

# Vodacom KZN spends big to improve network

Vodacom KwaZulu-Natal is making a significant investment of over R1bn in the current financial year to enhance network connectivity for its customers. This investment aims to bolster network capacity and resilience, while also expanding access to connectivity across the province. A special focus is being placed on improving connectivity in deep rural areas.



“In pursuing our aim of creating an inclusive digital society, we are making a significant investment into the region’s network. By expanding access to reliable, quality connectivity through the deployment of more sites and network upgrades, we aim to provide an exceptional network experience to our customers. With this effort, we hope to bring the benefits of digitalisation to all communities we serve,” says Imran Khan, managing executive, Vodacom KwaZulu-Natal.

From this expenditure, R700m will go towards projects for radio access network, network capacity and upgrades, with R173m allocated to improving core network infrastructure. The region plans to modernise 429 base station sites and expand LTE capacity to 774 sites in the current financial year.



## Vodacom invests R570m to improve Western Cape network connectivity

Lindsey Schutters 29 Aug 2023



“Vodacom KwaZulu-Natal’s 4G population coverage is standing at 95.8%. We are rolling out 23 new urban sites and 129 deep rural sites across the region this financial year to expand this reach and drive digital inclusion, especially in underserved areas of the province. In addition, we now have circa 200 sites on 5G, with plans to switch on another 122 within the financial year,” adds Khan.

## Vodacom outperforms rivals in KZN

As a result of increased investment in network services, the network boasts a call drop rate of 0.34% and a call setup success rate of 99.4%. The region also outperformed rivals in providing the highest *overall reliability* score and best service for voice calls in an independent benchmarking audit by umlaut, part of Accenture.

“These results are testament to our commitment to delivering a quality network experience to customers. With our reliable widespread coverage, we are ensuring that individuals and businesses, regardless of their location, are able to reap the benefits of connectivity,” explains Khan.

Widespread loadshedding continues to affect the network in the region. To keep customers connected, Vodacom is investing R235m into energy projects, including the procurement of 68 generators to add to an existing fleet of over 196 and increasing base station site power standby time to a minimum of four hours. These upgrades will improve network capacity and availability, particularly during stage 4-6 loadshedding.

## **Cost to communicate**

The cost to communicate remains a critical issue for customers facing major economic pressures. Vodacom KZN introduced personalised discounted voice and data offers such as Just4You, Just4You Town bundles for residents in certain KZN towns and bigger prepaid data bundles with prepaid LTE to make connectivity affordable. As a result, more customers can affordably use data, and consequently, data traffic has grown by 40% in the province over the past year.

In driving inclusion for all, Vodacom supports the Code Like a Girl initiative, aimed at inspiring more girls to explore careers that require coding skills to help them get a start in the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields and industries. The region will be running an instalment of the programme, which trains girls between 14 and 18 years old in coding and other IT skills, in October this year.

“Inclusive access to connectivity is how we are meeting our purpose in shaping a digitally enabled society and contributing to sustainable economic growth. At Vodacom KwaZulu-Natal, we remain committed to accelerating and expanding access to internet services, such as employment, education, healthcare and financial services, that can transform lives,” concludes Khan.

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