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## New Director-General Outlines Plans for ERC

ERC's new Director General Engineer Joseph Ng'ang'a intends to increase the Commission's engagement with the public and with stakeholders so as to improve compliance with energy sector regulations and raise the public's understanding of what we do.

Internally, Eng. Ng'ang'a is encouraging a bottom-up approach for staff to engage with management. "As management, we are open and welcome all ideas as we go forward," he said during the first staff meeting he chaired as Director General (DG).

Eng. Ng'ang'a brings to the DG's office over three decades of experience in the energy sector. He started out as a drilling engineer with the Kenya Power and Lighting Company at Olkaria in the early 1980s, a time when geothermal power generation in Kenya was at its infancy.

Over the years, Eng. Ng'ang'a served in various technical and management positions at Kenya Power and later at the Kenya Electricity Generating Company (KenGen). He had risen to Deputy Managing Director at KenGen by February 2010 when he left to join ERC.

Among the biggest challenges is obtaining adequate funding for the Commission. "We are aware that our pleas have been considered and in the not too distant future, the relevant



ERC Director General Eng. Joseph Ng'ang'a at an anti-corruption workshop held at the Commission's Boardroom in October.

legal instruments will be executed to adjust the funding level from some of the regulated products," says Eng. Ng'ang'a.

Funding to ERC has not been adjusted in tandem with growing regulatory responsibilities and emerging challenges in the marketplace such as illegal LPG filling and fraudulent use of Commission licenses. With more funding, ERC could enhance its presence across the country in support of devolution and to increase compliance with regulatory requirements.

With a better cash flow, the DG would be able to realize his goal of increasing the Commission's visibility. "We need to disseminate information

on the mission of the Commission in the energy business and the value we add to consumers, investors and other key stakeholders in the value chain," he says.

Eng. Ng'ang'a intends to continue ongoing work on standardizing the Commission's certificates. Security features on certificates will be improved to minimize the possibility of forgery.

The DG says he will strive to reduce further the approval cycle for applicants that have met the mandatory licensing requirements, emphasizing that the Commission's role is to support rather than inhibit business activity in the country.

# ERC Management Visits New Energy Installations

Kenya's energy policy, legislation and regulations continue to attract private capital from investors as seen in large scale energy sector investments across the country.

This was among the many lessons learnt when ERC management paid a visit to two new energy installations built by both Kenyan and foreign investors.

The mid-October trip was to the Petrocity petroleum terminal at Konza and Gulf Power's 80MW thermal power station at Athi River. During the trip, management was accompanied by staff and ERC interns.

"We made the trip to see and appreciate what we have been reading in reports," said ERC Director General Joe Ng'ang'a at the start of the tour.

The ERC team was warmly welcomed at both places and given extensive tours of the facilities. The main feature at both facilities is that all operations are automated. This ensures efficiency, eliminates waste and

reduces the risk of injury to staff.

Petrocity's Konza terminal has been operational since early 2014. The terminal has a direct connection to the Nairobi - Mombasa refined products pipeline run by the Kenya Pipeline Company (KPC).

Gulf Power's Athi River power station was largely complete at the time of the visit. Ten Wärtsilä diesel generating sets had been installed, each with an output of 8MW. Gulf Power was expecting the Kenya Power company to connect them to the national grid a few days later in readiness for production.

Both installations have been welcomed by the host communities. Gulf Power has given jobs to some members of the local community while Petrocity's presence at Konza is promoting small scale business in the area. "We want the community to grow with us," Harish Asodia, Director and Partner at Petrocity, said.



ERC staff and interns pose for a group photo with the management of Petrocity after a tour of the company's Konza petroleum terminal



ERC's Director for Economic Regulation, Dr. Frederick Nyang, switches on a Wärtsilä engine at the Gulf Power thermal generating station, Athi River.

## Inter-office e-mail



### Energy Saving

**Client:** Yesterday I bought an energy saving bulb from your shop, returned home, but it did not work.

**Shop keeper:** It should not, it saves energy.

### Relocation

**Human Resource Officer:** Why did you leave your last job?

**New employee:** Company relocated and didn't tell me where.

# C.A.R.E.S.

## Creating an Atmosphere of Respect and Excellent Service



**M**any people perceive that customer service is not as important in public sector organizations as it is in the private sector. However, the Kenyan taxpayer expects high quality customer service from both the public and private sector. *Energy News* talked with Chrispine Shilwatso, customer service officer at ERC about the subject of customer care.

