

INSPIRE
Annual Report

2024



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Message from the Managing Director

2024 has been a transformative year for INSPIRE, marked by significant milestones and new opportunities to deepen our impact in the renewable energy sector. As we continue our mission to advance social performance, we have strengthened partnerships, expanded our knowledge-sharing initiatives, and embedded collaborative frameworks across projects.

This year, our focus on initiatives like the Community of Practice (CoP) in the Inland 5 region and the Trust Matters programme has strengthened collaboration among Independent Power Producers (IPPs), community trusts, and local and international practitioners in the renewable energy and natural-resource sector eco-systems. Through these efforts, we have enhanced capacity building, improved governance, and supported the implementation of impactful socio-economic development projects.

Looking ahead, INSPIRE is poised to scale its impact further, embracing new opportunities to influence policy, strengthen partnerships, and elevate voices from community equity shareholders.

I extend my gratitude to the INSPIRE team, our board, funders, and stakeholders for your dedication and trust. Your support makes our mission possible and drives the meaningful progress we celebrate today.



Dr Holle Linnea Wlokas
Managing Director, INSPIRE



Message from the Chairperson of the Board of Directors

As Chairperson of the INSPIRE Board, I am honoured to reflect on a year defined by progress, resilience, and possibility. In 2024, INSPIRE has continued its vital work of shaping a future where the promise of South Africa’s renewable energy transition is matched by meaningful socio-economic impact for all.

At INSPIRE, we are driven by the belief that every project we support, every partnership we nurture, and every learning opportunity we create brings us closer to a shared vision of communities that thrive. This year, the Community of Practice (CoP) initiative in the Inland 5 region and the Trust Matters programme have served as powerful examples of what can be achieved through collaboration, innovation, and a steadfast commitment to change. Together, these initiatives have strengthened governance, expanded knowledge-sharing, and laid the foundation for co-designed solutions that will resonate for years to come.

INSPIRE’s webinar series and learning events have broadened our reach and deepened our impact, enabling critical conversations on issues like youth unemployment and substance abuse. These platforms have not only tackled pressing challenges but also fostered hope and collective purpose across the renewable energy sector, aligning our shared vision for community development.

As we celebrate these milestones, we are also mindful of the challenges inherent in our work. Juggling multiple demands and opportunities as a small and dynamic organisation has required

creativity and resilience. Similarly, pursuing deep, sustainable impact while navigating the uncertainty of short-term funding cycles has tested our adaptability. Yet, these experiences have only strengthened our resolve to continue building meaningful partnerships for collective strength, deepening trust, and creating an ecosystem of shared learning and impact.

INSPIRE’s journey is not only about overcoming challenges but also about crafting a new narrative for renewable energy in South Africa. It is a story of trust, collaboration, and the transformative power of shared purpose. As we look ahead, I am filled with hope for what we will achieve together—a legacy of lasting change that will shape the lives of communities and stakeholders across the country.

On behalf of the Board, I extend my deepest gratitude to the INSPIRE team, funders, and stakeholders for your unwavering trust and collaboration. Together, we are not only meeting the moment but also building a future that will inspire generations to come.

“At INSPIRE, we are driven by the belief that every project we support, every partnership we nurture, and every learning opportunity we create brings us closer to a shared vision of communities that thrive.”



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jennifer Boca', located below the portrait.

Jennifer Boca
Chairperson of the Board of Director

INSPIRE Governance and Team Overview

INSPIRE BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Dr Holle Linnea Wlokas
Managing Director



Jennifer Boca
Non-Executive Director
CHAIRPERSON



Libby Hirshon
Non-Executive Director



Letsiwe Thuli Dlamini
Non-Executive Director
SECRETARY



Phetsile Magagula
Non-Executive Director
TREASURER



ABOUT INSPIRE

The Initiative for Social Performance in Renewable Energy (INSPIRE) is a female-led, practitioner-driven non-profit organisation based in South Africa. We are committed to ensuring that renewable energy projects not only deliver low-carbon power but also generate meaningful, lasting socio-economic benefits for host communities.

INSPIRE works to professionalise the field of social performance, build leadership capacity, and drive innovation across the renewable energy ecosystem. Through strategic collaborations, peer learning, and applied research, we empower social performance practitioners, strengthen community voice, and influence both policy and practice. Our work is grounded in the South African Renewable Energy Independent Power Producer Procurement Programme (REIPPPP), which has demonstrated the importance—and challenges—of embedding equity and transformation into energy infrastructure. INSPIRE responds to these challenges with a bold agenda: to shift the sector from fragmented, compliance-based approaches to co-designed, impactful models of community engagement and benefit-sharing.

Over the 2025–2027 period, INSPIRE is focused on five interconnected programme areas: capacity building, strategic partnerships, knowledge generation, community innovation, and advocacy. With an expanding network of partners across South Africa and the Global South, we aim to amplify local insights, scale replicable models, and catalyse global conversations on just energy transitions.

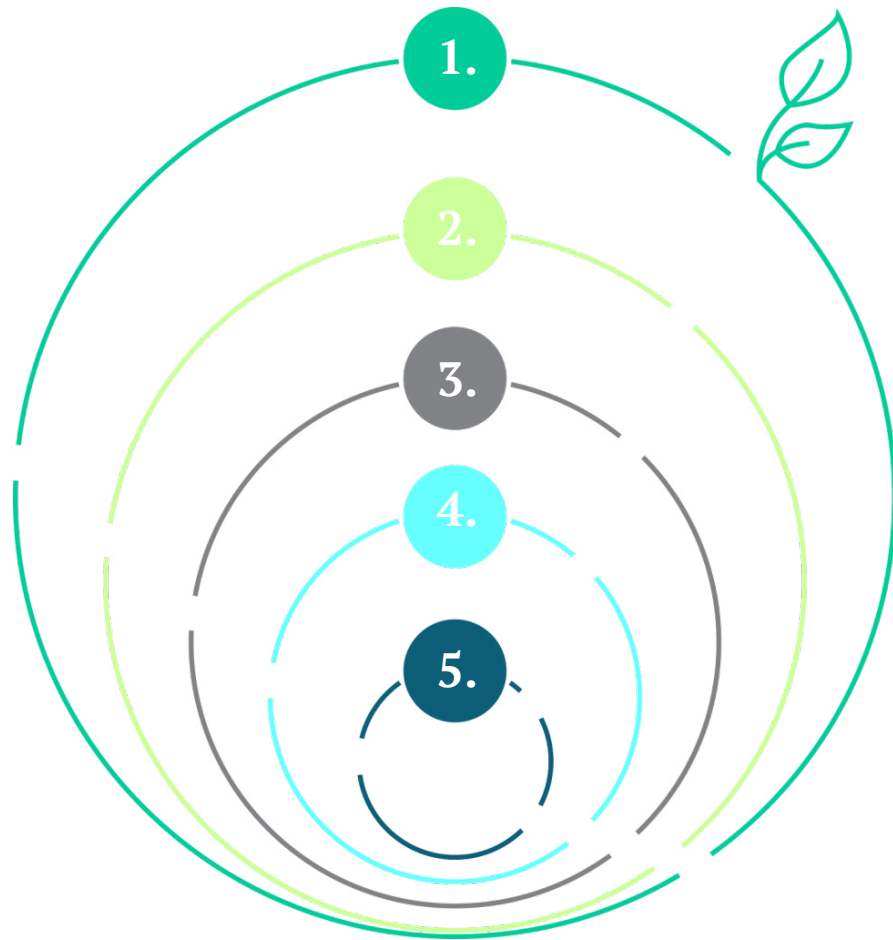
Registered as a Non-Profit Company in April 2022, with NPO and Public Benefit Organisation status, INSPIRE brings together technical expertise, trusted relationships, and a strong development ethos. We envision a renewable energy future where social performance is not an afterthought but a cornerstone—ensuring energy transitions are truly just, inclusive, and transformative.

Our definition of social performance:

“All of a company’s interactions, activities, and outcomes that can affect – positively or negatively- its asset level stakeholders (host communities, local and regional government, industry/business, civil society, and so on)”.



INSPIRE'S AMBITION



1. Grow leadership for a people-centred just transition
2. Grow capacity in the renewable energy eco-system to maximise economic development and transformation potential of projects and policy
3. Professionalise the field of social performance in the renewable energy sector
4. Drive best practice development in community engagement and development
5. Deepen the community development impact of South Africa's renewable energy procurement programme

INSPIRE'S THEORY OF CHANGE

In 2024, INSPIRE transitioned from its previous learning pillar model to a more structured programme framework, aligning its work with its Theory of Change to drive transformation within the renewable energy (RE) ecosystem.

INSPIRE's **Theory of Change** aims to address systemic gaps in social performance by working with key stakeholders, including Social Practitioners, Independent Power Producers (IPPs), host communities, and oversight bodies like the IPP Office of national government. By providing capacity-building, fostering collaboration, and promoting evidence-based interventions, INSPIRE seeks to enable trusted, co-designed socio-economic investments in RE host communities.

The change INSPIRE seeks to energise can be summarised as follows:

- Current State:** Inconsistent IPP social performance, limited collaboration, and under-realised socio-economic benefits.
- Future State:** Professionalised SP practitioners and collaborative IPPs delivering impactful and trusted benefit-sharing models for host communities.

