CAPE
Business News
FOUNDED 1980 National Distribution NOVEMBER 2026

Veolia and Overstrand's partnership for a sustainable future



Western Cape export fund could help cut food compliance costs



How spray technology improves cooling efficiency in data centres



Western Cape investment hits R21.8 billion, says Wesgro

Despite a challenging global economic climate, the Western Cape's investment agency exceeded its annual targets, boosting exports, creating jobs, and expanding into new markets across China, India, and the Middle East.



By Larry Claasen

THE Western Cape has attracted R21,8 billion in investment in the 2025/26 period, with the potential of creating 3,500 jobs over five years, according to Wesgro's latest annual report.

This is a significant increase from the R14,6 billion the regional economic development agency managed to attract in the previous financial year. The R21,8 billion in investments stemmed from 16 projects spanning a broad range of economic sectors.

Exceeding targets amidst global headwinds

The investment in the region, however, comes at a difficult time for the country and the global economy.

"Conflict in the Middle East set much of the tone for the world economy this year, straining shipping and air routes through the Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz," noted Wesgro chairperson, Dr Shirley Zinn in the report.

She explained that for energy-importing economies like South Africa's, such disruptions arrive quickly and close to home. Higher fuel prices feed into the cost of transporting and producing goods, raising the cost of doing business. Food prices follow, inflation takes hold, and in time, the pressure extends to household budgets and the cost of credit.

The effects of this type of disruption are global.

"The International Monetary Fund has already trimmed its projection for global growth in 2026 by 0,2 percentage points to 3,1%. Add shifting trade relationships and intense competition for investment, and the year asked hard questions of every economy, ours included," she said.

Biovac and green energy lead the charge

Wesgro CEO Wrenelle Stander noted that new investment was facilitated from key global source markets into priority sectors such as the green economy, life sciences and health, logistics, food and beverages, green manufacturing, and services.

Key investments include a R7 billion injection by The Biovac Institute to create an end-to-end multi-vaccine manufacturing site in Cape Town. This will boost its vaccine manufacturing capacity from 150 million to 560 million doses annually and create 450 jobs.

Aside from Biovac, a R7 billion investment by H1 Holdings into the Zen and Bergriver wind farms, which will generate 194MW in power in the Cape Winelands, in partnership with GreenCape, is also a boost to the region's economy.

These wind farms are majority owned by ACCIONA Energía, the largest 100% renewable energy company, with H1 Capital and Chariot Limited, a London Stock Exchange-listed Africa-focused energy group, owning the 49% balance.

Other notable commitments include a R450 million investment by medical company Inuversal Group, a R317 million investment by Wellington-based Atlantic Fruit Processors, and a R114 million investment by German tech group Intense AG. Wesgro also reported a R5 billion investment in the real estate and infrastructure sector in Cape Town, which will create about 1,500 jobs, though the investing group asked to remain anonymous.

Expanding exports and breaking into new markets

On the trade front, Wesgro secured 51 export declarations worth R3,7 billion, supporting 1,837 potential direct jobs. Its engagements reached 48 countries through 81 outward missions and 53 inward delegations.

This helped grow the province's export markets, opening new ground in China, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), India, Brazil, and the Middle East, while maintaining existing markets in the EU, UK, US, and Africa. These efforts saw Wesgro substantially exceed its trade target of R1,6 billion.

However, this was the first year of reporting against the specific indicator of the number of companies providing an export declaration. While it set a target of 68 companies, it only managed to sign up 51, resulting in a shortfall of 17.

"Though fewer companies submitted export declarations than anticipated, the declarations secured were of higher value and still

Continued on p2

Commercial washroom standards: The overlooked brand risk

How washroom hygiene shapes trust in Cape Town's commercial and hospitality buildings



A neglected washroom can undermine years of brand investment; deliberate provision can quietly reinforce it.

By Charl Broodryk, Director at Nuwkem Hygiene, creators of Ticra®

IN property and business, mastery rarely shows only in the brochure or the lobby. Buildings send signals constantly, and some of the strongest are formed in places leadership seldom visits. The washroom is one of them. A visitor steps in alone, forms a judgement in seconds, and carries that impression back to their view of the organisation as a whole.

Cape Town's hotels, Waterfront retail, professional offices and commercial buildings invest heavily in reception, branding and client experience. The washroom often remains one of the least deliberately managed parts of the same building. That gap is not a small facilities detail. It is an unmanaged brand moment.

Hygiene is how the brand is felt

When a washroom is neglected, users read it as a lack of care about detail. When it is clean, stocked and functional, it works the other way: a practical signal that the organisation can be trusted with larger things.

Read full article on p6

fastenright
Your Stainless Steel Bolt and Nut Experts
S/S Flange Bolts & Nuts NOW in Stock!
CONTACT US
t: 021 534 9095
f: 021 534 5997
sales@fastenright.co.za
www.fastenright.co.za
VISIT US
27 Mail Street
Western Province Park
Epping


best service | competitive price | high stock availability
S/S Flange Bolts & Nuts

Cape Town Manufacturing Support Policy faces wider industry challenges



By Kris van der Bijl

CAPE Town's Manufacturing Support Policy offers qualifying investors relief from municipal fees and approval processes, but manufacturers face a wider set of cost, infrastructure and regulatory constraints that the City's incentives cannot address on their own.

The Manufacturing Support Policy extends the City's support from six industrial areas to all 33.

Approved by Council on 31 March 2026 and launched on 26 May, it is intended to encourage new manufacturing investment rather than reward businesses relocating within Cape Town.

Qualifying projects can access a dedicated City facilitator and waivers of land-use, building-plan and wayleave fees. The policy also provides for faster processing of qualifying applications.

The distinction between municipal incentives and the broader conditions affecting manufacturers is central to the assessment offered by Jacques Moolman, president of the Cape Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

> "City of Cape Town - The City's fee waivers and faster approvals address some of the administrative and cost barriers associated with municipal processes."

He argues that improving competitiveness requires coordinated action by multiple players, not just the metro.

Manufacturers face constraints beyond municipal approvals

Moolman said the industrial environment was constraining efficiency and scale, while manufacturers struggled to generate sufficient returns from their productive assets.

He identified high factory rentals and basic-service costs at firm level, crime and logistics disruptions in industrial precincts, and labour-market policy and ineffective industrial policy implementation at regional level.

The Chamber's Business Environment Surveys, conducted with the Bureau for Economic Research at Stellenbosch University, provide its evidence on business conditions. The latest survey, completed earlier this year, found manufacturers were, according to him, "severely constrained by a dual burden of firm-level regulatory compliance and precinct-level infrastructure failures".

The City's fee waivers and faster approvals address some of the administrative and cost barriers associated with municipal processes. They do not resolve the wider pressures identified by the Chamber, which also require action from other stakeholders.

Moolman said the Chamber's approach was to establish the nature and extent of constraints through manufacturer data, identify the stakeholders responsible and facilitate discussions on possible solutions.

City's policy impact still to be measured

Alderman James Vos, the City's Mayoral Committee Member for Economic Growth, told CBN it would be "premature" to provide verified uptake figures before formal monitoring and verification.

The policy is in its first year of implementation, and the City expects to report more comprehensive information on uptake and impact after its first annual reporting period. A draft standard operating procedure for implementation is being finalised.

Vos said the City had received positive interest from manufacturers and investors, including businesses in the Atlantis industrial area, with "indications of early uptake and enquiries".

The City's work since launch has focused on awareness and engagement. It listed various activities spanning five months, from staff orientation to a stakeholder workshop. Other engagements included a manufacturing business breakfast and a presentation at an NCPC/Atlantis Special Economic Zone workshop.

The City's figures of 15 948 direct jobs and R18.9 billion in investment for 2025/26 relate to its wider sector partnerships, not verified results attributable to the manufacturing policy.

Moolman said the Chamber could not comment meaningfully on the policy's success without data, while welcoming efforts to support and expand manufacturing. He called for a more aggressive and holistic approach covering the entire business environment and manufacturing value chain.

The policy's first annual reporting period should provide a basis for assessing uptake. Its broader economic impact will need to be considered alongside the wider conditions affecting manufacturers' competitiveness.



Western Cape investment hits R21.8 billion, says Wesgro

Continued from p1

delivered strong economic impact," the report noted, adding that targets have been updated in outer years to better reflect actual performance trends while continuing to broaden the exporter base.

The road to a R30 Billion goal

Zinn pointed out that the Western Cape managed to attract investment and grow exports in a difficult global environment.

"Institutions earn their keep in conditions like these. Much was decided far beyond our borders this year, but a province is never powerless. It can make itself easy to invest in, keep its exporters close to their buyers, and present itself credibly to the world," she said.

The overall goal is to attract R30 billion new investment with a focus on targeted areas and markets, resulting in 15,490 jobs in a five year period between 2025/26 to 2029/30.

Wesgrow exceeded its annual outcome target of attracting and facilitating R5,5 billion and creating 2,960 jobs for the 2025/26 period, against the R21,8 billion it attracted, and the 3,566 jobs created.

Local clothing makers sharpen their edge against imports



By Tarryn-Leigh Solomons

SOUTH African clothing manufacturers are using smaller production runs, shorter lead times and tighter quality control to compete with cheaper imports.

The government's Retail, Clothing, Textile, Footwear and Leather Master Plan aims to increase local procurement from 45% to 65% by 2030. This would lift its value from R32 billion to R66 billion and support a target of 330 000 jobs across the value chain.

A 2024 progress report found that major retailers had bought 371 million more units from local manufacturers over five years, a 51% increase on the baseline. More than 20 000 jobs were created during the period.

Government provided R2.5 billion in industry support, while the Industrial Development Corporation supplied R4.4 billion in loan capital to improve productivity and meet demand.

Factories still have room for additional orders. Stats SA's February 2026 figures placed production-capacity utilisation across textiles, clothing, leather and footwear at 70.8%, down slightly from 71.1% a year earlier.

Imports retain a strong hold

Imports remain the biggest challenge. ITC Trade Map data shows that South Africa imported about US$480 million in knitted clothing and US$440 million in non-knitted clothing from China in 2025. China supplied 46% and 40% of the respective import categories.

Retailers are also operating in a difficult consumer market.

Rory Kutisker-Jacobson, portfolio manager at Allan Gray, said in a recent market analysis that no listed clothing retailer had recorded a share-price gain this year.

Mr Price was down 7%, while The Foschini Group had fallen 43%. Pepkor and Truworths traded between those two extremes.

Cash-strapped consumers have shifted towards value, increasing pressure on retailers to control stock and limit markdowns.

Local production carries a higher cost

Bruce McMurray, general manager at Jockey South Africa, said about 95% of the company's garments were manufactured locally through Ninian & Lester in KwaZulu-Natal. The figure has remained stable over the past two years.

Jockey has manufactured in South Africa for 75 years, but McMurray said local businesses still had to contend with raw-material costs, limited access to specialised fabrics and trims and pressure on retail prices.

"The conversation needs to move beyond price alone," he said.

Local production gives manufacturers closer control over quality and allows them to respond faster when demand changes. It also makes it easier to develop clothing suited to South African consumers.

Celeste Burger, founder of Pretoria-based Sista.Love, said all its garments were cut and sewn by the company's own team at its Garsfontein studio. Its fabrics include both local and imported material.

Burger previously outsourced production to cut, make and trim operations, but moved the work back in-house to maintain quality.

Sista.Love produces three or four staple lines and limits most designs to between six and 15 garments.

"For a small brand, the challenge is making the numbers work at low volumes," Burger said.

The business has also moved away from paying seamstresses per construction task. It now pays steady salaries and keeps its designs simple enough to support the model.

Smaller runs cut stock risk

Burger sees the strongest opportunity in smaller batches, pre-orders and clothing made around customers' measurements.

This reduces waste and limits the amount of money tied up in unsold stock. The company's wash-and-wear Fuss Free Collection was developed around demand for practical clothing that requires no ironing.

McMurray sees further growth in everyday clothing and athleisure. He said closer planning between retailers and factories could improve forecasting and align production with customer demand.

Local orders may cost more per unit, but faster replenishment and smaller runs can reduce inventory risk.

That could become the sector's strongest argument as retailers decide whether to place their next orders locally or offshore.

South African textile industry faces R5.11 billion procurement gap

A landmark Constitutional Court ruling has halted the government's new procurement rules, leaving billions of rand flowing to non-local suppliers and threatening thousands of local manufacturing jobs.



By Larry Claasen

THE government leaks R5.11 billion of the R7.52 billion it spends on apparel spend to non-local suppliers, but a recent Constitutional Court ruling has made it difficult to protect local manufactures.

The government, including state owned enterprises and municipalities, is a big buyer of clothing and footwear, ranging from police and military uniforms, to workwear and patient clothing, but this buying power has not been fully utilised to support local manufactures.

This staggering 68% leakage rate reveals a systemic failure to leverage the state's massive buying power for local industrialisation, according to the Lost Threads report compiled by BMA for the Localisation Support Fund.

As this money bypasses our factory floors, the country is currently forfeiting R7.16 billion in GDP and roughly 51,684 direct and indirect jobs that should be supported by the value chain.

The sheer scale of this disconnect between localisation policy and actual procurement is laid bare in the report's findings, which starkly note: "for every rand spent on CTFL [Clothing, Textiles, Footwear and Leather] procurement, only 32 cents can be tracked to local manufacturers and suppliers."

The roots of the "Legal Limbo"

This systemic failure is rooted in a regulatory "legal limbo" created when the 2022 Preferential Procurement Policy Framework Act 5 of 2000 (PPPFA) regulations explicitly removed local content rules, leaving CTFL designation legally binding but practically unenforceable and reliant on individual government departments choosing to police themselves.

To reverse this trend, the report recommended that industry stakeholders use the Draft General Public Procurement Regulations under the 2024 Public Procurement Act as a "critical advocacy opportunity" ahead of the comment deadline to call for stricter selection criteria.

Specifically, it called on the government to confirm CTFL designation under Section 20 and implement strict, exclusionary local content thresholds that disqualify non-compliant bidders and make verified local sourcing a mandatory condition of payment.

The constitutional court setback

The Constitutional Court's recent invalidation of the Public Procurement Act has closed this avenue, meaning the "legal limbo" on local content will be around for a while.

The potential return on such regulatory intervention remains immense, nonetheless.

"Each additional R1 billion redirected to compliant local procurement could support [about] 2,450 direct manufacturing jobs and a further 5,050 indirect jobs across the value chain."

The Cost of poor compliance

Aside from amending the regulations, the report also noted that stricter adherence to existing regulations could make a big difference, as there is a systemic failure to enforce localisation rules across multiple departments.

Compliance rates vary drastically depending on the sector and department. For example, Gauteng Health has a 44% localisation rate, while Eastern Cape Education sits at just 9%.

"The analysis reveals that in many cases the bulk of procurement is going to unconfirmed suppliers, suggesting systemic non-compliance with localisation requirements across multiple departments and provinces," the report said.

The economic upside

Addressing the issue could have a significant impact on the local economy. Moving the localisation rate from the current 32% to the R-CTFL Masterplan target of 60% would nearly double local manufacturing revenue to R4.51 billion.

Every additional R1 billion redirected to compliant local procurement is a highly effective economic lever, supporting thousands of direct manufacturing jobs and even more indirect jobs across the value chain.

Systemic failures in the process

The report also noted that the procurement process itself contains critical failure points that allow non-compliance to flourish. At the tender stage, specifications are often weak or biased toward imports.

There is also an over-reliance on the SBD 6.2 self-declaration form at the bid stage without independent verification, creating a massive loophole for false declarations, and many state entities release funds before local content is verified.

Grindrod runs first private freight train on Transnet network



TRANSNET Rail Infrastructure Manager (TRIM), a division of Transnet SOC Ltd, and Grindrod Limited have marked a major rail reform milestone with the successful completion of Grindrod's first test train on the North-East Corridor.

The operation commenced from Komatipoort on 1 November with the empty leg, and returned on 2 November with 2,991 metric tons, making Grindrod the first private Train Operating Company (TOC) to operate on South Africa's national freight rail network under the country's open-access framework.

The milestone follows the signing of Rail Access Agreements with 12 Train Operating Companies, including Grindrod, and marks the culmination of extensive safety, regulatory and operational readiness processes required to enable third-party operations on the network.

The operation utilised Grindrod-owned locomotives and wagons and demonstrated the company's readiness to commence services on the corridor.

Commercial service from 2027

Grindrod plans to begin commercial operations in 2027, transporting approximately 288 000 tonnes in its first year. Using its two allocated slots on the North-East Corridor, the company will primarily move coal from Mpumalanga to Grindrod's Matola Terminal in Mozambique. Future growth opportunities will be determined by corridor capacity, additional slot allocations and operational efficiencies.

The achievement represents a significant step in implementing South Africa's rail reform agenda and broadening participation in the freight rail sector. It supports efforts to improve network utilisation, move more freight by rail and strengthen the country's logistics system.

As a strategic trade route linking South Africa's mining and industrial heartland with regional markets and export gateways, the North-East Corridor has an important role to play in unlocking additional capacity, improving competitiveness and supporting regional trade.

"No longer a policy concept"

Moshe Motlohi, Chief Executive of Transnet Rail Infrastructure Manager, said: "The successful completion of this test train is a landmark achievement for South Africa's rail reform programme. It demonstrates that open access is no longer a policy concept but an operational reality. Through collaboration with private operators such as Grindrod, we are creating a more competitive and efficient rail network that supports economic growth and strengthens South Africa's logistics capability."

Kwazi Mabaso, Group Chief Executive Officer of Grindrod Limited, said: "This is an important milestone for Grindrod and for the transformation of South Africa's freight logistics sector. As an integrated logistics provider, the ability to combine rail operations with our terminal infrastructure and corridor footprint enables us to deliver greater efficiency, reliability and value to our customers. We are proud to partner with TRIM in demonstrating the practical benefits of rail reform and helping restore rail as the backbone of bulk freight transport."

The successful test train provides a tangible demonstration of how open access can unlock investment, increase network utilisation and strengthen the country's position as a competitive regional trade and logistics hub.

