

Understanding the Draft Integrated Resource Plan (IRP) 2023

What is the IRP?

A planning document for South Africa to ensure energy security and that electricity supply meets the demand. The last IRP was published in 2019.

Legal requirements

The IRP is required under Section 34 of the Electricity Act 2006. It should be reviewed and revised every 2 years, but the last IRP was released in 2019. The IRP has a more detailed electricity focus than the also required Integrated Energy Plan (IEP). The IEP is an overall plan for petrol, diesel, paraffin, gas and electricity. The IRP should follow the IEP, but we are still awaiting the IEP.

New assumptions in IRP 2023 (relative to IRP 2019)

Eskom's plant performance increases.
Electricity demand projection is reduced.
Delayed shutdown of Coal fired power plants beyond 2035.
Increased cost of renewable energy technologies.

The IRP does not outline how it intends to increase plant performance. Corruption and aging infrastructure are responsible for poor performance.

This contradicts updated cost data that show renewables with back-up storage is the lowest cost new build electricity.

Draft IRP 2023

Divided into horizon one (now-2030) and horizon two (2031-2050).
Horizon one looks at 5 scenarios, supposedly focusing on addressing electricity generation constraints
Horizon two proposes and analyses 5 energy mix pathways for sustainable security of supply

In all 5 scenarios loadshedding continues until 2028.

This includes small nuclear and "clean coal" technologies, which remain speculative, expensive, and water and energy intensive.

Key Climate Justice Concerns

This IRP will prevent us from meeting our national climate commitments. It includes nuclear, gas to power, delayed decommissioning of coal plants, while relying on private sector to build new renewable energy generation capacity. There is a misalignment with South African climate policy and Treasury. Loadshedding is not addressed urgently with least cost considerations. Minimum emission standards for aging coal power plants are not considered.



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