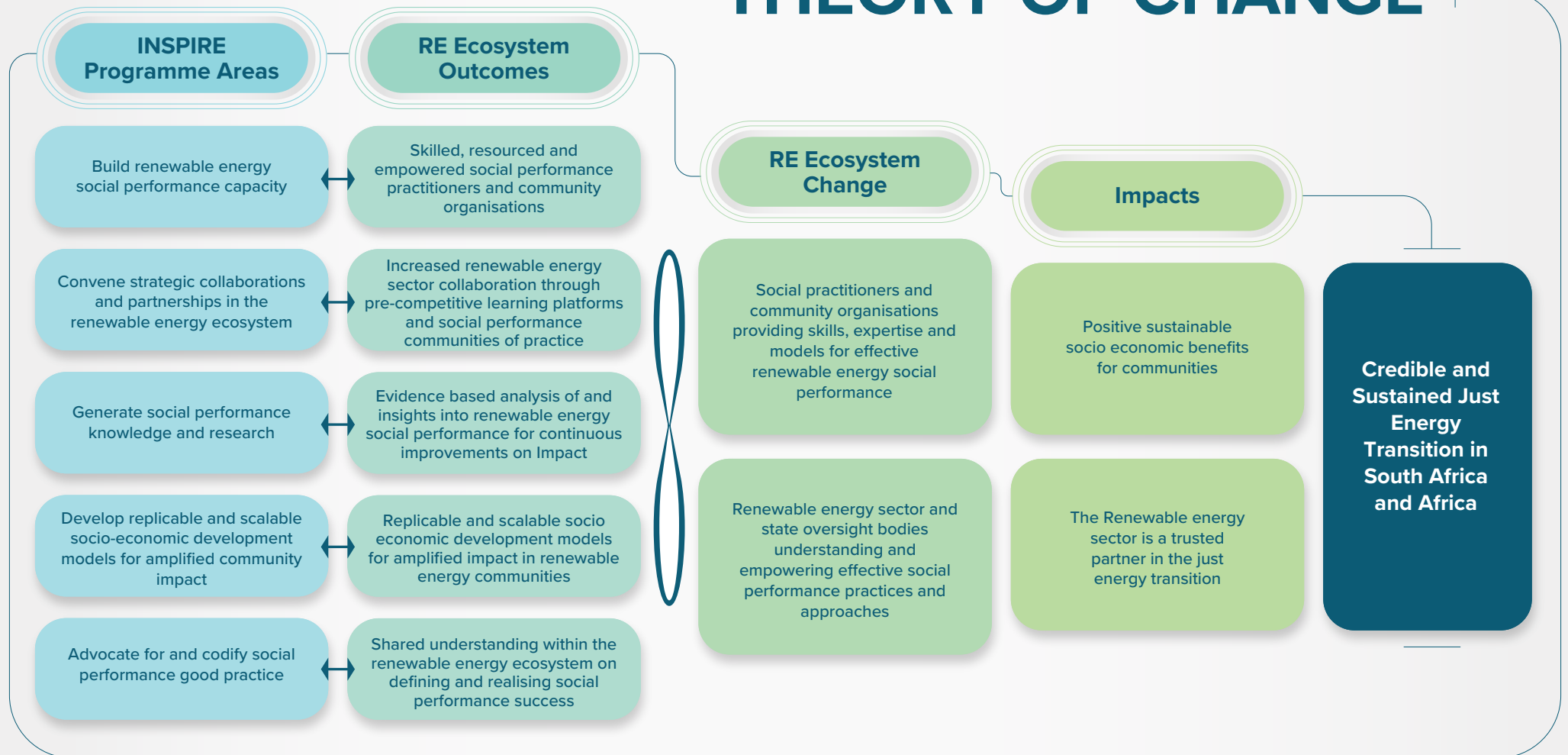
Programme Areas

INSPIRE's work is now organised into the following programme areas, designed to deliver on its Theory of Change:

- 1. Professionalising Social Performance:** Building the capacity of SP practitioners and organisations to address complex socio-economic challenges effectively.
- 2. Collaborative Platforms:** Hosting learning events, Communities of Practice, and forums to foster dialogue and shared strategies within the RE ecosystem.
- 3. Community Impact Models:** Developing scalable, community-based solutions that deliver sustainable socio-economic benefits.
- 4. Advocacy and Communication:** Raising awareness and influencing policies to advance effective social performance practices across the sector.



THEORY OF CHANGE



Knowledge Resources & Platform

<https://inspire-excellence.net/knowledge/>



INSPIRE's Digital Library for Renewable Energy Practitioners: INSPIRE works toward deepening awareness and understanding of social performance in the sector.

2024 KNOWLEDGE INVENTORY



32

32 Workshop Reports (e.g. Trust Maturity Framework co-design sessions)



25

25 Academic Theses (including 5 on gender-inclusive transitions)



17

17 Guidelines & Toolkits (e.g. trauma-informed leadership, community engagement)



20

20 Practice Notes (real-world insights from REIPPPP and international practitioners)

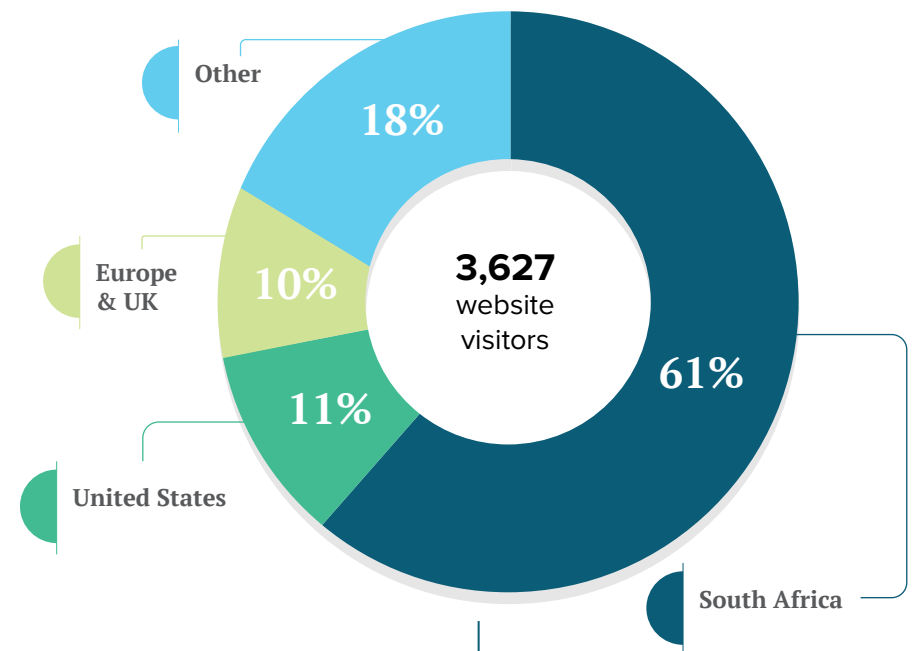


9

9 Podcast Episodes (practice insights and expert interviews in audio form)

VERIFIED METRICS (from INSPIRE Analytics):

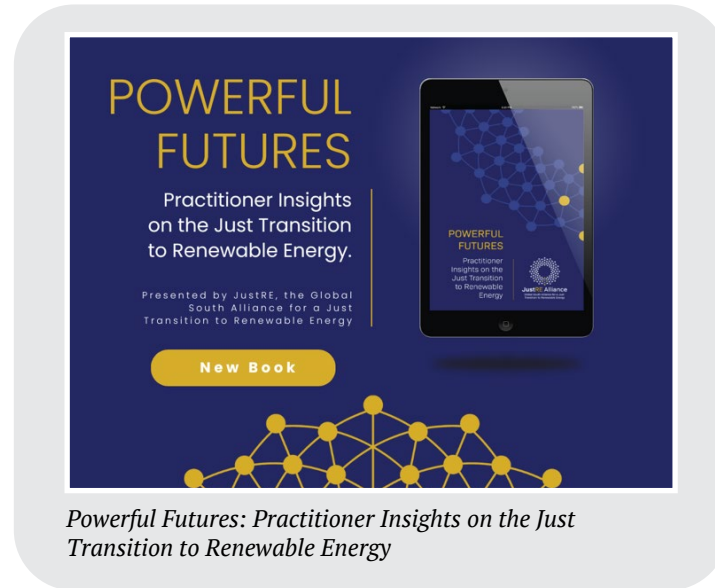
- **3,627** visitors to the website
- **61%** of visitors from South Africa, 11% from USA, 10% from Europe incl. UK



Key 2024 publications developed by INSPIRE and partners to advance social performance practice:



Trauma-informed leadership in Community Development: A content guide for the renewable energy sector



Powerful Futures: Practitioner Insights on the Just Transition to Renewable Energy



