

Western Cape invests R116.6m in energy resilience, solar

The 2024/25 fiscal year will see the Western Cape Department of Infrastructure's contribution to the Provincial Energy Resilience Programme make significant advances in helping the Western Cape become less reliant on Eskom, and the first province to end load shedding.



Source: [Pexels](#)

In March, the Provincial Minister of Infrastructure, Tertuis Simmers, announced that from its annual budget, the department has set aside R116.6m for the energy-programme's project schedule to launch or continue in the 2024/5 fiscal year.

There are five projects that have been identified as part of the department's programme for this financial year:

- The feasibility phase of the Explore Options for Gas to Power project has recently been completed.

This is a current topic with the ongoing national Gas Independent Power Producer Procurement programme which seeks 3GW of energy generation from gas, and the expected publication of the national Gas Master Plan.

Findings from the feasibility phase of the project and the implications of the options available to the Western Cape Government (WCG) are now being considered in depth.

These results will be incorporated into the Provincial Integrated Resource Plan, currently being developed through the

Department of the Premier.

- The Stellenbosch Municipal Independent Power Producer Procurement (MIPPP) transaction advisor and project manager project is well on track.

The second phase which includes the feasibility study is due for completion in the first quarter of 2024/25.

The Stellenbosch Municipality will, thereafter, be equipped with the results of a detailed, multi-faceted and multi-disciplinary investigation into the viability of a 50 MWp solar PV facility, including Battery Energy Storage.



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The investigation will include financial, legal, technical, socio-economic and environmental matters.

The project is unique in South Africa, and hence dubbed a 'pioneering' project. Should the feasibility study show the viability of the venture, the project will progress to the third phase, which is centred on the actual procurement of power from an Independent Power Producer.

- The Project Preparation Facility will build on learnings from the Stellenbosch MIPPP project and has been established to bring transaction advisory and related services to other municipalities across the province.

The range of services is wide and designed to match the anticipated needs of the municipalities to bring projects to bankability and to ensure compliant procurement of low-carbon and renewable energy to support the municipalities' residents, businesses, and consumer bases.

Currently, the projects are being developed in response to the applications received from several municipalities.

- In the Grid Infrastructure project, the department completed a detailed assessment of the grid infrastructure in the Western Cape at the end of March 2024 and will continue to build on this with the assistance of engineers contracted via the Capacity to Implement project.
- The Solar Geyser Panel Installation programme for indigent households will continue this year with the programme being implemented at seven housing developments across the province.

The pilot project, unique to WCG, was launched by Minister Simmers in the last financial year through the department's own funding.

The department aims to install 1,557 solar-geyser panels by the end of this current financial year (2024/5).

Resource capacitation and commitment

In addition to these projects, the department is also focusing on the capacitation of internal resources.

In reflecting on his department's efforts to mitigate the energy crisis, Minister Simmers said, "Our commitment to advancing energy resilience in the Western Cape is evident through the allocation of R116.6m towards critical projects aimed at reducing reliance on Eskom and enhancing sustainability.

"The extension of our solar-geyser panel installation programme for indigent households further underscores our dedication

to providing clean and affordable energy solutions for our communities."

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