TRIM is the custodian of South Africa's rail infrastructure and facilitates access by Train Operating Companies under the open-access framework. Grindrod is a JSE-listed integrated logistics and shipping group with operations across Southern Africa.

IN THIS ISSUE

12 CSI &CSR

14 Food, Beverage & Dairy Manufacturing & Processing

16 Renewable & Alternative Energy Solutions

19 Metal Fabrication Cutting & Welding

22 Electrical Cables, Accessories, Test & Measurement

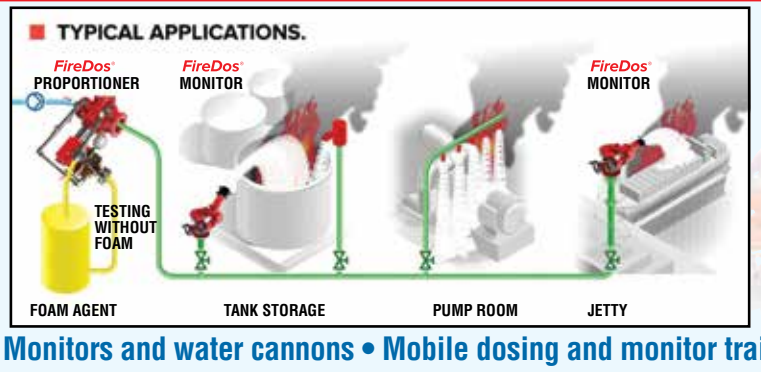
23 Data Centres

27 The Next Generation

25 YEARS AUTHORIZED PARTNER OF FireDos

Future proof your fire protection system with FireDos

Efficient • Effective • Easy to use & test



dosetech fire 35 ANNIVERSARY
special risk fire protection

+27 (0) 861 111 544
Mike – mgf@dosetech.co.za
firedos@dosetech.co.za
www.dosetech.co.za

ALL INDUSTRIAL, MOBILE, SPRINKLER REQUIREMENTS

FireDos foam dosing proportioners and skids • Monitors and water cannons • Mobile dosing and monitor trailers • Bund, tank top and rim pourers



Cape Town's electric bus fleet grows to eight as first seven MyCiTi e-buses arrive

The City of Cape Town has received the first seven of 38 battery-electric buses planned for the MyCiTi service, with 13 more due in November and the remainder expected by March 2027. The locally manufactured Volvo BZRLE buses will support cleaner public transport and may be deployed on the N2 Express service.

THE City of Cape Town's first batch of seven electric buses arrived from Johannesburg, where the bodies of the MyCiTi electric bus fleet are being manufactured.

The City now has eight battery-electric buses, inclusive of the prototype e-bus that arrived in July and was successfully piloted on a variety of routes to determine its performance on steep inclines and downhill, in the city environment with many stop-and-goes, in heavy traffic during peak periods, and when travelling longer distances.

Another 13 buses will arrive in November 2026, and the remaining 17 buses are expected between January and March 2027, bringing the City's e-fleet to 38.

All-in-all, the City will take delivery of 38 low-floor battery-electric buses as part of the roll-out of the MyCiTi bus service to the metro-south east.

'I was at the depot when the seven buses arrived, and it was a very exciting moment. Given the steep diesel prices in particular, we cannot wait to see the difference the e-fleet will make in the operational expenditure where these buses operate. Some countries operating e-buses have noted a reduction of up to 70% in operating costs,' said the City's Mayoral Committee Member for Urban Mobility, councillor Rob Quintas.

The fleet comprises 12-metre Volvo BZRLE battery-electric buses, the first MyCiTi buses where the bodies have been designed in South Africa and locally manufactured in Gauteng. The passenger capacity for these buses is 59.

"The e-bus fleet also supports the City's transition towards a cleaner, more sustainable public transport system that is not only more cost-effective to operate and maintain, but more resilient. The operating data we will collect over time will help us quantify the benefits we can get from an e-fleet and inform future deployment decisions that will keep Capetonians moving," said Quintas.

If all goes as planned, the fleet of 21 e-buses will be deployed as part of the N2 Express service that operates along the N2 highway, and serve commuters from Mitchells Plain and Khayelitsha.

Other routes will also be considered to align available capacity with demand.

The acquisition of more battery-electric buses remains a strategic priority for the city, but will depend on the availability of future funding from the national government.



R88,56 billion in unclaimed assets: New framework aims to reunite South Africans with lost money

National Treasury's proposed Unclaimed Financial Assets Centralisation Framework would use a central administrator and the Corporation for Public Deposits to trace beneficiaries and safeguard dormant bank, pension, investment and insurance proceeds.



Finance Minister Enoch Godongwana tabling the 2026 Medium Term Budget Policy Statement.

By Larry Claasen

ABOUT R88,56 billion sits in dormant or "lost" accounts in South Africa, and the government is moving to make it easier to trace the people who are owed that money.

In a difficult economy, many South Africans would welcome finding out that they have money due to them in an old bank account or a forgotten pension plan. But as things stand, these amounts remain unpaid indefinitely because approaches to identification of lost accounts and tracing their beneficiaries are fragmented across the sector.

The proposed Unclaimed Financial Assets Centralisation Framework is intended to change that. It would create a centralised model in which the Corporation for Public Deposits (CPD), working in partnership with a public or private administrator, would receive, invest and safeguard unclaimed assets on behalf of owners and beneficiaries, while improving the tracing and claims process.

The framework, which was published for public comment on 20 August, has received broad support from industry players.

Broad support and phased implementation

Finance Minister Enoch Godongwana said National Treasury had received broad support for reforms aimed at improving the tracing of beneficiaries and reuniting unclaimed assets with their rightful owners. He was speaking when he tabled the 2026 Medium Term Budget Policy Statement in October.

Godongwana added that the government would undertake further technical work on the institutional, legal and operational arrangements required to support a phased implementation of the framework. Draft legislative amendments are expected to be introduced in 2027.

Single portal and economies of scale

A centralised administration system could strengthen tracing and provide a single portal for claims and enquiries. It could also support economies of scale in the administration and investment of unclaimed assets, subject to appropriate governance and safeguards.

The framework also addresses governance concerns. There have been instances where tracing was outsourced and subject to "tracing fees" that were not consistently regulated in respect of governance, timelines or pricing.

CPD to handle custody and investment

The framework also envisages transferring the unclaimed funds from financial institutions to the Corporation for Public Deposits (CPD), a subsidiary of the South African Reserve Bank (SARB) which manages public deposits from various governmental entities.

By law, the CPD may invest funds received from the public sector in non-market investments at the SA Reserve Bank and "other permissible investment instruments."

Moving the fund to the CPD would divide the burden of administering the money and locating its beneficiaries. The CPD will provide custody and investment functions, leaving the central administrator to focus on data, tracing, claims and customer service.

Transferring the funds, however, would require a legislative change or the necessary approval from the Minister of Finance under the CPD Act.

R88,56 billion may be an understatement

Although R88,56 billion appears to be a large amount, the true figure may be much higher. The Financial Sector Conduct Authority (FSCA) said in a 2022 discussion paper that the lack of a common understanding of what constitutes an unclaimed asset, together with a lack of reliable and trusted data, meant the total could be higher.

Consumer education and implementation risks

Besides establishing a central administrator, the framework identifies consumer education as a critical enabler in reducing the accumulation of unclaimed assets.

"Targeted awareness initiatives can contribute to limiting growth in both the value and number of unclaimed accounts, while improved consumer engagement may encourage individuals to maintain up-to-date personal records with financial institutions and to actively pursue outstanding claims," the framework states.

It also warns that implementation risk related to operational complexity must be well managed. "Migrating unclaimed assets and associated records from multiple institutions into a centralised system may present challenges, particularly where records are incomplete, inconsistent or outdated."

Cape Town looks to private sector for organic waste processing as 2027 landfill ban nears

By Kris van der Bijl



AFTER CBN's September 2026 edition reported that the City of Cape Town's 2026/27 budget documents identify no new municipal facility to process commercial food waste, we can now confirm it plans no new organic waste processing facility in general.

In a response received after publication, The City's Urban Waste Management Directorate told CBN that there is "currently no capital spend planned" for "any large organic waste processing facility". It is therefore not just food waste left to fend for itself.

Food waste is part of organic waste, as is garden waste, wood waste, paper waste, sewage sludge, animal mortalities. and abattoir waste.

A Western Cape Government ban requires every municipality in the province to keep organic waste out of landfill by 2027 in accordance with an earlier announcement made back in 2018.

The Directorate said it expects organic waste processing capacity to be "primarily provided by the private sector in the short to medium term at least". It described the City's role as "regulation, accreditation, planning, facilitation, targeted municipal programmes and consideration of partnerships".

The City's own capacity is limited to its Bellville compost plant, which "represents only a small fraction of processing capacity requirements".

Organic waste landfill ban

I asked how much organic waste large businesses must divert by 2027 and what processing capacity the City needs. The Directorate gave neither figure. It pointed to the City's adopted Waste Strategy, which itself acknowledges that the 100% diversion target "is not achievable under current conditions".

The Directorate said the province imposed its targets without a dedicated source of funding. It called organic waste infrastructure "extremely cost-intensive" and is leaving this gap for the private waste sector to fill.

Private composting capacity

Melanie Ludwig, who has been involved in organic waste management in Cape Town for the past 17 years, is concerned that although the organic waste landfill ban was announced in 2018 the City of Cape Town has not built any organic waste processing facilities to handle this waste.

"I was excited to see the ban driving waste generators, both residential and commercial, to separate organic waste at source and divert it from landfill. This would grow organic waste processing businesses and create compost, biogas and animal feed from this waste," she said.

"Unfortunately, although there is one municipal composting facility and a few private organic waste processing companies, there is just not enough processing capacity to achieve the target. Although the City's Urban Waste Management Directorate has run small pilot projects in diverting organic waste from landfill I have not seen real commitment from the municipality, in both budgets and staffing, to properly roll out organic waste separation across all waste generators in Cape Town in preparation for the ban."

Ludwig said. "What is needed is more awareness amongst waste generators about the organic waste landfill ban and public-private partnerships where City owned land at landfills or waste water treatment works can be developed for organic waste processing which can then be run by private operators."

Waste plan compliance

Waste generators must still submit integrated waste management plans to the City. The Directorate said compliance "is currently much lower than required".

The City is aware some generators may hire collectors who are "not accredited with the City", the Directorate said. This "creates a risk that waste reported as diverted may instead be improperly managed or disposed of".



Commercial washroom standards: The overlooked brand risk

How washroom standards quietly shape trust in Cape Town's commercial and hospitality buildings



A neglected washroom can undermine years of brand investment; deliberate provision can quietly reinforce it.

By Charl Broodryk, Director at Nuwkem Hygiene, creators of Ticra®

IN property and business, mastery rarely shows only in the brochure or the lobby. Buildings send signals constantly, and some of the strongest are formed in places leadership seldom visits. The washroom is one of them. A visitor steps in alone, forms a judgement in seconds, and carries that impression back to their view of the organisation as a whole.

Cape Town's hotels, Waterfront retail, professional offices and commercial buildings invest heavily in reception, branding and client experience. The washroom often remains one of the least deliberately managed parts of the same building. That gap is not a small facilities detail. It is an unmanaged brand moment.

Hygiene is how the brand is felt

When a washroom is neglected, users read it as a lack of care about detail. When it is clean, stocked and functional, it works the other way: a practical signal that the organisation can be trusted with larger things. Perception research supports that reading. A major global survey on commercial restrooms, conducted by MetrixLab across respondents in the United States, Europe and Asia, found cleanliness and hygiene the top concern. Participants agreed that a dirty restroom reflects poorly on the establishment. Among restaurant settings, a large share said they would not, or might not, return after a bad toilet experience.

People rarely march to reception to report a broken dispenser or an empty soap unit. They simply leave, and they talk. In a city that sells experience, professionalism and care, that silent verdict is part of the brand whether anyone has put it on the risk register or not.

The shadow brand in the corridor

Every building has a version of its brand that lives in marketing materials, and another that lives in small, tactile encounters. Jammed dispensers, low-quality paper, missing feminine hygiene provision or soap systems that fail under ordinary use all speak. They tell visitors whether attention stops at the front desk or extends to the rooms people actually use.

That is why washroom equipment is not only a procurement line. It is one of the simplest ways to stop reputation slipping in a space the organisation does not actively host. Users interpret careful management of these encounters as a sign of how the wider building is run.

Managing the moment

Closing that gap means specifying the washroom with the same intentionality as the spaces that welcome people in. Dispensers and compatible consumables should match real use. Sealed soap systems are preferable to top-up habits that invite contamination. Feminine hygiene belongs in the brief where women use the facility. Finish and durability should suit the environment, whether corporate, lodge, retail or hospitality. Someone should own replenishment and service so standards do not depend on chance.



That is the work Nuwkem does through Ticra across South Africa, with growing support for distributors and end users in Cape Town and the Western Cape. Controlled paper systems, automatic soap and sanitiser, touch-free sanitary disposal and finish ranges suited to commercial and upmarket interiors are built so the quiet encounters in the washroom support the reputation the rest of the building is trying to earn.

Walk it as a visitor would

Reputation is defined by the consistency of the experiences a building provides. A neglected washroom can undermine years of brand investment; deliberate provision can quietly reinforce it. Take a walk through your facilities not only as an owner or manager, but as a guest. Ask what the space is saying about your commitment to detail.

That habit matters every week of the year. It matters even more as Cape Town moves into busier festive and summer periods, when higher footfall will expose every weak point faster. The buildings that treat hygiene as part of brand will not need to advertise it. Guests will simply leave knowing the standards did not stop at reception.

www.nuwkem.co.za





Credit Guarantee Vehicle set for South Africa launch in 2027

The Credit Guarantee Vehicle, intended to back private investment in South Africa's infrastructure build, is being capitalised for launch by end-March 2027, while the Final RFP for ITP Phase I has slipped to the second quarter of 2027.

By Larry Claasen

THE move to create an insurance type company, which will provide billions in cover for much of South Africa's R1,07 trillion infrastructure build will take place earlier next year.

This new entity takes over the government providing billions of rands in credit guarantees for public-private projects, like the construction of new power transmission lines.

These guarantees commit the state to repaying the loans of private companies if those companies default. They enable private companies to access finance, manage trade risk and protect cash flow. They do, however, pose a risk to taxpayers, because the state commits to carrying the risk if a company cannot repay its loans.

This commitment has far reaching implications because it has seen the national government commit to providing R303,1 billion in guarantees to independent power producers.

A new coverage model

As a way to reduce its exposure, the government is creating the Credit Guarantee Vehicle (CGV), which will initially be funded by the government, the World Bank, and several other development funding institutions.

Once the CGV is up and running, it will require participating companies to pay guarantee premiums and also open itself up to the private sector to fund it.

The National Treasury has committed R2 billion to it, the World Bank is investing about R9 billion and other institutions are expected to contribute as much as R6,65 billion to its capitalisation.



"The National Treasury has committed R2 billion to it, the World Bank is investing about R9 billion and other institutions are expected to contribute as much as R6,65 billion to its capitalisation."

The Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA) is not directly investing in the CGV but is hosting its Project Implementation Unit, which is responsible for supporting the development and operationalisation.

Delayed until 2027

The plan was to launch the CGV in the second half of 2026, at the same time Final Request for Proposals (RFP) for Phase One of its Independent Transmission Projects (ITPs) Programme, but both have been delayed till 2027.

The start of the transmission programme, which will see the construction of 11,400 km new power transmission lines over the next 10 years, was pushed back. This was to ensure that the ITPs were appropriately structured, commercially bankable and capable of attracting competitive, high-quality bids.

The government said it decided to hold a further targeted, time-bound consultation and issue a second draft RFP package before the Final RFP, to identify and address remaining material bankability issues.

In a joint statement, the Department of Electricity and Energy (DEE) and National Treasury said the second draft is expected to include a draft non-binding CGV term sheet, so bidders and lenders can assess the credit enhancement framework alongside the wider transaction.

Lenders seek regulatory and payment-security clarity

The move from state backed guarantees to a CGV is proving itself to be lengthy and technical. This is because it requires the buy-in of lenders, which need the assurance of the regulatory, contractual and payment security framework to assess the projects.

DBSA chief investment officer Greg Fyfe told CBN that the CGV has been set up and that capitalisation of it was in progress, and that process would be completed by the end of March 2027. Once this was completed, "it would be in a position to be formally launched."

Governance and licensing under way

So far, a steering committee, caretaker board and advisory board for the CGV has been set up and it was registered and incorporated on 12 August 2026, with its statutory directors, auditor and corporate secretariat appointed.

The licensing process for the CGV is currently underway following submission of the licence application to the South African Reserve Bank's Prudential Authority. At the same time the recruitment and development of the CGV's operating policies and procedures is also in progress.



November: Name what matters

Before you plan 2027, get honest about what 2026 actually taught you.

By Joni Peddie, CEO of Resilient People



EVERY November, the same ritual starts in boardrooms across the country: the 2027 strategy sessions land in the diary. The 2026 strategy deck gets dusted off, and the 2027 budget spreadsheet sprouts new tabs.

I love a fresh plan as much as anyone, and I used to be wired to sprint towards the next goal before I had properly unpacked the last one. I recently turned 60, so a little bit of wisdom has finally kicked into play.

Here is what I see in the year-end sessions I facilitate: teams are eager to plan forward and reluctant to look back. When they do look back, they head straight for what went wrong. The missed target. The restructure that wobbled. The project that ran three months over. Those lessons matter, but they are only half the story.

So November deserves its own mantra: N is for Name what matters. Before you write a single 2027 objective, name what 2026 actually taught you, including the parts that went well.

"For leaders, the message is clear. Your wins are data, not just good news. A success you cannot explain is a success you cannot repeat."

Unnamed experiences stay vague, and vague experiences tend to repeat themselves. When you put precise words to what happened and how it felt, a blur of a year becomes usable insight. In my book From CAN'T to CAN DO: The 9 Human Capabilities that AI Can't Replicate, this is where two dimensions of the CAN DO Adaptive Leadership Framework meet: Mental Clarity and Emotional Agility.