Academic Networking Event Report

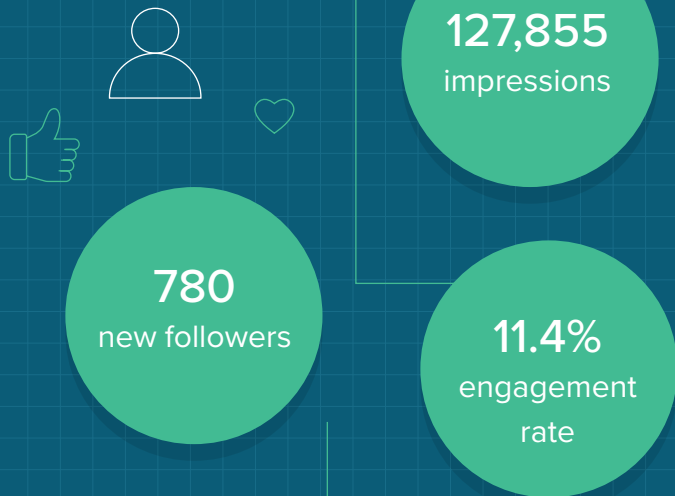


2024 INSPIRE Learning Event Report: Leading for Impact

Communications & Engagement

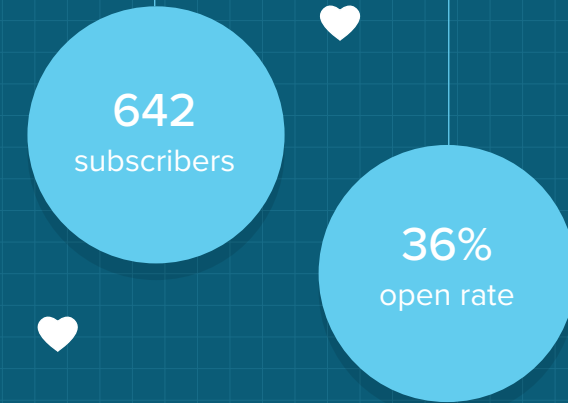
LINKEDIN GROWTH

- Reached **127,855** impressions
- Gained **780** new followers (total: 2,204)
- 11.4%** engagement rate (1,810 reactions, 78 reposts)



NEWSLETTER REACH

- 642** subscribers (+94 this year)
- 36%** open rate | **18%** click rate





Key Projects & Initiatives

4.1 Trust Matters: Capacitating Community Trusts in REIPPPP

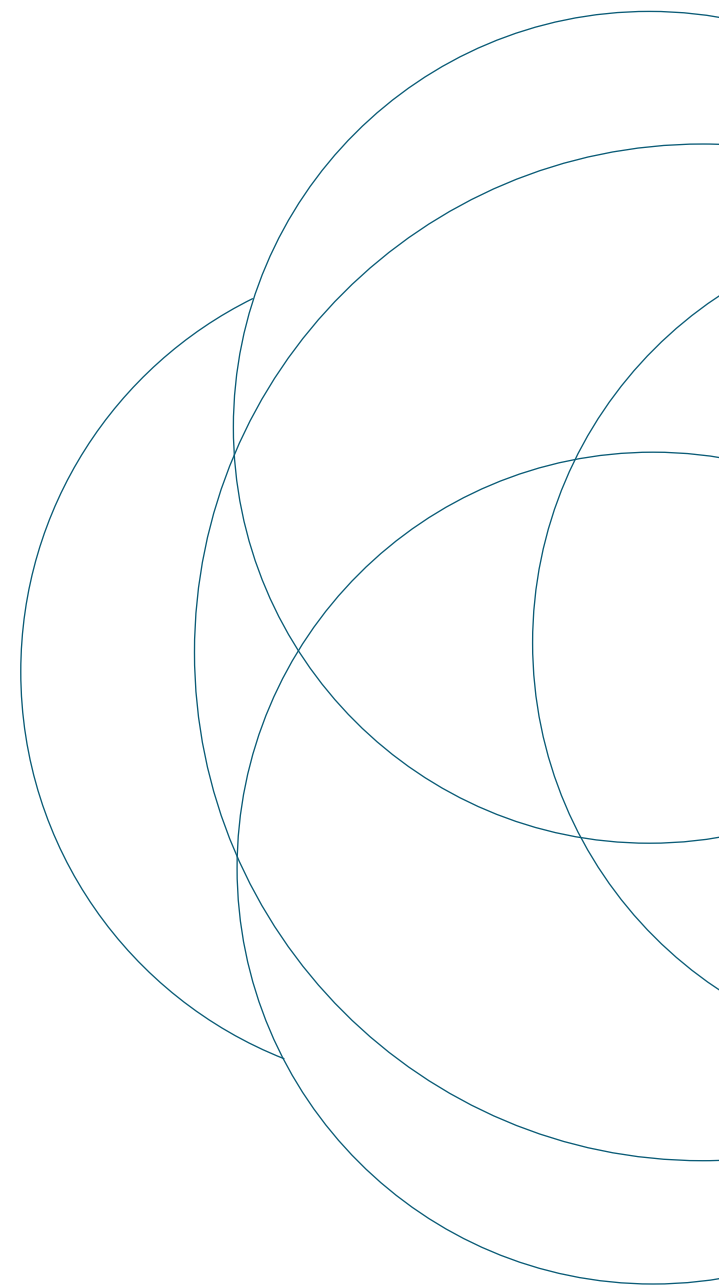
The Trust Matters project, funded by the Industrial Development Corporation (IDC), continues to be a flagship initiative of INSPIRE. Trust Matters is working with community trusts to achieve socio-economic resilience and meaningful community engagement within South Africa's Renewable Energy Independent Power Producer Procurement Programme (REIPPPP).

Phase One Achievements: Building the Foundation for Community Trust Empowerment

In 2024, INSPIRE concluded Phase One of Trust Matters, focusing on deepening the understanding of REIPPPP community trusts, mapping their unique needs and creating foundational support systems for trustees. Key efforts focused on extensive research, engaging communities, and the co-development of the Trust Maturity Framework, which evaluates trusts efficacy: governance, capacity development, vision and strategy, and impactful delivery. Phase One marked significant strides in reaching trustees, understanding their operational challenges, and establishing connections between trusts and develop a framework for tailored support to enhance trust operations and impact.

Trust Connect Workshops: Strengthening Trust Networks and Community Dialogue

Between April and May 2024, INSPIRE hosted the Trust Connect Workshops in three key provinces—Cape Town (Western Cape), Kimberley (Northern Cape), and Gqeberha (Eastern Cape). These workshops served as interactive forums for approximately 70 trustees and related practitioners from across the REIPPPP. The objective was to provide trustees with opportunities for networking, capacity-building, and strategic alignment in the face of shared challenges. Discussions focused on addressing regulatory pressures, limited capacity for impactful project delivery, and the need for long-term strategic alignment to achieve community development impacts.





CAPE TOWN
20 PARTICIPANTS

KIMBERLEY
24 PARTICIPANTS



GQEBERHA
23 PARTICIPANTS

Key findings from the workshops include:

GOVERNANCE GAPS

- Trustees often lack familiarity with trust deeds and regulatory requirements, leading to inefficiencies.
- Poor induction processes and fragmented communication exacerbate delays in project implementation.

TRAUMA AS A BARRIER

- Historical and individual trauma undermines leadership effectiveness and community collaboration.
- Participants highlighted money trauma, land dispossession wounds, and fear of speaking out as critical issues.

CAPACITY GAPS

- Trustees need targeted training in strategy, finance, governance and stakeholder engagement.
- Local implementation partners often lack alignment with community needs, risking generic or ineffective solutions.

Trauma-Informed Development: A Holistic Approach to Leadership and Community Resilience

The Trust Connect Workshops recognised the importance of psychological resilience in community leadership and actively introduced participants to a trauma-informed approach to community leadership and development. This framework acknowledges the historical traumas that shape many South African communities and emphasises healing as an essential component of effective leadership.

Discussions explored how unresolved trauma affects trustees' and community members' interactions, highlighting the need for psychological support tools to enhance trust leadership and impact. This holistic perspective will be integral to future Trust Matters initiatives, aiming to build sustainable, emotionally resilient trust ecosystems.

