

# SA's evolutionary transition to green-infrastructure

As it deals with the infrastructure backlog that has been hampering South Africa's development over the past few years, the country also needs to consider ways to build and maintain a sustainable infrastructure that takes account of South Africa's ecosystems and rich biodiversity. Doing this could have both job and economic benefits, reports Engineering News.

Speaking at the recent Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA) Knowledge Week, however, Public Enterprises Minister Malusi Gigaba stressed that, in light of the country's relatively energy-intensive economic reality, the transition to a greener economy would not be without trade-offs. "South Africa is one of the highest greenhouse-gas emitters globally - it is ranked among the top 30," he said. The move towards green infrastructure could only be achieved through a collaborative effort between domestic and international stakeholders, through schemes such as the South African Renewables Initiative (SARi).

Gigaba cautioned that a "big bang" approach to overhaul the current make-up of the economy could have serious employment and growth consequences. Therefore, he said, the transition would have to be evolutionary, pursuing a gradual integrated strategy and phasing-in new technologies over time. "Technology plays a significant role in moving towards the construction of green infrastructure across industries, such as power and transport, besides others," Gigaba said. "Hence, there is a call for a knowledge-based economy to be able to achieve a high level of technology integration in the built environment."

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