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Cape Town overtakes London as sixth worst city for traffic congestion



Traffic congestion in Cape Town is among the worst in the world. Attribution: Coolcaesar.

By Larry Claasen

RESIDENTS who believe traffic congestion in Cape Town has worsened over the past two years have been proven right, according to a recent study.

The 2025 INRIX Global Traffic Scorecard shows that Cape Town rose from ninth to sixth worst among 942 urban areas analysed worldwide. INRIX measures congestion as the number of hours lost during peak commute periods compared with off-peak conditions, relative to a city's population. In Cape Town, commuters now lose 96 hours annually, up from 94 hours in 2024.

That puts the Mother City ahead of London, which ranked seventh with 91 hours lost to congestion, and behind Philadelphia, which lost 101 hours.

Several factors — including rapid population growth and commuter train routes that were out of service for several years — have compounded the congestion problem.

Cape Town's population grew from 3.74 million to 4.77 million between 2011 and 2022. By comparison, Johannesburg's population increased from 4.43 million to 4.8 million over the same period, meaning Cape Town grew by 27.6% while Johannesburg grew by only 8.3%.

The central line rail corridor, which connects Khayelitsha — South Africa's largest township — with the CBD, was out of service from November 2019 and only became fully operational again in March 2026. When operating at full capacity, this line accounted for 350,000 of Cape Town's 685,900 daily passenger trips.

It is hoped that the revitalisation of commuter rail — which has seen the introduction of new trains and upgrades to signalling equipment — will encourage more people to take the train rather than travel by car.

"The numbers speak for themselves: nearly 700,000 daily passenger trips equate to a substantial number of cars taken off Cape Town's road network. At capacity, each train transports about 2,400 passengers per trip, meaning it plays a vital role in the transport industry," said Transport Minister Barbara Creecy during a site visit to the central line in 2025.

Rob Quintas, the City of Cape Town's Mayoral Committee Member for Urban Mobility, agreed with Creecy that shifting to rail commutes is one of the best ways to reduce congestion.

"A fully functional and reliable passenger rail service will attract commuters, as it is the most cost-effective and efficient form of public transport and commuting anywhere in the

world. Once passenger rail is restored and fully functional, it will naturally draw commuters away from road-based public transport and private vehicles," Quintas said.

Aside from trains, the city also hopes that the expansion of its MyCiTi bus network will alleviate road congestion. Quintas said that if all goes as planned, the first routes on the MyCiTi Khayelitsha–Mitchells Plain expansion will become operational in late 2027.

Although the city has long viewed MyCiTi as a solution to congestion, bus shortages, vehicle breakdowns, and service unreliability on the N2 Express service saw it miss its passenger projection target of 9.95 million by about 10,000 for the second quarter of the 2025/2026 financial year.

Quintas also said there are no immediate plans to expand MyCiTi operations beyond the Mitchells Plain–Khayelitsha and Wynberg–Claremont expansions.

He added that the Urban Mobility Directorate has budgeted R294 million over the medium term — from 1 July 2025 to 30 June 2028 — for road projects aimed at relieving congestion.

Upgrades have already been made to Kommetjie Main Road, while Amandel Road and Saxdowns Road in Kuils River will be upgraded, and Belhar will see improvements to Erica Drive.

The city also plans to invest in Voortrekker Road in Salt River and to convert Berkley Road in Maitland into a double carriageway between the M5 and Ndabeni/Ryger Street. These projects are expected to commence in the latter part of the next financial year (2026/27).

One of the most effective ways to address congestion is through an integrated public transport system, Quintas says, which is the city's long-term plan.

"The intention is to have one integrated public transport system where commuters can seamlessly transfer from one mode — train, bus, minibus-taxi — to another; where commuters can use one card for payment; and where time schedules are integrated to make transfers possible and convenient."

While the goal is still some way off, Quintas said it remains an objective the city is committed to.

"This vision will take time to implement, but it remains our commitment for commuting in Cape Town."

Tired of your brew tasting like a maybe? Precision brewing gets a boost with VEGA instrumentation



CONSISTENCY is the currency of modern brewing. Whether you're a craft producer scaling up or an established brewery protecting brand reputation, even small deviations in pressure, temperature, or ingredient dosing can shift a beer from exceptional to average. As South Africa's beer market becomes increasingly competitive, brewers are turning to smarter, more reliable instrumentation to safeguard quality at every stage.

Why precision matters in the wort kettle and hops dissolver

The heart of flavour development happens when wort and hops meet. Achieving the right hop balance—bitterness, aroma, and stability—depends on accurate dosing and controlled cooking. This is where pressure and point-level measurement become mission-critical.

Breweries face a demanding measurement environment:

- Level ranges up to five metres
- Temperatures from 10°C to beyond 100°C
- Pressures exceeding 2 bar
- Foam, condensation, and suspended solids

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Organic waste to energy driving Western Cape shift from landfill to sustainable waste solutions

By Adrian Ephraim

SOUTH Africa's looming landfill capacity crunch is driving new partnerships and investment in waste-to-energy solutions, as both regulators and businesses look to move away from traditional disposal methods.

Major metros, including Cape Town and Johannesburg, are estimated to have less than five years of remaining landfill space, intensifying pressure on the country's waste management system. At the same time, organic waste sent to landfill is costing the economy an estimated R8.7 billion annually, largely due to inefficiencies and environmental impact.

Organic waste to energy partnerships driving innovation in the Western Cape

Against this backdrop, Oricol Environmental Services and Cape Town Biogas have formed a partnership to divert organic waste from landfill and convert it into commercially viable resources.

The collaboration is built around a bio-

gestion facility in Athlone, which forms part of a broader waste diversion network. The plant is currently the only facility in Africa capable of simultaneously splitting biogas into two high-value outputs.

In total, the process produces three usable commodities: biogas for energy, beverage-grade carbon dioxide for the food and beverage sector, and nutrient-rich byproducts for agricultural use.

Cape Town mayor Geordin Hill-Lewis, speaking at the Coastal Park landfill, said, "We are just getting started with these win-win projects, which produce electricity, reduce emissions, and generate carbon credit revenue to pump back into infrastructure and waste management."

The initiative reflects a broader shift in how waste is being valued, particularly as methane emissions from landfill sites come under increasing scrutiny. The waste sector accounts for more than 30% of South Africa's methane emissions, largely driven by decomposing organic material.

At an operational level, the process be-



gins with the treatment of expired or non-compliant goods at Oricol's Cape Town facility. Products are securely repackaged to prevent re-entry into the market, with packaging materials sent for recycling and organic content redirected to the bio-digester under an offtake agreement.

The partnership processed around 8,000 tonnes of organic waste in 2025, with plans to scale volumes further in 2026 as demand for compliant waste solutions grows.

"At Coastal Park Landfill, the city's waste-to-energy project will generate 1.3-million kilowatts a month," said Urban Waste Management MMC Grant Twigg at the ribbon-cutting ceremony last year.

"Of this, 1.2-million kilowatts will be fed into the Cape Town grid. The remaining power will be used to run operations at the landfill facility, generating further savings and efficiency for rate-payers."

Organic waste to energy regulations and future outlook

Policy changes are also accelerating the transition. The Draft National Waste Management Strategy 2026, published in late 2025, identifies organic waste as a priority stream for the first time, warning that the country's current waste diversion rate of roughly 10% is unsustainable.

In the Western Cape, regulatory pressure is set to intensify

further. A 100% ban on organic waste to landfill - embedded in provincial waste licences - is scheduled to take effect in 2027. Businesses that fail to establish alternative waste pathways risk falling foul of compliance requirements.

Industry players say the shift presents both a challenge and an opportunity. As landfill space dwindles and regulation tightens, waste is increasingly being repositioned as a resource - with energy generation, carbon capture and soil regeneration forming part of an emerging secondary economy.

For companies operating in the region, the message is clear: adapt to a circular model or face rising costs and regulatory risk.

Cape route back in focus as global trade uncertainty reshapes shipping patterns

AS geopolitical tensions in the Middle East continue to disrupt key global trade routes, Exporters Western Cape (EWC) says the Cape of Good Hope is once again be-

coming a viable alternative for international shipping, but warns that South Africa must act quickly to turn this into a sustained advantage.

EWC Chairman Terry Gale said escalating instability, coupled with ongoing risks to vessels transiting through the Suez Canal and Red Sea, as well as heightened tensions around the Strait of Hormuz, was already influencing global shipping patterns.

Recent instability across key maritime corridors is contributing to rising insurance costs, longer transit times and increased schedule uncertainty, prompting some carriers to reassess traditional routes and consider more predictable alternatives.

"Shipping lines are making decisions to mitigate risk, avoid delays and protect cargo. In this environment, routing around the Cape of Good Hope

is not a theoretical option. It is already happening," said Gale.

While diversions around the southern tip of Africa add distance, he said predictability, safety and schedule integrity were increasingly outweighing pure cost considerations.

"In a volatile market, reliability becomes the priority. If vessels cannot move through traditional corridors with confidence, they will seek alternatives. That places the Cape directly on the map."

However, he cautioned that geography alone would not be enough.

"This is a time-sensitive opportunity. If South Africa wants to benefit, our port and logistics systems must be able to respond efficiently to increased volumes and shifting trade flows."

Gale said the Port of Cape Town had the potential to play a far more prominent role, but consistency in per-

formance remained critical.

"We have seen what the port is capable of under the right conditions. The challenge is maintaining consistent performance, particularly in the face of wind disruption and ongoing equipment constraints."

He added that the opportunity extended beyond the port itself.

"This is not just about vessels calling at port. It requires alignment across the value chain from terminal operations to trans-shipment, warehousing and clearing. If that alignment is in place, the economic benefit for the Western Cape and South Africa can be significant, including growth in ship services, bunkering and broader logistics support."

Despite the opportunity, timing must be decisive, said Gale.

"Global shipping patterns shift quickly. If we are not ready now, those opportu-



EWC Chairman Terry Gale

nities will move elsewhere just as fast."

EWC has called for closer collaboration between industry and government to ensure that enabling conditions are in place.

"We need a coordinated, proactive approach. The private sector is ready to support this, but it requires urgency and a clear focus on execution. The Cape has always been strategically positioned. We must now convert this into a real, sustained trade advantage," said Gale.

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Credit guarantee vehicle to unlock jobs and infrastructure investment



By Larry Claasen

THE government says its move to create an insurance company, which will take over from providing billions of rands in credit guarantees for public-private projects, is gaining traction.