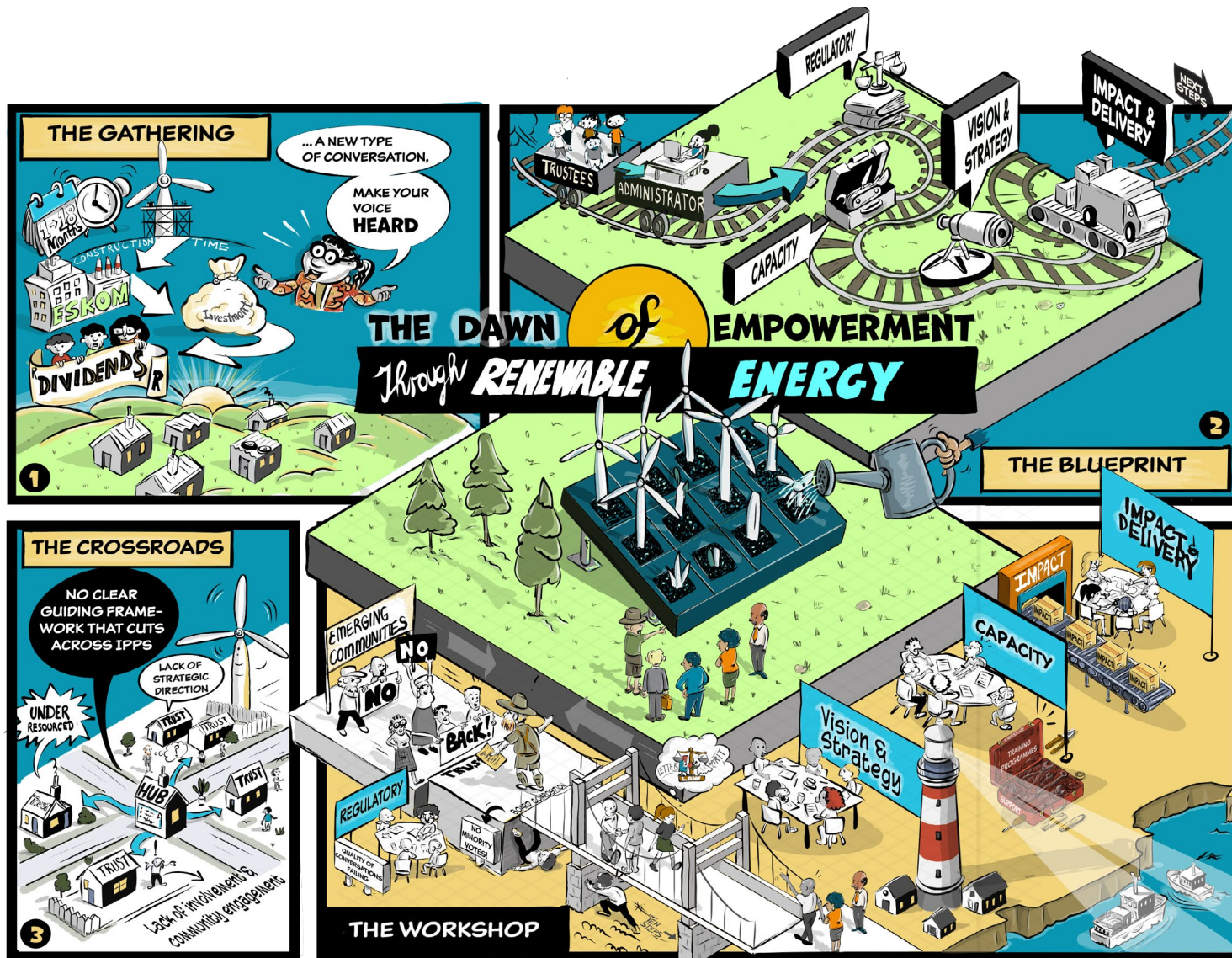
Intermediary Connect Sessions: Collaborative Platforms for Trust Stakeholders

Complementing the workshops, INSPIRE convened a series of Community Trust Intermediaries Connect Sessions throughout the latter half of 2024. These virtual sessions gathered diverse stakeholders—trust administrators, economic development professionals, legal advisors, and financiers—to

further unpack and explore the unique support needs of community trusts. These sessions fostered a collaborative dialogue to identify lacking resources, including standardised onboarding processes and accessible toolkits, thereby creating a more cohesive support network. Key insights from these sessions informed the planning of INSPIRE's Learning Event 2025: *Inspired Community Trusts—Building the Ecosystem for Community Ownership to Thrive*. In February 2025, this in-person event convened community trusts from across the REIPPPP to evaluate and refine support offerings, setting the stage for sustainable trust ecosystems.

Trust Matters Milestones and Next Steps

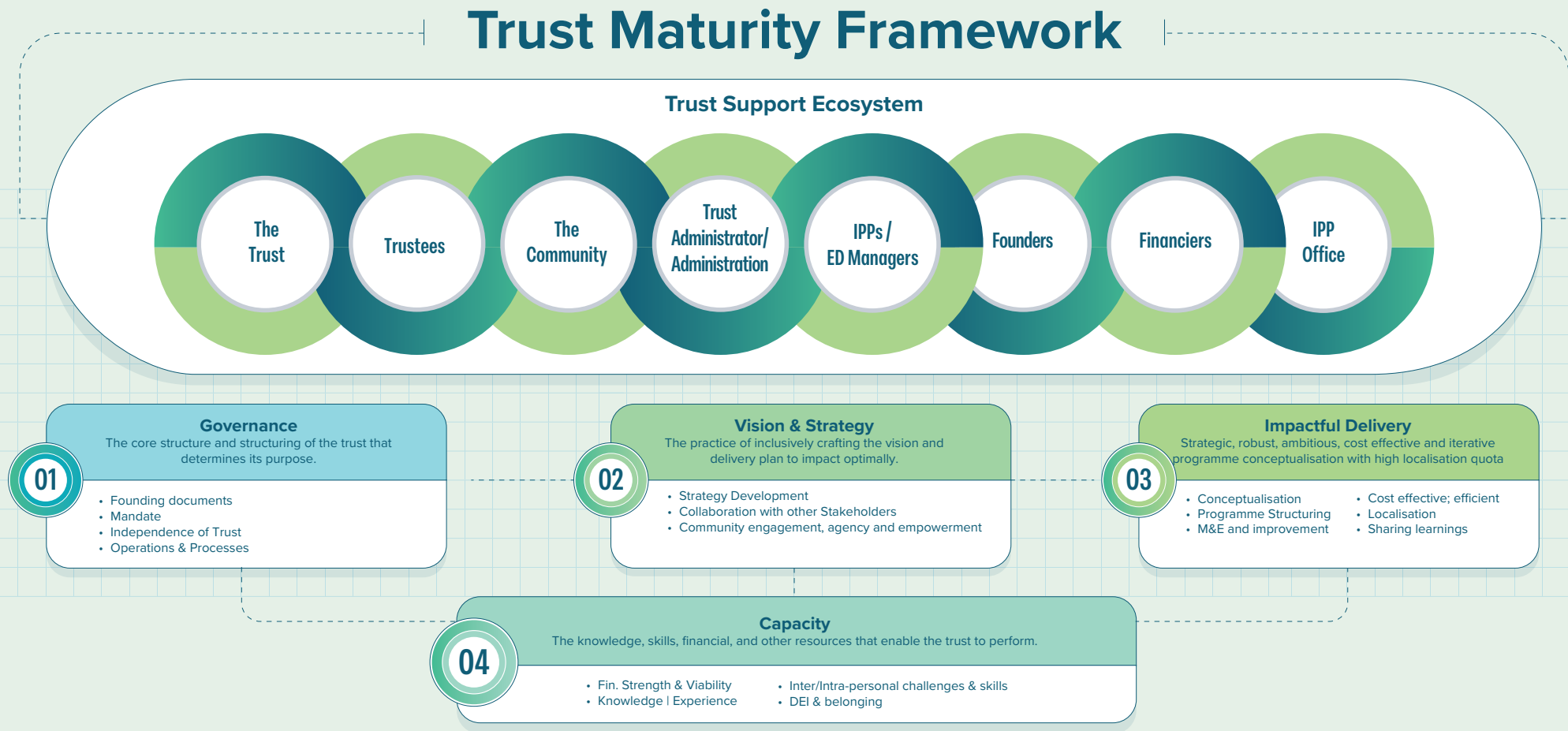
The insights gained through Phase One have laid the groundwork for Phase Two, which will prioritise the co-design of support resources and implementation of capacity-building offerings designed to address critical needs in governance, stakeholder engagement, and financial sustainability. INSPIRE's Learning Event: *Inspired Community Trusts—Building the Ecosystem for Community Ownership to Thrive* in February 2025 marks a milestone in the eco-system, bringing together trustees, intermediaries, and community leaders nationally to build on these achievements.



The infographic provides harvesting insights from the Community Trusts Connect workshops held in early 2024 in Cape Town, Kimberley, and Gqeberha. This visual journey captures the collective challenges, strategies, and steps forward as discussed by community trustees and other stakeholders in our recent workshops.

Trust Maturity Framework

The project developed a Trust Maturity Framework to aid various members of the trust support ecosystem across four key elements influencing trust efficacy. Through various in-person and online workshops with REIPPPP stakeholders, we have been able to consult on and to co-design this framework. The Maturity Framework forms the basis of the self-assessment tool for trusts that is part of the offerings in Phase Two of the project.



4.2 Xazulula: Trauma-informed community leadership development

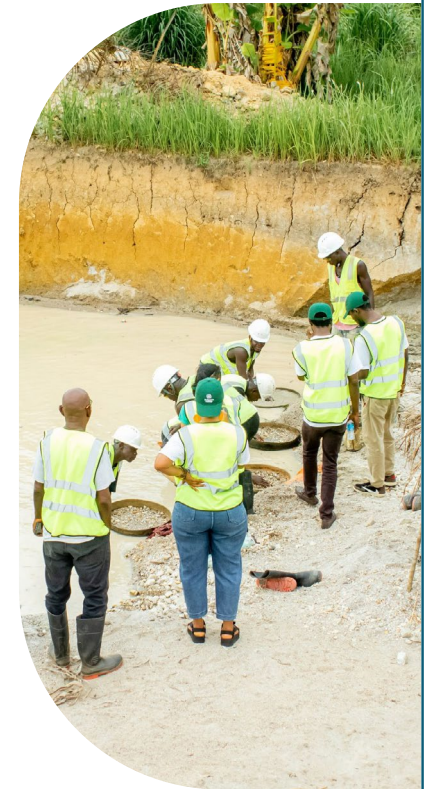
The ongoing Xazulula Project—a collaboration between INSPIRE and the Center for Mental Wellness and Leadership (CMWL), supported by RESOLVE, a U.S.-based nonprofit focused on sustainable solutions for environmental and social challenges, was advanced in two Resource Exchange Summits, held in Sierra Leone and South Africa. The project, named after the isiXhosa word meaning "Resolve," focuses on trauma-informed leadership in community development within South Africa's renewable energy sector.