We are also far better at post mortems than at studying our wins. Most teams skip the success debrief or gloss over it: "It worked, so let's move on."

That is a costly habit. Researchers Diwas KC, Bradley Staats and Francesca Gino studied ten years of data from 71 cardiothoracic surgeons who performed more than 6,500 procedures using a new heart surgery technique. You would expect surgeons to learn most from the operations that went wrong. They did not. They improved more from their own successes than from their own failures.

Why? When things go wrong, we tend to blame the circumstances: a difficult case, a bad day, someone else. When things go right, we own the result, so we pay closer attention to what we did. Interestingly, the reverse held for colleagues: surgeons learned more from other people's failures than from other people's successes.

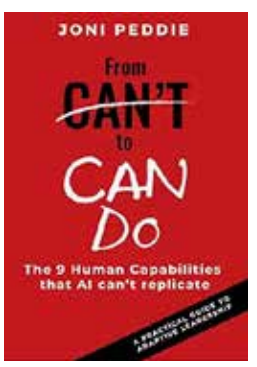
For leaders, the message is clear. Your wins are data, not just good news. A success you cannot explain is a success you cannot repeat.

There is an energy bonus too. Taking time to study what went right refuels a team that has been running on empty since October. That is Physical Nexus at work, and by November most of us need every drop of it. So what, now what?

- Pick your three best wins of 2026. Not the loudest ones, the ones that genuinely moved the business forward.
- Debrief each one properly. Ask: What exactly did we do? What conditions made it possible? Who made the difference? Where did our energy come from, and how did it feel?
- Borrow lessons from the wobbles of others. Ask a peer or another team to share one thing that went wrong for them this year. The lesson is often easier to see in someone else's story.
- Carry three lessons into 2027. Choose three insights from your 2026 successes and name them before you set a single 2027 target.

November is not a month to sprint past the year that taught you the most, the wins and the wobbles. Name it. Learn from it. Then plan. Change your words to change your world.

Build change-fit teams. Bounce Forward™ together.



T: +27 82 490 9975
E: joni@resilientpeople.co.za
LinkedIn: Joni Peddie

Industry trends in digital mining and IO-Link-enabled automation



By Martin Jooste, Sales Engineer, ifm South Africa

FOR more than a century, Africa's mining sector has been built on the strength of its people, natural resources, and engineering innovation. Today, however, a new revolution is underway. Unlike previous industrial shifts driven by larger machines or deeper shafts, this transformation is powered by data, connectivity, intelligence, and automation.

From reactive to predictive operations

Historically, many African mines have relied on preventative maintenance schedules and operator experience to manage equipment performance. While effective, these methods often result in unnecessary maintenance activities or unexpected failures. The next generation of mining operations is shifting toward predictive maintenance.

Connected devices now continuously monitor vibration, pressure, temperature, flow, and equipment condition. Instead of waiting for a failure to occur, maintenance teams can identify signs of deterioration early and intervene before production is impacted. This transition represents one of the most significant opportunities for African mining companies seeking to improve asset availability while reducing maintenance costs.

The rise of the connected mine

The importance of intelligent sensors and IO-Link technology lies in the ability to provide not only process values but also diagnostic information, health status, and device parameters. This capability is expected to drive the transition toward fully connected mining operations across Africa.

Future mines will increasingly feature: smart conveyors with continuous condition monitoring; intelligent pumping stations with self-diagnostics; digitally connected process plants; real-time equipment health visibility; centralised operational dashboards; and cloud-based analytics platforms.

Rather than operators walking long distances to inspect equipment manually, critical information will be available instantly through control rooms, mobile devices, and enterprise systems.

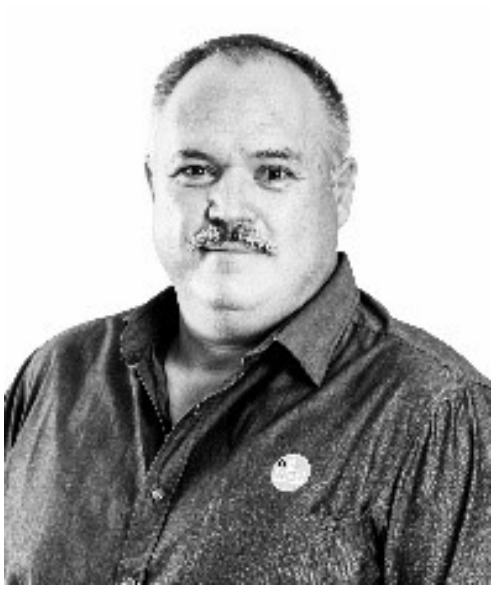
Data will become the most valuable resource

Traditionally, gold, platinum, coal, copper, and iron ore have been considered Africa's most valuable mining assets. In the coming decade, operational data may become equally important. Every sensor, motor, valve, and instrument generates valuable information. When combined with advanced analytics and Artificial Intelligence (AI), this data can reveal opportunities to optimise production, reduce energy consumption, improve safety, and maximise recovery rates.

AI will move underground

Globally, mining companies are already exploring AI-driven maintenance, process optimisation, and operational decision support. As African mining operations continue investing in digital infrastructure, AI applications are expected to expand rapidly.

Future AI systems may predict equipment failures automatically, recommend process adjustments, optimise energy consumption, and enhance fleet management.



Martin Jooste, Sales Engineer, ifm South Africa.

However, AI is only as effective as the quality of the data it receives, which is why technologies that provide reliable field-level information such as intelligent sensors and digital communication networks, will become increasingly important.

Safer mines through digital visibility

Safety remains the highest priority across the mining industry. The ability to continuously monitor operating conditions provides an additional layer of protection for both personnel and equipment. Early warning systems, automated alerts, and enhanced diagnostics enable operators to respond faster to abnormal conditions before they escalate into incidents.

Skills will evolve, not disappear

One concern frequently associated with automation is workforce displacement. In reality, the African mining workforce is more likely to experience transformation than replacement.

As mines become more automated, demand will grow for:

- Data analysts
- Reliability engineers
- Automation specialists
- Instrumentation technicians
- Control system engineers
- Digital transformation leaders

The successful mine of the future will combine advanced technology with highly skilled personnel capable of interpreting and acting on the insights generated by connected systems.

For Africa, the future mine will be: Connected. Intelligent. Predictive. Automated.

The journey is already underway. The question is no longer whether mining automation will arrive in Africa. The question is which mining companies will lead the transformation, and which will struggle to catch up.

Learn more: http://www.ifm.com

THE BOTTOM LINE

South Africa looks beyond US trade as Western Cape exporters seek new markets

The loss of preferential access to the US threatens Western Cape jobs and exporters, but growing trade links with Asia, Africa and other markets could help cushion the blow.

By Larry Claasen



THE loss of preferential trade access to the US would be a blow to South Africa, and to the Western Cape in particular.

With South Africa set to be excluded from the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) from 1 January 2027, an estimated 35,000 Western Cape jobs linked to exports to the US could be at risk.

Beyond the threat to jobs, the impact could be felt across a wide range of economic sectors, from fruit juice and wine production to yacht manufacturing.

Exporters Western Cape, in an open letter to President Cyril Ramaphosa, said local businesses were already under pressure. In the latest 12-month rolling comparison, exports fell by 41%, from R16,89 billion between August 2024 and July 2025 to R10,02 billion between August 2025 and July 2026.

Higher tariffs add to pressure on exporters

Although the increase in the US tariff to 15,9%, from the 12,5% implemented on 24 July 2026, will put further pressure on the economy, it would not necessarily trigger an economic implosion.

"One could argue that while this would be a challenging path, it would not necessarily be as catastrophic as we have faced in the past, when we faced much higher US tariffs and still managed to compete," said Agricultural Business Chamber of South Africa (Agbiz) chief economist Wandile Sihlobo in a recent blog post.

Sihlobo said that, in 2025, the local farming sector faced tariffs of around 30%, but exports to the US remained relatively strong.

"South Africa's agricultural exports to the US in 2025 totalled $504 million, down 3% from the previous year."

Western Cape seeks to diversify export markets

South Africa has not been caught entirely off guard by the threat of losing AGOA access. Government, trade development agencies and organised business have been working to expand access to alternative markets around the world.

Wesgro, for example, said in its latest annual report that it had been developing markets in Asia, the Middle East and Africa, while maintaining trade links with established markets in Europe, the UK and the US.

The Western Cape's trade and investment promotion agency has pursued an extensive international programme, undertaking 16 trade missions to Europe, eight to the US, three to Canada and 14 across Africa. Through its European trade missions, 76 Western Cape exporters were given exposure to international markets.

The Made in the Cape Hosted Buyers' Programme connected 34 buyers from 17 countries with 200 exporters through more than 400 business-to-business meetings.

Wesgro also operates the Cape Trade Portal, a free business-to-business virtual marketplace and matchmaking platform that connects international buyers with verified exporters and suppliers in Cape Town and the Western Cape.

These efforts to broaden trade links appear to be delivering results. In October, Western Cape Premier Alan Winde said citrus volumes to Africa had increased by 40%, while volumes to Asia were up 21%.

Canada and North America offer further opportunities

Wesgro has also made progress in strengthening trade links with Canada. Through its trade missions, 15 Western Cape food and beverage exporters were supported in exhibiting at the Grocery Innovation Canada trade show.

In addition, the SAT North American Roadshow showcased the Western Cape's tourism offering, while Air Access advanced route-development discussions with Air Canada.

The local vehicle manufacturing industry has also made inroads into the North American market. Vehicle exports to the region fell from 25,554 in 2024 to 6,530 in 2025, following the introduction of US tariffs. However, exports increased from 1,562 in the second quarter of 2025 to 3,086 in the second quarter of 2026.

"Vehicle exports to North America remained affected by … automotive tariffs imposed by the US in 2025, but exports to Canada and Mexico increased during the quarter," said Naamsa.

Diversification could pay off in the long run

South Africa is steadily developing alternative markets for its products. However, the possibility of regaining preferential access to the US should not be ruled out.

A change in the US administration following the 2028 presidential election could create an opportunity for South Africa to seek a reconsideration of its AGOA eligibility. That outcome is far from guaranteed, but it remains a possibility.

If South Africa were to regain preferential access, it could find itself in a stronger position: with renewed access to the US market, alongside the additional trade relationships it has built across the world.

South Africa's data centre blind spot: UCT Researcher calls for mandatory national register

As data centres proliferate across South Africa, authorities cannot say how many exist or what resources they consume. A University of Cape Town expert argues a mandatory national register is the first step toward accountable growth.



By Larry Claasen

SOUTH Africa's data centre boom has a blind spot. Nobody knows exactly how many facilities are running, where they are, or how much power and water they draw.

That absence of basic data has prompted a University of Cape Town (UCT) researcher to call for a mandatory national register, warning that the country cannot regulate what it cannot measure.

The transparency gap: No official count, no public record

The problem is not a lack of interest from operators, but a lack of legal compulsion.

Dr Pitso Tsibolane, a senior lecturer in UCT's Department of Information Systems, argues that the information already exists inside company books and is not commercially sensitive. What is missing is a single public record.

Estimates of the number of data centres in South Africa vary widely, and there is no official count at all. Sources cited by Tsibolane put the number at between 55 and 80 facilities.

Nor is there any aggregate figure for water consumption, because facilities are not required to report it.

Tsibolane said communities have a direct stake in knowing what is being built around them.

"Communities cannot weigh a new application against what is already there," he said. "Responsible operators cannot distinguish themselves from the rest, because nobody's numbers are on the table."

He pointed out that operators already hold this information, and it is not commercially secret. All that is needed is a legal requirement to report it so it can be compiled into a single public record.

Given the demands data centres place on power and water resources, Tsibolane's proposed fix is a national register, maintained by the Department of Communications and Digital Technologies.

This would see operators make binding disclosure of location, power capacity, actual consumption, water source and volume, cooling technology and backup generation.

"You cannot govern what you cannot count," said Tsibolane. "A regulator cannot assess cumulative pressure on a grid or a catchment if it does not know how many facilities exist, where they are or what they draw."

Water and electricity: The resource question

Water is one area where Tsibolane said greater disclosure is particularly important. He cautioned against assuming that all data centres have the same water requirements.

"Modern hyperscale facilities can use closed-loop, air-based cooling with modest water demand," he said. "A facility relying on evaporative cooling is a different matter, and there is a wide range between the two. So the answer depends on the design, which is exactly why the design must be disclosed."

His concern is not that data centres are necessarily high-water users, but that authorities are already approving facilities without knowing precisely how much water they will require.

He proposed that operators disclose their water source, annual volume, peak demand, cooling technology and treatment of discharge before approval, with those figures becoming binding conditions of approval.

Electricity presents a similar challenge. Tsibolane said the rapid expansion of data centres could place significant pressure on the electricity grid, particularly because large facilities require substantial and continuous power connections.

He stressed the importance of distinguishing between electrical capacity and actual consumption. A facility's connection capacity is the maximum load it is entitled to draw, not what it will actually consume.

"Only actual consumption reporting tells a grid planner what is happening," he said.

Tsibolane also said that allocating scarce electricity capacity is ultimately a policy decision.

Data centres can provide benefits to utilities as large, stable customers, but those benefits should be demonstrated through transparent information about consumption, infrastructure requirements and economic contributions.

"What is not legitimate is settling it in supply agreements nobody sees," he said.

FUCHS strengthens African lubricants market presence through strategic investments



Paul Deppe, FUCHS Regional Vice President Sub-Saharan Africa.

THE FUCHS Group, which operates globally in the lubricants industry, today announced an expansion of its African footprint through a series of strategic investments that reinforce the company's long-term commitment to the region.

"Through our expanded footprint, we aim to be closer to our customers, respond more rapidly to local market needs."

As part of this growth strategy, FUCHS has signed agreements to acquire 100% ownership of its former joint venture operations in Zimbabwe, Zambia, and Mozambique, further strengthening its direct presence in Southern Africa. The company has also expanded its position in East Africa by establishing a controlling share in a new joint venture in Kenya and increasing its shareholding to a controlling stake in its existing Tanzanian joint venture. The transactions are expected to be completed early in 2027.

"These investments build upon FUCHS' well-established manufacturing and commercial platform in South Africa, which serves as a regional hub for production, technical expertise, and customer support across Sub-Saharan Africa," says Paul Deppe, FUCHS Regional Vice President Sub-Saharan Africa. "Through our expanded footprint, we aim to be closer to our customers, respond more rapidly to local market needs, and leverage our global technology leadership to support industrial growth throughout Africa."

Africa represents one of the most significant long-term growth opportunities for the lubricants industry. Rapid urbanisation, industrial development, infrastructure investment, expanding mining activity, growing manufacturing sectors, and increasing vehicle ownership are driving demand for high-performance lubricants and specialty products across the continent.

Commenting on the expansion, Dr. Ralph Rheinboldt, Member of the Executive Board responsible for Europe, Middle East and Africa (EMEA), says: "Africa is a strategically important growth region for FUCHS. Our increased investment reflects our confidence in the continent's long-term economic potential and our commitment to supporting customers with locally relevant solutions, technical expertise, and world-class products. By strengthening our presence across Southern and East Africa, we are creating a platform for sustainable growth while contributing to the industrial development of the markets we serve."

The companies involved in the transaction employ around 170 people and currently generate sales of approximately EUR 50 million per year.

For further information, email Kayla Van Vught, Marketing Manager at kayla.vanvught@fuchs.com Visit: www.fuchs.com/za



Blue Reef: Strengthening water security for Western Cape businesses



The Blue Reef Water Solutions team.

FOR years, water was considered a predictable utility expense rather than a significant business risk. Today, water security has become a critical operational priority across South Africa, including the Western Cape. Disruptions can halt production, affect hospitality operations and compromise effluent compliance. Businesses must therefore approach water management with the same strategic attention given to other operational risks.

Blue Reef Water Solutions, a South African manufacturer serving clients nationally and internationally, has spent over a decade helping businesses address these challenges. Originally a speciality water treatment chemicals supplier, Blue Reef has evolved into a comprehensive solutions partner, designing, implementing and managing integrated water treatment systems.

Every engagement begins with an assessment of site conditions, water chemistry, consumption and operational risks, ensuring solutions are tailored to specific requirements.

In thermal and process water, Blue Reef provides boiler and cooling water treatment programmes that prevent scale, corrosion and biological fouling, supporting energy efficiency, equipment reliability and operational continuity across manufacturing and food and beverage facilities.

Its industrial wastewater and effluent solutions focus on achieving discharge compliance, reducing chemical and biological oxygen demand (COD and BOD), and enabling water recovery and reuse, with opportunities to progress towards zero liquid discharge where technically feasible.

Through water security, Blue Reef helps businesses reduce reliance on municipal supply through geohydrological assessments, borehole development, water use licence applications and onsite purification using nanofiltration and reverse osmosis technologies.

These solutions are supported by Blue Reef's proprietary Hexamer Technology platform, which underpins chemical formulations developed internally rather than relying on relabelled third party products.

An important distinction in potable water treatment is chemical certification. Blue Reef holds NSF/ANSI/CAN 60 certification for specified listed products, providing independent verification of potential health effects under defined conditions of use. Unlike SANS 241, which establishes drinking water quality requirements, NSF/ANSI/CAN 60 addresses the chemicals introduced during treatment. Understanding both standards helps businesses make informed decisions about chemical selection and drinking water compliance.

Backed by Deneb Investments and the Hosken Consolidated Investments (HCI) group, Blue Reef offers institutional stability and long term continuity. This provides reassurance to Western Cape businesses across manufacturing, hospitality and agriculture seeking reliable partners for multiyear water treatment contracts.

As water infrastructure pressures, rising costs and supply uncertainty continue to affect businesses, proactive water management is becoming essential. Investing in appropriate treatment technologies and alternative water sources can strengthen operational resilience while supporting regulatory compliance and sustainable resource management.

Water security is no longer simply a sustainability consideration. It is a fundamental aspect of infrastructure risk management, and businesses addressing it today will be better prepared for tomorrow's challenges.

