

We can't afford to wait' – Shoprite Group invests heavily fighting climate change

The Shoprite Group has almost doubled the amount of renewable energy used in its operations to 103 234MWh (FY 2022: 54 138 MWh) over the past year. It has achieved this by increasing the amount of renewable energy bought from landlords and other suppliers by 91%.

"We have also reduced electricity consumption by 161 million kWh through our [LED lamp replacement project](#), and our network of solar-panel installations now cover the equivalent of more than 26 soccer-fields," says the Shoprite Group's CSI & Sustainability Manager Sanjeev Raghubir, commenting on the upcoming COP28 climate summit (SUBS: 1 to 10 December) in Dubai.

"Events like COP28 are absolutely crucial, but we – business, government, civil society, humankind in general – can't and mustn't wait for their decisions.

"This is especially true in the African context: despite contributing the least of any region to global greenhouse-gas (GHG) emissions, the continent is being affected disproportionately by climate change."

It's why, Raghubir adds, the Group invests heavily in reducing its carbon footprint across all aspects of its operations, with energy consumption a key priority.

The Group's solar photovoltaic (PV) facilities now generate enough clean energy to power nearly 4 800 homes for a year, and it is the only African company to have earned a place on the Carbon Disclosure Project's Supplier Engagement Leaderboard, for taking action to measure and reduce climate risk within its supply chain in the 2022 financial year.

The retailer's three-pronged approach includes reducing consumption, expanding its installed capacity of renewables and purchasing electricity in collaboration with independent power producers (IPPs).

"We've increased the amount of electricity we're buying from landlords and other suppliers by 91%. That's progress by any measure. The next step is [wheeling](#): buying electricity from an IPP through the existing transmission network."

Achieving that would be a massive step forward, says Raghubir, but will require greater collaboration between various stakeholders to establish a national wheeling framework.

"In the interim, we will continue to improve energy efficiency wherever we can, and to this end the Group has embarked on a refrigeration project. We'll also continue to install solar wherever its viable, whether on rooftops or carports.

"Naturally we'll watch the negotiations at COP28 keenly, but at the Shoprite Group we've set and are pursuing science-based targets to reduce our carbon emissions throughout our operations – in stores, distribution centres and transportation – with a sense of urgency.

Ends