

Vodacom installs new solar-powered sites in South Africa

Vodacom announced that it has installed new solar-powered sites in Polokwane, Vereeniging and Bloemfontein. The company said it has invested over R8m in these solar-powered sites as part of its ongoing commitment to securing alternative energy sources to power its operations where feasible. The three sites are in addition to a solar project installed at a base station controller site in Randburg, Gauteng, by Vodacom in May last year.



Source: [Unsplash](#)

According to a statement released by Vodacom, the three new sites will generate approximately 127MWh of energy collectively on an annual basis, which will help to reduce the telco's carbon emissions and lower its electricity consumption. The solar panels will also ease the load on the sites' batteries in the event of load-shedding.

"As the demand for digital services grows, we will need more energy to keep these services running. In anticipation of this growth, and despite the current economic challenges, we are investing in strategies to decrease our energy consumption while reducing the use of carbon-intensive sources of energy. By reducing our carbon footprint, our aim is to mitigate climate change and its effects on the planet. Solar-powered sites are just one of the innovative ways to introduce cleaner, more sustainable energy sources to keep our mobile networks running and our customers connected in an ever-increasing digital society," said Takalani Netshitenzhe, executive director of external affairs at Vodacom South Africa.



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The solar projects are aligned with Vodacom's purpose-led journey, in which the company has committed to improve the lives of 100 million people and reduce its environmental impact by half by 2025. This is also aligned to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular, SDG 9 on Industry Innovation and Infrastructure and SDG 13 on

Climate action, as well as South Africa's National Development Plan, which prioritises eliminating poverty, reducing inequality and growing an inclusive economy by 2030.

Reduced energy cost and Vodacom's largest single rooftop solar installation

“At Vodacom, we want to ensure that as our business growth transforms society in a manner that will not come at the cost of the planet. We have made progress in our waste and water reduction strategies, however, energy consumption remains our largest environmental impact, requiring significant investment in order to reach the targets that we have set out to achieve. We are also working with government and other role players to explore ways in which to transition towards a sustainable, equitable and low carbon future,” adds Netshitenzhe.

Vodacom said it saved a total of 11,971MWh of electricity last year through its energy management strategy, which included investing in energy efficiency projects such as IoT capabilities and renewable energy solutions like solar power. This reduced the company's total energy cost by R16m for that financial year.

The three solar-powered sites in South Africa form part of the 1,088 solar-powered sites across all of Vodacom's markets. The company said it also installed the largest single rooftop solar installation at its Century City offices in Cape Town in 2012, and Vodacom Lesotho's head office has been powered by solar energy since 2017.

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