

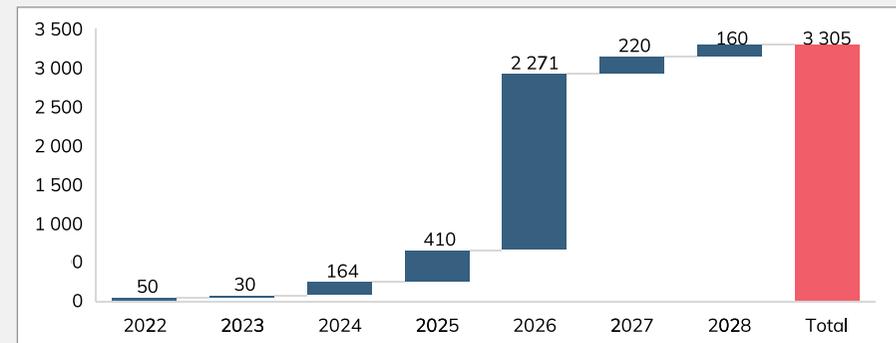
Case study | Mining sector

Several years ago, the rapid growth of renewable energy was seen as a potential solution to South Africa's electricity challenges. Utility-scale solar PV projects offered relatively short construction timelines of about 18 to 24 months, and the ability for the private sector to generate its own power made renewables an attractive option. This was further supported by Eskom's financial constraints and the slow progress on the Medupi and Kusile power stations, creating strong incentives for private sector participation.

The numbers highlight the progress made. By October 2025, 6,701 MW of generation capacity was operational under the Renewable Energy Independent Power Producer (IPP) programmes, with an additional 6,951 MW identified as preferred bidders and moving toward operation (source: IPP Office). According to the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), renewable energy accounted for 8% of South Africa's electricity generation mix in 2024. This share is expected to grow significantly as projects currently in the pipeline are completed.

The mining sector has been a leading contributor to this transition. Among listed companies, more than 3,300 MW of projects are either operational, under construction, or have power purchase agreements in place and are scheduled to begin construction soon. Most of these projects are expected to come online in 2026. Key offtakers include Sasol, Valterra Platinum, Rio Tinto, Sibanye-Stillwater, and Northam Platinum.

Renewables capacity additions from listed mining companies by date of commissioning (MW)



Source: Company reports, media reports, Ashburton analysis

In the coming years, as renewables continue to claim a larger chunk of the pie, time-of-day tariffs (where electricity prices fluctuate through the course of the day) are likely to come into focus. Here, the ability to shift electricity supply time profiles to match that of demand is crucial, which is where battery storage shines bright. For example, the California grid frequently has days where battery storage delivers more than 10,000 MW during the evening peak hours, a substantial figure in a grid where the 2024 peak demand was 48,323 MW.

Closer to home, the battery energy storage IPP programmes already have 1,744 MW in progress, which will help keep the lights on after the sun goes down. Ideally, in the not-to-distant future, the sunset of load shedding driven by the rollout of clean energy generation will become reality.