"This operation supports the government's agenda by helping mobilise private investment for infrastructure"

A credit guarantee is a risk-mitigation mechanism where the government commits to repaying a loan to a private company if it defaults, enabling businesses to access finance, manage trade risk, and protect cash flow.

This policy of underwriting public-private projects has seen the national government com-

mit to providing R303,1 billion in guarantees to independent power producers.

As a way to reduce the state's risk exposure, the government is creating the Credit Guarantee Vehicle (CGV), which will be majority privately owned, to take over as guarantor.

Credit guarantee vehicle to shift risk from government to private sector

The CGV will act as an insurance company for public-private projects. This means participating private companies will soon have to pay insurance premiums, compared to the current arrangement where they pay nothing for government-backed guarantees.

The idea behind the CGV is that the government would be able to provide insurance coverage for its R940 billion infrastructure development programme

without taking the credit risk onto its own balance sheet.

In creating the CGV, the hope is that private sector investors could eventually be brought in to back the new venture and underwrite the risk for the infrastructure programme.

The World Bank, which has committed to investing R5,6 billion in the CGV, said that about R160 billion in capital from private investors, commercial lenders, and institutional investors would see it generate about 997,000 direct and indirect jobs over 10 years.

Aside from the World Bank's commitment, the National Treasury said it will invest R2 billion.

Credit guarantee vehicle to drive infrastructure and job creation

The CGV will first be used in the Independent Transmission Pro-

gramme, which aims to build 14,000 km of new power transmission lines over the next 10 years.

"Investment in infrastructure is central to South Africa's efforts to restore growth and create jobs," said Satu Kahkonen, World Bank Division Director for South Africa. "This operation supports the government's agenda by helping mobilise private investment for infrastructure that improves services, strengthens competitiveness, and expands economic opportunity."

The National Treasury, together with the World Bank, is making "significant progress" in setting up the CGV, said acting DDG for asset and liability management, Ravesh Rajlal.

"The CGV will be incorporated as a company in the coming month," he said.

Rajlal added that besides the World Bank, more development finance institutions were expected to invest. "We expect additional development partners to commit capital participation into the CGV."

Once it receives its capital injection, it will apply for a licence to operate from the South African Reserve Bank's Prudential Authority. Rajlal said the National Treasury was aiming to have the CGV operating in the second half of 2026.

The CGV complements reforms under Operation Vulindlela II — the government's structural reform programme to unlock growth and investment — and broader efforts to improve governance, regulatory certainty, and project preparation capacity in the electricity, transport, and water sectors. It is also aligned with South Africa's just energy transition by supporting investment in renewable energy, transmission, storage, and related infrastructure.

South Africa's economic outlook 2026: Strategies for business growth and resilience

By Chris Hattingh

SOUTH Africa faces a tough economic road in 2026. While the 2025 GDP growth rate of 1.1% improved on 2024's 0.5%, the composition of that growth tells a concerning story. Household consumption drove the gains; gross fixed capital formation declined by 2.2%. Investment in infrastructure, plant, and machinery remains stuck in the 13%–15% range, well short of the 25%–30% needed to accelerate growth meaningfully.

Elevated fuel prices, increased domestic levies, and electricity tariff hikes effective April 2026, will squeeze disposable income and push headline CPI up by an estimated 2-4 percentage points in April alone. Interest rate cuts in 2026 are now highly unlikely; increases cannot be ruled out.

For businesses that are prepared, constrained conditions create real strategic advantages over competitors who are not.

South Africa's economic outlook signals urgent shift toward energy independence

The 8.76% Eskom tariff increase for direct customers, followed by a 9.01% municipal bulk purchaser hike from July, sends an unmistakable signal: energy self-sufficiency is no longer optional. Companies that have invested in solar, battery storage, and efficiency upgrades are insulated from grid price shocks in ways their competitors simply are not. Payback periods on commercial solar installations have shortened considerably as panel costs have fallen and tariffs have risen. For manufacturers and logistics operators, a full energy audit is no



longer a nice-to-have, it is a margin protection exercise.

April's increases — R3.06 per litre across all grades and R7.51 for diesel — will ripple through every sector with a logistics component. Businesses that act now rather than absorbing increases passively can structurally reduce their exposure. Route optimisation, fleet telematics, load consolidation, and renegotiated supplier delivery terms are proven tools that many businesses still underutilise. Strategic procurement — such as reducing single-source dependencies — becomes more valuable with each fuel price cycle.

South Africa's economic outlook shows why business agility drives competitiveness

Business agility during downturns is the key to competitiveness and long-term sustainability. Constrained conditions expose inefficiencies that easier times allow businesses to ignore. Companies willing to renegotiate property leases in a softening commercial market, digitise paper-heavy processes, and automate repetitive tasks emerge from

downturns structurally leaner than when they entered. Technology costs continue to fall: cloud-based software, AI-assisted customer service, and digital procurement platforms are accessible to mid-sized businesses at price points unthinkable five years ago.

The country's 2026 outlook is undeniably constrained. But constraints do not mean businesses must stagnate. The JSE's retreat and commodity price volatility create selective opportunities for patient investors, while the GNU's attempts at reform and policy continuity have preserved enough international confidence to keep reform momentum alive.

Businesses that invest in energy independence, sharpen procurement and logistics, and use this cycle to eliminate inefficiencies will be better positioned not just to survive 2026, but to accelerate when conditions improve.

The companies that will look back on this period as a turning point are already making decisions today that their competitors are deferring. For the prepared, adversity is not a threat but a differentiator.



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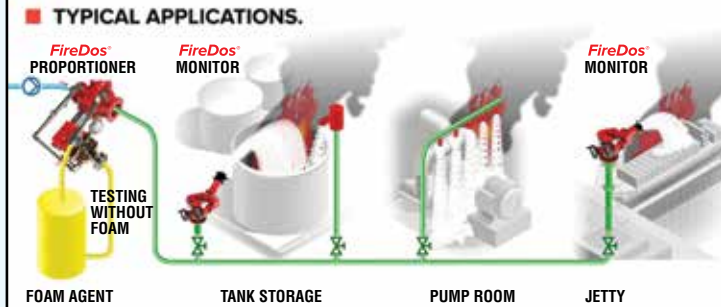
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Enlit Africa 2026 unveils full programme with focus on investment, innovation and infrastructure

ENLIT Africa has released its full 2026 conference programme, setting out an ambitious agenda for the continent's power, energy and water sectors. Taking place from 19 to 21 May 2026 at the Cape Town International Convention Centre, the event will bring together more than 280 speak-

ers, over 250 exhibitors and an expected 7,200 attendees from across Africa and beyond.

Recognised as one of the continent's leading gatherings for energy and water professionals, Enlit Africa 2026 will feature eight specialised content tracks designed to address some of the sector's most urgent

challenges and opportunities. This year's programme places a strong emphasis on infrastructure, investment, innovation and practical case studies that can support Africa's transition to more secure and sustainable utility systems.

One of the major additions to the programme is a new session

titled African Nuclear 2.0, which will examine how several countries are moving from nuclear planning into execution. The session will cover South Africa's Koeberg Nuclear Power Station and its 20-year life extension, with Units 1 and 2 now licensed to operate until 2044 and 2045. It will also look at Ghana's progress to Phase 3 of its nuclear programme, where the country is currently evaluating technology bids from vendors in the United States, China and Russia. Broader regional ambitions will also be discussed, including the West African Power Pool's 10 GW nuclear target and the role that small modular reactors could play in African grids.

Grid development will be another major theme. A new session on Independent Transmission Projects will explore how private investment could help solve Africa's transmission bottlenecks. With many countries expanding generation capacity but struggling to move power efficiently, the discussion is expected to draw attention from policymakers, utilities and investors looking for workable models. International case studies, including lessons from India's PowerGrid, will be used to frame the African opportunity.



The conference will also include a series of Generation Masterclasses, with interactive roundtables covering gas-to-power, nuclear, hydropower, clean coal and hydrogen. Another notable theme is the growing use of artificial intelligence in utility operations. Sessions focused on AI in Africa's Power Grid will examine how utilities are already using real-time analytics and predictive maintenance tools to improve performance and reliability.

Beyond the main conference, Enlit Africa's co-located platforms remain a key part of the event offering. Water Security Africa will showcase country playbooks and sector case studies, including Namibia's long-running potable reuse programme, Uganda's

reduction in non-revenue water and Cape Town's response to the Day Zero crisis. The programme will also feature stewardship sessions with major private sector organisations such as Harmony Gold, Heineken, Mediclinic and Growthpoint Properties.

The Project & Investment Network, now part of the new Level 2 Executive Experience, is positioned as a deal-making platform that connects project developers, financiers, utility leaders and development finance institutions. The programme will open with a Business Breakfast led by award-winning journalist and author Bruce Whitfield on 19 May.

The Utility CEO Forum will gather more than 35 utility CEOs for closed-door discussions

on topics such as unbundling, prosumer management and financial sustainability. The Municipal Forum will focus on South Africa's local government challenges, including metering, tariff reform, revenue management and electrification in informal settlements.

On the exhibition floor, free Technical Hub sessions will provide CPD-accredited training across power, renewable energy, storage and water topics.

Register for free expo pass to attend Enlit Africa's exhibition floor and Technical Hub sessions: <https://wearevuka.com/energy/enlit-africa/ticket-options/>

Download the Full Programme here: <https://wearevuka.com/energy/enlit-africa/programme/>

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iTek Drives expands into larger premises near OR Tambo airport

ITEK Drives, a leading supplier of variable speed drives and control panels, has moved to larger premises in the industrial and commercial hub of Meadowdale, near OR Tambo International Airport.

The new property provides a warehouse with facilities for receiving and dispatch, a large workshop for product assembly and repair, a variable speed drives (VFD) showroom, reception area, a training room, and offices. The building has space for further growth.

iTek Drives is Africa's leading supplier of the Optidrive range of VFDs south of the Sahara. Also known as inverters, VFDs are the electronic controllers commonly fitted to fans, pumps, compressors and cranes to smoothly manage electric motor acceleration

and deceleration by changing voltages and frequencies.

Optidrive is a British product, manufactured by Invertek in Wales. Since 2016, iTek has grown this brand in Africa, with an emphasis on quality and competitive pricing. In 2024, the company opened a comprehensive testing, repairs, programming and software centre in Johannesburg.

Increasing sales is one reason for iTek's move to larger premises. The space at Meadowdale is also sufficient to develop alliances with electric motor companies. Another reason is distribution. iTek recently announced the sale of VFDs, control panels and specialised electric motors to a copper mine in Zambia. Proximity to OR Tambo will facilitate rapid delivery by air.



