

Vodacom invests R570m to improve Western Cape network connectivity

 By [Lindsey Schutters](#)

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Vodacom Western Cape will invest R570m this year to improve its network quality, capacity and reach. The investment will focus R470m on expanding 5G, modernising existing infrastructure, and upgrading LTE sites, with the remaining R100m going towards energy projects to ensure uninterrupted connectivity during load shedding.



Vodacom Western Cape has expanded 5G access with the spectrum acquired in the Ices auction. Source: Zz/Pexels

"As we continue to connect for a better future, we remain focused on the quality, reliability and expansion of our network," said Carol Hall, managing executive, Vodacom Western Cape at a press briefing in Cape Town.

"Our significant investment into infrastructure upgrades is enabling customers to reap the transformative benefits of technology. This includes access to education, health and financial digital platforms that promote socio-economic empowerment in the region."



5 broadcasters move to broadcasting band 470 - 694 MHz

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Vodacom picked up 110MHz of high-demand spectrum at the Independent Communications Authority of South Africa's (ICASA) auction in March last year and has used this to quadruple its 5G network reach in the Western Cape over the last year.

Unlocking 5G potential

"We identified that the Western Cape has the highest percentage of 5G devices in circulation in the country," explains Christien Geldenhuys, head of network operations: Vodacom Western Cape.

With 5G now available on over 200 base stations in the Western Cape, Vodacom customers in various high-demand urban areas have access to the associated substantial network capacity and speeds.

“Deploying 5G to areas with a high density of 5G devices has allowed us to shift those users off of LTE to free up capacity,” she continues.

Geldenhuys said that the difference between energy use between 5G and LTE network connectivity is the same, but 5G does offer more network capacity which improves the user experience.

The acquired spectrum has also enabled several network firsts in 5G connectivity, including a 5G indoor solution, which was deployed at the Cape Town International Convention Centre in time for the AfricaCom Conference in November last year.

Vodacom also deployed 5G ocean coverage, which allowed for HD live-streaming of the 50th Ocean Race in February this year.

“We’re excited about the possibilities of 5G, especially as we are the Vodacom region with the most 5G-enabled smartphones. Expanding this next-generation technology opens opportunities to further improve our network performance and deliver innovative solutions that can build an inclusive digital future,” says Hall.

Helping SMEs

Although the 5G advancements are great for marketing, the network operators has also been busy with other projects.

Vodacom launched V-Hub, which is a free online advice platform designed to help SMEs grow their businesses, through its Vodacom Business division.

The company consulted with experts to bring SMEs objective, trustworthy and actionable advice, especially as SMEs embark on a digital journey.

The advice also guides SMEs on how to find and keep customers, protect business data online, financial and business best practice and more.

“Our aim is to deliver greater value to our customers through unparalleled network connectivity. Testament to this commitment is the results of the latest biannual network report by the independent benchmarking organisation umlaut, part of Accenture,” explains Hall.

“Vodacom was ranked 'Best in Test' ahead of mobile network competitors and scored the highest for network reliability, data services and crowdsourced network quality.”

Vodacom Western Cape has also tried to make connectivity more affordable in the region and introduced personalised discounted bundles Just4You, Just4You Town bundles for residents in certain Western Cape towns and bigger prepaid

data bundles with Prepaid LTE to make connectivity affordable.

This has helped data traffic to grow by 40% in the province over the past year. The company also expects further growth on the back of investments into improving indoor signal quality and expanding LTE capacity and signal reach in rural areas.

Vodacom deployed LTE on the newly acquired 700MHz spectrum on more than a quarter of its installed base in the region to help achieve these goals..

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