



# IMPOWER

Solar Energy & Storage

## Customer Story

Breaking Boundaries in Service Delivery





## CHALLENGE



Econo Foods is a leading food service provider specialising in frozen and chilled products across Southern Africa. In their quest to become a prominent leader on the African continent,

the company required a viable solution to support its stores during power outages, ensuring lower utility bills and enhancing sustainability by reducing their carbon footprint with renewable energy solutions.

## SOLUTION



Over a three year period, Econo Foods have installed approximately 2 Megawatts of Solar PV across 14 sites in Southern Africa.

This implementation has empowered them to maintain their brand's pledge to its customers: "To ensure a continuously low price promise while simultaneously producing clean energy".

## BENEFITS



These solar PV plants have enabled Econo Foods to significantly reduce their electricity bills and consistently uphold their commitment to their customers.

As a result, the organisation yields an impressive return on investment, saving on average R100 million over a 20-year lifespan. In addition, they positively impact surrounding communities by creating jobs for the locals in solar panel installation and offering them fresh produce when power outages are rife. Lastly, they also ensure all their operations positively impact the environment, as demonstrated with a combined carbon saving of over 3000 tons Co<sub>2</sub>/year.

# ECONO FOODS PTY LTD -

## Breaking Boundaries in Service Delivery

Established in 1996 as a chicken distribution agency, Econo Foods is a premier food service provider specialising in frozen and chilled products in the Free State, Northern Province, Eastern Cape, Western Cape, Northern Cape, Gauteng and Lesotho. Since opening the first factory shop 25 years ago in Hilton Bloemfontein, Econo Foods have grown exponentially, with a further opening of 27 stores nationally along with 2 in Lesotho. This broad customer base in Southern Africa has led them to earn a reliable and sustainable supplier reputation.

From the outset, Econo Foods had a clear-cut goal: To provide top quality products at the best possible prices while offering an unrivalled service delivery experience, including exceptional customer satisfaction. Implementing more sustainable energy solutions at their various stores enables this independently-owned company to remain committed to levels of superiority and exceptional customer satisfaction, ultimately guaranteeing a more personal and flexible experience from order to delivery.

### CHALLENGE



Businesses have become increasingly dependent on electronic devices along with the technology that powers them. As a result, companies are utilising various innovative techniques to operate more efficiently. However, power outages seize all technological functionalities, consequently causing businesses operations to grind to a halt. As Econo Foods hold a large number of items to ensure inventory levels meet customer demand, the challenge lies in the significant strain placed on these numbers by taking down refrigerators and other storage mechanisms owing to the rolling blackouts. What's more, an outage increases food waste and throws off inventory tracking, thereby inhibiting operations and productivity. For Econo Foods, the threat is even more critical, as there is a high probability of them rapidly losing the necessary inventory to meet customer demands, subsequently hampering their longstanding reputation of reliability.



Due to the adverse effects of fossil fuels on the environment, energy-efficient buildings and industrial applications have become essential in the Food and Beverage industry. Furthermore, to increase energy efficiency, the reduction of specific energy consumption is needed, thereby highlighting the need for sustainable energy technologies. As such, the organisations objective is to become more sustainable by reducing its carbon footprint through implementing renewable energy practices, which present substantial advantages that positively impact the communities of their stores and the overall environment.

With the drastic increase in utility tariffs and rapid electricity bill escalation in South Africa, Econo Foods, like many other businesses, have faced astronomical utility bills, resulting in increased running costs and reduced profitability. Therefore, to continue providing top quality products at the most desirable prices, an imperative decision was made to employ a more economical and sustainable energy solution at the various stores to secure unsurpassed customer loyalty.

While Econo Foods remains committed to service excellence and customer satisfaction, management has sought innovative solutions to overcome this energy hurdle in a bid to meet their business, profitability, and sustainability benchmarks. Their decision to seek alternative energy sources has enabled them to consistently expand their business operations by effecting renewable energy solutions.

## SOLUTION



Following a comprehensive review of the available renewable energy opportunities, Econo Foods elected **IMPOWER's Solar Energy and Storage solutions**, drawing on its extensive capabilities, scalability, and low total cost of ownership. Further, the professional preparation and consultations during the lifecycle of the project phases enabled Econo Foods to instil trust in all that **IMPOWER** offer thereby, building a sound foundation for a lifetime partnership. As a result, within just a few months, Econo Foods was able to maximise the capabilities delivered by the solar PV plants.

... building a sound foundation for a lifetime partnership.

