

NC solar park scoops award

STAFF REPORTER

JUST months after commencing commercial operation, the Kathu Solar Park walked off with an African Power, Energy and Water Industry Award at the African Utility Week and POWERGEN Africa conference and exhibition in Cape Town recently.

This was the sixth edition of the African Power, Energy and Water Industry Awards, which took place during the 19th annual African Utility Week and POWERGEN Africa in Cape Town. The industry awards brings together 800 of Africa's most renowned power, energy and water industry professionals, many of them long-standing attendees of African Utility Week and POWERGEN Africa.

The Kathu Solar Park, constructed by SENER, ACCIONA Industrial and ENGIE, came into

commercial operation on January 30 this year.

With an installed capacity of 100MW, it will allow clean energy to be supplied to 179 000 homes in the Northern Cape and prevent the emission of six million tons of CO₂ into the atmosphere over the next 20 years.

The plant is a greenfield concentrated solar power (CSP) project and incorporates parabolic trough collectors and a molten salt storage system that enables heat from the solar park to be stored and electricity to be generated in the absence of solar radiation.

This molten salt storage system, which provides up to five hours of power generation, extends the operational capacity of the plant after sundown and on cloudy days.

The Kathu site covers approximately 4.5 square kilometres (km²), with 384 000 mir-

rors.

“With the completion of Kathu Solar Park, we show our firm commitment to the development of a renewable energy industry in South Africa. Concentrated solar power, as a viable alternative to traditional baseload sources of energy, has a demonstrated alignment with South Africa's national agenda of achieving inclusive growth that includes job creation manufacturing, construction and rural development. Reaching commercial operation at Kathu means that the energy supply to the local community is secure and demand is well managed while contributing to mitigate the effects of climate change,” Siyabonga Mbanjwa, regional managing director of SENER Southern Africa, stated.

The Kathu Solar Thermal Power Plant won the grid-tied renewable energy project category.