

Global interest boost for wind farm project

■ Arrival of international players 'significant step' for R550m renewable energy development

Patrick Cull

SOME of the world's leading wind turbine manufacturers and developers of wind farms arrived in Port Elizabeth yesterday in what marks "a significant step forward" in the development of a 25 megawatt wind farm by CEF (Pty) Ltd.

More than 40 companies from countries such as Germany, Belgium, Denmark,

France and South Korea, have sent senior representatives to express interest in the R550-million project Central Energy Fund (CEF), through subsidiary ETA Energy, is developing in Nelson Mandela Bay.

The wind farm is part of a basket of renewable energy projects – worth nearly R2-billion – CEF is developing in partnership with the municipality.

The CEF group is made up of a number of operating subsidiaries, among others PetroSA, the South African Gas Development Company, Petroleum Agency SA, the South African National Energy Research Institute, the National Energy Efficiency Agency, the Strategic Fuel Fund Association and ETA Energy.

ETA Energy, one of CEF's key vehicles for developing renewable and alternative energy as well as energy efficiency projects, has entered into an agreement with the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality to develop a multipronged renewable energy and energy efficiency programme. Projects include the wind farm, generating electricity from landfill gas, domestic solar water heating, a roll-out of compact fluorescent lamps and

making street lights more energy efficient.

Construction of the 25MW wind farm is planned at one of three alternative sites close to Port Elizabeth.

It will comprise about 10 new generation turbines with a power output of about 2.3MW each with associated infrastructure for connection into the existing municipal power grid, access roads, control building and visitor centre.

Under fair wind conditions the turbines replace the use of about 10 tons

of polluting coal, or a large truck-load of coal every four hours, and saves about 160 000 litres of water.

There is also a significant reduction in harmful global warming and toxic emissions, and this clean green power will be-

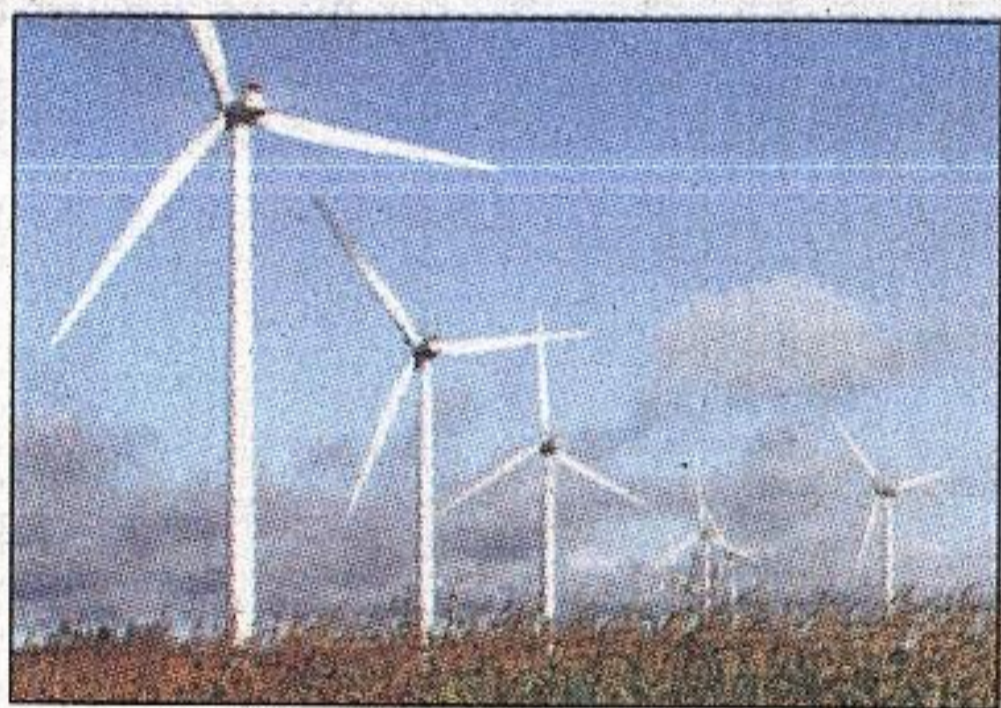
come available to users. The power output represents about 1% of the usage in the region, with the ability to expand later.

Dr Manny Singh, a director of ETA Energy, said: "This is an important milestone in our broader endeavours as a public sector company to help the country achieve the target of 10 000GWh from renewable energy by 2013.

"We must commend the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality for taking a far-sighted and integrated approach to the development of renewable and alternative energy sources, and in this case specifically to utilise their natural resource endowment of wind.

"It is our intention as CEF and ETA Energy to replicate the projects we are rolling out in Nelson Mandela Bay on a national scale."

CEF is a leading player in the renewable energy sector with interests in key energy projects around the country.



BREATH OF POWER... Nelson Mandela Bay is leading the way with its wind farm project