

PE firm to supply green energy to KFC outlets

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13 Sep 2017

At the forefront of South Africa's energy revolution, Port Elizabeth energy services company Energyworx is poised to supply several Nelson Mandela Bay outlets of a national fast food chain with green power.



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Energyworx is awaiting approval from the National Energy Regulator of South Africa (Nersa), after which it will start supplying more than a dozen KFC outlets in the Bay with renewable energy. It operates from Port Elizabeth's technology and innovation hub and the custodian of the metro's SmartCity ambitions, the Propella Business Incubator in Humewood.

This was revealed by Energyworx director Tim Whitaker, who said the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Municipality was the only metro authority in the country which allowed "wheeling". This enabled Energyworx, through a licensed renewable energy retailer, to supply renewable energy - such as that from wind and solar sources - to commercial entities in the region.

Whitaker, 44, who is a co-director of the company, along with his partner Khaled El-Jabi, 45, said that Energyworx was an implementing agent which secured power through PowerX.

Pioneered by the African Energy Exchange through its PowerX entity in 2009, which secured Nelson Mandela Bay for its pilot wheeling project, renewable energy wheeling helps to alleviate the consumption pressure on the national power grid -

particularly during peak demand periods.

PowerX is the licensed applicant for the KFC renewable energy supply contract, while Energyworx is the implementing agent. Energyworx, which focuses on delivering improved energy efficiencies and thereby energy cost reductions for its clients, has, through PowerX, been supplying SPAR outlets in the region since 2012.

Whitaker, who entered the energy efficiency field after working in high energy-consuming foundries, said Energyworx was delighted at having secured its latest project with KFC, which was just awaiting Nersa approval. "As an indication of the benefits to KFC, the company should field a 3% saving in rand terms of its overall energy costs and at no cost to that company," he said.

Whitaker said some of the company's clients had already been using 100% renewable energy at their businesses. "Our target clients are small and medium business, and specifically those who do not have internal energy management departments or professionals," he said. "We assess the companies' energy usage systems and patterns, which includes how, where and when energy is used.

"This allows us to advise the company on where and how they can make energy savings, which are often significant for the companies.

"This in turn reduces their operating costs and can also provide them with the opportunity to tap into renewable energy, helping to make those businesses more environmentally friendly."

Whitaker listed the company's core offerings as green energy trading, energy performance contracting and energy supply contracting. According to Whitaker, an important component of Energyworx's business model was that their services came at minimal costs to their clients. "Energyworx derives its income from the energy savings it secures for clients, therefore meaning that there is minimal on-cost for our customers," he said.

Whitaker said his company was set to participate in the coveted Tech-Nvst programme, which assists small tech businesses to ready themselves for investment, exit and global expansion.

"Part of our considerations for future growth is expanding into other African markets and specifically into the East Africa region," he said.

Propella Business incubation manager Anita Palmer said Energyworx had already delivered significant energy costs savings for Propella.

Source: Herald