Typical variable speed drives from the Optidrive range.

Sales Director Ryan Bisnath said he anticipates working more closely with importer Emac (Electric Motors & Components) to supply flame-proof motors, explosion-proof motors and slip ring motors to the African market. Brands will include KMMP, VEM, and CEMP. iTek will marry these European motors to Optidrive VFDs and iTek's locally-built control panels, to deliver a turnkey system.

"By serving as a single-source supplier, we will remove the diffi-

culties and risks associated with ordering and assembling an integrated system from two or more separate companies," Bisnath said.

"Our core business as a variable frequency drives supplier has not changed, but we hope to make the customer's purchase of his integrated motor and drive systems a lot easier."

iTek's move to new premises took place in February. The new street address is 28 Bell Street, on the corner of Watt, Meadowdale, Johannesburg.

PPC Western Cape Calcined Clay trial cuts costs and carbon emissions



The new plant is expected to be commissioned by the end of the calendar year 2026.

PPC Western Cape growth linked to infrastructure and market demand

Though there has been talk of an upswing in the economy, PPC has yet to see it. Sales volumes in South Africa only increased by about 2% for the 10 months to January.

“excited about its potential.”

Aside from cutting emissions, the use of Calcined Clay also had the potential to reduce cement production costs, PPC CEO Matias Cardarelli said in November.

PPC Western Cape Calcined Clay explained as a low carbon alternative

Calcined Clay is a natural material, typically rich in the mineral kaolinite, that is transformed into a highly reactive, sustainable ingredient for cement by heating it to around 700-800°C, a process called calcination. Its primary value lies in its ability to replace a significant portion of traditional cement clinker, which is the most energy-intensive and CO₂-heavy component of concrete.

Beyond its environmental benefit, it enhances the concrete’s strength and durability, and because suitable clay deposits are abundant worldwide, it offers a cost-effective and locally available

solution for producing lower-carbon concrete.

Using Calcined Clay to make cement has been known about since the 1820s, but it was only when the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation funded research into it in 2014 that it was taken more seriously.

Its partnership with Indian researchers eventually saw it being used in construction projects in India, Cuba, Colombia and Denmark.

Aside from the promising findings of its Calcined Clay trial, Cardarelli said last month the development of its RK3 Project in Riebeeck-Kasteel, in the Western Cape, was on track. The RK3 Project is a R3 billion integrated cement plant, which will produce 1,5 million tons of cement per annum.

Cardarelli said this project was a “game changer,” and that it remained on schedule and within budget. Engineering is nearly complete, equipment manufacturing has started, and civil works are advancing.

“Companies like PPC are set to benefit from the government’s commitment to spend R1 trillion on infrastructure over the medium term.”

This modest rise reflected Finance Minister Enoch Godongwana saying in his national budget speech that the growth outlook was expected to be 1,6% in 2026.

Companies like PPC are set to benefit from the government’s commitment to spend R1 trillion on infrastructure over the medium term. This will see R577,4 billion spent by state-owned companies and other public entities, R217,8 billion by provinces, and R205,7 billion by municipalities.

PPC saw its revenue increase 6.2% to R5.38 billion, and profit after tax surge 15.75% to R368 million. Its full-year numbers will be published on 9 June.

Adaptability is the new consistency

YOU don’t stay upright by standing still - you stay upright by learning to move with the waves.

We are living in a “quicksand” era - where the ground is constantly shifting beneath our feet, and at times it feels like we might sink before we can find our footing again.

Geopolitical tensions ripple through global markets overnight. Oil prices spike. Supply chains wobble. And artificial intelligence is accelerating at a pace that is both exhilarating and unsettling - with estimates suggesting that up to 40% of jobs will significantly change or become obsolete by 2030. This is not a passing phase. This is the new operating environment.

There was a time when strategy and consistency were the gold standard. Build a plan. Execute the plan. Deliver the results. Repeat.

That is no longer enough. Today, the waves of change hit relentlessly. There is barely time to regain balance before the next one arrives. Leading in this environment requires something different - not just resilience, but adaptability.

Think of it like surfing. You don’t stay upright by standing still on the board. You stay upright by adjusting - constantly. Your business plan is often outdated before the quarter ends, the variables change mid-execution, and the conditions you started in are not the conditions you finish in.

Trying to lead with rigid consistency in a world that refuses to stay still is no longer effective.

This is where Adaptive Leadership becomes essential.

Adaptability is not about reacting faster. It is about responding better.

It is the ability:

- to recalibrate without losing direction;
- to shift without losing identity;
- to stay grounded internally while everything externally is moving.

And here is the uncomfortable truth: most leaders are not drowning because of the waves of change. They are drowning because they are trying to



control the ocean instead of learning how to ride the waves.

So what does adaptability actually look like in practice?

Firstly, mental flexibility.

The ability to let go of how things “should” be done and think more expansively about what is possible now. This requires cognitive agility - the willingness to update your thinking in real time. Stay open. Stay curious.

Secondly, emotional agility.

Change is not just operational - it is deeply human. Uncertainty triggers fear, resistance, and fatigue. Adaptive leaders do not ignore this. They navigate it. They regulate themselves so they can stabilise others. As the saying goes: name the emotion to tame it.

Thirdly, disciplined energy management.

Adaptability is not a once-off event. It is a daily practice. You don’t build strength in a single gym session, and the same applies here. Sustainable energy comes from consistent habits: quality sleep, regular movement, and proper nutrition. When energy drops, adaptability follows.

Many leaders get it wrong. They treat adaptability as a crisis response - something you switch on when things go wrong.

But in today’s world, adaptability must become your default operating rhythm. A way of leading. A way of being.

The leaders who will thrive are not the ones with the most perfect plans. They are the ones who can:

- read the environ-

- make clear, timely decisions under pressure;
- re-focus quickly when conditions shift;
- maintain clarity in the middle of noise.

Leaders are taking strain. Cognitive overload is real. Attention is fragmented. Decision fatigue is rising. And, therefore, adaptability becomes harder - just when it is needed most. This is why adaptability is not just a strategic capability. It is a human one.

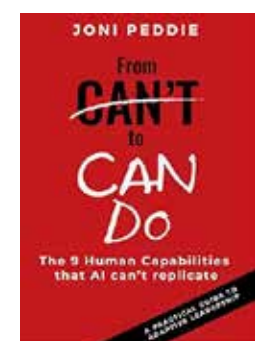
If you want an adaptable organisation, you need adaptable leaders. And if you want adaptable leaders, you need individuals who can self-manage effectively - mentally, emotionally, and physically.

So here is the real question:

Are you trying to hold everything steady or are you building the capability to move well and be adaptable?

The waves are not slowing down. If anything, they are getting bigger. Adaptability is the new consistency. It is about showing up every single day: clear enough to think; steady enough to decide; and agile enough to adapt.

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Atlantis SEZ Announces Ambitious Infrastructure and Investment Programme to Accelerate Green Industrial Growth

Nearly R4 billion in combined infrastructure and fixed capital investment is set to flow into the Atlantis Special Economic Zone over the next three years, with an estimated 7 200 jobs expected by 2035.

The ambitious infrastructure and construction programme, announced following funding commitments from the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition (the dtic), will unlock an additional 72 hectares of industrial land in Zones 2 and 3. The expansion is expected to generate 1 200 direct permanent jobs and 6 000 construction jobs once the zone reaches full operational capacity.

The zone's long-term vision to develop a globally competitive green industrial hub that supports investment, innovation, and inclusive economic growth.

Saliem Fakir, board chairperson of the Atlantis Special Economic Zone (ASEZ), said the funding confirmation allowed the zone to move forward with its next phase of development.

"The Atlantis SEZ has seen increasing demand from investors seeking suitable location that supports green manufacturing and sustainable industrial development," Fakir said.

"The confirmation of infrastructure funding for Zones 2 and 3 enables us to move forward with the next phase of development and ensure we are ready to accommodate the growing pipeline of investors." He added: "The additional support from the dtic is a strong vote of confidence in the progress the ASEZ has made since its establishment in trust in the work being done to build a globally competitive green industrial hub."

The ASEZ, promulgated by President Cyril Ramaphosa in 2018, is South Africa's first green-focused special economic zone, dedicated to renewable energy, green manufacturing, and circular economy industries. The zone is currently finalising its first greenfield investor factory in Zone 1.

The additional infrastructure investment from the dtic reflects government's continued confidence in the work being done by the ASEZ and its role in advancing South Africa's industrial development and green economy ambitions. This latest investment comes as the Western Cape is gearing up for big investments in green energy. The region is already home to several renewable energy ventures and is set to be the hub for the Green Hydrogen sector. A recent study also ranked it the top site for the location of EV battery factory.

Minister of Trade, Industry and Competition Parks Tau welcomed the announcement, saying special economic zones were central to the country's industrial policy.

"By investing in critical infrastructure within zones such as the Atlantis SEZ, we are creating the enabling environment required to attract investment, grow local manufacturing capability, and create jobs," Tau said.

"The Atlantis SEZ is a critical driver of green industrial development in the Western Cape. Expanding the zone's infrastructure will allow us to attract new investment, support innovation in green manufacturing, and create communities across the province."

Western Cape Minister of Agriculture, Economic Development and Tourism Ivan Meyer said the expansion would strengthen the province's green economy. "Expanding the zone's infrastructure will allow us to attract new investment, support innovation in green manufacturing, and create economic opportunities for communities across the province," Meyer said.

Meyer also noted: "The Atlantis SEZ is a critical driver of green industrial development in the Western Cape. Expanding the zone's infrastructure will allow us to attract new investment, support innovation in green manufacturing, and create communities across the province."

Alderman James Vos, the City of Cape Town's mayoral committee member for economic growth, echoed Meyer and said the initiative reinforced the city's commitment to enabling investment. "The development of additional industrial infrastructure will unlock further investment opportunities and support job creation in Atlantis and across the city," Vos said.

The infrastructure programme is set to begin in the coming months, with development of Zones 2 and 3 expected to significantly expand capacity for investors in renewable energy manufacturing, green technology, and circular economy sectors. ■

Memorandum of Understanding Signing Between the Atlantis Special Economic Zone and West Coast TVET College

The Atlantis Special Economic Zone (SEZ) signed an agreement with West Coast TVET College to ensure that local talent is ready for the green manufacturing jobs coming to the zone. The Memorandum of Understanding, signed on 4 March 2026, aligns skills training directly with industry needs, and covers enterprise development, youth support, and connecting training programmes to real investor requirements.

