

THE UTILITY REGULATORY AUTHORITY AWARDS ITS FIRST ELECTRICITY GENERATION LICENCES

Ebene, Thursday 11 May 2023 – On Thursday, 11 May 2023, the Utility Regulatory Authority (URA) held a licence handing ceremony in honour of the first electricity service licences to be issued since its operationalisation. The ceremony was held at its offices in Ebene. Alteo Energy Ltd was awarded a Transitional Generation Licence while Provisional Generation Licences were issued to Green Rock Ltd, Green Yellow (Arsenal) and Le Val Village Photovoltaïque Ltd.

Alteo Energy Ltd operates a 41 MW biomass/coal power plant which supplies steam and electricity to its milling operations and the national electricity grid. Its annual exports to the Central Electricity Board (CEB) are 170 GWh, on average. Over half of their production is derived from renewable sources like bagasse and cane trash. The relationship between Alteo and CEB is governed by a Power Purchase Agreement (PPA).

On the other hand, Le Val Village Photovoltaïque Ltd has partnered with the Rose Belle Sugar Estate Board and Corexsolar (International) Ltd to set up a 16 MW solar farm at Le Val. The power plant will feed power into the grid from the Rose Belle CEB Substation. This will increase the share of renewable energy (RE) in Mauritius’ electricity generation mix.

Furthermore, Green Yellow (Arsenal) Ltd, for instance, plans to contribute to the share of RE in the country’s generation mix through the setting up of a 13 MW solar farm at Arsenal. The project is in line with the government’s objective of promoting sustainable development through the use of RE for power production. The proposed PV farm will connect to the national grid at the Jin Fei Substation.

Lastly, Green Rock Ltd intends to set up an 11 MW solar PV power plant at Petite Retraite, which will also support the Government’s strategy to reduce our reliance on fossil fuels through the production of electricity from RE sources. The proposed solar PV power plant will inject power into the national grid at CEB’s Amaury Substation.

In his speech, the Chairperson of the URA Board, Mr Philip Ah-Chuen stated that: *“Last year, the Renewable Energy (RE) Roadmap 2030 for the Electricity Sector was reviewed, following the Government’s decision to attain 60% of RE in the energy mix by year 2030. In line with the*

Government’s agenda for a green energy transition and the phasing out of the use of coal in the electricity generation by 2030, the Authority reiterates its commitment to fulfil its mandate of implementing Government policy and ensuring the sustainability and viability of utility services in Mauritius.”

Furthermore, Mr Mbulelo Ncetezo, the CEO/Director of the Authority explained that the proclamation of the Electricity Act 2005 and the Central Electricity Board (Amendment) Act 2020 and the promulgation of the supporting Regulations in June 2022, has undoubtedly facilitated the operationalisation of the URA. Since then, the Authority has rolled out its e-Licensing platform to allow current and aspirant licensees to seamlessly transition to the newly regulated environment.

He added that the URA has worked in close collaboration with all stakeholders to allow operators to reorganise their businesses, so as to ensure compliance with relevant laws. Through the e-Licensing platform, deemed licensees have registered and applied for transitional licences.

“Consequently, after the expiry of the transitional period, operators will be required to apply for permanent licences while aspirant licensees will have to register on our e-Licensing platform and apply for a provisional licence. When they are ready to produce power into the grid, they may also apply for permanent licences,” Mr Ncetezo explained.

The CEO of the URA also stated that the Authority is ready to support all initiatives aimed at achieving Mauritius’ target towards a green energy transition.

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About the Utility Regulatory Authority

The Utility Regulatory Authority (URA) was officially launched in September 2016 with the appointment of the Chairperson and Commissioners as per the provisions of the *URA Act 2004* (as amended). The URA's objectives are four-fold: to ensure the sustainability and viability of utility services, to protect the interests of both existing and future customers, to promote efficiency in both operations and capital investments in respect of utility services and to promote competition to prevent unfair and anti-competitive practices in the utility services industry.

Mr Philip Ah-Chuen is the Chairperson of the URA Board and the Commissioners are Mr Sadatmanund Narain, Mr Pratabsing Bacorisen, Mrs Jenny Mootealoo, Mr Hemant Multra, Mrs Geereesha Topsy-Sonoo and Mrs Fatwma Abdool Raman-Ahmed.

Mr Mbulelo Ncetezo is the CEO of the Authority.

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