

Johnson Controls boosts training, stockholding to launch intelligent, mid-range plug-and-play Hitachi SET FREE Σ VRFs in South Africa

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Johnson Controls' recent 60 percent acquisition of Hitachi is starting to bear fruit for the South African market. In addition to increased stockholding, Johnson Controls has put a huge effort into training local HVAC providers on configuration, setup and installation of the HVAC range, with a big focus on the Hitachi **SET FREE Σ VRFs**.

"This range of Japanese HVAC solutions has a reputation for solid engineering and reliability—and with the addition of Johnson Controls' advanced HVAC control and management capabilities, it's a very welcomed addition to the solutions available in South Africa. For the local market, one range is going to be of particular interest: the mid-market Hitachi SET FREE Σ VRFs" says Neil Cameron of Johnson Controls.

The SET FREE Σ VRF range is modern, intelligent, plug-and-play HVAC solution for small, medium and even larger facilities. It fits neatly between Johnson Controls' domestic and high-end York, and industrial Sabroe/Frick chillers. It not only fills a gap in the Johnson Controls catalogue, it meets many of the HVAC cost, feature, flexibility and reliability challenges currently facing South African users looking for mid-market solutions.

Hitachi SET FREE Σ VRF range is the eighth generation of its VRF solution and the first to combine Johnson Controls' technologies, which includes connectivity to building management systems, bringing greater intelligence, control and cost efficiency. Other standout features include design flexibility, highest efficiency in its class, and the range's small footprint, which makes it easy to install, move and maintain.

"These are important factors in the local market where energy costs are higher, and the slow economy is compelling users to add greater weighting to lifecycle costs," notes Cameron.

To secure a place in the local market for this range, Johnson Controls is addressing three important factors: stockholding, technology support and training.

Says Cameron: "Our stockholding of key components has increased nationally, and supply chain turnaround times have increased dramatically to 24 hours. We have also invested in building technology support centres. One has already been constructed in Johannesburg and two more will be built in Cape Town and Durban in the next two years.

"We are, furthermore, providing HVAC solution providers with hands-on training on solution development, configuration, installation and fault-finding. Approximately 80 people have already completed this training."

"I believe this product is well positioned to meet local requirements. It is tried and tested and well established worldwide as a top end, reliable solution. With broader representation in the market and a strong support base, we believe the Hitachi SET FREE Σ VRF range will find a ready market in South Africa.

Its features speak for themselves.

Key features include:

- Design flexibility—the range is modular and can supply from 8 to 96HP, delivering 22-272kW of cooling and 25-300kW of heating.
- High efficiency—the range achieves the highest COP rating (4.90) in its class.
- Small footprint—the range has the smallest footprint per KW of heating; modules can be transported in an elevator and by pallet jack.

BMS connectivity—this means individual billing becomes possible, as does better control of performance.