This event marked an important milestone for both organisations, as they have worked closely together for over ten years, to support long-term investment growth in Atlantis and the broader economy.

This partnership has seen them launch initiatives focused on enterprise development programmes, enhancing skills pipelines, supporting youth development, and connecting training offerings to real industry opportunities. These sorts of collaborations have laid a strong foundation for deeper cooperation.

The signing of this Memorandum of Understanding formalises and strengthens this partnership, reinforcing a joint approach to building an ecosystem where skills, jobs, and investment support enhances one another. The agreement also signals a long-term commitment to ensuring that local talent development remains central to economic growth in the Atlantis region.

"This MOU symbolises a key partnership for a thriving Atlantis. We've spent ten years collaborating, and today we formalise a relationship that turns local



(Left) Mr. Matt Culinan, CEO of the Atlantis Special Economic Zone Company, (Right) Mr. Lungisa Mbulawa, Principle, West Coast College)

potential into a green industrial asset. This is about preparing students for jobs, but it is also aiming to empower them to be the cornerstone of a sustainable, green-tech future for the entire Country" said Matt Culinan, CEO of the Atlantis SEZ.

"Through this partnership with Atlantis SEZ, West Coast College is ensuring that our students are not only trained but positioned to actively shape the economic growth of Atlantis and build a thriving community," said Lungisa Mbulawa, principal, West Coast College. Both agreed that this signing represents a significant step forward in advancing collaborative efforts that benefit local communities, industry partners, and future investors. ■

ASEZ Donates Laptops to West Coast TVET College to Support Student Learning

The Atlantis Special Economic Zone (ASEZ) handed over a number of laptops to West Coast TVET College in support of student learning and improved digital access in March.

This donation forms part of ASEZ's ongoing commitment to responsible asset management and community upliftment. By providing much needed computers to an educational institution, the hope is that the students will eventually be able to live up to their potential.

Waheeda Saib, Chief Financial Officer of the Atlantis Special Economic Zone, emphasised the broader significance of the initiative. "At ASEZ, responsible asset management is not only about compliance and efficiency — it is about impact. By redirecting functional laptops to West Coast TVET College, we are ensuring that public resources continue to create meaningful value beyond their initial lifecycle. Supporting digital access for students is an investment in human capital, and ultimately, in the longterm economic sustainability of the Atlantis region."

West Coast TVET College, the only TVET institution in the immediate area, plays a critical role in developing technical and vocational skills for the region.

Access to laptops will assist students with research, assignments, online learning, and digital submissions, helping to bridge the digital divide. ASEZ CEO Matt Cullinan, reaffirmed the zone's commitment to strengthening the link between industry and education.

"West Coast TVET College plays a pivotal role in developing the technical and vocational skills that our region depends on. As the Atlantis Special Economic Zone, we recognise that industrial growth must be matched by skills development. This donation reflects our commitment to strengthening the partnership between industry and education, ensuring that young people are equipped with the digital tools they need to participate fully in the modern economy. Together, we are building a skilled workforce that will drive the future of Atlantis."




The official handover concluded with a symbolic presentation of the devices and a shared commitment to continued collaboration between ASEZ and



On your left: Olwethu Mpahlwa – ASEZ Financial Accountant, Keasha Passenz – ASEZ Bookkeeper and Jaime Lee Miller – ASEZ Internal Control. In the middle is Matt Cullinan, CEO of ASEZ and next to him is Phumzile Nkuzo, WCC Campus Manager – Atlantis Campus. On your right is Mr Mario Hartneck, Nated, Senior Lecturer and WCC SRC member.

West Coast TVET College. The event on 3 March 2026, was attended by ASEZ leadership, alongside West Coast TVET College leadership, Atlantis Campus Manager Phumzile Nkuzo, staff, and the Student Representative Council (SRC). ■



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Blastrite and Minrite celebrate 45 years of growth and innovation



FROM a family business rooted in the late 1970s, Erakis has evolved into a South African industrial minerals group with a global reach.

While Blastrite began by selling silica sand for sandblasting, its subsidiaries are now among South Africa's leading producers of loose abrasives, mineral sands and vermiculite-based products.

For CEO Andrew Lashbrooke, the formal establishment of Blastrite 45 years ago is a key milestone and reflects the positive impact the group has had on its people and customers alike.

A safer, smarter approach to blasting

Blastrite was built on a commitment to safety and innovation. When concerns about silicosis arose, the company replaced silica sand with platinum slag, a byproduct of PGM refining. "Rather than letting it go to waste, we turn it into a high-quality abrasive," Lashbrooke explains. The slag is refined,

crushed and screened for abrasive blasting.

Blastrite's products are essential where steel meets heat and moisture, from marine vessels and oil rigs to large refineries. The company operates two core processing facilities in South Africa, exporting worldwide via several distribution hubs. Meeting rigorous quality controls, Blastrite Platinum Grit® is the most certified industrial abrasive in the world and is one of the few products approved by the US Navy, the world's largest user of industrial abrasives.

Mineral sands and industrial garnet

Beyond slag, the group processes heavy mineral sands products, including ilmenite, leucosene, rutile, zircon and garnet. While Blastrite sells the garnet for high-quality blasting and waterjet cutting, Minrite recovers rutile, ilmenite, zircon and monazite for use in several applications, such as pigments, paints and coatings, ceramics and

the globally critical rare earth magnets.

Growth from humble beginnings

From around 20 employees in its early days, the holding company, Erakis, now has some 300 direct staff and indirectly sustains thousands of livelihoods. This growth has created new opportunities for staff, including the



recent promotion of a plant manager who started as a packer 11 years ago, while each Erakis site provides support to the local schools.

Many employees have developed lifelong careers here, contributing to the company's success and the well-being of their communities. "It's a reminder of the opportunities we can provide when we give people a chance," Lashbrooke notes.

Supporting the wider industrial minerals market

While Blastrite and Minrite are the group's core, Erakis also includes Mandoval Vermiculite, which celebrates 80 years of operation this year. Acquired in 2016,

Mandoval produces vermiculite products for horticulture, agriculture and lightweight construction.

Notably, it is also South Africa's largest producer of passive fire protection solutions, essential for structural steel in high-risk environments like refineries. Using this

Values and pride

Erakis provides centralised services across finance, HR, supply chain, health and safety, environmental compliance, quality, asset performance and continuous improvement to ensure efficient and compliant operations.

The scale of the operation is significant: Erakis moves in excess of five million tons of raw materials and finished products annually and is the second-largest global provider of mineral sands concentrates into China. Today, the group ranks among South Africa's largest shippers of containerised products.

Lashbrooke emphasises the company's core mission and values. These include low cost, safe tons produced to specification through teamwork, clear communication, ownership and accountability, integrity and innovation. "We are proud of what we have

achieved," he says, "but what matters most is the positive impact we have on our people, our customers and the communities we touch."

THE BOTTOM LINE

Mobile banking apps: Balancing convenience and security



Source: Christina (Unsplash)

By Diane Silcock and Robin Dunbar

AS banking apps become increasingly sophisticated, financial institutions face mounting pressure to deliver frictionless digital experiences without compromising the security and trust on which customer relationships depend.

Many small and medium businesses rely on their cellphones to perform daily business banking transactions via a banking app and to obtain One-Time-PINs. But have they considered how they will conduct their banking in the unlikely event that their cellphone is stolen or damaged? For a business owner, this scenario could bring essential transactions to a halt.

The dilemma of the OTP

How do you receive an OTP without your cellphone when your bank will not email the OTP for security reasons? Or, in the case of some banks, how do you access internet banking from your laptop without an OTP from your now stolen or damaged cellphone? The dilemma is clear.

Some of South Africa's banks appear to be divided on the matter of OTPs. Capitec says that it has 'largely moved away from SMS OTPs because of inherent security risks', FNB will send OTPs via SMS, but not via email, while Standard Bank allows OTPs to be sent via email.

The balance between convenience and security

South Africa's banks are clearly dedicated to ensuring a secure digital banking experience, particularly with the rise in cybercrime. But when complexities outweigh convenience, and processes and protocols hinder a client's banking experience or render them unable to transact, it's time to rethink.

As bank apps become more complex, more vulnerable groups become greater targets for cybercrime. It's noteworthy to mention Dr Nondumiso Ndlovu's PhD research on how elderly users in

Hammarsdale township are 'navigating the complex and increasingly perilous world of e-banking'.

She makes the point that 'banks must not assume a one-size-fits-all approach to digital adoption. By addressing the unique vulnerabilities faced by older users, we can ensure that digital financial services become a tool for inclusion – not exploitation'.

Standard Bank says, "We recognise these challenges and remain deeply committed to safeguarding our clients, particularly pensioners, against evolving fraud tactics. Our commitment is reflected not only in ongoing investment in advanced security controls, but also in our extensive fraud awareness efforts and client education initiatives."

Capitec states: "In 2025, our AI tools blocked 80 000 mule accounts and stopped 200 000 payments to scammer accounts. We have invested significant time and resources into fraud prevention technologies, initiatives and education. Combined, our security tools and teams prevented over R300 million in client fraud in 2025."

These initiatives are vitally important to safeguarding business and personal accounts, but simplicity and finding the right balance between convenience and security should ultimately be the goal when it comes to banking apps and any form of digital banking.

The bottom line is: Convenience without contingency is not innovation — it is risk. If a client can be locked out of their account because of an app outage, a lost cellphone, or a system failure, then the system is fundamentally incomplete.

Banks cannot expect customers to operate in a single-channel ecosystem with no practical fallback. A secure, verified email alternative — backed by strengthened authentication protocols — should not be optional; it should be standard.

True digital leadership is measured not by how sleek the app is when it works, but by how resilient the system is when it doesn't.

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BMG launches next generation Hansen I4 industrial gear units for mining and conveying applications in Africa



BMG has introduced the Next Generation Hansen I4 Industrial Gear Units (IGUs) which deliver high torque capacity, dimensional accuracy and operational reliability in underground and surface mining and conveying applications.

BMG has recently introduced the Next Generation Hansen I4 Industrial Gear Units (IGUs) which have been developed for safe and efficient use in tough mining and conveying applications.

These compact, invertible Hansen I4 units are engineered to deliver high torque capacity, dimensional accuracy and operational reliability in both underground and surface applications, while ensuring minimal maintenance requirements and extended service life.

Important advantages of the Next Generation Hansen I4 programme, which combines cost optimisation with retained design integrity, include reduced lead times and OEM-backed technical support throughout Africa.