Blue Reef Water Solutions
info@bluereef.co.za |
+27 31 910 7500
www.bluereef.co.za



Modernisation of lifting equipment an economical and practical solution



LIFTING equipment has a finite operational lifespan, and the decision to replace or modernise a crane depends largely on its mechanical, structural and foundational condition. Where the fundamental condition of the equipment remains sound, modernisation can often provide a more economical and practical alternative to complete replacement.

The Konecranes Crane Reliability Study (CRS) provides a comprehensive assessment of lifting equipment, evaluating its current condition and providing a theoretical assessment of its remaining design life. The study also delivers detailed recommendations for component upgrades and modernisation.

"The average lifespan of a crane is between 20 and 25 years. A CRS modernisation analysis assesses the crane's current safety, productivity, reliability, usability and design-life status, as well as the electrical and mechanical functions of the crane system" says Ian Grobler, Sales Manager for Konecranes South Africa.

He added that as lifting equipment becomes older and potentially less productive, replacement can become an unnecessary expense when modernisation may achieve the desired outcome at a lower cost.

An ageing crane is not necessarily an unsafe crane. However, equipment that is inadequately inspected, maintained and assessed presents an increasing risk of mechanical failure, accidents, production losses, financial costs and potential legal liability.

Keeping pace with technological advances

The technology incorporated into an overhead crane at the time of its original installation may have since been superseded by more advanced solutions. Continuous research and development has resulted in improvements that make modern cranes safer, more efficient, productive and cost-effective.

"Safety regulations may also have changed or become more stringent since the original lifting equipment was purchased" explains Grobler. "A Konecranes CRS analysis can identify components and systems that can be upgraded to meet current regulatory requirements, potentially eliminating the need for a costly complete replacement."

The CRS process

A Crane Reliability Study involves a team of Konecranes specialists assessing the lifting equipment in its production and operating environment. The process includes a detailed evaluation of the crane structure and components, interviews with operators and maintenance personnel and a review of relevant technical and maintenance documentation.

Following the assessment, Konecranes provides a detailed report outlining the condition of the equipment, identified risks and recommended actions. Further consultation can then assist the customer in planning maintenance, modernisation and future investment requirements.

CRS performance indicators

A CRS can be particularly valuable when a crane, its components or the lifting process is approaching a point where the probability of failure, remaining service life or consequences of failure can no longer be adequately managed through routine inspection and maintenance.
A number of indicators may point towards the need for a CRS, including:

- An increase in equipment breakdowns
- More frequent emergency repairs
- Repetitive component failures
- Deterioration of safety-critical components
- Increasing maintenance requirements and costs
- The age of the equipment
- Accumulated operating hours or service data
- Changes in production requirements or operating conditions

The information gathered through the CRS provides the data required to make informed decisions about how best to restore the equipment to its expected level of performance, reliability and safety.

Modernisation versus replacement

Modernisation does not necessarily mean replacing the entire crane. Depending on the assessment, upgrades can be targeted at specific components or systems to address changing operational requirements.

Common modernisation solutions can include the replacement or upgrading of hoists, trolleys, operator cabins and control systems. These upgrades can be used to improve lifting capacity, operating speed, duty classification, ergonomics, load control, safety and overall productivity.

Importantly, the age of a crane alone does not determine whether a CRS is required. Grobler said "A relatively new crane operating intensively in a high-consequence application may warrant a CRS, while an older crane with very low utilisation and an excellent documented maintenance and inspection history may not. An old crane is not necessarily unsafe, but an old crane that is inadequately inspected and assessed presents a progressively greater risk of mechanical failure, accidents, financial loss and legal liability."

Rather than automatically replacing existing equipment, a detailed assessment can determine whether the crane can be modernised and upgraded to meet new productivity, application and safety requirements.

Making an informed investment decision

Several factors can trigger the need to reconsider the future of lifting equipment. These include the need to extend the crane's economic service life, increased production demands, changes in application, more frequent maintenance and rising maintenance costs.

The key question is therefore not simply whether a crane is old, but whether it remains fit for purpose and whether modernisation can economically restore or improve its performance.

"Our Konecranes CRS provides the information and data required to make an informed decision about whether to replace or modernise" says Grobler. "Modernisation can be one of the most cost-efficient ways of returning cranes and their components to an optimised level of performance," he concluded.

With the expertise, technology and resources to modernise virtually any make or model of overhead crane, Konecranes can help customers extend the productive life of existing lifting equipment while addressing changing safety, reliability and productivity requirements.

Further information is available from: Ian Grobler, Sales Manager, Konecranes (Pty) Ltd, Telephone: 011 898 3500, Email: info.za@konecranes.com

South Africa's trillion-rand logistics bill needs to lighten its load

By Prof. Zane Simpson, Director at GAIN Group, Prof. Jan Havenga, Director at GAIN Group, and Justin Schmidt, Sector Executive for Transport and Logistics at Absa Business Banking.

SOUTH Africa has good reason to be concerned about what it costs to move goods through its economy. This is a country whose geography and economic structure make transporting freight an expensive undertaking even under favourable conditions, with vast distances separating much of what it produces from the markets it serves.

Then there is the expense South Africa has learned to live with: the additional cost of a logistics system that fails to perform as it should, so thoroughly absorbed into the ordinary business of moving goods that it is easy to lose sight of how much the economy is paying for it.

According to The State of Logistics 2026 for South Africa report, produced by GAIN Group and sponsored by Absa Business Banking and the Western Cape Government Mobility Department, the country's national logistics bill is projected to reach R1.156 trillion in 2026, up from an estimated R1.009 trillion in 2025 and R972 billion in 2024. This expenditure, which covers the movement, storage and management of freight across the economy, is forecast to rise from 13.2% of GDP in 2025 to 14.6% in 2026, the highest proportion recorded since the current measurement series began in 2003.

Transport accounts for almost six out of every ten rand spent on logistics, with the remainder going towards warehousing, the cost of carrying inventory, and the management and administration of freight operations. Having risen from approximately R101 billion in 2003, transport expenditure is forecast to reach R683 billion in 2026, with R117 billion of that increase occurring between 2025 and 2026 alone. That accounts for almost 80% of the projected R147 billion rise in the country's total logistics bill over the year, driven in part by substantial increases in fuel prices.

Much of the attention paid to rising transport expenses tends to settle on fuel prices, understandably so, given how sharply fluctuations in diesel prices can affect operators. But the figures suggest that this preoccupation has obscured the extent to which almost every other component of road freight expenditure has become more expensive, particularly the cost of financing vehicles and equipment in a country heavily reliant on imported assets and relatively expensive capital.

The persistence of transport's share of national logistics expenditure over thirty years also raises uncomfortable questions about how much progress South Africa has made in addressing the inefficiencies built into its freight system. There is little to be gained from concentrating exclusively on whichever operating expense happens to be rising most sharply when the underlying challenge is to improve the economics of moving freight altogether.

Considerable work has gone into reforming the country's freight system, from the introduction of new rail policy and the establishment of the National Logistics Crisis Committee to opening the rail network to private operators, while the gradual recovery in rail volumes is beginning to offer some evidence of improvement.

The opportunity now is to build on those gains by making more deliberate choices about which freight belongs on which mode of transport, because there is considerable expense in moving goods by road when rail could perform the same task more economically. Long-distance, high-volume freight is an obvious candidate for rail where the service is sufficiently reliable, leaving road transport to serve the markets and distribution activities for which it is better suited.

But shifting freight onto rail will achieve little if the service cannot meet the needs of the businesses using it, which is why the reforms underway must translate into dependable operations and sufficient capacity. The same principle applies to the use of existing road infrastructure and vehicle fleets, where better loading, more effective scheduling and arrangements that reduce empty return journeys can allow operators to move the same volumes with fewer trips.



Justin Schmidt, Sector Executive for Transport and Logistics at Absa Business Banking.

Government has an equally important role to play, from planning rail capacity alongside intermodal terminals, port access and first- and last-mile connections, to aligning land-use planning with the location of warehouses and distribution centres to reduce freight distances and allow for greater consolidation. This must be supported by proper road maintenance, improved rural access and consistent enforcement of loading limits.

With freight moving on the most economically appropriate mode, transport capacity used more productively and operations running more efficiently, South Africa could reduce its national logistics costs by an estimated R149.3 billion in 2026, and by approximately R668 billion over the five years from 2022 – under the improved-logistics scenario modelled in the report. Even with these savings, however, logistics expenditure would continue to rise relative to GDP, reinforcing the need for improvements in freight performance to be accompanied by stronger economic growth.

The task now falls to government, infrastructure managers, road and rail operators and freight owners to work together to build on the progress already made and turn these possibilities into measurable gains. South Africa has laid much of the groundwork for a better functioning freight system, and the opportunity now is to ensure that every improvement in how goods move translates into greater economic value for the country.

Building more than infrastructure: Veolia and Overstrand's partnership for a sustainable future

SINCE 2015, Veolia Southern Africa's Operations and Maintenance contract with Overstrand Municipality has demonstrated what can be achieved when global expertise and local commitment work hand in hand. More than a service agreement, this partnership represents a shared investment in resilient communities, reliable essential services and a sustainable future for the Overstrand.

Veolia brings more than 170 years of experience to this relationship, supported by a strong global presence and unrivalled expertise in water, waste and energy management. As one of the world's leading resource management companies, Veolia applies international knowledge while tailoring solutions to local needs. In Overstrand, this approach has helped support the effective operation and maintenance of critical water and wastewater infrastructure, contributing to the wellbeing of residents, businesses and visitors.

The partnership's success is reflected in the municipality's repeated Green Drop and Blue Drop achievements. These recognitions are a powerful testament to the quality of the municipality's water and wastewater management, as well as to the close cooperation between Overstrand Municipality and Veolia. They demonstrate that excellence is not achieved by one organisation alone. It is built through trust, accountability, technical capability and a shared commitment to high standards.

However, Veolia's contribution extends far beyond the boundaries of the contract. We believe that sustainable development must include the empowerment of local people and businesses. That is why Veolia runs annual Enterprise Development programmes designed to help local entrepreneurs strengthen their businesses and build a better future.

Through these programmes, successful candidates receive practical guidance and meaningful support. Training includes how to develop a professional company profile, create an effective marketing and business plan, understand financial management and improve workplace health and safety. Participants are equipped with essential knowledge, tools and courses to help them operate their businesses with greater confidence and professionalism. This is the difference between simply delivering a contract and creating lasting value.

Veolia is committed not only to maintaining infrastructure, but also to developing skills, opening opportunities and helping local enterprises grow. By investing in people, we help build stronger supply chains, more capable businesses and more resilient communities. The Overstrand partnership illustrates the best of what can happen when municipal leadership and private-sector expertise unite around a common purpose. Together, Overstrand Municipality and Veolia are delivering dependable services today while helping prepare the community for tomorrow.

For Veolia, success is measured not only by operational performance, but by the positive impact created beyond the plant, the pipeline and the contract. In Overstrand, that impact is clear: stronger services, recognised quality, empowered businesses and a partnership built to endure.

www.veolia.co.za



Babcock recognised for nine years of commitment to youth employment



Left to right: Tsholo Mogotsi, Chief Partnerships Officer, Yes4Youth; Ashley Craft, Transformation Manager, Babcock; Ravi Naidoo, CEO, Yes4Youth.

BABCOCK'S nine-year partnership with the Youth Employment Service (YES) has created 765 work experience opportunities for young South Africans, earning the company a Partnership Excellence Award at the 2026 YES ESG Awards.

The award recognises Babcock as one of YES's earliest partners and acknowledges its sustained contribution to helping unemployed young people gain practical workplace experience and improve their employment prospects.

Presented at the Sustainability and ESG Africa Conference and YES ESG Awards 2026, held at the Sandton Convention Centre on 30 September, the award was accepted by Ashley Craft on behalf of Babcock from YES Chief Executive Officer Ravi Naidoo.

Nine years of creating opportunities

Babcock has participated in YES since its introduction in 2018, helping unemployed young people gain practical workplace experience, develop skills and improve their future employment prospects.

Now in its ninth year, the partnership has created 765 work experience opportunities, with more than R43.89 million injected into the South African economy through youth salaries.

The programme continues to grow, with Babcock supporting its largest cohort to date in 2026. This year's intake comprises 137 young people, compared with 120 in the previous programme.

Of the current participants, 97 are gaining experience within Babcock's operations, while the remaining 40 are placed with external host companies.

Developing skills through practical experience

Participants are placed in various roles across Babcock's business units throughout South Africa, gaining exposure to different working environments and developing skills that can support their future careers.

Hosting participants internally also allows Babcock to align its investment in youth development with business needs, while providing additional support across its operations.

Beyond providing workplace placements, Babcock focuses on making the 12-month experience meaningful. Participants work alongside experienced employees, receive practical training and guidance from their line managers and become part of the teams in which they are placed.

Supported by programme partner Afrika Tikkun Services, participants also complete workplace development modules designed to strengthen their employability.

"Our partnership with YES is about giving young people the opportunity to gain meaningful work experience and develop skills that will help them build their careers," says Kereshma Naidoo, HR Director at Babcock Africa.

"By bringing more participants into our own operations, we can provide practical training, mentorship and exposure to the working world. Receiving this award is a welcome recognition of our long-standing commitment to youth development and the role business can play in creating opportunities for young South Africans."

"Hosting participants internally also allows Babcock to align its investment in youth development with business needs, while providing additional support across its operations."

From work experience to career opportunities

The value of practical workplace experience is reflected in the achievements of young people who have used their YES placements to develop skills and build careers.

One example is Katleho Thianye, who participated in a Babcock-sponsored YES programme implemented through Afrika Tikkun Services.

During his placement as a Junior Systems Developer Intern, Katleho developed skills in website maintenance, front-end and back-end development and mobile application design.

Following his internship, he secured permanent employment as a full-time Systems Developer.

His experience illustrates how workplace exposure and practical skills development can help young people take the next step in their careers.

Opportunities for the next generation

For participants in the current programme, the opportunity to work within Babcock provides valuable exposure to the working world and a chance to develop their professional skills.

A partnership with lasting impact

Youth unemployment remains a significant challenge in South Africa, making collaboration between business and youth development organisations an important part of expanding access to workplace opportunities.

Since its establishment, YES has created more than 230,000 work experience opportunities nationally, demonstrating the scale of what can be achieved through sustained private-sector participation.

For Babcock, the Partnership Excellence Award recognises nine years of continued investment in helping young South Africans gain the experience, skills and confidence needed to pursue future employment opportunities.

Three new voices join Shoprite's R1 million food garden competition



ACFS Khunadi Food Garden - Act for Change Food Garden Competition winner 2026.

RADIO broadcaster and agricultural storyteller Mmatsheko Mosito, journalist and media entrepreneur Ivor Price and homestead food gardener and educator Natasha Van Zyl have been named guest judges for Shoprite's second Act For Change Food Garden Competition. Entries for this year's competition close 15 November 2026.

Five winning gardens will share R1 million in tailored support to help meet their specific needs and strengthen the positive impact they're making in their communities. Community food gardens that are feeding communities, creating jobs and teaching valuable skills are encouraged to enter.

"Five winning gardens will share R1 million in tailored support to help meet their specific needs and strengthen the positive impact they're making in their communities."

A trio with one common goal: meet the 2026 judges

Mosito, the host of The Journal and Planting the Seed on Channel Africa and the founder of the Agri Women Guild, has a special interest in sustainability, regeneration and development. This allows her to look at community food gardens from both a livelihood and a human perspective. "A successful community food garden needs a clear purpose, committed people, sound growing practices and a realistic understanding of what the community needs," she explains.

For Price, who founded media company Food for Mzanzi, some of the most powerful stories told by the publication come from community food gardens. "When I saw how many gardens entered last year and the quality of what they were doing, I wanted to be part of it. Being a judge lets me recognise these growers and help put them in front of people who can support them," says Price.

As a hands-on home gardener whose career is devoted to passing on knowledge and skills to others, Van Zyl brings extensive knowledge of practical and affordable ways to grow food successfully to the judging panel. "What I love most is that the knowledge doesn't stop at the garden gate. Someone learns how to grow spinach or tomatoes, takes that knowledge home, teaches a neighbour or a child and suddenly the impact reaches far beyond that one garden. That's where the real magic happens." she says.

"Just as each community garden has its unique identity and circumstances, so do our three judges, who together form a rich mix of sustainability, storytelling and practical knowledge. Each one brings a unique perspective to the competition, yet they share a common belief that these gardens don't just grow vegetables; they contribute to food security, economic opportunities and resilience," said Shoprite Group chief sustainability officer Sanjeev Raghubir.

According to Raghubir, the proliferation of community gardens is one of the most practical ways to accelerate uplifting of lives on a broad scale in South Africa. Community gardens put food on the table, develop valuable skills, promote entrepreneurship and strengthen bonds within its bounds.

"A successful community food garden is measured way beyond its harvest," adds Raghubir. "Its deeper value is as a social impact incubator that can nurture multiple generations."

About the competition: call to action

The Act For Change Food Garden Competition forms part of the Shoprite Group's ongoing commitment to food security and sustainable livelihoods. Over the past, the Group has invested in 320 community gardens, which collectively produced more than 84 500kgs of fresh food last year.

Do you know a community garden that is feeding, teaching or engaging people in South African neighbourhoods? Whether it's a church plot, school garden or informal, co-operative, now is the time to encourage them to enter. The competition is open to all community food gardens. Entrants must be 18 or older and the garden must serve a broader community.

Enter online at actforchangefoodgardencompetition.datafree.co – entry is free and no data costs apply.

Western Cape export fund could help cut food compliance costs

By Kris van der Bijl

THE South African Fruit and Vegetable Canners Export Council (SAFVCEC) wants the Western Cape's new export fund to help reduce the cost of overlapping domestic food regulations, proposing a shared compliance system for processors.

Jill Atwood-Palm, the council's general manager, says food-related safety, quality, environmental and social requirements are administered across multiple government departments and regulatory authorities. That spread of oversight creates "duplication and unnecessary costs for exporters", she said.

The Western Cape Government launched its Export Global Accelerator Programme (EGAP) Fund on 9 September. It provides grants of R500 000 to R2.5 million to export-enabling intermediary organisations, including export councils, industry associations and business chambers, rather than directly to individual companies.