RESOLVE hosts Resource Exchange Summits to provide opportunities international knowledge and practice exchange between organisations and projects. In April 2024, the Xazulula team was represented at the Exchange in Sierra Leone by Nomfundo Mogapi (CEO of CMWL) and Dr. Holle Linnea Wlokas (MD of INSPIRE) and in November, the Xazulula team and INSPIRE colleagues co-hosted another Exchange Summit in South Africa.

Key Learnings from Sierra Leone: The visit provided valuable insights into the challenges communities face in managing natural resources such as land, water, and air when interacting with small- or large-scale businesses, including national and international mineral extraction operations. Key observations included:

- **Limited Local Benefits:** Mining activities, regardless of scale, rarely contribute to sustainable livelihoods for local communities.
- **Burden of Rehabilitation:** Post-mining rehabilitation often falls to communities, who must mobilise resources to create new livelihood opportunities.
- **Role of Intermediaries:** NGOs and organisations like RESOLVE play a critical role in supporting communities through resource management and livelihood development efforts.

Trauma-Informed Leadership Training in Sierra Leone: At the summit in Sierra Leone, the Xazulula team presented on the ongoing trauma-informed leadership development work in South Africa to a group of 40 traditional and community leaders and organisations from across 20+ countries. The session was enthusiastically received, with attendees expressing a strong interest in further engagement and inviting the Xazulula team to return for deeper knowledge sharing. A more comprehensive training was delivered for Sierra Leone communities and practitioners specifically, in Sierra Leone, by Nomfundo Mogapi and Zamokuhle Lekwape (Lekwape Consulting) in August 2024. The success of this training underscores the growing recognition of trauma-informed approaches as essential for sustainable community development.





Trauma-informed governance at the Summit in South Africa: This 6-day gathering in the Eastern Cape Province focused on various topics shaping the direction of natural resources and renewable energy governance and leadership through trauma-informed approaches.

With over 50 participants in attendance hailing from different parts of the world, including countries such as Canada, USA, Sierra Leone, Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, Guyana, Tanzania, and Zimbabwe, the summit provided a platform for the diverse group to connect, share experiences and exchange best practices that they can apply in the development of their own communities.

Key takeaways included lessons from the earlier project/ summit in Sierra Leone around how community leaders and chiefs are working in conjunction with extractive industry players to accelerate community development initiatives and natural resource conservation.

Indigenous People of Guyana shared insights on how they use their natural resources to leverage for community benefit and how they have been tapping into carbon markets to support community livelihoods. Speakers from South Africa delved into how communities are faced with different kinds of traumas caused by historical factors such as forced displacement of people. These traumas can affect how communities react to and perceive development efforts presented to them. This was a strong showcase of why practitioners and leaders working in natural resources/ extractive and renewable energy industries should implement their work through a trauma informed lens.



Xazulula Phase 2 Design Workshop

INSPIRE, in partnership with the Centre for Mental Wellness and Leadership, convened a collaborative workshop to co-design the next phase of the Xazulula Project. The workshop brought together diverse thinking partners to share ideas and develop forward-thinking solutions for the future of Trauma-Informed Governance and Leadership interventions. This dynamic session created a reflective space to evaluate the impact of the project so far, capture key learnings, and collaboratively shape the next stages of the project.

Next Steps for 2025: The insights from this learning journey will be incorporated into the Xazulula project's continued work in South Africa, aiming to refine and expand trauma-informed frameworks for leadership and governance in renewable energy communities. By strengthening emotionally resilient leadership, the project contributes to creating empowered communities capable of navigating the complexities of the energy transition.



4.3 Community of Practice: Inland 5

The Community of Practice (CoP) initiative, supported by DGMT, aims to strengthen collaboration among IPPs in the Inland 5 region (Bedford, Cookhouse, Adelaide, and Somerset East). This region was carefully selected as a pilot focus for the CoP after extensive discussions with stakeholders, including DGMT, IPPs, and associated community trusts. The decision was based on the established relationships within the region, their readiness for collaborative development, and the potential for impactful education-focused interventions.

Launched at the Rural Education Conference in East London on 31 July 2024, this programme focuses on aligning education investments across participating IPPs while promoting strategic, collective efforts in socio-economic development. By facilitating structured engagement, the CoP addresses the complexities of collaboration, builds trust, and develops impactful, shared interventions. Our key learning from this project, is recognising the value of collaboration opportunities between IPPs, Community Trusts and expert partners like DGMT.

Achievements and Challenges:

Progress to Date:

- Identified high school and NEET-focused interventions as priority areas.
- Enhanced social cohesion among participants through trust-building exercises.
- Facilitated initial alignment on integrating a shared education programme into the IPPs' Economic Development Plans (EDPs).

Key Challenges:

- **Inconsistent Participation:** Practitioner fatigue and workload demands have affected attendance, requiring adjustments to ensure progress.
- **Collaboration Complexity:** Concerns about reporting and shared spending on collaborative projects may lead IPPs to prefer individual initiatives. As a contingency, IPPs are encouraged to implement aligned programmes separately if consensus on a unified approach cannot be reached.
- **Staff Turnover:** High attrition and “recycling” of staff across IPPs have introduced instability, complicating coordination.



Key Components and Activities:

Webinar Series: Inspiring Change

The CoP introduced a webinar series hosted by DGMT, featuring experts addressing critical issues such as school dropout prevention, substance abuse, and maternal health. The series is openly accessible, with recordings shared on INSPIRE's online platforms to broaden its reach and impact. These webinars are complemented by Deep Dive Sessions, where participants reflect on the content, explore alignment with existing programmes, and build strategies tailored to the Inland 5 context.

In-Person Strategy Meetings

The initiative includes in-depth in-person sessions to strengthen social cohesion and advance strategic planning. The inception meeting in East London set the foundation for collaboration, while the October strategy session in Port Alfred introduced actionable approaches to high school and NEET (Not in Employment, Education, or Training) interventions. Activities included simulations to address collaboration challenges, discussions with education project leads recommended by DGMT, and reflective tools such as the “River of Life” exercise

Shared Vision Development

Through tools like the “River of Life” exercise and social contract creation, the CoP participants worked on defining a shared vision for impactful education investments, fostering alignment across the Inland 5 IPPs. Looking forward, the CoP aims to establish a shared Monitoring and Evaluation Framework with common indicators to assess developmental outcomes effectively.

Theme-Based Collaboration

The CoP invites participants to focus on themes aligned with their priorities, including Health & Wellbeing, Education, Youth Development, and Enterprise Development. These thematic collaborations aim to address diverse objectives while building robust networks among IPPs, trusts, and other stakeholders.

Support and Engagement

The CoP offers technical support and convenes learning events and reflective activities to engage practitioners and trustees. This process seeks to draw interest for collaborative possibilities within the CoP and beyond, creating a platform for meaningful collaboration, learning, and innovation.



4.4 JustRE Alliance

The JustRE Alliance, established through the Transnational Network for Inclusive Renewable Energy Deployment project, represents a vital opportunity to create an inclusive and expansive network that amplifies voices across the Global South. This alliance strengthens the ecosystem of stakeholders affected by and engaged with the transition to utility-scale renewable energy.

Recognising the challenges within the sector, the JustRE Alliance serves as a strategic platform for organisations and other stakeholders to collaborate towards socially responsible renewable energy deployment. The alliance is guided by a mission to foster inclusivity, equity, and sustainability in renewable energy transitions across the Global South.

BOOKSPRINT WRITING RETREAT

In 2024, the JustRE Alliance co-lead by INSPIRE, the Responsible Energy Initiative (REI), the Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI Kenya and Colombia), and Iniciativa Climática de México (ICM), hosted a five-day BookSprint Writing Retreat in Türkiye. This retreat aimed to capture and document practical experiences to support practitioners working in the renewable energy sector. The retreat brought together twelve practitioner experts who collaborated in an intensive writing and editing process facilitated by Book Sprints. The first day focused on brainstorming and developing the structure of the book, followed by four days of rigorous writing. The result is a comprehensive resource documenting practical lessons and promising examples from diverse contexts within the Global South.