“By standardising the core materials required in key Hansen I4 models, we are able to improve supply efficiency, while main-

taining the original torque ratings, gear geometry and bearing performance required for heavy-duty mining and conveying applications,” explains Barry Stoltz, BMG’s Gears Regional Manager, Electro-Mechanical division. “The result is a robust and reliable unit that conforms with Hansen’s global design standards and technical specifications, but with improved availability for operations throughout the African continent.

“BMG has streamlined production and supply processes, reducing delivery lead times to a maximum of four weeks. This shorter turnaround time supports plant uptime strategies for our customers, where conveyor availability is directly linked to output and revenue.”

The revised I4 platform incorporates a standardised bill of materials across the core RDD, RDE and RDF configurations, with gear ratios be-

tween 16:1 and 35:1. This rationalisation enables bulk procurement of critical components, including bearings, seals, spacers, nilos rings, bolts and nuts. As a result, accessibility and cost-efficiency are improved, with no compromise on performance, even in arduous conditions. Local sourcing further strengthens supply continuity for the African market.

The Hansen I4 is built around precision-manufactured helical gearing and designed to AGMA-rated standards to balance high torque density with controlled noise levels. High torque geometry is applied to low-speed gears, while high-speed stages are configured to reduce noise emission. Detailed service factor and operating life calculations underpin the shaft and bearing design, ensuring suitability for continuous-duty conveyor and mining drives.

Installation flexibility is a core feature of the Hansen I4 range. The gearbox can be inverted through 180 degrees to accommodate left- or right-hand drive arrangements, reducing inventory requirements and simplifying plant layout. A robust horizontally split housing facilitates easy inspection and maintenance, while horizontal or vertical shaft configurations provide adaptability for different mechanical interfaces. Hansen’s Oil-Lock sealing arrangement ensures long-term oil retention and reduced contamination risk in abrasive environments.

As the official OEM for Hansen gearboxes in Southern Africa, BMG is authorised to repair Hansen IGUs in accordance with the manufacturer’s documented procedures, maintaining original

tolerances and operating specifications. Every unit undergoes detailed incoming inspection, full disassembly and dimensional verification of housings, shafts and gears before reassembly to factory-defined clearances. Bearings and seals are replaced

as standard, fasteners are torqued to specified values, and gear contact patterns are verified to meet correct mesh alignment requirements.

No gearbox is released before a controlled running test confirms mechanical, thermal and lubrica-

tion performance, including checks on temperature, noise and oil tightness.

BMG’s Next Generation Hansen I4 range meets the requirements of customers seeking a standardised, high-torque cost-efficient IGU, with reduced lead times and local

OEM-backed technical support.

For further information contact Barry Stoltz, BMG’s Gears Regional Manager, Electro-Mechanical Division
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Food-oil production: ifm's SUH ultrasonic flow meter reduces waste and improves operational efficiency



ifm's ultrasonic flow meter range for food-oil measurement.

Precision, hygiene and reliability for food-oil production

THE food-oil industry demands measurement technology that performs reliably under varying temperatures, viscosities, and strict hygiene requirements. The ifm SUH hygienic ultrasonic flow meter is engineered specifically

to meet these challenges, delivering accurate and repeatable flow measurement for sunflower, rapeseed and blended edible oils.

With advanced ultrasonic technology and a fully hygienic design, ifm's SUH series ensures consistent product quality, reduces waste and improves operational efficiency across all pro-

duction stages.

The ultrasonic flow meter monitors liquid media such as water, glycol solutions or industrial oils. It detects the three process categories: volumetric flow quantity, consumed quantity, and medium temperature.

Peak consumption, present consumption or accumulated consumption can be accessed and adjusted via programmed switch and alarm level settings, all at the touch of a button.

The units feature two switching outputs which can be programmed as normally open or normally closed.

For output of the measured value, one switching output can also be configured as a scalable analogue output. For consumed quantity monitoring, the other output transmits counting pulses to the controller.

In addition to volumetric flow monitoring,

the SU also monitors the temperature of the medium. It is displayed on the unit and provided for signal processing. The sensor is thus particularly suited for monitoring cooling circuits.

Designed for food-oil applications

- Suitable for food oils with viscosities ranging from 30 to 68 mm²/s at 40 °C
- Stable and precise measurement even when product temperature or viscosity fluctuates
- Ideal for dosing, blending, filtration, transfer and filling lines

Hygienic by design

- 0-Clamp process connections for quick and secure installation
- Stainless steel measuring tube with no internal seals, gaskets

- No dead spaces or contamination risk
- CIP/SIP compatible for fast and reliable cleaning cycles
- Resistant to blockages, leakage and pressure drop issues

Accurate, consistent and reliable

- Precise volumetric flow and totalised volume measurement
- Integrated temperature monitoring for improved process transparency
- High repeatability in both conductive and non-conductive oils
- Supports stable control of batch and continuous produc-

tion processes

Optimised for modern food-oil facilities

ifm's ultrasonic flow meters are ideal for modern food-oil facilities as they ensure consistent product quality, reduce raw-material loss through accurate dosing, improve plant efficiency with low-maintenance design, and enhance production safety and process stability.

Flexible range options

The flow meters are available from ½ inch up to 4 inches with flow ranges from 1 to 6000 l/min. The range is suitable

for both small processing lines and large transfer systems.

Your trusted partner for food-oil measurement

The ifm SUH ultrasonic flow meter combines hygienic construction, advanced measurement technology and long-term reliability. It delivers the precision and confidence required in today's food-oil production facilities.

Contact: ifm South Africa, Tel: 0861 IFM RSA (436 772), International Tel: +27 12 450 0400 <http://www.ifm.com>, Customer Support – ifm ZA

Bisedge appointed exclusive dealer for Linde Material Handling in South Africa

BISEEDGE, a leader in sustainable logistics solutions, is proud to announce that it has been appointed as the exclusive dealer for Linde Material Handling products in South Africa, effective 1st April 2026.

This strategic partnership combines Linde's world-class engineering and premium material handling equipment with Bisedge's deep operational expertise in material handling and intralogistics. Bisedge will handle the sales, service, and support for the full range of Linde equipment across the South African market.

The move marks a significant shift in the regional landscape, providing local businesses with streamlined access to Linde's innovative technology, including its industry-leading forklift fleets and automated warehouse solutions.

Christian Wessels, Co-Founder and CEO of Bisedge, said the deal was a significant development for the group.

"Becoming the exclusive dealer for Linde Material Handling in South Africa is a pivotal moment for Bisedge. Our mission has always been to drive efficiency and sustainability in African intralogistics. By partnering with Linde Material Handling, we are providing South African industries with the highest standard of equipment backed by a service model that prioritises uptime and operational excellence."

Stéphane Nicoli, Senior Director Linde Material Handling for

MEA, emphasised the importance of the partnership with Bisedge for Linde MH. "South Africa is a cornerstone of our growth strategy in the MEA region, and finding the right partner was critical. Bisedge's operational excellence and their forward-thinking approach to sustainable logistics make them the ideal choice to represent the Linde brand. This partnership ensures that our customers receive not only world-class engineering but also the localised, high-touch service and innovation required to thrive in today's competitive market."

Bisedge provides material handling solutions as Equipment as a Service across Sub-Saharan Africa and the GCC. With a team of more than 1,250 colleagues across South Africa, Nigeria, Kenya, and Tanzania, the company supports intralogistics operations by supplying equipment, improving operational efficiency, and helping clients reduce emissions through the transition from diesel to electric equipment.

Bisedge provides, maintains, and operates mission-critical fleets of forklifts, reach trucks, and narrow-aisle trucks, delivered through full outsourcing contracts, long-term rentals, or equipment sales with after-sales maintenance. Its strategic partnership with Linde Material Handling, a leading global manufacturer of material handling equipment, provides access to premium equipment and



Christian Wessels, Co-Founder and CEO of Bisedge.

technical expertise, supporting Bisedge's role in advancing fleet electrification across the region.

This deal follows Bisedge being appointed as the exclusive dealer for Linde Material Handling products in East Africa in March.

Bisedge was founded by Wessels and Jasper Graf von Hardenberg, its Chief Operating Officer in 2020.

For its part, Linde Material Handling (MH) is a global intralogistics company and part of KION GROUP AG.

Linde MH and its independent network partners have a global sales and service workforce of close to 10,000 professionals, ensuring close customer proximity with 700 locations spanning all continents.

Since its establishment 121 years ago, Linde MH has evolved into a comprehensive provider of material flow solutions with a diverse range of products and services, including counterbalanced trucks up to 18 tons, manual and automated warehouse equipment

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AS Industry 4.0 continues to advance, the shift toward total industrial automation has become a non-negotiable requirement for staying competitive. Whether in automotive manufacturing, high-speed logistics or the food industry, the goal remains the same: greater productivity, consistently high quality, and the flexibility to handle anything from mass production down to a batch size of one.

Infrastructure makes or breaks these ambitious goals. The processors, sensors and drives of modern automated systems are only as effective as the system of cables, wires and accessories connecting them.

HELU South Africa specialises in ensuring these components receive the power and data flow they need to function reliably. From high-flexibility solutions that withstand the constant bending and torsion of robotic applications to cables that resist extreme temperatures and chemicals, HELU's products are designed to survive the harshest conditions while supporting uninterrupted operations.

A comprehensive range for automation technology

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CATALOGUES



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Yaskawa and Dale Automation partner to boost manufacturing efficiency – integrating robotics and conveyor systems



Jan 't Hart, National Sales Manager at Yaskawa Southern Africa

SOUTHERN African manufacturers are facing unprecedented operational pressures, from rising labour costs to growing demand for processed foods. To meet these challenges, companies are turning to automated solutions on the factory floor, and the partnership between Yaskawa Southern Africa and Dale Automation effectively demonstrates how robotics and material-handling expertise can transform end-of-line operations.

continues to decrease while labour costs rise,” explains Jan 't Hart, National Sales Manager at Yaskawa Southern Africa, highlighting why automation is increasingly attractive.

Demand for palletising robots has risen sharply over the past few years, driven by changing eating habits, population growth, and the acceleration of processed food consumption, from mielie meal to pasta and bread. Industries seeing the strongest uptake in-

cludes food and beverage, pharmaceuticals, and heavy industrial manufacturing, where precise handling and throughput are critical.

Previously, palletising operations relied on semi-automated machines that were prone to jamming and required constant supervision. Space constraints, SKU variation, and product handling added further complexity. Manual lines limited throughput and increased the risk of product damage during transport.