## IMPOWERING ECONO FOODS STORES AND DISTRIBUTION CENTRES



### Fauna, Bloemfontein | Free State

#### ABOUT THE SOLAR PLANT



YEAR COMMISSIONED:  
2019



PLANT CAPACITY:  
209 KWP



20 YEAR SAVINGS:  
≈ R15.5Mill

#### ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS



CARBON SAVINGS:  
≈ 431 Tons CO<sub>2</sub>/year



EQUIVALENT TREES PLANTED:  
≈ 7 420



## Hilton, Bloemfontein | Free State

### ABOUT THE SOLAR PLANT



**YEAR COMMISSIONED:**  
2019



**PLANT CAPACITY:**  
184.25 KWP



**20 YEAR SAVINGS:**  
≈ R11.7Mill

### ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS



**CARBON SAVINGS:**  
≈ 336 tons CO<sub>2</sub>/year



**EQUIVALENT TREES PLANTED:**  
≈ 6 923



## East End, Bloemfontein | Free State

### ABOUT THE SOLAR PLANT



**YEAR COMMISSIONED:**  
2019



**PLANT CAPACITY:**  
107.20 KWP



**20 YEAR SAVINGS:**  
≈ 8Mill

### ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS



**CARBON SAVINGS:**  
≈ 222 Tons CO<sub>2</sub>/year



**EQUIVALENT TREES PLANTED:**  
≈ 3 934



## Kimberley Factory Shop | Northern Cape

### ABOUT THE SOLAR PLANT



**YEAR COMMISSIONED:**  
2020



**PLANT CAPACITY:**  
150.75 KWP



**20 YEAR SAVINGS:**  
≈ R9Mill

### ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS



**CARBON SAVINGS:**  
≈ 261 tons CO<sub>2</sub>/year



**EQUIVALENT TREES PLANTED:**  
≈ 4 193



## Welkom | Free State

### ABOUT THE SOLAR PLANT



**YEAR COMMISSIONED:**  
2020



**PLANT CAPACITY:**  
105.90 KWP



**20 YEAR SAVINGS:**  
≈ R9Mill

### ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS



**CARBON SAVINGS:**  
≈ 213 Tons CO<sub>2</sub>/year



**EQUIVALENT TREES PLANTED:**  
≈ 2 387



## Rustenburg | Northern West

### ABOUT THE SOLAR PLANT



**YEAR COMMISSIONED:**  
2020



**PLANT CAPACITY:**  
128.64 KWP



**20 YEAR SAVINGS:**  
≈ R15Mill

### ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS



**CARBON SAVINGS:**  
≈ 224 tons CO<sub>2</sub>/year



**EQUIVALENT TREES PLANTED:**  
≈ 2 760



## Klerksdorp Factory Shop | North West

### ABOUT THE SOLAR PLANT



**YEAR COMMISSIONED:**  
2020



**PLANT CAPACITY:**  
90.20 KWP



**20 YEAR SAVINGS:**  
≈ 6.7Mill

### ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS



**CARBON SAVINGS:**  
≈ 159 Tons CO<sub>2</sub>/year



**EQUIVALENT TREES PLANTED:**  
≈ 1 160



## Klerksdorp N12 | Northern West

### ABOUT THE SOLAR PLANT



**YEAR COMMISSIONED:**  
2020



**PLANT CAPACITY:**  
243.75 KWP



**20 YEAR SAVINGS:**  
≈ R25Mill

### ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS



**CARBON SAVINGS:**  
≈ 416 tons CO<sub>2</sub>/year



**EQUIVALENT TREES PLANTED:**  
≈ 3 678



## Potchefstroom | North West

### ABOUT THE SOLAR PLANT



**YEAR COMMISSIONED:**  
2020



**PLANT CAPACITY:**  
120.51 KWP



**20 YEAR SAVINGS:**  
≈ 8Mill

### ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS



**CARBON SAVINGS:**  
≈ 212 Tons CO<sub>2</sub>/year



**EQUIVALENT TREES PLANTED:**  
≈ 1 609



## Bethlehem | Free State

### ABOUT THE SOLAR PLANT



**YEAR COMMISSIONED:**  
2020



**PLANT CAPACITY:**  
81.90 KWP



**20 YEAR SAVINGS:**  
≈ R7Mill

### ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS



**CARBON SAVINGS:**  
≈ 145 tons CO<sub>2</sub>/year



**EQUIVALENT TREES PLANTED:**  
≈ 1 423



## Gqeberha | Eastern Cape

### ABOUT THE SOLAR PLANT



**YEAR COMMISSIONED:**  
2021



**PLANT CAPACITY:**  
235.44 KWP



**20 YEAR SAVINGS:**  
≈ 10Mill

### ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS



**CARBON SAVINGS:**  
≈ 364 Tons CO<sub>2</sub>/year



## Cape Town | Western Cape

### ABOUT THE SOLAR PLANT



YEAR COMMISSIONED:  
2021



PLANT CAPACITY:  
260.28 KWP



CARBON SAVINGS:  
≈ 426 tons CO<sub>2</sub>/year



20 YEAR SAVINGS:  
≈ R14.6Mill

### ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS



## BENEFITS



The benefits of solar are undeniable. Solar panels not only have zero adverse effects on the environment, but they also reduce one's energy bills. Further, versatile installation means solar panels can be mounted anywhere, thereby providing electricity to even the most remote regions. Notably, less energy is lost during transportation and distribution as solar reduces the distances and increases efficiency levels of solar panels.

In merely three months from the initial solar PV plant installation in 2019, the organisation started reaping the rewards from the first plant. With a combined **2 MWP** Solar PV installation across **14 sites** in Southern Africa, Econo Foods can now maintain a total carbon saving of over **3000 tons Co<sub>2</sub>/year** while saving on average **R100 million** over a 20-year lifespan.

On this premise, Econo Foods can unquestionably preserve its brand commitment to its valued customers, ensuring their continuous low price promise while producing clean energy. Not only does this reduce their electricity bills and generate a profitable return on investment, but the organisation also becomes more sustainable, thereby positively impacting their local communities and the environment in its entirety.

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Consistent with their customer-first values, Econo Foods strives to deliver premium quality foods at optimal prices while offering an unsurpassed service delivery experience to ensure the highest levels of satisfaction for their valued customers. What's more, by proactively harnessing green energy solutions, they positively impact surrounding communities and the environment at large. Importantly, this privately-owned entity enables them to consistently deliver on their promise to their patrons: "To provide them with an extensively customised and flexible engagement from order to delivery".



# Contact Us

**Tel:** 021 300 0470 **info@impower.solar**

Unit F1 CTX Business Park, Freight Road, Airport Industria 7490



**[www.impower.solar](http://www.impower.solar)**