



Case study

ISF and Vertiv: A high-performance partnership in distribution and deployment



Background

Established in 2007, the ISF Group is a specialist engineering integrator with operations within Southern Africa. The group delivers projects in information and communications technology (ICT), energy and specialised projects.

ISF ICT Infrastructure provides critical power, thermal management, data centre infrastructure, monitoring and management solutions for mission-critical environments in telecoms, banking, manufacturing and government. It also delivers management and maintenance services.

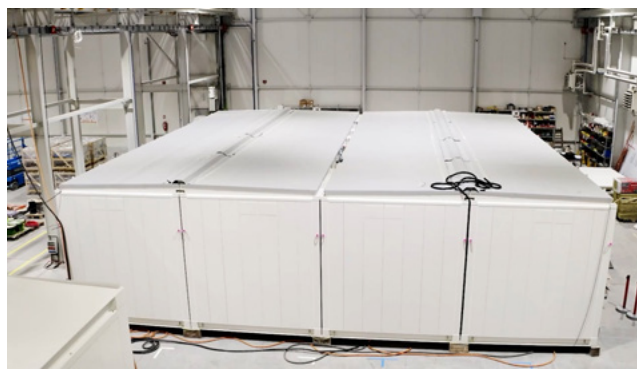
Vertiv and ISF ICT Infrastructure have built a long-standing partnership, teaming up to deliver high-availability infrastructure across Africa. This recent collaboration includes the deployment of a state-of-the-art data centre in Malawi for a local IT firm managing one of the country's largest fibre networks. The facility supports broader digital access with scalable and reliable IT solutions to accelerate digital adoption.

Industry: ICT

Region: Africa

Company profile:

ISF Group is a highly diversified, integrated engineering, procurement, construction and management (EPCM) company, providing specialised solutions in the energy, water, ICT, transportation and construction sectors.



Challenge

Deploy a scalable, modular data centre in Malawi without the delays and cost overruns of traditional builds.

A traditional brick-and-mortar facility would have required longer lead times, on-site construction, and specialised local labour, driving up costs. The customer needed a faster path to colocation, one that could handle harsh conditions, including high heat and dust, without compromising availability.

The solution had to be modular, cost-effective, and expandable from 50 to 100 racks, with built-in redundancy and advanced cooling.



“The collaboration between ISF and Vertiv is built on mutual expertise and a shared commitment to delivering high-performance, scalable, and efficient data centre solutions. ISF adds value through its in-depth understanding of Vertiv’s full offering, its exclusive focus on the Vertiv brand within its ICT infrastructure business, and its strong operational presence across the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region. Vertiv, in turn, provides an end-to-end portfolio of reliable, energy-efficient infrastructure technologies backed by a globally recognised brand,”

— **Gavin Katzenstein,**

Operations Director at ISF ICT Infrastructure.



Solution

Pre-configured, integrated design cuts deployment time and reduces risk.

To meet project requirements, the Vertiv™ SmartMod™ was deployed for its integrated power and cooling, rapid assembly and shorter time-to-market. The prefabricated modules were manufactured in Europe under strict quality control before being shipped to Malawi, avoiding delays from material shortages and reducing reliance on local skilled labour.

The Vertiv™ SmartMod™ is a modular platform optimised for quick deployment of critical IT assets and ideal for small data centres up to 10 racks and 100kW. It enables capacity expansion in a fraction of the time required for traditional builds.

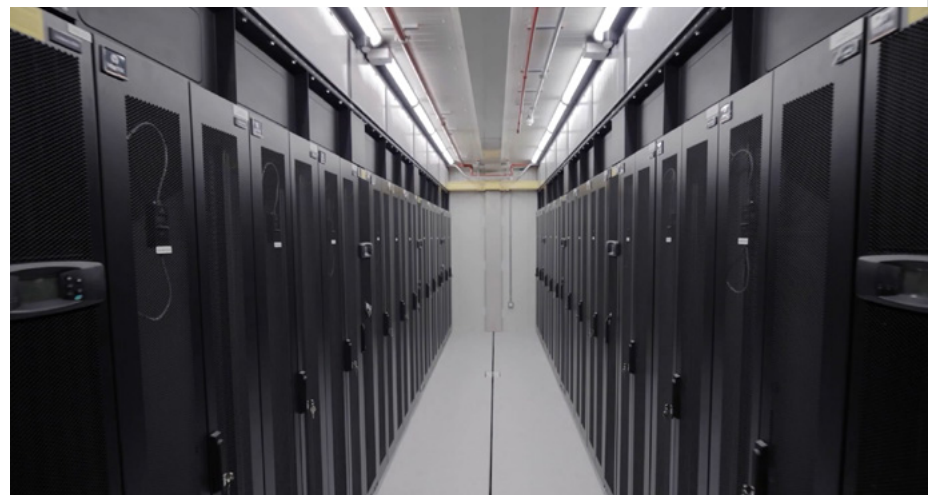
The complete solution includes five prefabricated modules, covering 204 square metres (approx. 2,200 square feet) with dedicated power and IT rooms:

- Vertiv™ Power Module in 2N configuration, capable of supporting power densities of 3-5 kW per rack of IT load
- 2N Vertiv™ EXL S1 uninterruptible power supply (UPS) having a 200 kVA rating backed by valve regulated lead-acid (VRLA) batteries to provide 10 minutes of runtime per side at 312 kW
- Vertiv™ Liebert® CRV in-row cooling systems with N+1 redundancy per row
- Vertiv™ Liebert® PDX compact direct expansion cooling system for the modular power room
- Vertiv™ Geist™ rack power distribution units (rPDU) within each of the racks
- Vertiv™ rack enclosures
- Access control system and closed-circuit television (CCTV) cameras for security
- Fire alarm and suppression system within each module
- Vertiv™ monitoring software to provide remote alarm management

Results

Faster builds, smarter growth:

- Rapid deployment – The Tier III data centre in Malawi was built, tested and delivered in 28 weeks, with just seven weeks for shipping and five days for on-site assembly, cutting implementation time by more than half compared to traditional builds.
- Faster ROI, stronger market position – The rapid deployment enabled the customer to recoup investment faster and secure a competitive edge in a high-growth market.
- Scalable growth model – The modular ‘pay as you grow’ approach allows cost-effective expansion without heavy upfront capital, allowing the business to scale with customer demand.



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