“This project was driven by the need to move beyond dedicated, semi-automated machines,” says Grace. “With growing throughput and demand, we needed to operate at optimal speeds to reduce damage and improve quality, while providing flexibility for future variations.”

Why the partnership worked

The collaboration between Yaskawa and Dale Automation was central to the project's success. By combining robotic palletising technology with advanced conveyor and material-handling expertise, the teams were able to optimise floor layouts, reach, and output.

“Early collaboration was critical,” adds Grace. “The robot needs materials to be presented in a very specific way. Aligning material handling with the robot's capabilities ensured the solution worked effectively.”

The project utilised Yaskawa's palletising robots, chosen for their payload, speed, reach, and accuracy. These robots provide flexibility for future SKU changes and scaling production.

On the Dale Automation side, conveyor

design and in-feed systems were optimised to maximise throughput within space limitations. The team also addressed complex technical challenges, including the design of the robot's end effector to handle lids, pans and finished products using either magnet or suction, ensuring smooth product flow at an optimal plant rate.

Safety, efficiency, and measurable outcomes

Automated palletising significantly reduces ergonomic risks associated with manual handling of heavy products in high-heat environments.

Operators have transitioned from manual labour to supervisory and technical roles, supported by in-house training in mechatronics and robot operation. Minimal manual intervention has also allowed staff to focus on higher-value tasks.

Automation has enabled 24/7 production, improved consistency, reduced downtime, and stabilised production during peak periods. Throughput, efficiency, and accuracy have all increased.

Long-term value and future readiness

The partnership between Yaskawa Southern Africa and Dale Automation demonstrates the tangible benefits of integrating robotics and conveyor systems, enhancing efficiency, safeguarding staff, and preparing manufacturers for the future. “We see demand for robotic palletising growing, not just locally but across the region,” concludes 't Hart.

For more information on Yaskawa's robotic solutions, visit www.yaskawa.za.com.

Western Cape fruit packhouses face EU compliance pressure



By Kris van der Bijl

THE Western Cape fruit industry is moving to address a long-standing structural gap: the absence of locally based manufacturing for packhouse equipment.

For decades, grading systems, conveyor lines and related technology have largely been imported. The establishment of a production facility in Paarl signals a shift in how packhouses may source, maintain and upgrade critical infrastructure. The development coincides with intensifying export competition and firm European Union regulatory deadlines.

Supply chain exposure and local capacity

South Africa produces more than 4.7 million tonnes of fruit annually in a market valued at R145 billion, projected to reach R190 billion by 2030. Most of this production is exported, primarily to Europe.

Despite the scale of the sector, no South African packhouse operates as fully automated. Automation levels remain low compared with leading fruit-exporting countries.

Imported equipment exposes operators to shipping costs, port congestion, vessel availability constraints and currency volatility. Servicing and replacement parts face the same delays.

Francois Malan, Managing Director of Ceres Fruit Growers, notes that parts availability has been a central obstacle in upgrading facilities.

A local manufacturing base reduces procurement lead times and mitigates supply chain risk, offering packhouse operators a more reliable alternative.

EU Packaging Regulation 2025/40

Automation is increasingly linked not only to efficiency, but also to compliance.

The EU Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation 2025/40 takes effect on 12 August 2026. From that date, each item of packaging placed on the EU market must carry a Declaration of Conformity confirming compliance with sustainability requirements.

Hortgro has issued guidance to exporters highlighting the significance of the deadline.

Nitasha Baijnath Pillay, Hortgro's Manager for Resource Management and Sustainability, describes the regulation as stringent and measurable, emphasising the need for proactive industry engagement.

At Fruit Logistica in Berlin in February 2026, AGRINFO, the EU-funded programme coordinating implementation across exporting countries,

expressed interest in assessing the regulation's implications for South Africa's supply chain. The study has not yet been finalised.

Further regulatory milestones follow. Single-use plastic packaging for small portions will be prohibited from 2030. Harmonised labelling requirements begin in August 2028. By 2030, all packaging on the EU market must be recyclable.

Rising export volumes increase compliance exposure

Hortgro's first seasonal report for 2026 projects apple exports to rise by 5 percent to 52.2 million equivalent cartons. Royal Gala volumes are expected to increase 12 percent and Fuji exports 11 percent as new plantings mature.

Higher export volumes mean more packaging in scope, requiring additional Declarations of Conformity and enhanced traceability at packhouse level.

While local manufacturing strengthens supply resilience, the regulatory timeline remains fixed.

Each Declaration of Conformity requires verifiable traceability data generated at packhouse level and communicated across the value chain. The issue is therefore as much about systems and documentation as about packaging materials.

“The collaboration between Yaskawa and Dale Automation was central to the project's success.”

Manufacturing pressures driving automation

Across the region, manufacturers are grappling with labour costs and the challenge of maintaining efficiency in high-volume production. “Over the long run, the cost of capital equipment

include food and beverage, pharmaceuticals, and heavy industrial manufacturing, where precise handling and throughput are critical.

Darren Grace, Dale Automation's Director of Technical Sales, notes, “There is a clear need to increase production volumes on the factory floor. Compa-



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.

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Precision spray control reduces material costs by 50–80% in manufacturing



The AccuCoat fully-jacketed heated systems for butter chocolate and heavy syrup applications.

THE performance of any spraying operation, depends on a variety of system components working seamlessly to optimise production processes. From simple on/off control to real-time monitoring and automatic adjustments, advanced spray control technologies give manufacturers greater control over product quality, operating costs, and workplace conditions.

Spray nozzles can only perform effectively when the entire system is operating efficiently. Pumps, sensors, and other hydraulic and pneumatic devices can influence performance.

An established specialist in this field, Monitor Engineering has represented Spraying Systems Co. in Southern Africa for over seven decades. The company has helped manufacturers optimise operations through precision spray control technology that features electrically-actuated nozzles and controllers.

Managing Director Grant Ormond explains, "Precision spray systems deliver precise fluid volumes with uniform coverage, eliminating overspraying, misting and dripping. This significantly reduces waste across applications such as coatings, flavourings, oils, release agents, lubricants, resins and waxes."

Precision Spray Control improves efficiency in food manufacturing

In food manufacturing, precision spraying systems can extend the

shelf life for products such as baked goods and cheese while reducing production costs. The consistent application of mould inhibitors at the correct volume ensures complete and reliable coverage.

Automation further enhances efficiency by reducing labour requirements, eliminating scrap caused by uneven application, and minimising cleaning time – all while improving product quality and maintaining food safety standards. Replacing manual rollers or air-atomised sprays, can significantly reduce the waste of costly coatings, oils, lubricants and chemicals.

Electrostatic nozzles for lubrication systems

Single-point electrostatic nozzles are particularly effective in lubrication applications. These nozzles enable precise application of low- or high-viscosity oils, release agents, and corrosion fluids to coils, sheets, stamping tools, and pipes.

Chain lubrication, for example, can be applied with exceptionally high transfer efficiency. This reduces oil consumption, minimises chain wear and breakages, and limits the downtime associated with chain-driven conveyors. By providing accurate placement and on/off control, lubricant consumption can be reduced by 70-80%.

Precise control of gas temperature and volume

AutoJet Gas Cooling Systems provide closed-loop control of all nozzles, pumps, sensors and other system components, simplifying the gas cooling process for effective emission control. This is ideal for cement plants, paper mills, power plants, steel mills, and waste incineration plants, among others.

In petrochemical processing, gas cooling systems and precision injectors support applications such as NOx control, feed injection, desuperheating, steam quenching, and chemical injection in off-gas streams and thermal oxidisers.

Precision spraying systems save time and money

Across all sectors of industry, precision spray systems make every drop count, reducing material costs by 50-80%, boosting line speeds, and eliminating hours of manual labour and maintenance.

Customers report quick payback through waste prevention, higher yields, and safer, more sustainable operations, thereby transforming precision spraying into measurable time and money savings.

For more info and for expert advice, contact Grant Ormond at Monitor Engineering at email grant@monitorspray.co.za. <https://www.spray-nozzles.co.za/>

OST-Africa's in-house manufacturing ensures optimum control and reliability in materials handling

STRINGENT manufacturing standards play a key role in operational reliability in most industries, including harsh bulk materials handling environments, where equipment is exposed to impact, abrasion, misalignment and continuous duty.

OST-Africa's commitment to the highest standards encompasses the integration of engineering, fabrication, assembly, painting and inspection at one facility. This enables close control over quality, lead times and the performance of every component.

The company, which specialises in the design and manufacture of screen, transmission and materials handling products, designs and manufactures most equipment in-house. Systems installed at transfer points, screens and conveyors are required to withstand sustained impact, vibration, abrasion and environmental exposure, while operating continuously and often with limited access for maintenance. For this reason, OST focuses on durability and predictable performance, reducing the need for frequent adjustment or repair once equipment is installed on site.

OST's portfolio comprises equipment used across transfer points, conveyors and screening applications, including niche screens, impact beds, feeders, belt scrapers and the High Impact Torsion (HIT) System. Supporting components encompass screen mounts, oscillating mounts, anti-vibration mounts, tensioner arms, self-tensioning motor bases and the Efficiency-Base (E-Base).

"By keeping our production processes internal, OST reduces reliance on external suppliers and our skilled designed team is able to implement design changes efficiently to meet each

customer's specific project requirements," explains Chantelle Scheepers, Marketing Manager, OST-Africa. "To support our customers facing unplanned downtime, we maintain stock of key components and products, enabling quick response when breakdowns occur or when spares are required at short notice. This service, combined with our local manufacturing capability, reduces delays typically associated with imported equipment and contributes to improved uptime on site."

Vibration and impact control as a system function

All OST products are built around the Neidhart system—a proven, high-performance design used globally in specialised materials handling applications. The system consists of three main components - an outer tube, inner tube and four specially shaped round rubber pieces positioned between them. When the inner tube rotates within the outer tube, it twists the rubber, generating a torsional force. This mechanism allows the system to absorb energy and dampen shocks, providing effective protection against impact and overload.

Advantages of corrosion resistant Neidhart units include natural oscillation and vibration damping, as well as shock load capabilities and extended service life.

Most standard frames can be converted to suit Neidhart impact suspensions and mounting pitches are suited to fit existing stringers. No special support structures are required when using standard conveyors.