A shared approach to compliance

Atwood-Palm proposed an integrated food-control framework supported by a digital compliance platform. The framework would address fragmentation in domestic food-control regulation, while the platform would help streamline processes and reduce administrative work.

Exporters must also navigate destination markets' import regulations, certification requirements and standards. These differ between markets and add to the cost of pursuing overseas opportunities.

"For many processors, the cost of navigating these requirements can deter market entry before commercial opportunities are fully realised," Atwood-Palm said.

Her proposal focuses on the domestic part of that burden. A shared platform could help processors manage requirements more efficiently, while a more consolidated framework would address how food-control requirements are administered across government authorities.

The EGAP programme lists export-compliance solutions and shared export-support platforms among its eligible activities. A digital compliance platform could fall within those categories, although funding would depend on the proposal meeting the programme's evaluation criteria.

Why the fund works through industry bodies

EGAP focuses on helping established exporters expand in existing international markets, enter new ones or improve products for global growth. Food and beverages are among its eligible sub-sectors.

Unlike the separate Export Competitiveness Enhancement Programme (ECEP), which accepts applications from both individual businesses and intermediaries, EGAP accepts applications exclusively from export-enabling organisations.

Marthinus van Wyk of the Department of Economic Development and Tourism (DEDAT) said in response to questions from CBN that these organisations could coordinate market expansion for their members, achieve economies of scale and broaden the department's reach.

For SAFVCEC, a shared compliance initiative would apply that collective approach to a cost that Atwood-Palm says affects processed-fruit exporters. Rather than each business navigating overlapping domestic requirements independently, a sector-wide system could provide common support.



Jill Atwood-Palm, the council's general manager.

Other barriers to export growth

Atwood-Palm identifies market access as the main challenge for processed-fruit exporters. High import duties relative to those paid by competing suppliers, tariff barriers and complex foreign-market requirements can constrain opportunities.

SAFVCEC also works on market intelligence, technical barriers to trade, participation in trade missions and international exhibitions, and advocacy for improved market access through trade agreements.

A shared domestic compliance system would address the administrative costs associated with food-control requirements. It would not remove import duties or change the regulations imposed by destination markets.

DEDAT plans to collect baseline information on participating companies at the start of each project and compare it with close-out reports over three years. Impact and outcome evaluations will assess the programme's contribution to the Western Cape's target of increasing exports from R136 billion in 2020 to R408 billion by 2035.

Woolworths in2food acquisition signals SA retail shift

Woolworths' acquisition of Paarl-based food producer in2food is a sign of things to come, with more retailers potentially buying out their suppliers to keep ahead of competitors.

By Larry Claasen

WOOLWORTHS' acquisition of Paarl based food producer in2food is a sign of things to come with more retailers potentially buying out their suppliers as a way to keep ahead of their competitors.

The transaction to buyout in2food for an undisclosed amount, could be an indication of retail chains looking to secure supply of their house brands.

House brands, also known as private label products, are growing in importance for retailers because they have higher margins, because they can control production costs. They can also set prices without adding marketing and advertising costs, which national brands require.

Differentiation through exclusivity

It also allows them to offer bespoke products. "House brands enable a retailer to differentiate themselves clearly from their peers. Then it just becomes about price," said Sasfin senior equity analyst Alec Abraham.

"If you differentiate with your house brand, you may have a particularly tasty biscuit that everybody loves and you won't be able to get anywhere else. So it will draw people to you," Abraham said.

The competition around house brands has already seen the Shoprite Group take Pick n Pay to court in 2023 – it won the case – over how the latter's Crafted Collection products imitated its Forage and Feast range.

Pick n Pay's precedent

Woolworths is not alone when it comes to taking over a supply. He pointed to how Pick n Pay bought the Riebeek West-based Tomis Group, a meat processing, packaging, and abattoir business, for R340 million in June 2023.



"House brands, also known as private label products, are growing in importance for retailers..."

"In this drive to try and elevate the house brand, you may well see more of that."

Pick n Pay said at the time that the acquisition enabled it to offer a higher-quality, more consistent red meat offer at reduced cost.

The Beyers dispute and its aftermath

Woolworths' deal with in2food came at about the same time its acrimonious dispute with its former chocolate supplier Beyers made headlines. The fallout with Beyers ended a 30-year relationship and eventually saw the chocolate maker go under.

Like Beyers, in2food has been a supplier to Woolworths for decades, but Abraham did not think the deal to buy it was a reaction to the dispute with Beyers.

Though it made sense for Woolworths to directly control the products that gave it a competitive advantage, it was more likely focusing on its food operations which was now the strategic priority.

Although the deal was first announced 17 March 2026, it underlines the shift from clothing to food under the new Woolworths CEO, Sam Ngumeni, who took over on 1 June 2026. Prior to taking the top job, Ngumeni, who has been with the group for almost three decades, headed Woolworths Food.

"I think it's all part of the new CEO's focus on food. Food has been really the core driver and the most consistent part of Woolworths for many, many years. The clothing side has been very erratic," said Abraham.

Woolworths' rationale

Woolworths did not respond to CBN's questions about the in2food transaction. It had, however, put out a statement when the Competition Tribunal approved it in October saying that in2food was a "producer of high-quality convenience foods" and a strategic supplier to it for decades.

It also noted that it was looking at "unlocking new revenue streams by leveraging in2food's established presence in food service and export markets." It exports products to the UK, Australia, Europe, Middle East, North America and Africa.

In2food would continue to operate as a standalone business within Woolworths, "it was envisaged" that the current senior leadership team would remain in place, but did not say anything on whether it could supply Woolworths' competitors.



Water costs put food manufacturers' cleaning routines under scrutiny



South Bakels is exploring opportunities to reuse treated effluent from its newly installed on-site wastewater treatment process. From left: Abongile Solomon, Natasha Khan (HSE Manager), Pfunzo Rizwane, Brandon Joubert and Natasha Mbuyisa (National Operations Manager).

By Kris van der Bijl

WATER efficiency in the Western Cape is often framed as an environmental responsibility. For food manufacturers, it is also a cost and operational concern: water is used not only in production, but in cleaning, heating, pumping and wastewater treatment.

The South African Weather Service's 31 August seasonal outlook indicated that El Niño conditions were expected to continue through the 2026/27 summer, with below-normal rainfall forecast in many parts of the country.

Separately, the Western Cape has experienced a drier winter, with provincial officials warning of increased pressure on water resources

On 9 October, Zahid Badroodien, the City's mayoral committee member for water and sanitation, said dam levels were lower than the City would like.

For manufacturers, uncertain supply makes it important to manage water as carefully as any other operating cost. The challenge is to find savings without compromising cleaning standards, hygiene or food safety.

South Bakels, a Cape Town food-ingredients manufacturer, shows how a food plant can shrink its exposure to restriction prices. Its Montague Gardens plant cut water consumption while production volumes grew. The company received four stars at the City's latest Water Star Rating Awards.

Natasha Khan, the company's health, safety and environment manager, said the gain from each saved litre reaches past the meter.

"Every unnecessary litre can also carry additional costs associated with heating, pumping, wastewater handling and treatment," she said.

Cleaning habits hold the savings

Khan said manufacturers tend to concentrate on major equipment and high-consumption processes. She sees considerable opportunity in routine cleaning and the way employees interact with equipment.

South Bakels Cape Town Montague Gardens (South Bakels CMG) asked whether it drew the water it needed or the water it had become accustomed to.

Khan said what surprised her most was that the opportunities lay in ordinary practices that had become part of the plant's routines. Water could flow for longer than a task required because that was the established way of doing the task. Once a habit settles into a process, the excess stops looking like waste.

Those small losses repeat on every shift, every day of the year. Restriction tariffs would raise the cost of each repeat.

South Bakels CMG studied its cleaning practices and found variations between operators and shifts. It made the methods that met its cleaning requirements with less water the standard on all three shifts. The plant's existing hygiene verification tested each change before wider adoption.

Staff scrape and brush ingredient residue off equipment before rinsing. Low-flow pre-rinse spray valves have replaced conventional hose pipes. Washing happens in full batches, in place of partial loads through the day. Where food-safety requirements allow, final rinse water from one task serves as the pre-rinse for another.

"Data tells you where to look, but employees often help you understand why the consumption is happening," Khan said.

South Bakels CMG learned that significant improvements can come with little capital investment.

Bühler CompactMix combines chocolate mixing and grinding in one system

WITH a rising demand for stable chocolate masses, manufacturers seek flexible, cost-effective processing solutions. Bühler's CompactMix combines mixing and grinding with the Aurora ball mill in one compact, modular system.

The system produces various products with particle sizes below 20 μm with consistent quality, while lowering energy use and product losses. Its hygienic stainless-steel design allows easy cleaning and food safety compliance.

With scalable capacities from 400 to 3000 kg/h and multiple mixer options, the system delivers Bühler process quality for a high variety of products.

Beyond CompactMix, Bühler offers complete processing solutions from raw material cleaning and handling, through mixing and grinding, all the way to shaping chocolate and compound products.

CompactMix handles a wide range of compound and confectionery products, adapting quickly to changes in demand. Typical end products include:

- Compound chocolate



- Praline
- Filling and creams
- Spreads
- Ice cream coatings
- Chocolate bars

Smooth and stable texture

Single-pass ball mill grinding achieves particle sizes below 20 μm with narrow particle size distribution, resulting in smooth texture, excellent mouthfeel, and stable flow of various masses.

Versatile applications

The system handles a broad range of recipes from low-fat compounds down to 25%, up to high-fat compounds. It is suitable for bars, fillings, coatings, and spreads, with flexibility to serve diverse market needs.

Cost efficiency

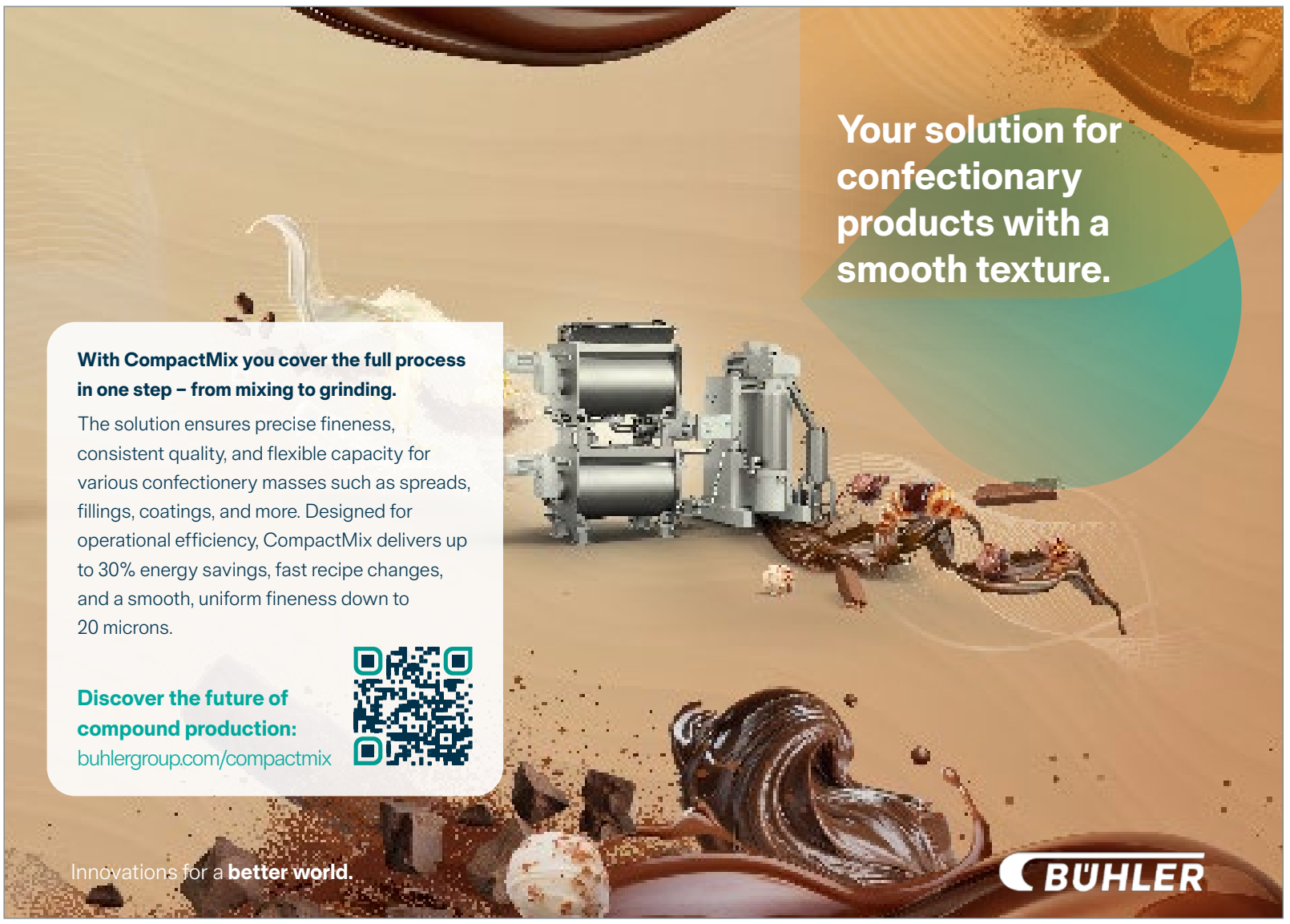
Up to 30% lower energy consumption compared to conventional systems can be achieved, combined with significantly reduced product waste during changeovers. This ensures economical production and maximum utilisation of raw materials, lowering overall operating costs.

Reliable and intelligent operation

Smart automation of the complete system ensures consistent fineness, stable grinding, and reproducible quality. Integrated recipe handling, traceability, and advanced controls enable efficient and reliable production with minimal operator input.

By combining mixing and grinding in a single, modular system, Bühler's CompactMix offers manufacturers greater flexibility in responding to changing product requirements while improving production efficiency. Its reduced energy consumption, lower product losses and consistent processing performance support more cost-effective chocolate and confectionery manufacturing.

For more information, contact Gerhard Booysen +27 (78) 800-7030 / gerhard.booysen@buhlergroup.com



Wind energy in South Africa faces grid delays despite investment growth



Grid constraints continue to delay renewable energy investment in South Africa. Image: Pexels

By Tarryn-Leigh Solomons

SOUTH Africa's wind energy industry continues to attract private investment, but limited transmission capacity is delaying projects and threatening opportunities for local manufacturers, contractors and suppliers.

Grid constraints, procurement delays and local manufacturing were among the main issues raised at Windaba 2026, held in Cape Town on 6 and 7 October.

According to the Global Wind Energy Council's (GWEC) latest Status of Wind in Africa report, the continent had 11.1GW of installed wind capacity by the end of 2025, with another 186GW planned across 259 projects.

South Africa accounts for approximately 4.2GW of installed capacity and remains one of Africa's largest wind energy markets.

Private investment has also gained momentum as mining companies, cement producers and other large electricity users increasingly turn to independent power producers to secure electricity.

GWEC reported that regulatory reforms have enabled more than 3.3GW of corporate wind projects through power purchase agreements in less than 30 months.

However, the shortage of available grid connections remains a major obstacle, particularly in the Cape provinces, where some of the country's strongest wind resources are located.

The National Transmission Company South Africa (NTCSA) plans to construct approximately 14 500km of high-voltage transmission lines over the next decade and install 133 000MVA of transformer capacity.

The expansion programme is expected to cost R440 billion, with a funding shortfall of R134 billion.

NTCSA chief executive Monde Bala has called for greater private-sector participation in financing and constructing transmission infrastructure.

Government's Independent Transmission Projects Programme is intended to attract private investment, beginning with approximately 1 164km of new transmission infrastructure.

However, the programme has experienced delays, with the final request for proposals for the first phase now expected in the second quarter of 2027 following further consultations with seven prequalified bidders.

The delays extend beyond electricity generation, affecting businesses supplying steel, cables, transformers, construction equipment and engineering services.

Uncertainty around construction schedules makes it difficult for manufacturers to plan production, purchase machinery or employ additional workers.

Electricity and Energy Minister Kgosientsho Ramokgopa told Windaba that electricity curtailment was costing South Africa close to R49 billion annually in potential revenue.

Curtailment occurs when electricity generation must be reduced because the transmission network cannot accommodate the available supply.

Government is considering additional battery storage capacity and exporting surplus electricity to neighbouring countries to address the problem.

Under the Integrated Resource Plan 2025, the first new procurement determination will prioritise 4 600MW of battery storage and 5 000MW of gas-to-power, with wind and solar procurement to follow.

Local manufacturing also came under discussion at Windaba, particularly South Africa's reliance on imported components and the cost of establishing domestic production facilities.

Industrial Development Corporation representative Ian Davis acknowledged that developing local manufacturing capacity would require upfront investment, but maintained that the long-term benefits of local production and employment would justify the expense.

Import tariffs and local content requirements were also debated, with concerns about rising costs and their potential impact on project financing.

The South African Wind Energy Association (SAWEA) reported that more than 800MW of wind capacity had entered commercial operation during 2026, with installations expected to exceed 1GW by year-end.

Wind developers have also contributed to transmission expansion, including the installation of 116km of power lines.

While investment interest remains strong, delays in transmission infrastructure and procurement continue to affect the pace at which projects reach construction.

Manufacturers and suppliers will be watching the rollout closely, particularly those considering additional production capacity to meet demand from the wind energy industry.

South African wholesale electricity market faces 2027 test

South Africa's wholesale electricity market will open in stages from 2027, turning power into a tradable financial product. A new Krutham report warns that key rules are still being written — and banks, regulators and traders are running out of time.



By Larry Claasen

THE way electricity is bought and sold in South Africa is about to fundamentally change.

Power will no longer be shifted mainly through private deals. Instead, it will be traded more like a financial product, where risk has a price and the market and not the regulator sets the rate.

The shift will not happen overnight. A report by market research and consulting firm Krutham says the new South African Wholesale Electricity Market (Sawem) will open in stages.

Commercial trading is targeted for the second quarter of 2027, but initial exposure will be limited. Full balancing is only expected in the first quarter of 2028, with capacity and ancillary services markets following in 2030.

