

**Paper title- Barriers and Opportunities for SMME in the Renewable Energy Industry**

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Mrs Esther Mkhwebane works as a Researcher at the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) within the Integrated Energy Research Centre. Her main focus is SMME Development, in renewable energy to encourage industrialization of technologies in this sector and localization, which in turn contributes to job creation. She has extensive working experience in enterprise development in various sectors, with a special focus on energy and waste, and managing energy efficiency projects. Mrs Mkhwebane studied Chemical Engineering and obtained BTech Degree from Tshwane University of Technology (TUT) and further obtained Post Graduate Diploma in Business Administration from Milpark Business School. She is currently enrolled with the University of Witwatersrand (Wits) on her Masters Degree in Chemical Engineering.

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Previously she worked for the Department of Trade and Industry as a Director: Green Industries, where she was responsible for facilitating the development of the local renewable energy industry. Before joining the DTI, she spent 3 years at the Embassy of Denmark working as a Coordinator for the Business to Business Programme, where she facilitated business linkages between Danish and South African companies. Prior to that she spent 7 years in Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality working on Energy and Climate Change programmes.