Welding and assembly

Dedicated welding and assembly areas form a central part of the factory layout. Com-



OST-Africa's commitment to the highest manufacturing standards encompasses the integration of engineering, fabrication, assembly, finishing and inspection at one facility. This enables close control over quality, lead times and pristine performance.

ponents are built and assembled prior to dispatch, ensuring correct fitment and alignment. This pre-assembly process reduces installation risk and limits the need for on-site modification, which can result in delays, safety risks and unplanned costs.

As part of OST's quality control process, Non-Destructive Testing (NDT) is applied to welded components to assess weld quality and structural integrity, while ensuring the component remains fully intact and fit for use.

Surface protection and painting

OST's in-house paint facility ensures components are prepared and coated to exact specifications, with Dry Film Thickness (DFT) measurement used to verify coating consistency and compliance. This facility is particularly important for equipment operating outdoors or in wet and abrasive conditions.

Maintaining painting operations internally not only reduces turnaround times, but also ensures that corrosion protection is suitable for the intended operating environment.

Quality control

Quality control is applied throughout the manufacturing process, with every product inspected before leaving the factory. Checks focus on workmanship, fitment and overall condition, to meet specific requirements for site use and compliance with internal and project requirements.

The OST team also conducts inspections and basic assessments on Visam vibrator motors, for which it is the sole importer. Adherence to ISO-certified management systems ensures compliance with quality, environmental management and occupational health and safety standards.

OST-Africa's commitment to its broad customer base is to manufacture equipment that performs reliably in harsh conditions, requires less ongoing maintenance and delivers extended service life in harsh mining and bulk materials handling applications. By designing, fabricating, assembling and inspecting equipment at its own facilities, the company maintains direct control over quality standards.



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Nearly half of SA's wastewater systems in critical condition, Green Drop report warns

SOUTH AFRICA'S wastewater infrastructure is deteriorating at an alarming rate, with the 2025 Green Drop Report revealing that 47% of the country's wastewater treatment

systems, 396 out of 848 audited, are now classified in a critical condition, up from 39% in 2022. The findings, released by Water and Sanitation Minister Pemy Majodina on 1

April, carry direct consequences for public health, environmental compliance, and business continuity. Systems achieving excellent or good performance declined

from 14% in 2022 to just 8% in 2025, while only 14 systems achieved Green Drop certification, down from 22 in the previous report.

Released alongside the Green Drop findings were Progress Assessment Reports for Blue Drop (drinking water quality) and No Drop (water use efficiency). On drinking water, the picture was marginally more positive: low-risk systems improved from 60.2% to 61.9%, and critical-risk systems decreased from 9.9% to 7.9%. However, Majodina cautioned against complacency, warning that critical and high-risk systems still require urgent corrective action.

Non-revenue water sits at 47.3%, essentially unchanged from 47.4% in 2023 - a level described as "stabilised but unacceptably high."

Governance failure at the core

The report makes clear this is not purely a technical problem. Systemic issues include poor maintenance of ageing infrastructure, failure to adhere to operational standards, lack of skilled personnel, weak municipal leadership, inadequate budgeting, and poor revenue collection. Vandalism, corruption, and attacks on infrastructure are compounding the crisis further.

The Western Cape and Gauteng continue to lead with the strongest risk profiles, while the Northern Cape was flagged as the worst-performing province. The Free State also remains a province of material concern.

President Cyril Ramaphosa has declared South Africa's water situation a national crisis, and government has established the National Water Crisis Committee (WaterCom), chaired by the President, to coordinate action across all spheres of government.

For business, the message is stark: water security is a core economic risk. Industries from agriculture and manufacturing to hospitality depend on reliable supply and functional sanitation. As government mounts its response, accountability across all sectors will be essential.



TRICOM AFRICA WAS AWARDED THE TERM TENDER CONTRACT FOR WELLFIELD DEVELOPMENT IN THE TMG AQUIFER

City of Cape Town develops groundwater within fractured aquifers of the Table Mountain Group in several areas across and outside the metropolitan area, as an additional water resource for the bulk water supply to the City. Groundwater is part of the alternative water resources being developed by the City as outlined in their Water Strategy to create a more resilient water supply.

Tricom Africa was awarded the term tender to undertake the design, manufacture, supply, delivery, installation, testing, commissioning and upholding (during the Trial Operation Period and the Defects Notification Period) of mechanical and electrical equipment for Wellfield Development in the TMG Aquifer for a period of three years.

Seven borehole pumps were installed with flow rates from 10 l/s up to 50 l/s, including pipework, valves and pipe supports required to connect the pump sets to the HDPE pipelines, local control panels, instrumentation (e.g. pressure gauges, level sensors, etc.) required for the monitoring and control of pump sets, SCADA, RTUs and remote monitoring required for the borehole installations, small power and lighting, inclusive of power (MV and LV), control, fibre, and ethernet cabling, including earthing of all equipment.

Civil and building works included the construction of four pump house structures and flow meter chambers complete with earthworks.



Client:



Consulting Engineer:



Contractor:



Your water bill is a warning sign

RE-SOLVE helps businesses find hidden water losses, cut municipal costs, and build resilience - backed by over 65 million kilolitres of proven savings.

The problem

South Africa loses nearly half its treated water before it reaches a tap. Inside your facility, the picture may be similar - continuous-flow leaks, pressure-related losses, night-time consumption spikes, and billing anomalies that quietly inflate your municipal account month after month. Non-revenue water nationally sits at 47.4%, with 40.8% lost through leaks and ageing infrastructure alone. For businesses, the risk is compounding: rising tariffs, unreliable municipal supply, and increasing regulatory pressure on water use.

What we do

Re-Solve Consulting is a specialist water engineering firm that helps businesses move from passive consumption to active water management. Through advanced monitoring, on-site intervention, leak detection, and pressure

optimisation, we identify exactly how, where, and why your water is being used - and lost. Our shared savings model means we invest our own capital and recover costs only from savings achieved. You pay from results, not promises.

Beyond savings: Alternative water supply

Reducing consumption is only part of the solution. Re-Solve also designs and implements water augmentation measures that give your facility a more consistent, reliable, and independent water supply. This includes the identification, abstraction, and treatment of underground and surface water sources to potable drinking water standards, which is then connected directly into your facility's reticulation system. The result is a meaningful reduction in your municipal water bill, combined with supply security that no longer depends entirely on a municipality's ability to deliver. In a country where intermittent supply, infrastructure failures, and water restrictions are becoming

the norm, rather than the exception, an alternative supply is not a luxury - it is a business continuity measure.

The impact

The result is measurable: lower costs, reduced waste, improved supply resilience, and a facility better prepared for the disruptions now defining South African business life. With offices across five provinces and a team of over 120 professionals, Re-Solve has been delivering these outcomes for government, municipalities, mining, and

industry since 2005. Across government, municipal, and private-sector facilities, Re-Solve has consistently achieved water consumption reductions of between 50% and 90%. Return on investment periods on pressure management, leak reduction, and water augmentation projects are typically measured in months, not years - with ongoing savings flowing directly to the client's bottom line. These are not projections. They are audited, documented results from over 200 completed projects.

"Efficient water use is no longer optional. It is essential for cost control, compliance, and sustainability. Re-Solve offers a partnership in resilience - from demand reduction to alternative supply."



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Securing South Africa's water future: VEGA supports smarter conservation across the metros



SOUTH Africa faces a stark reminder: the country is running out of water. As a semi-arid nation with 98% of its available water resources already allocated, the margin for error is shrinking fast. Climate change, rapid urbanisation, ageing infrastructure, and escalating demand are placing unprecedented pressure on water boards and metropolitan municipalities.

To build resilience, South Africa must accelerate the adoption of smarter, data-driven water management strategies—and this is where VEGA's advanced instrumentation plays a critical role.

The Department of Water and Sanitation's latest reporting highlights water losses and inefficient use as major threats to national water security.

South Africa's largest metros face unique but interconnected water challenges:

1. Ageing infrastructure and high water losses: Frequent leaks and bursts are a consequence of decades-old pipelines, reservoirs, and pump stations. Without accurate level and pressure monitoring, early detection is difficult.
2. Rapid urbanisation: Cities like Johannesburg and Cape Town

continue to grow faster than infrastructure upgrades can keep pace, increasing pressure on bulk supply systems.

3. Climate variability: If anything, Cape Town's "Day Zero" crisis demonstrated how quickly a metro can reach the brink. Meanwhile, Gauteng relies heavily on the increasingly stressed Vaal River System.

4. Limited new water sources: Metros must prioritise conservation, efficiency, and real-time monitoring to stretch existing supplies.

To secure long-term water availability, metropolitan areas and water boards across South Africa are focusing on several strategic priorities. Foremost is reducing non-revenue water, with accurate measurement playing a crucial role in identifying leaks, monitoring pressure zones, and effectively managing reservoir levels.

Real-time monitoring is equally important. Continuous data on water flows, pressures, and storage volumes enables proactive maintenance and quicker responses to system failures.

Improved process control helps municipalities minimise waste, lower energy usage, and prevent excessive chemi-

cal use. Protecting strategic water source areas is also a high priority.

Finally, renewed public-sector investment in water infrastructure reflects a stronger commitment to resilience and securing sustainable water supplies for the future.

Instrumentation that protects every drop

VEGA's instrumentation is engineered for accuracy, reliability and long-term performance, all qualities essential for water boards and municipalities facing mounting operational pressures.

Radar sensors provide non-contact, maintenance-free level measurement, ensuring accurate reservoir monitoring. Pressure transmitters help utilities maintain stable pressure zones. Sudden pressure drops or spikes can indicate leaks or bursts.

Long-range radar technology enables safe, accurate monitoring of dam levels, river flows, and catchment behaviour—critical for drought planning and flood mitigation.

VEGA's instruments integrate seamlessly with SCADA and IoT platforms, giving water boards real-time visibility across their networks.

As South Africa confronts intensifying water scarcity, conservation is no longer optional, it is a national imperative. The country's metros and water boards need reliable, high-precision data to manage every drop. VEGA's advanced level and pressure measurement technologies provide the accuracy, durability, and intelligence required to build a more resilient water future.

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Werner Pumps' water-wise solution for municipal wastewater maintenance

WITH water management scrutiny intensifying and South African municipal maintenance teams under mounting pressure to keep ageing infrastructure functioning, there is growing demand for equipment that can do more with fewer resources.

Sewer and stormwater networks, which require regular cleaning to prevent blockages, overflows and environmental contamination, are typically serviced by traditional high-pressure jetting units. These tend to rely on large volumes of clean water and frequent refilling trips.

Werner Pumps, a South African manufacturer of high-pressure jetting and vacuum equipment, has developed a truck-mounted recycling unit designed specifically for these conditions.