**Q. What is good customer service?**

**Ans.** It is service that makes customers feel important, understood, respected and empowered through honest and trustworthy interaction. Each customer should leave feeling that he/she has been cared for.

**Q. Does customer service apply to all employees?**

**Ans.** Excellence in customer service delivery is a responsibility of all employees at ERC, not just customer service staff. Each employee needs to understand that customer service is part of their job, acknowledge the importance of customer service and believe in it. That's going to be a huge competitive advantage for ERC.

**Q. What is needed to deliver excellent customer service?**

**Ans.** In order to deliver world class customer service, courage and innovation is paramount. Apart from greeting people and being courteous, we need to be problem solvers. We need to be masters of "follow through" and doing what we say we will do.

**Q. What are some of the challenges faced in customer service delivery?**

**Ans.** We can't always deliver what customers ask for or need, but we can choose to assist them in a way that we care. You are never allowed to have a bad day. You have to be pleasant and cordial all day, every day.

*Story and photo by Eliakim R. Mwalo*

# Solar energy licenses attract huge interest



*Some of the over 150 people who did written interviews for solar photovoltaic licenses and energy auditor licenses in September 2014.*

Regulations governing the supply and installation of solar photovoltaic (solar PV) and solar water heating systems have been embraced by the industry as seen in a massive increase in applications for licenses.

The regulations, gazetted in September 2012, make it mandatory for anyone engaging in solar PV and solar water heating business to obtain a license from ERC. Licenses are issued to applicants that pass the oral and written interviews administered by ERC.

"The first interview in March 2013 had five applicants," recalls Caroline Kimathi of ERC's Renewable Energy Department. "This September [2014], we interviewed over 150 people applying for licenses as technicians in solar PV and solar water heating," she says.

The regulations were gazetted to protect the public from sub-standard products and untrained technicians.

"Customers would get disappointed by solar energy systems because of wrong advice given by unqualified people," says Caroline.

The Energy (Solar Water Heating) Regulations, 2012 and the Energy (Solar Photovoltaic Systems) Regulations, 2012 make it a criminal offense for anyone to produce, distribute, supply or install solar energy equipment without a valid license from ERC.

Five interviews for licenses were held in 2013 and six are scheduled in 2014 to cater for the increased number of applicants. Applicants register through the Commission's website ([www.erc.go.ke](http://www.erc.go.ke)) after which they will be invited for written and oral interviews.

Such is the increase in the number of applicants that the September 2014 written interviews could not be held at ERC offices due to lack of space. Instead, a bigger room at Weston

Hotel was hired.

Among the applicants in the September 2014 interview was Professor Maina Maringa, who said he was applying for a license so that he could run a business as a solar contractor. Another applicant, Maureen Obiero, was applying for the license to comply with the law. The serving police officer already has ten years experience installing solar PV systems at police stations across the country. "The written examination was not bad, it all depends on your skills," said Maureen.

At the moment, approximately 16 tertiary institutions across Kenya offer training in solar PV and solar water heating. ERC only recognizes training courses offered in institutions accredited by the National Industrial Training Authority (NITA). The list of authorized training institutions is available at NITA's website ([www.nita.go.ke](http://www.nita.go.ke)).

# Using your computer comfortably at work

**E**RC is a highly automated organization where the average employee performs more than 50,000 keystrokes a day. However, heavy computer use involves awkward posture, repetition and strain that may result in nerve, muscle, tendon, and ligament damage in vulnerable individuals.

"I usually sit for long hours in front of my computer and the result is a sensation of pain in my hands," says Esther Weru, Communication Assistant at ERC.

Injuries from repetitive strain develop over time, and may set in more quickly if you spend long hours sitting at a computer at home and at work. If you use a computer several hours each day, you should consider proper workstation layout and posture techniques to minimize the chances of developing injuries of the hand, arm, shoulder, neck, and back.

## Symptoms

Symptoms of computer-related injury include numbness in the fingers, sore wrists, lower back pain, or eyestrain (redness, dryness, soreness, temporary blurring of vision) and headaches. One may also develop general aches and pain in the neck, shoulders, arms, back, thighs, and lower legs (postural fatigue) or persistent pain or discomfort in muscles, tendons, and other soft tissue (repetitive strain injury).

