

Suppliers benefit from Woolworths partnership deal

A partnership between Woolworths, the UK Department for International Development (DFID) and the National Business Initiative (NBI) will result in the retailer's suppliers receiving free energy advice and assessments.



The initiative has seen Woolworths engage 150 of its suppliers to participate in energy audits fully paid for by the NBI/DFID programme - making them one of the leading South African companies interfacing with energy and sustainability management with their suppliers.

The widespread energy audits are already underway, with a positive response from Woolworths suppliers. To date Woolworths has engaged 113 medium-sized suppliers to work with the NBI, including 24 clothing and textile, 16 general merchandise and 73 foods suppliers. They have also included 58 small suppliers across various business units that include food, marketing, clothing and non-trade procurement.

Thrilled with commitment

Val Geen, head of Energy at the NBI, said they were thrilled with Woolworths' commitment and swift action on this campaign. "It truly illustrates their determination to shape a sustainable future through business leadership and decisive action.

"Not only has it assisted us in reaching our private sector energy efficiency (PSEE) targets, but it is also the way to go if

large companies recognise a role for themselves in promoting the sustainable development of SMEs," says Geen.

Out of the medium-sized suppliers, 51 have commenced with paperwork and are working towards signing contracts, while 16 of the smaller suppliers have also begun a similar process. Five site surveys have been completed and four suppliers have participated via remote advice and guidance provided by workshops and telephone advice line.

"Our medium-sized suppliers will each undergo a free four-day site survey carried out by skilled and experienced energy consultants to identify priority energy saving opportunities," said Justin Smith, Woolworths head of Sustainability.

"The small suppliers will participate in a one-day workshop on energy management and receive a free one day site survey carried out by skilled and experienced energy consultants to identify priority energy saving opportunities."

Distribution facilities

Woolworths also participated in the strategic energy management offering which entailed audits to review three Woolworths distribution facilities, with the PSEE programme partially subsidising the assessments.

Cape Town based Carbon and Energy Africa (Pty) Ltd (C&EA) completed the energy assessment of three distribution centres: Montague Gardens and Racecourse Gardens in Cape Town and Maxmead in Durban.

As a result, an energy review report was compiled and presented to Woolworths with results and recommendations. Even with a significant focus on energy over a number of years, new savings opportunities were identified. As an example, for one of the new projects, it was calculated that an initial investment of just R556,000 would translate into R14m in savings over the next ten years.

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