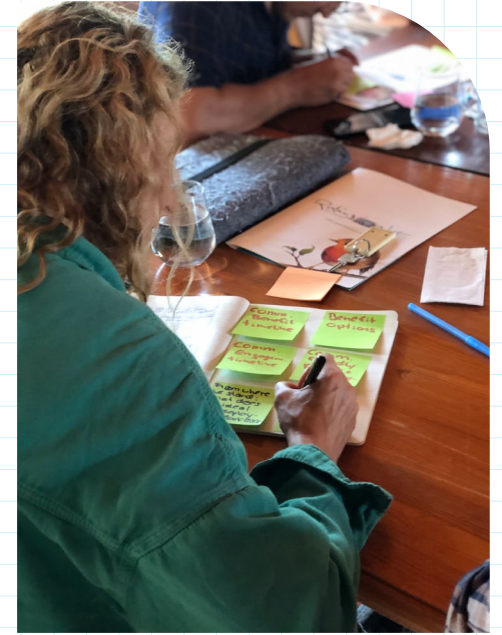


POWERFUL FUTURES: A PRACTITIONER'S GUIDE TO INCLUSIVE RENEWABLE ENERGY DEPLOYMENT

The book, [Powerful Futures](#), has been published and serves as a valuable resource for practitioners, particularly those in intermediary roles working with various stakeholders in the deployment of utility-scale renewable energy. Written by practitioners for practitioners, the guide addresses critical themes and provides actionable insights through its chapters:

- Responsible Land and Water Management
- Responsible Supply Chain Management
- Effective Community Engagement
- Effective Benefit Sharing
- Multistakeholder-Led Just Transition to Renewable Energy

By sharing insights and experiences from local initiatives, fostering international collaboration, and highlighting the global impact of these efforts, the Alliance demonstrates that a just and equitable deployment of renewable energy is possible and desirable for all. Through documented collective efforts, practitioners can find some of the tools and inspiration needed to drive meaningful change.



4.5 Local Gender Equal and Inclusive Just Transition

INSPIRE also supported Tournesol, WWF South Africa, Vukani Environmental Movement (VEM), and Womxandla, with funding from the World Bank, on a project focused on enhancing gender equity and social inclusivity in local decision-making processes related to the Just Transition. Over five months, the project aimed to enhance awareness and capacity amongst women to ensure their meaningful participation in shaping a low-carbon, climate-resilient future.

The project provided an opportunity to explore and identify the key priorities, challenges, and gaps in embedding gender justice into Just Transition strategies. Its findings will contribute to future initiatives and investments that align with national and local goals, ensuring inclusivity is a central feature of South Africa's transition to a more sustainable and equitable society.

Specific Activities and Outputs:

- 1. Mapping Exercise:** A rapid assessment was conducted to identify gaps and opportunities for advancing gender equity within local organisations. This highlighted the absence of women in leadership roles and decision-making in eMalahleni.
- 2. Community Dialogues:** Three interactive dialogues were held with women in eMalahleni between June and August 2024. Facilitated by Womxandla and VEM, these sessions focused on linking climate change impacts with women's lived experiences. Topics included gendered impacts of coal dependency, challenges in accessing local government support, and pathways for women to enhance their agency.
- 3. Local Government Workshop:** A workshop was conducted at the Nkangala District Municipality offices, with participation from two local government officials. This session aimed to bridge gaps between policy and local implementation, focusing on incorporating gender and climate justice into municipal planning.
- 4. Awareness Materials:** A toolkit was developed to support grassroots women in exploring climate change, gender justice, and the Just Transition. This resource was tested during the third community dialogue and refined based on feedback.



Key Findings

The project revealed several critical insights into embedding gender justice within the Just Transition:

- **Systemic Barriers:** Persistent gender inequities, such as unpaid care work and limited access to resources, continue to hinder women's participation in climate-related decisions and economic opportunities.
- **Disconnect Between Policy and Community Realities:** While national policies reference gender inclusivity, implementation gaps remain significant, particularly in grassroots communities like eMalahleni.
- **Gender-Based Violence and Economic Vulnerability:** The dialogues highlighted heightened gender-based violence and economic challenges exacerbated by the decline of coal-based industries.
- **Need for Awareness and Capacity Building:** Participants expressed a strong desire for more engagements to understand climate change, gender justice, and how these intersect with their lived experiences.
- **Voices of Women:** Women in grassroots communities have critical insights and adaptive strategies that are often overlooked, underscoring the need for inclusive decision-making frameworks.

Contributions to Future Work

This partnership established a foundational framework for advancing gender justice in the Just Transition in eMalahleni. By addressing the specific challenges faced by women and fostering collaboration among stakeholders—such as local women's groups, NGOs, and local government representatives—the project created resources and insights to guide future initiatives. Women participants called for continued capacity-building workshops and the establishment of a coalition to amplify their voices and support inclusive local governance.



4.6 Fostering Inclusive Growth through Climate Change Champions (FIGCCC)

Co-funded by the European Union, this project aims to create synergies between local governments, civil society organisations (CSOs), and Independent Power Producers (IPPs) to address climate change collaboratively.

By integrating public and private development priorities with community-driven climate action, this approach aims to enhance the impact of climate change mitigation efforts.

RESEARCH CONTEXT AND APPROACH

Developed under the FIGCCC Programme and working with Democracy Works Foundation and INSPIRE, KDS has explored the ways of improving the levels of engagement and coordination between the private sector (IPPs), the public sector and civil society regarding climate change actions.

The FIGCCC project, led by Democracy Works Foundation (DWF), addressed two critical questions: how to align the climate action priorities of the public and private sectors and how to strengthen engagement between these sectors to effectively address climate change. These questions formed the foundation for discussions and activities during the event. Participants explored the potential for integrating climate resilience efforts into local Integrated Development Plans (IDPs) while fostering collaboration between IPPs and government to maximise regional climate adaptation. The event provided a platform to educate stakeholders on incorporating sustainable practices and tools into their operations, with a focus on ensuring that local governance frameworks and IPP initiatives are aligned.

The FIGCCC Project Closure Event, held in Cape Town on 28–29 August 2024, marked a significant

milestone in fostering climate resilience through strengthened collaboration between local and provincial governments, Independent Power Producers (IPPs), and community stakeholders in the Northern Cape. Organised by Democracy Works Foundation (DWF), the two-day event brought together key players to disseminate research findings, build capacity, and align climate initiatives with regional development goals. INSPIRE's research findings were presented at the event by the lead-researcher Kalnisha Singh (KDS).

Research Insights and Impact

The FIGCCC project centred its research on the Witzenberg and Karoo Hoogland Municipalities, employing a multi-faceted approach that included stakeholder consultations, policy reviews, and focus groups. The findings highlighted significant gaps in communication, trust, and coordination among stakeholders. However, the project also delivered actionable recommendations, including:

- Advocacy briefs for community-based organisations (CBOs).
- Recommendation briefs for public and private sectors to enhance engagement and improve climate resilience strategies.

The Path Forward

The Closure Event reinforced the importance of building strong partnerships between the public and private sectors to make climate action a core part of local governance. Moving forward, INSPIRE will focus on disseminating the project's findings to relevant audiences. By collaborating with IPPs, government agencies, and community stakeholders, INSPIRE aims to support efforts that strengthen climate resilience and drive sustainable development in South Africa's renewable energy regions.





Improving the Levels of Engagement and Coordination between the Private Sector (IPPs), the Public Sector and Civil Society around Climate Change Actions

DEMOCRACY WORKS FOUNDATION

Democracy Works Foundation (DWF) is a southern African non-profit company focused on democracy development in the region. With headquarters in South Africa, DWF works through its country offices to provide tools to develop resilient democracies.

As an independent foundation, we build and promote inclusive, equitable and sustainable consensus democracies. We do so by providing tools, platforms and content to strengthen democrats, democratic culture and democracy institutions.

INITIATIVE FOR SOCIAL PERFORMANCE IN RENEWABLE ENERGY

The Initiative for Social Performance in Renewable Energy (INSPIRE) aims to advance the field of social performance in South Africa's renewable energy sector, with the wider goal of becoming a leading platform across the African continent and internationally.

KD STRATEGIES

KD STRATEGIES was built to support those that are trying to revolutionise the system – even if it's just by complying with regulations built on social consciousness locally – and those who are trying to disrupt the system altogether by redefining what it means to do business.

We exist to catalyse those project that accelerate the pace towards systemic changes in the socio-economic landscape of the global economy.

FOSTERING INCLUSIVE GROWTH THROUGH CLIMATE CHANGE CHAMPIONS (FIGCCC) 2019 - 2024

Co-funded by the European Union, this project aims to create synergies between local governments, civil society organizations (CSOs), and Independent Power Producers (IPPs) to address climate change collaboratively.

By integrating public and private development priorities with community-driven climate action, this approach aims to enhance the impact of climate change mitigation efforts.

RESEARCH CONTEXT AND APPROACH

Developed under the FIGCCC Programme and working with Democracy Works Foundation and INSPIRE, KDS has explored the ways of improving the levels of engagement and coordination between the private sector (IPPs), the public sector and civil society regarding climate change actions.



IMPROVING THE LEVELS OF ENGAGEMENT AND COORDINATION Between the Private Sector (IPPs), the Public Sector and Civil Society around Climate Change Actions



Improving the Levels of Engagement and Coordination

between the Private Sector (IPPs), the Public Sector and Civil Society around Climate Change Actions



INSPIRE

The Initiative for Social Performance in Renewable Energy (INSPIRE) is a female-led, practitioner-driven organisation based in South Africa, committed to ensuring that renewable energy deployment delivers equitable and transformative socio-economic benefits for host communities.

With a focus on professionalising social performance, building trusted relationships, and fostering collaboration, INSPIRE plays a vital role in advancing South Africa's Just Energy Transition and influencing global renewable energy practices.

