



MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate use

Industry highlights commitment to protecting birds as more wind energy props up the grid

Cape Town, 23 April 2014: As more wind farms become fully operational and put electricity into the constrained South African grid, Wind Energy BirdLife South Africa and South African Wind Energy Association (SAWEA) have noted and welcomed the increasing commitment to environmental best practice relating to birds and wind power in South Africa.

Given the potentially adverse effects of global climate change on birds, BirdLife South Africa and SAWEA share a commitment to renewable energy. Their co-operation led to the adoption of a code of conduct in June 2013 for wind farm developers in South Africa. While the code of conduct does not explicitly deal with birds, it does require SAWEA members to follow international best practice during project development, implementation and operation. It also requires members to exercise due care to reduce the risk of negative impacts on the environment. In addition to this, SAWEA endorsed the BirdLife South Africa / Endangered Wildlife Trust best practice guidelines for avian monitoring and impact mitigation at proposed wind energy development sites in southern Africa which were developed in 2012. These guidelines are based on international best practice and are a key resource used to help minimise the impact of renewable energy developments on birds and their habitats.

This collaboration is bearing fruit and the majority of successful wind farms comply with the code of conduct and many have voluntarily implemented the recommendations contained in the best practice guidelines.

Mike Mangnall, Chair of SAWEA's Environmental Working Group, contextualises as follows: "As clear guidelines on best practice have emerged, we have seen the majority of developers embracing these. We have been disseminating the guidelines to the industry, and they are being accepted."

"It is important that we follow international best practice" said Samantha Ralston, Birds and Renewable Energy Manager for BirdLife South Africa. "Wind farms are new to South Africa, but we are in a fortunate position that we can learn from our international partners who have years of

experience in assessing, monitoring and mitigating the impacts of wind energy on birds. With the right approach, conflicts between birds and wind farms can, to a large extent, be avoided” she said.

While there were a few teething problems in aligning the regulatory process with best practice, almost all wind farm developers have committed to monitoring and resolving impacts on birds both before and after construction. Many developers are also working closely with BirdLife South Africa to ensure compliance. “We are pleased to note this development”, said Dipolelo Elford, Chair of SAWEA. “Our industry is about long term sustainability and environmental best practice is a core part of that.”

Ralston likewise was upbeat and said: “We are really encouraged to see positive changes in the way potential impacts on birds are being monitored and assessed in South Africa. We acknowledge that following best practice requires a huge upfront commitment from developers, but this is critical if the industry is to develop sustainably. ”

Electricity from wind farms are already feeding the South African grid, with additional turbines from Round 1 being commissioned on a weekly basis. Round 4 of the REIPPPP is expected to close for bids in August 2014.

With sponsorship from Investec Corporate and Institutional Banking, BirdLife South Africa works with government and industry to support the responsible development of renewable energy in South Africa.

Ends

For further information, please contact:

BirdLife South Africa: Samantha Ralston, energy@birdlife.org.za (083 673 3948)

South African Wind Energy Association: Mike Mangnall environmental@sawea.org.za

Notes to Editors:

About Birdlife South Africa

The vision of BirdLife South Africa is to promote the conservation, research, understanding, observation of and enjoyment of natural birds, and their habitats. BirdLife South Africa supports renewable energy production, but renewable energy facilities can have unintended negative impacts on avifauna. BirdLife South Africa's Birds and Renewable Energy Manager, a position sponsored by Investec Capital Markets, works with government and industry to minimise the impact of renewable energy developments on birds and their habitats. South Africa has 846 bird species, of which 65 species only occur here and 125 (15%) are listed in The Eskom Red Data Book of Birds of South Africa, Lesotho and Swaziland (Barnes 2000). With one of the highest levels of bird endemism in the world, South Africa has an important obligation to ensure their survival. BirdLife South Africa is the largest non-profit bird conservation organization in the country. It relies on donor funding and financial support from the public to carry out its critical conservation work.

Through sponsorship from Investec Corporate and Institutional Banking, BirdLife South Africa works with Government and Industry to support the responsible development of the renewable energy industry in South Africa. In partnership with the Endangered Wildlife Trust, BirdLife South Africa has developed Best Practice Guidelines for Avian Monitoring and Impact Mitigation at Proposed Wind Energy Development Sites. These guidelines are based on international best practice and are a key resource used to help minimise the impact of renewable energy developments on birds and their habitats.

For more information, visit www.birdlife.org.za

About Investec Corporate and Institutional Banking

Investec's Corporate and Institutional Banking division provides a wide range of products, services and solutions to select corporate clients, public sector bodies and financial institutions. The division undertakes the bulk of Investec's proprietary trading activities, as well as all non-private client deposit taking, corporate and public sector lending, project finance, acquisition and leveraged finance as well as advisory and structuring activities.

The Investec Project and Infrastructure Finance team develops local and international renewable energy projects, through its debt and advisory services.

Corporate and Institutional Banking a division of Investec Bank Limited. Reg. No. 1969/004763/06. An Authorised Financial Services Provider and registered Credit Provider. A member of the Investec Group.

About SAWEA

SAWEA is the not-for-profit, industry organisation representing the wind industry in South Africa. Our members include both national and international entities active in the entire wind energy supply chain. See www.sawea.org.za