

# South Africans decreased power usage by 0.7%

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According to the figures released by Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) on Thursday, the estimated volume of electricity (available for distribution) for the three months ending July 2008 decreased by 1.8% compared with the three months ending July 2007.

"Electricity consumption after seasonal adjustment for the latest three months ending July 2008 decreased by 0.9% compared with the previous three months ended April 2008," said Stats SA.

The country is currently facing an electricity shortage and Eskom together with government have embarked on a drive to save energy.

## Contributing factors

In the first seven months of 2008, consumption of electricity was affected by numerous factors that led to reduced levels of consumption, such as load shedding and a continuous drive from Eskom in encouraging users to save on electricity consumption.

For this reason government had launched the national electricity management plan and further called on all citizens, businesses and other organisations to come together and work towards finding solutions to the current power crisis.

Large electricity consumers, such as businesses, have agreed to decrease their consumption by 10%.

The rapid economic growth has led to a higher demand for electricity than there is supply.

## Comparative consumption report

In its report entitled 'Electricity generated and available for distribution', Stats SA collated the January 2008 figures and was able to providing a comparison to 2007 trends.

With regards to production of electricity, the report indicates that also decreased and after seasonal adjustment it showed a drop of 0.9%.

This is for the three months ending July 2008 compared with the preceding three months.

“The estimated total production of electricity in July 2008 decreased by 1.3% (-310 Gigawatt-hours) compared with July 2007,” reads the report, adding that the estimated production of electricity during the latest three months ending July 2008 decreased by 2.2% (-1 552 Gigawatt-hours) compared with the same period of 2007.

While the proportion of electricity distributed to the provinces remained fairly stable, Eskom reported increases for Limpopo with 1.6% and Mpumalanga with 1.5%.

The decreases, however, were reported for Western Cape with -0.2%, Gauteng -1.4%, North West -1.7%, KwaZulu-Natal -4.5%, Free State -4.6%, Eastern Cape -5.0% and Northern Cape -8.6%.

## **International electricity trade**

With regards to international trade in electricity, the report indicates that for the first seven months of 2008 annual for electricity imported from outside South Africa decreases by -11.7% and electricity exported to neighbouring countries by -3.3%.

According to Stats SA, the decrease in imports of electricity in the first five months of 2008 resulted from reduced availability from the Cahorra Bassa scheme owing to the planned refurbishment of an Eskom converter station and the unavailability of the transmission network in Zambia owing to system instability in that country.

In July 2008 there was a 10.7% increase over July 2007 as imports returned to levels above 1 000 Gigawatt-hours for the second time in 2008.

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