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INSPIRE Events

INSPIRE hosted, convened, and collaborated in hosting key events last year and participated in significant events

ACADEMIC NETWORKING EVENT

In July 2024, the Centre for Sustainability Transitions (Stellenbosch University) in partnership with INSPIRE and Power Futures Lab (University of Cape Town Graduate Business School) hosted an Academic Networking Event in at the UCT Graduate School of Business in Cape Town, South Africa.

The event brought together over 60 registered participants, with approximately 35 attending in person and a small group joining online. Attendees included practitioners, academics, students, and researchers from five South African universities—University of Cape Town, Stellenbosch University, University of the Western Cape, University of the Free State, and the University of the Witwatersrand—alongside representatives from NGOs and private-sector organisations.

The focus of the gathering was to critically explore the socio-economic, governance, and developmental impacts of utility-scale renewable energy projects, particularly within the framework of South Africa’s Just Energy Transition (JET).

The event served as a platform to strengthen connections among stakeholders in the renewable energy sector and to deepen understanding of the research being conducted across disciplines. Participants engaged in dynamic discussions,

facilitated by Alison McCallum, that examined the various approaches to addressing social, environmental, and economic challenges in the sector. The sessions also provided space to identify emerging research themes and align academic efforts with practical challenges on the ground.

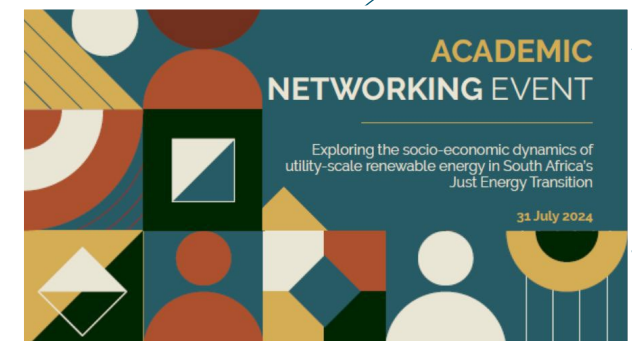
A key highlight of the day was the active collaboration between academic researchers and practitioners, reflecting on how to synergise theoretical frameworks with practical applications. These exchanges fostered peer learning and encouraged innovative approaches to knowledge creation and problem-solving. Discussions also emphasised the importance of bridging academic and industry divides to address critical gaps in understanding and practice, supporting South Africa’s JET objectives.

The insights and exchanges from the event were visually captured by Grant from Graphic Harvest, creating a vivid and accessible record of the discussions. These visual summaries contribute to INSPIRE’s growing knowledge database, serving as a resource for ongoing learning and collaboration in the renewable energy sector.

This landmark event reaffirmed INSPIRE’s commitment to fostering academic-practitioner

collaboration and advancing research that supports a more sustainable and equitable energy transition. Through these efforts, INSPIRE continues to catalyse meaningful dialogue and actionable solutions for the challenges faced by South Africa’s renewable energy landscape.

Following the Academic Networking Event, the discussions and outcomes were documented in the [Academic Networking Event Report](#). This report provides a detailed narrative of the topics explored, highlighting the importance of collaborative and transformative research in advancing South Africa’s Just Energy Transition. It captures key insights, practical approaches, and opportunities for fostering meaningful progress in the renewable energy sector.



ACADEMIC NETWORKING EVENT

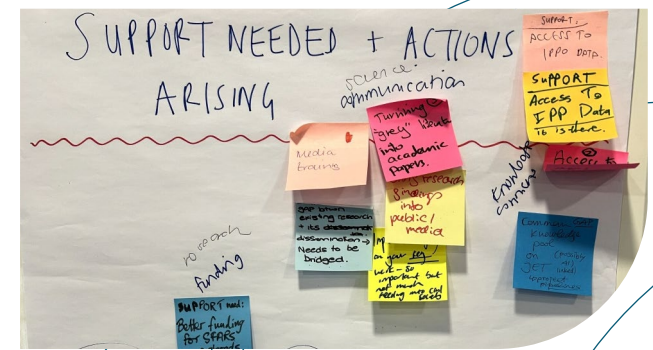
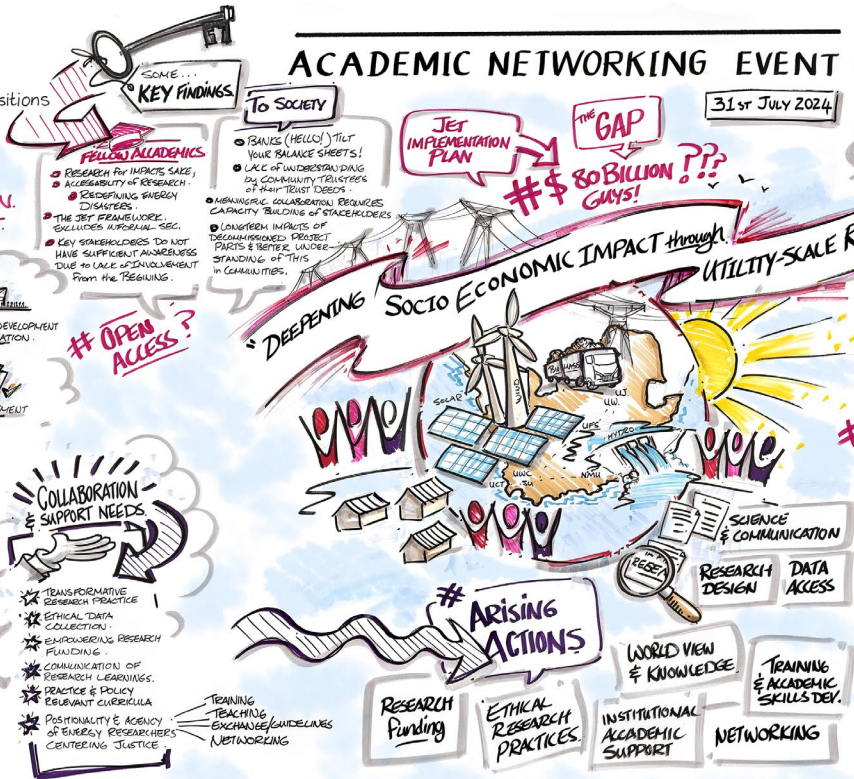
31st July 2024

Welcome

Develop & invest in the academic capacity to support the renewable energy sector, & the energy transition more broadly?

CONVERSATIONS! COLLABORATION. SHARING. SUPPORT.

Dr Megan Davies



LEARNING EVENT 2024: Leading for Impact

On September 2024, INSPIRE convened its third REIPPPP Learning Event in Johannesburg, bringing together 41 Social Performance practitioners from the renewable energy and mining sectors. The event was facilitated by Alison McCallum and funded by the DG Murray Trust. The purpose of this gathering was to strengthen collaboration, expand understanding, and explore how Social Performance can achieve lasting impact in host communities.

The day's focus was centred on:

- **Expanding** the understanding of Social Performance within international frameworks, including Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG), moving beyond narrow socio-economic compliance.
- **Inquiring** into the impact Social Performance has on organisations and host communities, especially its role in facilitating South Africa's Just Energy Transition (JET).
- **Exploring** the leadership skills and capabilities necessary to achieve meaningful Social Performance outcomes.
- **Identifying** capacity-building needs within the renewable energy sector to drive transformative impact.

Insights and Key Themes

The 2024 Learning Event provided an invaluable platform for cross-sector collaboration, practical knowledge-sharing, and critical reflection on the evolving role of social performance in delivering long-term community impact. Practitioners engaged in meaningful dialogue on the challenges and opportunities within the Social Performance discipline.

1. Leadership in a Wounded Context

A key focus was on the role of leadership in communities deeply affected by historical trauma and socio-economic marginalisation. Discussions emphasised the importance of trauma-informed approaches that address these wounds while fostering resilience. Leadership in this context requires empathy, strategic vision, and the ability to balance immediate needs with long-term community goals.

2. Strategic Investments and Skills Development

Participants explored the strategic role of community trusts and socio-economic investments in empowering marginalised groups, particularly youth. Addressing systemic barriers to development, such as education and skills gaps, was highlighted as critical for breaking cycles of poverty and realising economic potential in host communities.

3. Overcoming Barriers to Collaboration

The need for deeper collaboration among IPPs, government, and communities was a recurring theme. Participants acknowledged the fear of shared risks as a barrier to progress, calling for aligned, synchronised efforts across stakeholders. Establishing trust and transparent communication is seen as essential for achieving sustainable outcomes.

4. A Long-Term Vision for Impact

Practitioners agreed that community impact requires a shift in perspective, moving beyond short-term metrics and numerical reporting to embrace long-term, transformative change. This involves understanding the root causes of socio-economic challenges and designing interventions that address both tangible and intangible barriers.

Reflections on Social Performance Maturity

Throughout the event, participants reflected on the evolving nature of Social Performance, moving from compliance-driven activities to strategic, sustainable development. Indicators of maturity in the discipline included:

- Integration of Social Performance into organisational governance and decision-making processes.
- A culture of learning, collaboration, and accountability within and across sectors.
- Recognition of the importance of building internal capacity and aligning organisational objectives with community priorities.



