Misconception about the Registering of SSEG installations with the Municipality.

1. Some people want to believe that the municipality will charge extra property tax if the solar or other generators connected to the electricity network is registered with the municipality. THIS IS NOT TRUE!

The need for registration is to ensure that only approved systems or the right size of equipment is installed that will not have a negative impact on the quality of the electricity supply to other customers on the same network, and to ensure the safety of personnel working on the electrical network. If the municipality is not aware that there is another source of electricity on a specific network, there is a risk that the staff might be electrocuted when they conduct their normal routine inspections and maintenance work.

2. There also seem to be confusion regarding the announcement that the President made regarding Tax on solar generation. The tax that the President and the Minister of Finance **spoke about is a tax incentive that homeowners and business owners, that installed Solar Panels during the 2023/24 financial year, can claim back as a tax reduction when they complete their annual tax returns. It does not mean that the Municipality will tax the residents because they installed these solar panels.**

We must remind residents that several towns in the Swartland are direct ESKOM clients. This means that the residents, unfortunately, must deal directly with ESKOM in the event of power outages or any other electricity related matters. This also impacts any remedial actions the Municipality continues to implement to lessen the impact of these blackouts, as we are legally not allowed to interact with the ESKOM infrastructure. Our efforts are to mitigate the impact of loadshedding in our towns to ensure our basic service delivery e.g. water, waste water treatment works and administrative functions continue uninterrupted.

It is not within the financial means of any municipality to eradicate loadshedding completely. All efforts are now on lessening the impact wherever possible and to ensure legislation, by-laws and policies are in place so that residents (those who can do so) can equip themselves with ways and means to lessen the impact of loadshedding on their daily lives through alternative energy means such as residential solar panels and inverters.

Ons gee gestalte aan 'n beter toekoms! • We shape a better future! • Sakha ikusasa elingcono!

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Building Loadshedding Resilience

"Why does Swartland Municipality not simply leave the ESKOM grid?"

We are often asked: **Why does Swartland Municipality not simply leave the ESKOM grid?**

It is however not as easy and simple as it sounds. For any municipality to generate and provide electricity without ESKOM, infrastructure and generation capacity worth millions of rands is needed. For almost all municipalities in South Africa this is not financially possible or feasible.

Swartland Municipality has taken certain steps and we are continuing to plan additional measures to try and mitigate the impact of loadshedding wherever possible.

"What have we done so far?"

• Swartland Municipality is part of the Western Cape Provincial Government's Energy Resilience Project. Since the announcement thereof we have undertaken various feasibility studies and viability studies to determine if alternative energy generation at a reasonable price is possible. Currently, large scale generation is not financially viable and any attempts to do so will have significant financial implications for our already struggling residents.

• **However, a 3-year tender has been awarded to Darling Green Utility (DGU) to generate up to 1000kW of solar energy. The municipality will purchase energy from DGU to feed into the municipal grid at our Darling infeed substation. We are planning to buy the first energy from this plant in the first quarter of 2024.**

• Swartland has not boasted about some of our internal projects because they are not alleviating the blackout situation our residents experience daily. We are however attempting to reduce our own pressure on the network because the municipality is a significant consumer **within the Swartland region.**

• **A 10.92 kW Solar system has been implemented by Swartland at the Malmesbury Traffic Department since 2018. The energy generated is for the use by the Traffic Department.**

• A 17kW solar system has been implemented by Swartland at the Malmesbury Municipal Workshop (2020). The energy generated is used by the Municipal Workshop

• **During the period 2014 to 2021 a total of 8300 energy efficient streetlights have been installed.** Since the LED lights are far more energy efficient than conventional streetlights, we are saving energy and thus also cost for the purchase of energy from ESKOM.

• **All Traffic lights in the region were upgraded with more energy efficient LED lights.**

• We are in the process of purchasing emergency standby generators and battery back-up power supplies to ensure the continuation of service delivery- of critical infrastructure such as water and sanitation pump stations and critical customer facing office facilities.

• The municipality is also looking at making municipal land available for the possible development of a solar farm from which the municipality can purchase renewable energy to lessen the reliance on ESKOM and possibly reduce the input cost of bulk electricity purchases.

Since the announcement by the President and changes in legislation about the licensing of generators have been changed, more customers are interested to supply their own electricity by means of embedded generators.

What is an Embedded Generator? An Embedded Generator is a generator connected to the municipalities electrical network, either directly, or behind the customer's meter. Often such generators are 'Small-Scale Embedded Generators' (SSEG), meaning no larger than 1000 Kilo Watt or 1 Megawatt (MW) capacity. If such a connection is on the customer's side of the meter, it is still 'Embedded' as it is linked to the distribution network. A solar photovoltaic (PV) system connected to the customer's distribution board via an inverter is a common example. SSEG refers mostly to solar PV generation, although it also includes other forms of generation (e.g. wind, diesel).

The purpose of these private generator installations is to **reduce the customer's dependence on the national electrical grid, save money on energy purchases and be able to have electricity supply during load shedding. In addition, customers may want to sell energy that they don't use back to the Municipality.**

A total of 112 customers have already registered their Solar Generator Installations with the municipality. These installations have a total installed capacity of 2260kW. There are however a number of these installations that are not registered and/or approved by the municipality so we don't have a complete picture of the number of installations.

Swartland has an approved Export tariff for residential customers who has connected an approved embedded generator (Solar System) to the network and wishes to sell the energy that they are not using themselves (excess energy) back to the municipality.

Pioneer Foods in conjunction with the municipality has applied for participation in the ESKOM load curtailment program. The application has been approved by ESKOM which allows the Sasko flour mills to continue operation during loadshedding, **reducing food pressures.** In return Pioneer Foods must however reduce their electricity usage between 10% and 20%

Recent Developments

• The municipality is in the process of amending the electricity supply by-law. The draft amended by-law will be published in due course for public scrutiny and input.

• The Executive Mayoral Committee is considering an Embedded Generator Policy that will assist the municipality to effectively manage the installation and connection of alternative energy sources to the municipal grid.

• A circular providing information about embedded generation and how to install approved Small Scale Embedded Generators (SSEG) to the municipal Grid has been compiled that will be shared with residents and businesses in the municipal supply area.

• Residents that have already installed solar systems without the necessary prior approval from the municipality are requested to register their systems and will be given time until the end of June 2023 to do so. The municipality will have until the end of December 2023 to assess and approve or not approve these installations. Communication regarding the grace period to register installations are available on the municipal website and will be communicated via the local newspapers.

• The latest Application Form for the installation of an SSEG (Solar and other generators), the municipal requirements for embedded generators as well as other documentation, and the communication mentioned above, is available on the Municipal Website or can be requested by sending an email to SSEG@swartland.org.za or swartlandmun@swartland.org.za

• The municipality has taken a decision to also allow commercial and industrial customers with approved SSEG installations to sell excess electricity (Export) back to the municipality. This will however only be possible from 01 July 2023 and once the tariff has been approved by the Council and communicated by the municipality. This should be good news to our business community as they have been asking for this for some time now and will allow them to sell excess energy generated back to the municipality

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