For now, the country's 25 licensed traders are mostly aggregators. They bundle power from independent producers and sell it through bilateral contracts. None of them holds a real-time position in a spot market. That will change when Sawem goes live.

But the report warns that key rules are still being written on a tight deadline. Vesting contracts must be fixed before April 2027. Regulators must also clarify how financial markets law applies to electricity contracts. The market operator — the National Transmission Company South Africa (NTCSA) — must have settlement systems ready before the first trade.

"Key issues need to be addressed, such as the need to settle imbalances against a non-existent price. Key regulations, rules and frameworks are being developed against the clock to address these issues," said the report.

Krutham added that creating a reference price will transform bilateral deals into hedgeable positions for generators and off-takers. This means generators can secure revenue and customers can minimise risk.

There are also opportunities for banks to develop new business in credit cover, hedging and intermediation. The report says local banks should start building trading desks now, not in five years, if they want to compete with global commodity houses.

The government, meanwhile, will benefit because it will no longer need to create investment signals through procurement. Rather, this role will shift to the market, which will attract private capital and expose inefficient costs.

For Sawem to succeed, Krutham has made several recommendations centred on six themes: reforming vesting and market design; clarifying regulatory treatment of derivatives and setting price-quality standards; sequencing settlement readiness around the 2027 go-live; developing JSE and bank trading liquidity; providing credit support and allocating price risk; and preparing demand-side buyers, aggregators, traders and generators for the new market.



Redefine Properties' R106m Cape Town solar wheeling project expands its business model

Redefine Properties' R106m wheeling project is sending rooftop solar power from Brackengate to Kenilworth Centre, Blue Route Mall and The Towers — both as an energy strategy and as a new business model for the property group.

By Larry Claasen

REDEFINE Properties' R106 million wheeling project in Cape Town is part of its strategy of getting into the power market and broader its offering.

The property group wheeled power from its purpose-built municipal rooftop solar facility at the Massmart Distribution Centre in Brackengate across the municipal grid to Kenilworth Centre, Blue Route Mall and The Towers Office precinct.

The deal marks a shift in South Africa's electricity market, as it sees property companies like Redefine Properties become players in the power sector as it is a way to add value to its offering.

"Wheeling is becoming an increasingly important part of our broader energy strategy. It enables us to access renewable energy at scale, optimise energy across the portfolio and reduce reliance on traditional grid-supplied electricity. The focus remains property-linked: using energy initiatives to lower occupancy costs, improve resilience and support long-term asset value," said Redefine Properties chief operating officer, Leon Kok.

A replicable model - where it makes sense

That does not mean every Redefine property will follow. The group says the Massmart Distribution Centre project will not be its last of its kind, but it will replicate the model only where it makes commercial sense.

"The Brackengate project provides a practical model that can be replicated, but further rollout depends on factors such as municipal wheeling frameworks, available network capacity, suitable generation opportunities and commercial viability. The City of Cape Town has created an enabling framework, while municipal arrangements elsewhere remain a key constraint to wider adoption."

Why Brackengate matters

For Redefine, the scale of the industrial facility at Brakengate enables large-scale solar generation allowing it to maximise the value of its portfolio by linking assets into a more integrated energy system.

"The significance of this project lies not only in the scale of the installation, but in the way it allows us to manage energy across our portfolio," says Kok. "By using the capacity of one asset to support others, we're creating a more efficient and resilient portfolio. It is a more sophisticated approach to asset management, and one that reduces our reliance on traditional energy sources while supporting long-term value creation."

At Brakengate saw it develop a purpose-built 7.014MWp facility comprising 11,691 solar panels installed across approximately 57,000m^2 of roof space.

Collaboration is critical

The project comes after the City of Cape Town ran a wheeling pilot to enable private-sector participation in the energy sector. The pilot tested the concept of renewable energy being generated at one asset and then allocated to another.

Doing this successfully — and in a way that makes commercial sense for all parties — requires collaboration between local government and the private sector.

Kok said understating the needs of all involved was an important lesson learned from this project.

"The biggest lesson is that successful wheeling depends on collaboration and coordination. The generation asset, customer demand, commercial agreements, metering and billing systems, grid infrastructure and municipal framework all need to work together."

He added: "Strong partnership between the private sector and the municipality was critical, and that alignment is what can help make future projects scalable."



Redefine Properties' rooftop solar facility at the Massmart Distribution Centre in Brackengate

What tenants gain — and what they don't

Kok also clarified whether the project would deliver direct cost savings to tenants.

"This project is not about providing individual tenants with a direct saving on their electricity bills. For our tenants, the benefit is being part of a property portfolio that uses more renewable energy and has a lower carbon footprint. By bringing additional renewable generation into the energy mix, we also reduce demand on the national grid, helping to free up constrained capacity and support a more sustainable and resilient electricity system for everyone."



Partnerships that power a new energy future



Nicole Mason, CEO of Envusa Energy.

SOUTH Africa's energy transition will not be delivered by technology alone. It will require partnerships between businesses, energy providers, investors, communities and government built around a shared understanding that some of the challenges facing the country cannot be solved by any one organisation working in isolation.

At Envusa Energy, this philosophy has shaped the company's journey, which CEO Nicole Mason describes as "a partnership of firsts".

The joint venture between EDF power solutions and Anglo American brings together the global renewable energy development and trading expertise of an independent power producer, with the experience, energy demand and operational insight of a diversified mining group.

"This combination has enabled Envusa to approach South Africa's energy transition differently, developing solutions around the needs of customers rather than fitting customers into predetermined energy products," Mason says.

Envusa's first major milestone was the development of a 520MW portfolio of renewable energy projects serving 10 mine sites through a single transaction. At the time, it was one of South Africa's largest corporate renewable energy procurement initiatives and demonstrated what is possible when renewable generation, energy aggregation and corporate demand are brought together at scale.

More recently, the organisation reached financial close on the SIOC PV facility, a utility-scale project being developed on a rehabilitated waste rock dump at Sishen.

"These projects are very different, but they have one thing in common: they were enabled by close collaboration with our customers," says Mason. "Envusa's role is not simply to generate renewable electricity. It is to listen, assess and work with customers to develop an energy strategy that can evolve with their businesses."

This is the essence of co-creation: customers bring an intimate understanding of their operations, opportunities and risks, while Envusa brings expertise in renewable energy development, financing, construction, operations and energy trading.

The real value of a long-term energy partnership is that it creates a pathway rather than a single intervention.

> "The real value of a long-term energy partnership is that it creates a pathway rather than a single intervention."

A customer may begin with an opportunity for immediate emissions reduction through solar PV. From there, battery storage can be introduced, followed by additional wheeled renewable energy and, ultimately, more sophisticated energy management and optimisation.

The objective is to progressively move customers towards their longer-term decarbonisation ambitions while simultaneously addressing cost, reliability and energy security.

A partnership is about understanding each other's challenges and working together to identify solutions, opportunities and new ideas.

Envusa is targeting at least 3–5GW of renewable energy and battery storage capacity by 2030. Achieving that will require more than capital and technology, it will require deeper partnerships across the energy ecosystem.

As Envusa scales, this will mean continuing to challenge both the organisation and its partners to think differently. That includes customers, lenders, advisers, technology providers, communities and government.



EOT Solutions opens R30 million advanced manufacturing facility at Freeport Saldanha, creating jobs and driving industrial growth



EOT Solutions has opened an advanced metal processing and fabrication facility at Freeport Saldanha, marking an investment of more than R30 million in the region.

The facility, which currently supports approximately 15 direct jobs, strengthens Saldanha Bay's advanced manufacturing capabilities and reinforces growing investor confidence in the Western Cape as a destination for industrial development, economic growth and job creation.

The project also has the potential to expand through a second phase that could increase total investment to approximately R70 million and double direct employment to around 30 jobs.

Speaking at the official opening, Western Cape Minister of Agriculture, Economic Development and Tourism, Dr Ivan Meyer stated that the investment demonstrates the Western Cape Government's commitment to creating an environment that enables business growth and job creation.

"Today is about celebrating investment, innovation, partnership and job creation. Most importantly, it is about recognising the confidence that businesses have in Saldanha Bay and in the Western Cape as a destination for industrial growth and opportunity," said Meyer.

The facility, established by EOT Solutions (Pty) Ltd in partnership with Nine Dot Solutions (Pty) Ltd and Saxeni Project (Pty) Ltd, has introduced world-class manufacturing technology to Saldanha Bay, including one of South Africa's largest CNC fibre laser cutting machines, advanced profiling equipment and CNC brake press machinery.

Meyer said the investment directly supports the Western Cape Government's Growth for Jobs Strategy, which focuses on stimulating economic growth through private-sector investment and employment creation.

"Already, this facility supports approximately 15 direct jobs. Behind every one of those jobs is a family, a household and a future that is more secure because investment has translated into employment," he said.

The minister added that discussions regarding a second phase of expansion are a positive signal for the future of industrial development in the province.

"Successful businesses create confidence. Confidence attracts new investment. New investment creates jobs. And jobs create hope," said Meyer.

EOT Solutions CEO Gunther Guse, described the occasion as a significant milestone for the company.

"EOT sees this event as our peg in the ground. We are committed to building something credible, something sustainable, and creating jobs. We have established a world-class facility able to compete at the highest standard in full compliance with all the necessary quality standards," the CEO said.

Freeport Saldanha chairperson Stieneke Jensma, welcomed the investment and its contribution to the growth of the Special Economic Zone.

"EOT has brought serious capital and equipment and we do not take this for granted. Thank you EOT for the confidence you have placed in the SEZ through your investment," he said.

B.E.D. strengthens supplier synergies while showcasing product diversity and technical knowledge



Andrè Esterhuizen, B.E.D. Operations Manager (Free State), Frikkie Kruger, Simpology Senior Research Development Manager, and Jan Viljoen, B.E.D. Managing Director.

BOLT and Engineering Distributors (B.E.D.) Group joined its long-standing welding supplier Fronius South Africa, as well as suppliers Simpology Group and Titeforce at Electra Mining Africa (EMA) 2026.

"With this pivotal industry event only taking place every two years, B.E.D. together with our supplier partners sees it as a golden opportunity to share technical product and application knowledge, and showcase new technology, for the ultimate benefit of our mutual customers," points out B.E.D. CEO Mike Giltrow.

This year's event was no exception, giving B.E.D. and its partners a platform to demonstrate welding, safety and bolting technologies which positively impact customers' productivity and profitability, while simultaneously reinforcing the supplier alliances which underpin B.E.D.'s market offering.

Fronius: The future of welding, powered by automation

As Fronius South Africa's exclusive local distributor, B.E.D. joined Fronius on its outdoor stand to deliver a week of live, interactive welding demonstrations. The high-energy, demonstration-focused stand reflected the event's broader themes of energy innovation, decarbonisation and operational efficiency.

Highlights included the Fronius Fortis, the new industrial workhorse succeeding the TransSteel series for high-quality manual MIG/MAG welding, and the Fronius Ignis Battery, the next generation of Fronius's very popular AccuPocket battery welder: a cordless welding solution built for field use anywhere, anytime. Visitors also saw the Velocity Assistant ('Velo'), described as 'cruise control for welding', integrated into the iWave and TPS/i flagship systems for precise, consistent long weld seams.

Collaborative welding: Accessible to small and medium fabricators

A particular focus of the display was Fronius's Cobot welding range, comprising CE-certified collaborative robot welding cells engineered for accessible automation without advanced programming skills.

"The cobot demonstration at EMA 2026 is just the beginning of B.E.D. and Fronius SA's automation journey in South Africa," says Edric van der Walt, Welding Specialist at Fronius South Africa. "The focus going forward is on making robotic and collaborative welding genuinely accessible to small and medium fabricators: through demonstration, consultation and a support infrastructure that gives customers the confidence to invest."

Simpology Group: Mine-ready smart safety and asset control

Simpology Group exhibited its smart safety and asset control range, including SIMSAFE smart lockers and digital key system, as well as its intelligent vehicle management solutions for mobile mining machinery and fleet operations, software-driven digital Lock-Out/Tag-Out protocols to prevent accidental equipment start-up, and predictive safety systems supporting zero-harm initiatives across underground and heavy industrial mining sites.

"EMA 2026 was an excellent opportunity to introduce B.E.D.'s partnership with Simopology Group, as an official reseller of their locally manufactured and assembled safety and asset control systems. Mining and engineering customers were very impressed with Simpology's integrated solutions, and digital control over a range of assets: from keys to vehicles, equipment and access," comments Clayton Verster, B.E.D. Locks division Product Specialist.

Titeforce: Precision bolting for mining, power and industrial applications

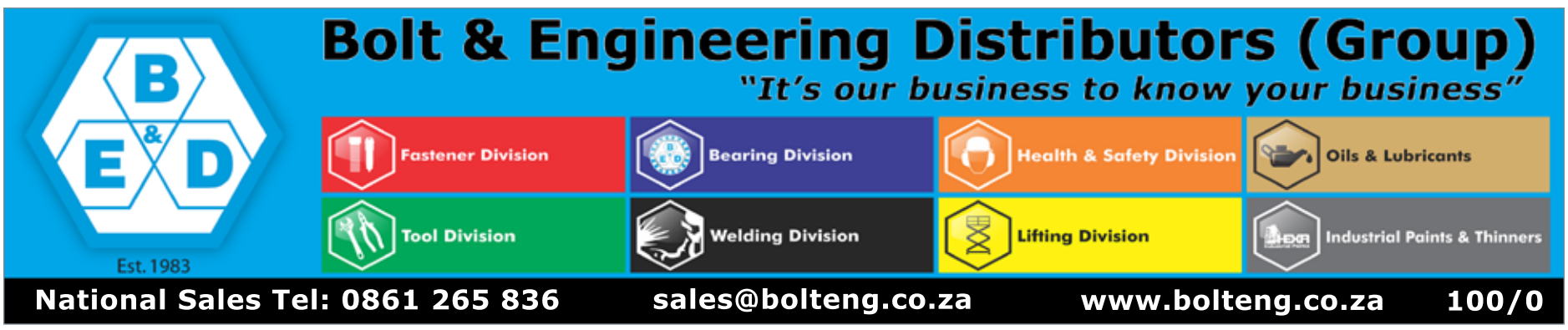
Titeforce showcased its RAD Torque Systems range of battery, electric and pneumatic torque wrenches built for demanding mining conditions, alongside partner brands TorsionX, TensionPro and Durapac for hydraulic torque, bolt tensioning and heavy lifting. Applications span maintenance on crushers, mills, haulage systems and processing plant infrastructure.

"EMA 2026 provided Titeforce with an excellent platform to showcase our range of specialist bolting solutions: not simply displaying equipment, but engaging directly with customers about their specific applications," says Bryce Mayer, Global Business Director of Titeforce. "It also provided an important opportunity to create greater awareness around B.E.D.'s alliance with Titeforce and how the combination of Titeforce's technical expertise and B.E.D.'s national network of 14 branches can provide customers with significantly greater access to RAD products and local support."

Strengthening alliances

"Electra Mining Africa 2026 was so much more than just another industry exhibition. It gave B.E.D. and our valued supplier partners the opportunity to enhance our relationships through teamwork and engaging in person with the customers who ultimately make these alliances work," Giltrow concludes.

https://bolteng.co.za/





Babcock expands Lincoln Electric welding stock and support in the Western Cape

BABCOCK is strengthening its Lincoln Electric offering in the Western Cape, with locally stocked welding products, dedicated regional sales support and expanded access to technical services for industrial customers.

As part of this initiative, Babcock is now stocking Lincoln Electric welding products at its existing Babcock facility in Kraaifontein, Cape Town.

The expanded offering is supported by a dedicated welding sales team serving the Western Cape, providing local commercial and technical assistance. Customers can access Lincoln Electric welding consumables, equipment and solutions, together with spare parts, technical support and machine repair services.

Babcock is also expanding the availability of commonly used welding consumables across multiple locations in the Cape Town area, including a local service and repair centre, to further strengthen its regional support.

According to Dhurusha Chetty, Head of Welding and Products (Plant Services) at Babcock, the initiative is focused on making welding products and specialist support more accessible to customers across the region.

"Our focus is on improving product availability and ensuring that customers have access to the technical expertise and support they need. By strengthening our local stockholding and sales presence, we can respond more effectively to the requirements of Western Cape industry," says Chetty.

Supporting the Western Cape's industrial sectors

The expanded offering supports a broad range of industries, including marine, power generation, petrochemical, manufacturing, fabrication and mining, each with distinct welding and maintenance requirements.

A central element of Babcock's strengthened Western Cape offering is the combination of locally available products and specialist technical support.

Through its existing Kraaifontein facility, customers now have improved access to Lincoln Electric welding consumables and equipment, supported by a dedicated regional sales team. The broader offering includes spare parts, technical assistance and machine repair services, with a local service and repair centre.

Babcock's welding specialists and engineers can also assist customers with product selection, application requirements and welding procedure qualification support.

The expansion of consumable stockholding across additional Cape Town locations is intended to further improve convenience and availability for customers undertaking routine fabrication, maintenance and specialised welding work.

"By combining Lincoln Electric's established welding technologies with Babcock's local infrastructure and technical expertise, we are making it easier for Western Cape customers to access the products and support they need to keep their operations running efficiently," concludes Chetty.

For enquiries, email: ashley.sullivan@babcock.co.za or enquiries@babcock.co.za



Steel fabrication Western Cape: Saldanha plant boosts capacity



By Kris van der Bijl

A new metal-processing plant at Freeport Saldanha adds advanced cutting and forming equipment to the Western Cape's steel industry. But local industry experience points to continuing gaps in some types of heavy fabrication and specialised machining, alongside shortages of technical workers needed to carry out the work.

Expanding regional fabrication capacity involves more than machinery. While the EOT Solutions plant is capable of growing both local fabrication capacity as well as supporting jobs in the region, the entire metal-processing industry must be considered.

EOT Solutions opened the plant on 9 September, establishing it with partners Nine Dot Solutions and Saxeni Project. Its equipment includes computer numerical control (CNC) fibre-laser cutting, profiling and press-brake machinery. The Western Cape Government describes the fibre-laser cutter as one of the largest in South Africa.