LEARNING EVENT 2024



WINDABA CONNECT 2024

INSPIRE actively participated in the second annual Windaba Connect, an action-led platform dedicated to transforming South Africa's renewable energy sector. This year, Windaba Connect provided a robust space for key players across the industry to convene, share knowledge, and develop measurable solutions that address pressing challenges. With a programme featuring 18 speakers across 7 sessions and over 120 delegates in attendance, the platform continues to grow as a pivotal feature of the Windaba Conference.

On the opening day of Windaba Connect, INSPIRE was represented by Yumnaa Firfirey, who participated in the session titled "Wind Energy Social Impact." This engaging panel, moderated by Celiwe Mabaso (EDF Renewables), also featured experts from leading organisations, including Nthabiseng Jonas (VESTAS), Libby Hirshon (ENGIE Africa), Caroline Nhlane (Enel Green Power), and Simon Maul Hansen (Danish Energy Agency).

During the session, Yumnaa Firfirey introduced the audience to INSPIRE, sharing insights on the organisation's projects and key learnings in driving social performance within South Africa's renewable energy landscape. She emphasised the

importance of engaging deeply with community trusts to realise the socio-economic benefits of renewable energy projects in practice. She also invited attendees to engage further by registering for INSPIRE's upcoming webinars and the next Learning Event, ensuring continued collaboration and knowledge-sharing among sector stakeholders.

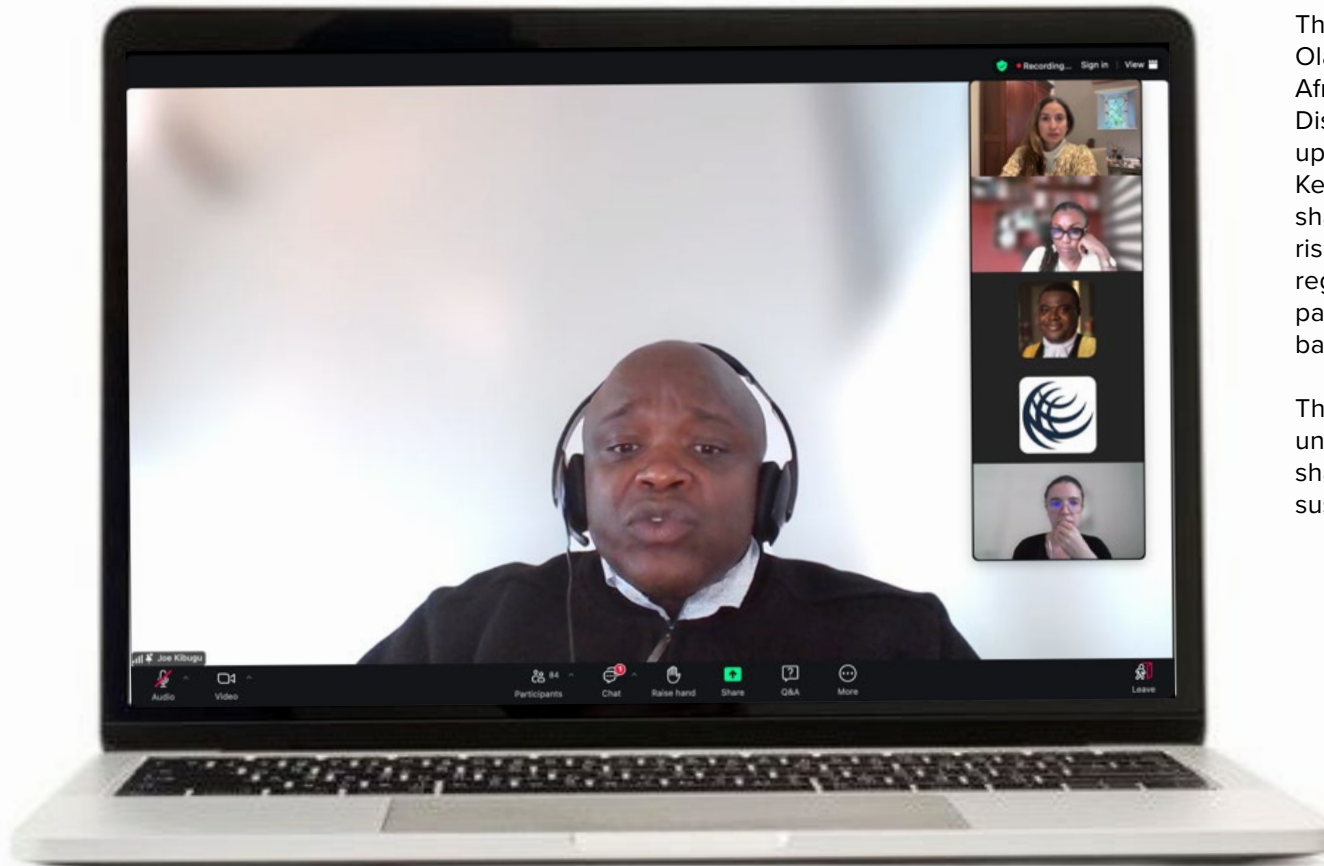
Yumnaa highlighted the critical role of Independent Power Producers (IPPs) in building trust and fostering meaningful relationships with communities. Underscoring the need for co-created solutions and initiatives that ensure socio-economic benefits reach those most in need.

Libby Hirshon, who is also an INSPIRE board member, contributed valuable insights into "Theories of Change," advocating for long-term, holistic approaches to address systemic barriers such as unemployment, illiteracy, and substance abuse. She called for renewable energy projects to move beyond compliance-driven metrics to tackle the real-life challenges communities face, with a focus on sustainable social capital and economic empowerment. Hirshon highlighted the importance of early and intentional community engagement during project development to avoid challenges downstream and to create lasting, positive impacts.



BUSINESS & HUMAN RIGHTS RESOURCE CENTRE WEBINAR

Following the launch of a new research briefing by the Business & Human Rights Resource Centre, a webinar was held to explore benefit-sharing regulatory frameworks in the mining and renewable energy sectors across six African countries: Ghana, Kenya, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, and South Africa.



The event featured a keynote address by Damilola S. Olawuyi, SAN, FCI Arb, alongside a panel of esteemed African experts, including INSPIRE's Yumnaa Firfirey. Discussions centred on the role of benefit-sharing in upholding human rights within a Just Energy Transition. Key topics included various mechanisms for benefit-sharing with communities, the drivers of success and risks from a community perspective, and the role of public regulation in ensuring equitable benefit distribution. The panel also explored co-ownership models, examining the barriers and factors driving their success.

This webinar provided a valuable platform to deepen understanding of how inclusive approaches to benefit-sharing can support community rights and contribute to sustainable energy transitions across Africa.

Funders And Implementation Partners

INSPIRE's seed-funders (2021/2022):



Implementation Partners in 2024:



International Implementation Partners:



Institutional Partners:



Funders in 2024:



Financial Overview

INSPIRE NPC | REG NO 2022/420733/08 | AUDITED ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DEC 2024

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL STATEMENT OF POSITION AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2024

Figures in Rand	Note(s)	2024	2023
Assets			
Non-Current Assets			
Fixed assets	2	28 697	12 380
Current Assets			
Trade and other receivables	3	385 326	34 882
Cash and cash equivalents	4	13 794 852	5 089 862
		<u>14 180 178</u>	<u>5 124 744</u>
Total Assets		<u>14 208 875</u>	<u>5 137 124</u>
Equity and Liabilities			
Equity			
Retained income		4 783 505	5 132 662
Liabilities			
Current Liabilities			
Trade and other payables	5	9 425 370	4 462
Total Equity and Liabilities		<u>14 208 875</u>	<u>5 137 124</u>

STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME

Figures in Rand	Note(s)	2024	2023
Revenue	6	12 040 652	7 100 511
Other income		134 446	17 207
Operating expenses		(12 891 813)	(2 796 025)
Operating (loss) profit		(716 715)	4 321 693
Investment revenue		367 558	-
(Loss) profit for the year		(349 157)	4 321 693

STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY

Figures in Rand	Retained income	Total equity
Balance at 01 January 2023	810 969	810 969
Profit for the year	4 321 693	4 321 693
Balance at 01 January 2024	5 132 662	5 132 662
Loss for the year	(349 157)	(349 157)
Balance at 31 December 2024	4 783 505	4 783 505
Note(s)		

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS

Figures in Rand	Note(s)	2024	2023
Cash flows from operating activities			
Cash receipts from customers		12 040 651	7 736 754
Cash paid to suppliers and employees		(3 672 192)	(3 051 044)
Cash generated from operations	9	<u>8 368 459</u>	<u>4 685 710</u>
Interest income		367 558	-
Net cash from operating activities		<u>8 736 017</u>	<u>4 685 710</u>
Cash flows from investing activities			
Purchase of fixed assets	2	<u>(31 027)</u>	<u>(13 108)</u>
Total cash movement for the year		<u>8 704 990</u>	<u>4 672 602</u>
Cash at the beginning of the year		<u>5 089 862</u>	<u>417 260</u>
Total cash at end of the year	4	<u>13 794 852</u>	<u>5 089 862</u>

Thank You





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INSPIRE |

Initiative for Social Performance in Renewable Energy

