

Production of Ford's next-gen Ranger bakkie commences in Pretoria

The production of the next-generation Ford Ranger at the company's Silverton Assembly Plant in Pretoria has begun. The start of the next-gen Ranger production follows a major investment of \$1.5bn (R15.8bn) in Ford's South African operations and supplier tooling. South African-built Rangers are exported to more than 100 markets, including Europe.



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Ford Motor Company now has three production hubs in the International Markets Group (IMG) region producing next-gen Ranger for global markets, including the Silverton plant in South Africa, and two plants in Thailand. The company also has CKD operations in Vietnam and Cambodia to assemble the next-gen Ranger, with plants in the US and Argentina to begin production in 2023.

“The start of next-gen Ranger production in South Africa highlights our commitment to delivering must-have products for our customers, not just in South Africa but around the world,” says Dianne Craig, president of Ford International Markets Group (IMG).

“South Africa is an important part of our global Ranger manufacturing network, and it is fantastic to witness the \$1.5bn investment being utilised to modernise and transform the Silverton Assembly Plant to produce vehicles of the absolute best quality for customers around the world.”

The expanded operations in South Africa contribute to job creation and economic development, with 1,200 new jobs added for a third shift to support the increased production volumes. This takes the workforce at Ford South Africa to 5,500 employees. Ford’s supplier network benefits too, with approximately 10,000 jobs added across the value chain.

Focus on quality

“We have put immense effort, resources, and the latest technologies in place to ensure that the next-gen Ranger is truly world-class and that the Silverton plant globally equals the very best,” says Andrea Cavallaro, director of operations, Ford

“We took several strategic decisions including the decision to bring the stamping operations and the frame manufacturing in-house, to ensure complete control of the production quality. The process put in today guarantees that the components going onto the assembly line for every next-gen Ranger are of the highest quality.”

The stamping plant at the Silverton Assembly Plant is in a new 10,320m2 facility and feeds stamped body panels directly to the adjacent and completely new 44,000m2 body shop which is highly automated with approximately 493 robots.

“To meet our volume and quality objectives, we have the world’s only Ford-owned and operated chassis manufacturing plant at the Silverton Plant that uses the most advanced technologies currently available,” Cavallaro added.

In addition, the vast 100,000m2 Frame Line in the Tshwane Automotive Special Economic Zone supplier park, located next door to the Silverton Assembly Plant, ensures the seamless sequencing of parts directly to the assembly line.



Current-gen Ford Ranger production comes to an end in SA

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“These latest-generation measurement and scanning systems give us real-time data throughout production, ensuring we can quickly identify and address any quality concerns before the part leaves its production area,” explains Ockert Berry, VP of operations, Ford South Africa. “This data is stored in our global quality management system, allowing us to monitor trends and respond proactively to any potential issues.”

“The uncompromising approach to quality has reshaped every aspect of our manufacturing operations and reinforces our commitment to delivering world-class products for our customers around the world,” Berry added.

Ranger legacy in South Africa

The ambitious targets and great confidence for the next-gen Ranger are built on a solid foundation established by the outgoing model in South Africa. First launched in 2011, the nameplate remained one of the leading contenders over the ensuing 11 years, earning a long list of accolades in the process.

“The success of the Ranger globally establishes it as one of Ford’s most important nameplates sold in every continent,” said Neale Hill, president, Ford Motor Company Africa. “The next-gen Ranger is sure to raise the bar yet again and with the start of production in the Silverton assembly plant, South Africa is proud to play a role in its growth.”

A total of 873,751 Rangers were produced at the Silverton Assembly Plant in South Africa. Out of these, nearly 603,000

units were exported to more than 100 global markets, which consistently placed it as the top light commercial vehicle export from South Africa.

With more than 271,000 units produced for South Africa, the Ranger topped the overall domestic sales charts on many occasions and remains one of the country's favourite vehicles. The South Africa volumes include the Ranger and trend-setting Ranger Raptor high-performance off-road pick-up, assembled in South Africa since 2019.

South Africa Silverton Plant has also been producing the Everest seven-seater sport utility vehicle (SUV) since 2016. However, with the Silverton Assembly Plant focusing on expanded production for next-gen Ranger, the next-gen Everest and next-gen Ranger Raptor will be sourced from Thailand.

"We are confident that the next-gen Ranger will build on this great success story and forge an even more powerful legacy in the years to come," Hill added.

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