## How to stay comfortable

1. Have the screen and keyboard straight in front of you.
2. The screen must be positioned at the correct focal length so that your eyes can focus easily. You should never accept anyone else's setting.
3. Swap hands using the mouse on alternate days.
4. If you are a touch typist (and don't



need to watch the keys) the top of the screen should be just below eye-line. Any higher and you will put extra strain on the back of your neck so as to tilt your head backwards. The poorer the typing skills the lower the screen should be, although you may need to tilt the screen back so you don't have to scrunch down bodily to see it.

5. Keyboards are better flat or even held in the lap and tilted away from you (that is, not on the desk and tilted up at the back). This requires less cocking back of the wrists to keep the fingers clear.
6. Used on the desk, the keyboard should be such that your elbows are below 90 degrees when your fingertips are poised above the keys. Any higher and your elbows will be working in inner range, which is bad for them. A keyboard too high also places greatly added load on your shoulder-girdle to hoist your arms up higher.
7. Ergonomic chairs should have the back support positioned close in behind the back and the chair as

close as possible to the desk. If the chair is too far away you will lose the benefits of the contoured padding as you lean forward to the screen. (This is a common failing of ergonomic chairs.)

8. The chair seat should be angled down a few degrees at the front. This encourages the lower back to maintain a better lumbar hollow which helps prevent the whole spine slumping in a crumpled 'C' shape.
9. Large inflatable plastic fit balls are ideal seating for computers. Apart from the joyous bouncing romp that eliminates the static compression of the spinal base, the lack of back support means you must recruit your own tummy strength to keep upright. Thus they encourage proper spinal alignment.
10. Do the right-angled stretch at the end of each computer session. It undoes the hunched sitting posture and opens out the pinched-in birds' wings arms to full stretch.

*Story and photo by Eliakim R. Mwalo*

## Kenya's energy sector is competitive, ERC tells MPs



*The Cabinet Secretary for Energy and Petroleum Davis Chirchir in a group photo with members of parliament and representatives of energy sector state corporations during a retreat at Whitesands Hotel, Mombasa on 12 September 2014.*

ERC in September demonstrated to members of parliament that prices in Kenya's energy sector are competitive when compared to other countries.

Director General Joseph Ng'ang'a told members of the National Assembly's Departmental Committee on Energy, Communication and Information that ERC ensures a balance between the needs of energy suppliers to deliver a profit and the needs of consumers for affordable energy.

"Petroleum prices and electricity tariffs should reflect the cost of production and supply otherwise there would be no incentive for anyone to invest in the energy sector," said Eng. Ng'ang'a during ERC's presentation.

ERC alongside state corporations in the Ministry of Energy and Petroleum met members of the National Assembly's Energy, Communication and Information Committee on 12 September at a retreat held in Mombasa. The Committee was led by its Chairperson, Hon. Jamleck Kamau.

Hon. Kamau spoke of the excellent relationship between the Committee and the Ministry of Energy & Petroleum. Energy and Petroleum Cabinet Secretary Davis Chirchir assured MPs of a 70% reduction in the fuel cost element of electricity prices as more geothermal power gets into the national grid.

"Electricity supply should be reliable, clean, secure, competitive and affordable," said Mr. Chirchir.

The Principal Secretary in the Ministry, Mr. Joseph Njoroge, asked the Committee to support KETRACO, Kenya Power, the Geothermal Development Company, Rural Electrification Authority and KenGen in order for Project 5000+MW to succeed.

At the end of the day-long retreat, there was agreement that more retreats be held to enhance the relationship between the Ministry, state corporations in the energy sector and Parliament.

### IT Administrator wins coveted award

Eng. Jonathan Ronoh, the Information Technology Administrator at ERC, was awarded by ISACA during the organization's AGM on 11 October 2014.

Eng. Ronoh already holds two ISACA professional certificates: one as Certified Information Systems Auditor (CISA) and another as a Certified Information Security Manager (CISM).

ISACA is a nonprofit, independent membership association that helps business and IT leaders maximize value and manage risk related to information and technology. Founded in 1969, ISACA helps its members and their employers ensure trust in, and value from, information systems.

*Congratulations Eng. Ronoh!*



The Energy News is the internal newsletter for staff at the Energy Regulatory Commission of Kenya (ERC). Staff are encouraged to participate in the production of this newsletter by sending articles, photos and news tips. Contact the editors at ERC Communication and Public Affairs Department (CPA).



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