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## AFRICAN UTILITY WEEK ◀

### What every prepaid electricity user and provider should know

Approximately seven million prepaid electricity meters in South Africa need to be reset before November 2024 as the system that runs the credit tokens will run out of numbers at this time and all existing meters will stop accepting credit tokens.

The South African metering standards industry body, Standard Transfer Specification Association (STSA), has embarked on an awareness programme to inform utilities to upgrade their vending systems to STS600 before November 2024.

Don Taylor, director of STS Association, a returning industry partner association and exhibitor at African Utility Week exhibition and conference in Cape Town from 15-17 May, says, “The token identifier (TID) is calculated as the number of minutes that have elapsed since a defined base date of 1993 up to the time of creating the token. The TID has a limited range and will run out in November 2024, at which point all existing prepayment meters will stop accepting credit tokens. In order to circumvent this issue, the memory of each meter needs to be cleared of all stored TIDs and its cryptographic key needs to be changed before 2024.”

The new range of TIDs will then start from a



Image Credit: STSA

**Don Taylor, director of the Standard Transfer Specification Association, says all prepayment meters will stop taking credit tokens in November 2024.**

new base date of 2014 and run out in 2045, thus extending the useful functional life of the meter. “In order to do this key change,” explains Taylor. “It is necessary that each meter has to be physically visited, which can be

performed either by dedicated employees of the utility or by the customer.

“There is thus a six-year window within which the utilities have to complete this programme. Because we are concerned that utilities may leave this too late, we are embarking on an awareness programme by reaching out to all STS users and providing a platform that will facilitate technical support and guidance to users during the implementation of the TID rollover programme. We aim to establish a website for this purpose where users can interact by discussion of issues. In addition we are embarking on a communication effort with users by making use of media channels and conference events in order to raise awareness of the 2024 TID rollover. This programme is being managed by a specially mandated task team.”

STSA estimates that approximately seven million prepayment meters are installed in South Africa, which could still grow to approximately eight million by 2024.

The 18th annual, multi-award winning African Utility Week will gather more than 7,000 decision makers from more than 80 countries to discuss the challenges, solutions and successes in the power, energy and water sectors on the continent.