A potential second phase could increase total investment to approximately R70 million and double direct employment to around 30, according to the provincial government's announcement.

Not all fabrication capacity is the same

Michael Papanicolaou, Chief Executive of Union Steel and a Western Cape member company of the Southern African Institute of Steel Construction (SAISC), says the province has established capabilities in light and medium structural steelwork, but more limited capacity for certain types of heavy fabrication and specialised machining.

Larger or specialised projects may consequently require additional capacity from elsewhere in South Africa, with the associated work and spending going to fabricators in other provinces.

SAISC's broader industry view is that expanding regional capacity requires investment, sustained market demand and skilled labour.

The Saldanha investment adds metal-processing equipment to the region's industrial base, while the wider question for fabricators is whether they can combine machinery, expertise and production capacity to compete for different types of projects.

The specific skills in short supply

Papanicolaou says Union Steel struggles to recruit experienced steelwork detailers, draughtspeople, workshop supervisors, boilermakers and CNC operators. Workshop-based coded welders are reportedly more readily available in the region.

The shortage is not uniform across trades. Steel fabrication requires people to prepare technical drawings, coordinate workshop production and operate machinery, as well as weld and assemble components.

SAISC identifies continued technical training and closer collaboration between design engineers and fabricators as priorities for strengthening industry capability and improving project efficiency.

Competing on more than production price

Western Cape fabricators bidding for projects in South Africa's northern mining and industrial regions may face additional logistics and inspection costs, according to Papanicolaou. Distance from major project clients and engineering teams can also influence overall project costs.

SAISC assesses competitiveness against both domestic fabricators and imported fabricated steel through total delivered cost, technical capability, production capacity, quality and reliable execution.

For regional businesses, the commercial challenge is therefore broader than acquiring equipment. They need the skills and production capabilities to meet project requirements, alongside the ability to deliver work reliably and at a competitive total cost.

SAISC's position is that building regional fabrication capacity requires investment to be matched by skilled labour and sustained demand

Yaskawa robotic welding boosts Tank Clinic production efficiency

A highly specialised robotic welding solution developed by Yaskawa Southern Africa is helping Tank Clinic transform the way it manufactures aluminium road tankers, demonstrating how advanced automation can address some of the most demanding challenges in South African manufacturing.

The system, developed specifically around Tank Clinic's requirements, combines a Yaskawa AR1440 welding robot with an OTG-XYZ on-track gantry, rotating headstocks, positioners, vision-based seam finding and aluminium welding technology.

The result is a large-scale robotic welding system capable of moving around the tanker while the tanker itself rotates, providing the reach, accessibility and welding positioning required for the final welding process.



The Yaskawa large-scale robotic welding system is capable of moving around the tanker while the tanker itself rotates.



Devon Prinsloo (Yaskawa) and Steven Holm (Tank Clinic).

The solution was showcased at Tank Clinic's recent Open Day, held to mark the company's 50th anniversary, giving customers, industry stakeholders and visitors an opportunity to see the technology operating in a live manufacturing environment.

The project originated from Tank Clinic's need to improve the capacity, consistency and repeatability of a welding process that had previously been carried out exclusively by skilled welders. Rather than applying an off-the-shelf robotic cell, Yaskawa worked with Tank Clinic to develop a system around the size, geometry and production requirements of its tankers.

"Large aluminium tankers present a very different challenge from the smaller, repetitive applications where robotics are traditionally associated. The robot needs to reach across a large workpiece, maintain the correct welding orientation and coordinate its movement with the movement of the tanker itself," says Devon Prinsloo, National Project Manager at Yaskawa Southern Africa.

"The solution therefore required considerably more than putting a robot on a track. It involved integrating the robot, gantry, positioners, welding equipment and vision system so that they operate as one coordinated system."

The OTG-XYZ gantry provides approximately eight metres of track travel, with additional multi-axis movement, while two headstocks rotate and position the tanker for welding.

The system also incorporates Fronius Cold Metal Transfer (CMT) technology for aluminium welding and a Servo Robot i-Cube camera system for seam finding, alongside automatic torch cleaning and safety systems.

Significant engineering, programming and R&D went into integrating the various technologies to suit Tank Clinic's specific manufacturing process. The Yaskawa robot controller also serves as the central control system for the entire cell, eliminating the need for a separate PLC (programmable logic controller), which would typically coordinate the different machines and processes within an automated system.

The impact on production is equally significant. Tank Clinic previously averaged approximately one week to fully weld a tanker. The automated system can now complete the welding process within an eight-hour working day, depending on the specific tanker configuration.

For Tank Clinic, the investment represents an opportunity to combine its 50 years of manufacturing experience with advanced technology designed for its future requirements.

"The significance for us is not simply having a unique piece of equipment. It demonstrates that South African manufacturing can adopt and implement world-class technology for highly specialised applications," says Steven Holm, Technical Director at Tank Clinic. "The system gives us greater consistency and repeatability, while allowing us to make more efficient use of our skilled workforce."

The installation is also significant for Yaskawa globally. It is the first OTG gantry system of this type installed in South Africa and one of four worldwide, highlighting the engineering capability required to apply advanced robotic technology to a complex, large-scale manufacturing environment.

"As manufacturers look to improve productivity, quality and competitiveness, the opportunity is to use automation to solve specific production challenges rather than simply automate for the sake of automation," Prinsloo says. "The Tank Clinic project is a good example of how robotics, engineering and local manufacturing expertise can be brought together to create a solution around a real industrial requirement."

The project offers a tangible example of the role advanced robotics can play in the future of South African manufacturing, combining global automation technology with local engineering expertise to create highly specialised solutions for industry.

www.yaskawa.za.com



AR2010

Combining Precision, Performance and Functionality

Ideal for welding agricultural equipment, automotive frames or construction machinery, the new AR2010 robot offers fast and powerful performance for arc welding applications. While the streamlined arm design gives easy access to parts in confined places, the slim robot profile permits close robot placement for high-density weld cells. Improved axis composite speed and expanded wrist range optimize robot functionality, and a symmetric wrist provides equal access to both sides of a part. A 50mm thru-hole reduces cable interference and wear, and an enhanced feeder mounting area on the arm reduces equipment obstruction.

YASKAWA

Sales Enquiries:
jan.thart@yaskawa-sa.co.za
+27 11 608 3182

Overcoming mechanical strain and heat: What real motor reliability looks like on the plant floor

By ElectroMechanica

IF you run processing lines, fluid handling systems, or continuous-duty machinery, you know that electric motor failures rarely happen at a convenient time. When a motor goes down, the real cost isn't just the replacement unit; it's the lost production hours, the scramble to find a frame that actually fits, and the frustration of dealing with premature insulation breakdown caused by harsh African operating conditions.

To solve these operational bottlenecks, ElectroMechanica (EM) has expanded its regional portfolio. Now, with the addition of the TechTop lightweight aluminium motor range alongside its established drives and switchgear, EM delivers a complete, single-source power solution backed by 40 years of local engineering expertise.

Protecting your plant floor from these seasonal and operational disruptions comes down to three key engineering realities: mechanical weight, mounting flexibility, and thermal endurance.

Lightweight portability and natural wash-down resistance

While heavy-duty cast-iron motors remain the gold standard for fixed, high-torque industrial installations, mobile and space-constrained equipment calls for a different approach. High-grade aluminium housings significantly cut motor weight compared to cast iron, making transport across facility floors and mounting on elevated skids, fan decks, or mobile processing frames far simpler.

Aluminium also provides inherent oxidation resistance. In damp plant environments or areas subjected to chemical wash-downs, steam cleaning, and high-humidity air handling, aluminium retains its surface finish and structural integrity, offering an ideal, lightweight alternative for specialised plant applications.

Drop-in versatility and heat protection on the plant floor

When a motor fails on a critical production line, the last thing you need is a replacement unit that requires custom brackets or altered wiring layouts. TechTop's aluminium series features removable multi-mount feet and a single-stator design, allowing technicians to reposition the terminal box directly on-site to clear tight spatial constraints. Combined with standard B5 and B14 flange options, a single workshop spare acts as a universal drop-in replacement across multiple production lines or HVAC skids.



Once installed, these units are engineered to handle continuous heavy-duty cycles. When running on Variable Speed Drives (VSDs) at reduced speeds, standard shaft fan airflow drops. TechTop counters this thermal strain by pairing IE3 energy efficiency with Class F insulation and a Class B temperature rise. This heavy-duty thermal buffer supports continuous VSD operation down to 20Hz without needing extra external cooling kits, keeping your energy costs down and preventing heat-induced trips during high-ambient summer runs.

Seamless integration across existing control panels

Upgrading or replacing your motor equipment should not force you into a complete overhaul of your electrical infrastructure. Built to standard industrial specifications, TechTop aluminium motors operate seamlessly whether paired with EM's Delta drive series or integrated into your existing third-party control panels. Every installation is fully supported by EM's local technical safety net and regional network of OEM-authorised field technicians.

Stocked for immediate dispatch

Backed by a local stockholding across Johannesburg, Durban, and Cape Town, the full TechTop IE3 Aluminium Motor range is ready for immediate dispatch via your nearest EM branch or through the online EM webstore.

https://www.em.co.za/

TECHTOP

TA SERIES:
THREE-PHASE
ALUMINIUM ELECTRIC
MOTORS

NEW

Techtop's Edge (Global Scale & Aluminum):
Arguably the largest manufacturer of aluminium motors globally, TechTop delivers research and development into lightweight housing designs for premium efficiency motors that remain unmatched in this tier.

Serving as the perfect lightweight partner to the TC cast iron line, these motors are built with flexible multi-mount frames and superior cooling, delivering reliable performance from 0.18 kW right up to 22.00 kW.



Ideal Applications:
Perfect for diverse industrial use, including packaging, material handling, fluid pumps, blowers, power transmission, and agricultural machinery.

Technical Specifications:

Motor rating:	0.18 kW to 22.00 kW
Efficiency classes:	**IE3** (Premium Efficiency): ≥ 0.75 kW
Number of poles:	Poles: 2 and 4 pole (Three-phase)
Housing:	Totally Enclosed Fan Cooled (TEFC)
Voltage (50Hz):	Frames 63–100: Δ 220-240V / Y 380-415V • Frames 112–180: Δ 380-415V / Y 660-690V

Scan to Learn More

FEATURES
5 YEARS Extended Warranty
Premium Efficiency
IP55 Ingress Protection
VFD Inverter Duty
Extra Strength

EM ElectroMechanica

How intelligent fan technology is redefining energy-efficient data centre cooling

AS South Africa's digital economy continues to expand, data centres have become essential infrastructure supporting cloud computing, artificial intelligence, financial services and digital communications. With growing demand comes a critical challenge: managing the heat generated by increasingly powerful IT equipment. ebm-papst's advanced fan technology provides effective energy-efficient cooling to maintain uptime, protect sensitive hardware and control operational costs.

Because no two data centres are identical, cooling systems must be tailored to specific operational requirements. Whether using in-row cooling, chillers, precision air-conditioning units or air handling units (AHUs), every solution depends on reliable airflow management to maintain optimal temperature and humidity levels. Poor climate control can result in equipment failure, reduced performance and costly downtime.

Modern electronically commutated (EC) fan technology is helping operators improve cooling efficiency while reducing energy consumption. ebm-papst's AxiBlade and AxiEco axial fan ranges have been developed for the demanding conditions found in data centres. AxiBlade fans provide high power density with low noise emissions, making them suitable for facilities located near residential or commercial developments. AxiEco fans are designed for applications requiring higher pressure performance and specialised heat exchanger configurations.

For precision cooling systems, RadiPac centrifugal fans have set new standards in efficiency and performance. Their optimised impeller and outlet design minimises airflow losses, allowing cooling equipment to operate effectively at lower fan speeds. This reduces energy consumption, lowers operating costs and improves system efficiency across a broad operating range.

Reliability remains a priority in mission-critical environments. One of the most significant advances in fan technology is automatic resonance detection. By using integrated vibration sensors and intelligent control software, fans can identify and avoid critical operating speeds that may cause excessive vibration and premature bearing wear. These sensors also support condition monitoring and predictive maintenance, helping operators reduce unplanned downtime and improve maintenance planning.

Power quality is another important consideration. Variable-speed motors can generate electrical harmonics that place strain on power infrastructure. Integrated Active Power Factor Correction (aPFC) technology addresses this challenge by preventing harmonics from being generated, improving energy efficiency while reducing demands on transformers, UPS systems and backup generators.

As the South African data centre sector grows, operators must balance performance, reliability, efficiency and sustainability. Advanced fan technologies are proving to be a key enabler of this transition, helping facilities lower operating costs, improve resilience and support long-term environmental goals while ensuring uninterrupted digital services.

For more information visit www.ebmpapst.co.za





Data centre cooling: How spray technology improves efficiency



Spray technology helps data centres maintain uptime, and improve energy and water efficiency.

AS rack power densities in data centres rise due to AI and high-performance computing, traditional mechanical cooling becomes energy-intensive. Spraying Systems Co. supplies spray technology for cooling applications that can help operators manage rising thermal loads and improve cooling efficiency.

The company's engineered spray technology supports facility-level cooling efficiency and process reliability by enabling precise humidification and evaporative cooling.

Fine-mist or fog nozzles atomize water into very small droplets (typically 10 to 30 microns for "dry fog" applications). These droplets evaporate rapidly in the airstream, absorbing heat and lowering the temperature of incoming air before it reaches condensers, heat exchangers, air-cooled chillers, or outdoor units.

> "By cooling inlet air, the systems increase engine efficiency and power output, allowing facilities to extract more capacity from existing generators without major upgrades."

HVAC / evaporative cooling

Spraying Systems Co.'s precision spray nozzles deliver fine, uniform mists for adiabatic (evaporative) pre-cooling of incoming air to air-cooled heat exchangers, condensers, and outdoor units. The droplets evaporate rapidly, lowering air temperature and improving heat-rejection capacity during hot weather or peak loads.

Systems often run dry most of the year and activate only when needed, with staged controls based on ambient conditions. Engineered droplet size, distribution, and placement minimise water carryover, protecting equipment while reducing chiller energy use and improving overall cooling efficiency.

Maximising power

Evaporative cooling nozzles are applied to natural-gas or diesel backup generators and on-site power engines. By cooling inlet air, the systems increase engine efficiency and power output, allowing facilities to extract more capacity from existing generators without major upgrades.

This helps data centres meet rising IT loads while maintaining reliability during utility outages or peak demand.

NOx control

For emissions compliance, specialised injectors and nozzles precisely dose ammonia or urea into exhaust streams from generators or turbines. These support Selective Catalytic Reduction (SCR) or Selective Non-Catalytic Reduction (SNCR) systems. Consistent droplet size, distribution, and placement ensure effective reagent-NOx reaction, minimise catalyst degradation or plugging, and help meet EPA limits. Insulated injectors and automated controls handle variable loads and short-duration testing runs common in data centre power systems.

Water treatment

Spray nozzles and eductors enhance chemical mixing, distribution, and process consistency in cooling-water treatment tanks and systems. Eductors use hydraulic energy for thorough mixing without mechanical agitators, reducing scaling, corrosion, and fouling risks. This protects critical cooling infrastructure, improves reliability, and supports sustainable water management in evaporative systems.

Together, these applications help data centres maintain uptime, improve energy and water efficiency, meet environmental regulations, and scale performance under increasing thermal and power demands.

For more information contact grant@monitorspray.co.za







How to speed up cable traceability (case study)



A large data centre rack manufacturer provides complete cable traceability in just 5 seconds per cable label. Applicable on power, UTP and fibre optic cables, the manufacturer maximises wired server rack output in full compliance with traceability requirements from any data centre. Thanks to automated printing and application of labels manufacturer saves 3694 hours in cable identification. Read the full case study and learn how Brady Corporation helped to answer the challenge.

CHALLENGE: LABEL GROWING CABLE VOLUMES

A large data centre server rack manufacturer faced a seemingly unscalable traceability challenge. Growing rack densities and increasing demand for tiny fibre optic cables resulted in growing cable volumes that created a considerable cable labelling bottleneck. Even at 15-20 seconds per printed and applied label, the manufacturer's rack integration service could no longer keep up with demand. Unwilling to abandon their premium offer, the manufacturer set out to find a solution for their cable traceability challenges.

SOLUTION: AUTOMATED LABEL PRINT & WRAP

The rack manufacturer contacted Brady Corporation, a specialist in Automated Identification and Data Capture, and decided on the **BradyPrinter A6500**. With this scalable solution, the rack manufacturer solved the traceability bottleneck. The company continues to provide integratable data centre racks with top quality cable traceability, at maximum production output.

5 seconds per label
3 times faster than the fastest manual labelling experts, the A6500 wraps labels around cables with mechanical precision. Supported by the Brady Workstation Data Automation app, the system sources authoritative data straight from the company ERP to immediately print in high, 300 dpi resolution for maximum print legibility.

Triggered automatically, by a button or foot pedal, operators simply insert a cable and the system prints and applies the right label anywhere on a cable. To keep pace with growing demand for data centre racks, and with increasing volumes of cables to identify, the manufacturer gradually installed 15 standalone A6500 printer-applicators.

Fit for all cables
The A6500 cable wrapping system is both precise and flexible. Without a wrinkle, it can label cable diameters ranging from 1.19mm to 10.92mm and 1.52mm to 15.24mm. That enables the manufacturer to quickly label fibre optic cables, UTP-cables and server rack power cables. The system reliably prints and wraps 3 standardised label sizes designed to optimally identify these common data centre rack cable types.

Custom traceability
To meet exceptional end-user traceability requirements, Brady engineers developed custom labels for the BradyPrinter A6500. They can identify 3 fibre optic cables with one label in customer-specified colours.

Any Brady label, both standard and custom, is designed to stay attached and remain legible. Tested using international ASTM- and FINAT-methods, and used in data centres worldwide, our labels still provide support when cable traceability becomes a factor.

