which includes the development technologies that are energy efficient. We recommend that businesses look for technologies that have a high energy efficiency rating – it is readily available, and the savings will quickly outweigh the initial capital outlay,” comments Bredenkamp.

Refrigeration is also a less obvious energy efficiency opportunity. “Today there are various refrigerator options available that run at optimal energy efficiency. The important thing is to do your homework beforehand and ensure that when you do purchase a refrigerator, it provides you with the best possible energy use for the money spent. Once again, energy efficient appliance labels can assist the purchaser to make the right decision”

The time is now

The above steps provide the foundation for moving towards a household or business that is more energy efficient. Bredenkamp adds: “We no longer live in a country where we have cheap and abundant energy; establishing a society that embraces energy efficiency is a vital step. Through awareness and ultimately a mindset change, most people will be able to embark on the energy efficiency journey towards a more sustainable future.

“Globally we’re seeing the move towards energy efficiency, which we believe will go a long way in creating important local awareness. Furthermore, with extreme and fluctuating weather conditions, people have become acutely aware that steps must be taken to safeguard the environment – energy efficiency is an important cog in this wheel,” he concludes.

Ends 622 words

About SANEDI

The South African National Energy Development Institute (SANEDI), established by the Government, directs, monitors and conducts applied energy research to develop innovative, integrated solutions to catalyse growth and prosperity in the green economy. It drives scientific evidence-driven ventures that contribute to youth empowerment, gender equity, environmental sustainability and the 4th Industrial Revolution, within the National Development Plan (NDP), through consultative, sustainable energy projects. For more information, go to www.sanedi.org.za.