

Saving R9 000 per month with solar energy installation

Master Power Technologies (MPT) has taken its first step into the world of sustainable energy production with a R475 000 solar panel installation at its head office in Randburg. MPT has been researching the efficacy of solar power for some time. "Having done our homework, we decided that implementing a solar solution at our own office would be the best way to demonstrate to clients that we were capable of recommending and installing solar solutions for them," says Master Power chief executive officer, Menno Parsons.

The solution Master Power designed was installed on top of the

car ports in the parking lot. Each of the two parking bays has 80 x 250 watt PV panels coupled to a 20 kW inverter, totalling 40 kW potential power in ideal solar conditions. The solar panels occupy a total area of 600 m² and are perfectly suited for a rooftop installation.

The total cost of the system including all the necessary cabling and mounting equipment was R475 000. Therefore, producing an average of 150 kWh per day, the system has an expected payback period of four years and four months in terms of savings from reduced electricity costs. Clarifying the savings MPT will achieve,

Parsons says that an average of 150 kWh per day translates into an average saving of R9 000 per month with current electricity tariffs.

With Eskom asking for another 25% increase in its fees, the payback period will actually be far less. "In addition, we haven't even included the cost benefits of having our own green power supply that does not depend on diesel or petrol and allows employees to remain productive during periods of load shedding."

The solar PV system is a once-off cost with a maintenance life of 25 years, which in the long run will provide significant savings. Not only is it economically beneficial, but it is an environmentally friendly means of obtaining an alternative energy source.

The solar project took approximately two months to install. As this was a first for the MPT team, depending on the site, future installations should be conducted in a shorter period.

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