RESULT: LABEL ANY CABLE IN 5 SECONDS

The rack manufacturer removed a considerable bottleneck in production output by making cable label speed 3 times faster with the BradyPrinter A6500. From 15 seconds for manual label print and apply, to 5 seconds per applied cable label, the A6500 provides a reliable and scalable solution to meet tightening traceability requirements for larger cable volumes in dense data centre server racks.



Wraptor A6500

By gradually implementing 15 BradyPrinter A6500 to keep pace with growing demand for server racks, including labelled cables, the manufacturer saved 3694 hours in cable identification time in a 12-month period.

Read more about identification solutions for data centres

Brady Corporation
Brady in South Africa
+27 11 704 3295
africa@bradycorp.com
www.brady.eu

South Africa's digital boom: Phoenix Contact balances power reliability and sustainability

by Jullian Rocha, Phoenix Contact Product Manager: Power Reliability

SOUTH Africa has firmly established itself as Africa's primary digital hub, boasting over 60 active facilities representing roughly 500 MW of power capacity. Driven by hyperscale expansions from global tech giants and an accelerating demand for cloud computing and local artificial intelligence (AI) readiness, the country's digital infrastructure pipeline is growing.

However, this rapid growth faces severe localised infrastructure constraints. Despite recent stability in the national grid, legacy municipal transmission vulnerabilities, grid connections, and rising water scarcity have forced operators to rethink resource management.

As developers expand multi-megawatt campuses, achieving consistent uptime requires a deep shift toward energy resilience and smart automation. By optimising interfaces across power distribution, energy protection, and building control, Phoenix Contact is supporting local operators as they build towards a sustainable All Electric Society.

Securing a Tier III or Tier IV (Hyper Scale) data centre means protecting the facility from unstable grids, downtime and localised surges. Unpredictable lightning strikes and current peaks present serious financial risks, with the potential to trigger hardware fires, critical system downtime, or catastrophic data loss.

To effectively mitigate these risks, Phoenix Contact introduces comprehensive energy resilience strategies early in the facility design phase. By combining advanced surge protection devices, lightning protection, and redundant industrial power supply systems directly into critical uninterruptible power supply loops, operators can safeguard essential equipment. This protective blueprint reduces unplanned failures, ensuring multi-tenant facilities meet strict service level agreements.

Distributing power smoothly throughout a high-density server hall requires minimised thermal loss and secure connections. Local data centre developments must manage substantial grid allocations effectively, making optimisation within Power Distribution Units a primary engineering objective. Phoenix Contact addresses this challenge through tailored control cabinet components and high-performance connection portfolios.

The company's building automation and energy monitoring tools deliver detailed oversight for large-scale operations. By integrating local renewable energy arrays, microgrids and battery storage directly into a unified automation platform, facilities can actively match their consumption profiles to available capacity. Furthermore, these smart monitoring systems orchestrate cooling infrastructure autonomously, allowing operators to run liquid or water-conscious cooling loops with high precision, lowering overall Power Usage Effectiveness ratings.

Phoenix Contact remains a vital partner by combining proven local technical knowledge with world-class automation and electrification solutions, ensuring local data centres achieve continuous, reliable operations while supporting a sustainable and energy-efficient future.

www.phoenixcontact.co.za



Solutions for modern data centers

Data centers are essential, but energy-intensive infrastructures. Ensure continuous operations with an efficient, scalable infrastructure from Phoenix Contact.

At Phoenix Contact, we provide solutions for data centers where reliability and environmental responsibility go hand in hand.

We help operators, planners, system integrators, and manufacturers maintain uninterrupted operations while sustainably increasing efficiency.

Phoenix Contact provides technologies in the following core systems:

- Power distribution, power supply and protective systems, thus ensuring smooth operations and avoiding downtimes.
- Monitoring, control and management systems, ensuring optimization of operations and reduction of energy consumption.
- Connection technology for reliable data transmission and efficient power distribution.

For more information:

JHB: 011 801 8200 WC: 021 930 9666 KZN: 031 701 2701 EC: 041 364 0415
www.phoenixcontact.co.za

PHOENIX CONTACT

THE NEXT GENERATION

Internships, Skills & Development Programmes

IITPSA launches 2026 ICT Skills Survey: AI skills demand surges as SA workforce adapts



CONTRARY to popular belief that AI is eroding jobs in the ICT sector, demand for AI-related skills is soaring and ICT practitioners are embracing the technology in South Africa.

This is a key finding of the 2026 Institute of Information Technology Professionals (IITPSA) ICT Skills Survey - a comprehensive guide to South African ICT skills supply and demand produced in partnership with Africa Analysis.

The survey, which was released at the IITPSA Workforce Intelligence Conference and exhibition in Johannesburg on 30 October 2026, polled both employers and ICT professionals, deep-diving for the first time into the impact of AI on ICT skills requirements.

AI reshapes workplaces and skills requirements

Lehlohonolo Mokenela, Managing Director at Africa Analysis and telecommunications analyst, says: "The IITPSA ICT Skills Survey found that AI is already reshaping the workplace, but that fears of widespread immediate job displacement may be overstated. Rather than replacing workers entirely, AI is primarily being used to automate routine tasks and augment human capabilities."

He notes: "Organisations that report major ICT skills shortages are among the strongest adopters of AI, suggesting that AI adoption is often a response to talent constraints rather than an alternative to human talent."

Mokenela says the report finds that the changing environment has made AI literacy a key capability required across workforces and is driving employers to seek advanced skills in AI-related, cloud computing, cybersecurity, data analytics and software development disciplines.

Skills shortfalls

While software development, cloud computing and data engineering remain important foundational capabilities, organisations increasingly need professionals who can operationalise AI solutions, manage AI risks, ensure responsible AI implementation and translate business requirements into AI use cases.

To meet the demands of the AI economy, the South African labour market is seeing a rapid increase in demand for AI Engineers, Machine Learning Engineers, Generative AI Specialists, Prompt Engineers and AI Governance and Compliance Officers - particularly in large enterprises, ICT firms and financial services organisations.

In addition, organisations require technical professionals to be able to combine technical expertise with business understanding, transformation capability, strategic thinking and the ability to apply digital technologies within organisational contexts.

Behind the skills gaps

The IITPSA ICT Skills Survey finds that the biggest reason for ICT skills gaps is a lack of workplace experience (24%), followed by gaps in education and training (20%), a lack of diversity (16%), and the brain drain (12%).

To address these gaps and retain skilled employees, 44% of organisations polled offer flexible schedules, 41% offer development programmes, 29% offer performance bonuses, and 36% offer increased pay. 28% also look overseas for specialised skills and experienced talent, and nearly 52% outsource IT functions to overseas firms.

ICT practitioners get moving

The IITPSA ICT Skills Survey reveals that ICT practitioners are well aware of AI-driven change and opportunities in the market, and are moving to upskill and work remotely to advance their careers in the AI economy. 22% are currently working remotely, 33.3% plan to, and 30.8% are considering it.

Contractors, freelancers and self-employed practitioners show particularly strong interest in remote international opportunities.

The report finds that most practitioners see AI as an augmentation technology rather than a replacement technology, with only a minority reporting that workforce reduction is an explicit objective of organisational AI programmes. Their response to AI in their workplace is largely positive, with nearly 80% indicating that AI has reduced workload and/or reduced task complexity and less than 10% saying it increased workloads or complexity. 47.9% are both optimistic and concerned about AI, while 37.6% are optimistic about AI's potential.

Those using AI for more than 50% of their daily work report the highest levels of productivity improvement and the strongest positive sentiment toward AI. The more practitioners use AI to boost productivity, the less likely they are to believe AI puts their jobs at risk.

Says Mokenela: "This relationship appears throughout the survey and is one of the strongest behavioural trends observed."

The survey finds only 6% of ICT practitioners believe they are at high risk of losing their jobs due to AI, while 27.4% believe AI poses a moderate risk to their jobs. 45.3% believe AI is a low risk, and 21.4% see it as no risk.

Industry needs alternative skills pipelines

The survey report found that technological progress is outpacing traditional ICT skills development pipelines through universities and TVET colleges.

However, it notes that the skills shortage is the result of multiple interconnected challenges rather than a single point of failure. Weak foundational literacy and numeracy outcomes, declining participation in STEM-related pathways, curriculum responsiveness challenges, limited workplace-based learning opportunities and the migration of experienced professionals collectively contribute to the shortage of digital talent.

It emphasises that alternative learning pathways must become an increasingly important source of ICT and AI-related skills, it says.

Build SA's AI capacity

Welcoming the ICT Skills Survey findings, IITPSA President Pearl Pasi says: "While AI is being viewed with increasing caution in much of the world, we are encouraged to find that South African ICT practitioners and employers are eager to harness the technology and explore the opportunities it offers."

> "The more practitioners use AI to boost productivity, the less likely they are to believe AI puts their jobs at risk."

However, she notes that every effort should be made to upskill existing workforces and build future skills pipelines to keep pace with change in the market. "The IITPSA wholeheartedly supports the report's recommendations that workplace-based learning, internships and graduate development programmes should be expanded, that partnerships between industry and educational institutions should be fostered to improve curriculum responsiveness, and that lifelong learning should be promoted through micro-credentials, certifications and alternative learning pathways," she says.

"South Africa should not miss the opportunity to take its place in the emerging AI economy, so we need to move quickly to build the human capital we need to create value from the technology," she concludes.

Download the full 2026 IITPSA ICT Skills Survey Report here.

For further information contact Leigh Angelo at leigh@tradeprojects.co.za or marketing@iitpsa.org.za

NEXT EDITION SECTOR FOCUS

- *Agri-processing; Industrial Machinery & Supply Agritech – Development Finance*
- *Automation, Control, Robotics & AI, The Future of Smart Systems*
- *Boilers, Burners & Combustion Technology*
- *Breweries / Wineries / Distilleries*
- *Compressors / Gensets / Plant Equipment*
- *Higher Education & Skills Development, Bridging the Skills Gap*
- *Marine Logistics & Supply Chain Services*
- *Materials Handling Logistics & Supply Chain*
- *OHS / PPE / Security Solution / Fire Technology*
- *Power Generation / Power Solutions*
- *Pumps Valves / Fluid Technology / Hydraulics Pneumatics*
- *Railway Infrastructure & Logistics*
- *Transport & Logistics / Smart Mobility / Trucking Heavy Haulage / Electric Vehicles / Fleet Management*
- *Warehousing & Storage Management Solutions*
- *Water Engineering & Management Solutions*

To secure your marketing campaign -
Email: sales@cbn.co.za
Booking Deadline: 30 November 2026
To enquire about press release submission
Email: editor@cbn.co.za
Submission Deadline: 3 December

CAPE Business News

Chairman:
Rudi Leitner
rudi.leitner@hypenica.com
Publishing Editor:
Robin Dunbar
robin.dunbar@cbn.co.za
Features Editor:
Larry Claasen
larry.claasen@cbn.co.za
Production Manager:
Elise Jacobs
elise.jacobs@cbn.co.za
Managing Director:
Robin Dunbar
robin.dunbar@cbn.co.za
Sales Team:
Heather Ferreira
heather.ferreira@cbn.co.za
Shaun Austin
shaun.austin@cbn.co.za
Client Liaison Officer:
nyameka@cbn.co.za
Cape Business News Enquiries
sales@cbn.co.za

Cape Business News has taken all reasonable care to ensure that the information contained in this publication is accurate on the stated date of publication. It is possible that the information may be out of date, incomplete or the opinion of the author. It is therefore advisable that you verify any information before relying on it.
Cape Business News accepts no responsibility for the consequences of error, or for any loss or damage suffered by users of any of the information and material contained in this publication.
Materials published in this newspaper are subject to copyright and other proprietary rights.

The real insight is sitting across the table from you

By Chantelle Botha



"YOU can't manage what you don't measure."

My manager said this to me back in 2006 when I resisted the weekly reporting component of my job. Over time I learnt to love the numbers, because they told a story. If I wasn't achieving my targets, the clue lay in the numbers.

Fast forward 20 years, and we have more data than we know what to do with. Increasingly, we are expected to leverage insight from this data. That way, we can adjust our performance to ensure we are hitting the metrics that determine success.

But there's a risk.

The data doesn't lie, but it also doesn't present the whole picture. Data identifies the pattern, but it cannot tell us what that pattern means to the people living with its consequences. Last time I checked, machines don't build relationships, understand human discernment, or create curious conversations. That's on us: humans.

So, if we want accurate insights, we're going to need something many companies still struggle to prioritise: honest conversations.

We assume data is objective and people are subjective; often trusting spreadsheets more than conversations. Twenty years ago, I learned that the numbers tell a story, but it's taken me nearly that long to realise that they only point to a partial story.

Honest human conversation tells us why performance slipped, why deadlines were missed, and why people reached a point where they needed duvet days.

True insight lives in the gap between what the data tells us and what the people are experiencing.

You're looking at performance reports and notice a decline in productivity. The data is telling a story, and it feels like a foregone conclusion that people are just not pulling their weight.

Productivity is down by 15%, deadlines are feeling more like suggestions, and absenteeism is on the rise.

But what's the experience behind the story?

Perhaps the three rounds of restructuring in the last year have created uncertainty. Coupled with the fact that people are carrying heavier loads than before, many are finding themselves on the brink of burnout.

But no-one wants to say that word. In many workplaces, burnout still feels like a confession that you're not up for the task. So people internalise their frustrations, gradually eroding their productivity, all while the numbers keep adding up on the report.

The next time a report lands on your desk and the explanation seems obvious, resist the urge to jump to conclusions. Before deciding what the numbers mean, go and have a conversation.

The real insight is sitting across the table from us, just waiting for the opportunity to share.

People can tell us why the numbers look the way they do. But only if we create the conditions in which they feel able to speak honestly.

That means more than asking questions. It means being willing to hear answers that challenge our assumptions, expose uncomfortable truths or reveal problems we would rather not have to deal with.

Sometimes, the most valuable information isn't in what people say. It's in the pause before they answer. The silence between their words.

As leaders, can we sit in that silence long enough to hear what is really being said?

Chantelle Botha is an international speaker and coach, shaping the future of life and leadership through conscious choice. She challenges leaders to look beyond the numbers, question their assumptions and understand the human experience behind performance. Through Phoenix, she helps people make better decisions and build healthier relationships.

https://hive.elevatedexperience.vip/businesses/phoenix

South Africa needs more engineers. But what kind of engineers?

SOUTH Africa's ambitions for energy security, infrastructure development and industrial growth depend partly on engineering expertise. From renewable energy installations to automated manufacturing systems, the country needs people with the technical skills to design, build, operate and maintain increasingly complex technologies.

However, according to Prof Herman Vermaak, Head of STADIO's School of Engineering & Architecture, producing more engineering graduates is only part of the challenge. Equally important is preparing these graduates for the realities of engineering work, where technical knowledge must be combined with practical judgement, commercial awareness and the ability to solve problems that don't always have textbook answers. He says the challenge begins with understanding how engineering itself is changing.

"In the engineering disciplines, the continuous and rapid development of complex technology necessitates higher levels of conceptual understanding and problem-solving skills," he says. "Adaptability to new technologies relies heavily on the ability to apply fundamental conceptual knowledge to address modern engineering challenges."

Charl du Plessis, General Manager: Power at Energy Partners, oversees a team of approximately 80 people, including around 50 engineers. Speaking at the recent launch of STADIO's new Bachelor of Engineering Technology in Electrical Engineering, he emphasised the importance of understanding the commercial and practical implications of engineering decisions.

He recalled questioning an engineer who had used a telehandler to lift solar panels onto a roof, despite the project budget allowing for a much cheaper solar hoist. The engineer had chosen the telehandler because it was the easiest solution, without considering that it cost approximately 100 times more than the budgeted equipment.

For du Plessis, this simple example illustrates why technical competence alone is insufficient. Engineers must understand budgets, contracts and project deadlines, and recognise how their decisions affect the commercial viability of the work they do.

He identifies five capabilities that employers value: problem-solving, project management, people skills, ethics and integrity, and a commitment to continuous innovation. Engineers need to understand what happens on site, including the work of electricians, artisans and technologists, if they are to design solutions that work in practice.

Vermaak believes practical competence must develop alongside theoretical understanding. Students should be able to work with equipment, diagnose faults and understand how engineering systems operate, rather than simply design solutions for others to implement.

At STADIO, he says, this philosophy is reflected in practical learning activities. For example, students enrolled in its engineering Higher Certificate programmes have designed and manufactured small vehicles using engineering software and 3D printing and worked with equipment representing industrial applications.

These activities encourage students to apply engineering principles, troubleshoot problems and develop their own solutions within defined technical requirements.



Charl du Plessis, General Manager: Power at Energy Partners, speaking at the recent launch of STADIO's new Bachelor of Engineering Technology in Electrical Engineering.

While this combination of theoretical and practical skills has always been important in engineering, Vermaak says it's particularly evident in renewable energy.

South Africa will need thousands of technicians, artisans, technologists and engineers to install, operate and maintain the systems that will power its future. As renewable energy projects become more widespread and sophisticated, demand is growing for a wide range of specialised skills. The industry's talent shortage is no longer confined to engineers. It spans everything from installation and maintenance to grid integration, monitoring and energy storage.

Emerging technologies add another dimension to the skills requirement. Artificial intelligence, automation, robotics and intelligent energy systems are changing the tools engineers use and the problems they are expected to solve.

But, Vermaak says, the ability to adapt still depends on a foundation of engineering knowledge, practical competence and professional judgemen

This thinking has informed STADIO's new three-year Bachelor of Engineering Technology in Electrical Engineering, which will welcome its first students at the Durbanville campus in 2027.

Alongside engineering fundamentals, the curriculum includes renewable energy technologies, machine learning applications, industrial process automation, control systems and energy management. Practical laboratory work and workplace-integrated learning are intended to connect academic knowledge with industry applications.

fastenright
Your Stainless Steel Bolt and Nut Experts
S/S Flange Bolts & Nuts NOW in Stock!
CONTACT US
t: 021 534 9095
f: 021 534 5997
sales@fastenright.co.za
www.fastenright.co.za
VISIT US
27 Mail Street
Western Province Park
Epping


best service | competitive price | high stock availability
S/S Flange Bolts & Nuts