

# New project puts wind in retailer's sustainable energy sails

Pick n Pay's pilot phase of a wind turbine project launched last week at its regional offices in Port Elizabeth in the Eastern Cape, in a further commitment to reduce its electricity usage by 20% come 2012.

As one of the country's largest retailers, PnP's business relies heavily on the agricultural sector, and issues such as food, water and energy security are obviously central to its ongoing sustainability. Consequently, the company recognises the impact that climate change will have on the way the company operates.

## Energy conservation strategy

"Pick n Pay has taken a significant step forward for sustainability and energy independence in this country. We have formulated an energy strategy that focuses on three core areas: management of energy within the company; investigation into new energy-efficient ways of operating; and exploring clean renewable sources of energy," says CEO, Nick Badminton.

"Until recently the company focused much of its efforts internally on managing its energy consumption and implementing initiatives to ensure greater energy efficiency. We installed DSM lighting in all stores and established an eco-store programme that will see new stores being designed in a more energy-efficient manner. Our efforts have been recognised globally - Pick n Pay was ranked one of the top 10 companies in the Carbon Disclosure Project's assessment of climate change disclosure practices."

## Renewable sources

In the past year the company has turned its attention towards the third focus area in its energy strategy: the exploration of cleaner renewable sources of energy. "While many countries around the world use renewable energy sources to great effect, in South Africa its use remains largely unexplored and it is not widely available," says Tessa Chamberlain, general manager: Sustainable Development. "Pick n Pay recognised that solutions to these challenges will not be forthcoming unless all the stakeholders commit to researching and further developing renewable energy sources available to us locally. The company has therefore pioneered a wind turbine project at its Eastern Cape operation, in association with Kestrel, the renewable energy arm of long-time supplier, Eveready.

## Turbines

The three locally manufactured Eveready-Kestrel wind turbines (e300i - 1kW) installed at Pick n Pay's Port Elizabeth Regional Office will generate green electricity to augment the usage of its employees and building situated at Walmer Park Shopping Centre. The turbines are fully commissioned as a Grid Connected system approved by the Nelson Mandela Bay Metropole.

The wind farm, which was manufactured in Eveready's Port Elizabeth factory, will allow Pick n Pay to make its electricity source more sustainable, which is ultimately kinder to the environment; as well as increasing its energy-autonomy. "When electricity comes from a single source your energy independence is very low," says Emma Sanan, Kestrel's marketing coordinator. "Having a separate electricity source has increased Pick n Pay's energy independence, which has given the ability to import and export energy to the national distribution grid ensuring the Regional Office has a sustainable supply of renewable energy."

## Reduction

The result is a real daily reduction in energy usage of 3% of the current electricity usage, as established via an energy audit and solution dialogue with Eveready-Kestrel. After understanding their usage patterns, Pick n Pay was able to select a

customised solution that suited the power requirement as well as their available resources. The micro-siting, construction, inspection and interconnection were managed by Eveready.

“This installation goes a long way in addressing the reality that we need to rethink the way in which we operate in order to guarantee a sustainable future,” says Chamberlain. “It is only a small part of Pick n Pay's commitment to the environment the Company has created a holistic approach to environmental practice by using available technologies to increase operational efficiency in the company's 'four pillars' concept, which comprises prioritising economic sustainability, transformation, social development and environmental responsibility.”

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