How it works

The Werner Pumps unit draws water directly from the sewer lines being cleaned, filters it and reuses it for high-pressure jetting. This allows teams to keep working without returning to refill tanks, saving both time and costs, and conserving a significant amount of potable water.

"Our recycling unit can save up to 168 000 litres of clean water during a single eight-hour shift," says Sebastian Werner, Managing Director of Werner Pumps. "For municipalities working in water-scarce areas, or where access to water points is limited, this makes a big difference. The right equipment helps maintenance teams respond faster, achieve more in a day, improve service delivery, and prevent bigger problems from



Werner Pumps' water-wise, truck-mounted recycling unit for municipal wastewater maintenance.

developing down the line."

Built for rugged use and municipal realities

The recycling unit is engineered for South African conditions and is 100% locally manufactured by Werner Pumps. Its design consolidates several functions into one system, giving municipal teams a single vehicle that can handle a wide range of maintenance tasks. This includes wet suction, high-pressure jetting, debris removal, and continuous water recycling.

Key performance features include:

- 12 500-litre 304 stainless steel tank
- 3 000 m³/h suction
- 360-degree continuous slewing boom with 6-inch suction line capacity
- Single-cylinder pressure transformer jetting pump operating at 350 l/min at 205 bar
- Quiet, contact-free rotor vacuum pump suitable for residential areas
- Wireless remote

control and real-time electronic monitoring for safer, easier operation

By using water available on site and reducing the number of refilling cycles, the unit helps municipalities cut downtime, fuel costs and operational disruptions. It is also well suited to remote areas where water access points are scarce.

Customisable and supported locally

Werner Pumps manufactures the recycling units on a range of chassis options, allowing municipalities to align purchases with their preferred vehicle brands and existing fleets. The company also offers aftersales support (including repairs and maintenance), as well as a comprehensive range of accessories and spares, such as high-pressure guns, lances, hoses and a tank-cleaning nozzle. This enables municipalities to configure the truck for their specific maintenance needs and protects against long lead times for parts, which Werner says can be the case

with imported alternatives.

"We work closely with our municipal partners to understand the challenges they face and to recommend configurations that will support long-term reliability," he says. "Local manufacturing also means faster access to parts, service and technical support, as well as meeting procurement requirements."

Supporting municipalities' environmental goals

With national attention fixed on improving water security and service delivery, the recycling unit gives municipalities a practical way to implement water-wise practices into daily operations.

By reducing potable water use and enabling more consistent maintenance, it contributes to cleaner environments, fewer sewer overflows and more efficient use of public resources.

For more information, visit www.wernerpumps.com or contact Sebastian Werner Tel: 011 362 6280 email: sebastian@wernerpumps.com

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Western Cape water security: How Cape Town is building long-term supply resilience

By Adrian Ephraim

South Africa's water crisis is well documented: a projected 17% supply deficit by 2030, R28 billion owed to water boards, and nearly half of treated water lost before reaching users. In the Western Cape, the challenge is more acute — shaped by climate change, geography, and a population that has doubled in a generation.

"The Western Cape has always been water-scarce," says Benoit LeRoy, CEO of the SA Water Chamber. Declining cold front intensity means less rainfall reaches catchment areas, limiting dam capacity. "We can't even fill the ones we have."

A system under strain

Cape Town's population has grown from 2.5 million to five million and could reach seven million by 2050. The system was never designed for this scale. Unlike global norms where agriculture dominates water use, roughly 70% of supply in the Western Cape now goes to urban demand. Meanwhile, the region's dams hold only about one year of supply — far less than the two-year buffer of the Vaal River system. "The population explosion has put stress on the system," LeRoy says. "Things are not normal."

Business risk, not just supply

Industry may not be the biggest water user, but it is highly exposed. Food and beverage producers, particularly poultry processors, face severe disruption if supply fails. Production cannot simply pause — losses compound quickly through contamination and spoiled stock. Businesses have improved efficiency, reusing water for non-critical processes and reducing waste. But the mindset has shifted. "It's not a cost issue anymore," LeRoy says. "It's a systemic risk."

A diversified response

Cape Town is responding with one of the continent's most advanced water strategies. The city has accelerated pipe replacement, cutting water losses to around 24%. A large-scale smart metering rollout will soon enable real-time system monitoring.

On supply, the city aims to add 300 megalitres per day from alter-

native sources by 2030, split between desalination, groundwater, and direct potable reuse.

Desalination at the core

A planned R5-billion desalination plant at

Paarden Eiland will anchor this effort, delivering up to 70 megalitres per day by 2030/31. The project is expected to raise tariffs by 6–7% but significantly improve reliability. "Cape Town is on a mission

to reach 99% water security by 2040," says LeRoy.

The lesson from the 2018 "Day Zero" crisis is clear: water resilience is no longer optional — it is foundational to the region's future.



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Allied Valve Specialists: Putting people at the heart of South Africa's water crisis



When containment fails, everything stops. Tebogo Modiakgotla, AVS Technical Specialist, showcasing Hunt & Mitton valve solutions engineered to ensure zero leakage and uncompromised system integrity.

By Adrian Ephraim

WHEN Tina Angelos and her female colleagues walk into a room full of engineers, there is sometimes a moment of visible recalibration. "They're like, okay, now who are these women?" she says, laughing. The moment never lasts long. When she begins speaking about containment integrity, Euro Chlor certification for zero-leakage and emissions, and the water ecosystem that sustains 62 million South Africans, the room adjusts.

Angelos - known to her team as "Kaptein" - leads Allied Valve Specialists (AVS), a company she describes as being at the heart of South Africa's industrial infrastructure. It is a metaphor she uses deliberately.

"I compare what we do to the hearts in our bodies," she says. "There are four main valves that pump the heart and give life. Each valve brings a plant to life."

AVS is a specialist steam and chlorine valve business, the product of Angelos consolidating two established valve companies - Steam and Valve Specialists and Entrade - into a single focused entity five years ago. The journey to that point was anything but linear. Trained originally as a pharmacist, she spent 15 years in corporate be-

fore crossing into the family industrial business her father founded decades ago. "He's 83 and still fully in the companies," she says. "He is my walking MBA - constantly sharing his wisdom and support."

That background shapes how she thinks about the sector. Chlorine, she explains, is the hidden gem behind our daily lives. It is used in the plastic of your toothbrush, your life medication, and the gold-refining process at Rand Refinery. "It's all an ecosystem," she says. "My technical specialist says chlorine is a very smart gas - unpredictable, responsive to pressure, temperature, and environment."

Safety And Containment Systems Support South Africa Water Crisis Response

Containing that gas - rather than merely controlling its flow - is where AVS has staked its ground. Their flagship product, the Hunt & Mitton valve range, is Euro Chlor certified for zero-leakage and emissions, which Angelos says is non-negotiable. "Every single one of our valves is 100% radiographed. No valve leaves our premises without complete confidence that it is the right valve going to the right place." In a pilot project with NCP Chlor Chem,

South Africa's largest chlorine manufacturer, AVS-supplied valves outlasted their predecessors by a factor of six. The plant has since been running entirely on Hunt & Mitton.

Municipal Partnerships Are Key To Addressing The South African Water Crisis

AVS is now working with Johannesburg Water - the first time, Angelos acknowledges, that the company has gone direct to a municipality. "The crisis isn't really about rainfall. It's at the end of the ecosystem, where infrastructure hasn't been upgraded, and wastewater treatment plants are failing."

Personal Experience Reinforces Leadership During The South Africa Water Crisis

When Angelos's son was diagnosed with a rare heart condition three days after birth, it brought to life the profound importance of her work. At eight months, he underwent open heart surgery - the cone procedure - that had never been performed before by his surgeon, Dr Susan Vosloo, trained by Christiaan Barnard. "She looked at me and said, I can do this," Angelos recalls. "And she did."

Watching those 10 days in ICU - the physios, the nutritionists, the nurses, the meticulous monitoring - transformed how she thought about systems. "Success wasn't the surgery. It was the entire process afterwards. That is where I was so attracted to the valve part of the business."

Today, her son is fit and full of life. And his mother runs a company where every engineer deserves a good night's rest.

South Africa's R400 billion water crisis: fixing leaking pipes before it's too late

By Adrian Ephraim

WHEN President Cyril Ramaphosa stood at Cape Town City Hall in February to deliver his 2026 State of the Nation Address, he did not mince words. Water, he told the nation, was now "the single most important issue" for millions of South Africans. The money followed: R156 billion committed to water and sanitation infrastructure over three years, part of a historic R1 trillion public infrastructure allocation.

But engineers are making a pointed argument - the money, however large, will achieve little if the fundamental failure at the heart of the crisis is not addressed first.

The leak before the dam

South Africa's No Drop report found that close to half (47%) of municipal water is lost as "non-revenue water" - because of leaking pipes, unreliable or non-existent water meters, illegal connections and poor billing and revenue collection. Auditor-General findings put the cost of those losses at R14.89 billion in a single year. Government estimates suggest more than R400 billion is required to rehabilitate municipal water and sanitation infrastructure nationwide.

The maintenance picture is equally damning. While 8% of the budget should go to infrastructure maintenance, the actual figure is often just 2%, leading to expensive breakdowns. By the end of the second quarter of 2025/26, the country's eight metros had collectively spent only 31.5% of their R5.8 billion water infrastructure budget, against a benchmark that should have been above 50%. Nelson Mandela Bay reported



spending just 3.4% of its capital budget for water in that period.

It is a crisis of managed neglect; a system not failing suddenly, but decaying for decades under the weight of deferred decisions.

"Failure rates reach disastrous levels"

Professor Kobus du Plessis, Professor of Hydrology and Environmental Engineering at Stellenbosch University, has been direct about what is at stake when infrastructure is left without care. Commenting on Stellenbosch's Level 2 water restrictions in February, he emphasised that "if not maintained appropriately, failure rates [of water distribution] significantly increase and reach disastrous levels which are extremely difficult to stop and turn around, replacing at a significant cost frequently being the only option."

He also contextualised the population pressure dimension: "If no extra resources are added, then the risk of failure increases significantly."

The observation is not specific to Stellenbosch; it describes the national condition. Ramaphosa acknowledged this in SONA: the real challenge facing South Africa is not a lack of water, but the struggle to get water from dams to peo-

ple's taps.

The engineering toolkit

The engineering sector is not waiting for policy to catch up. Specialists in flow measurement, pipe rehabilitation, pressure management, decentralised water systems and storage point to technologies already delivering measurable results, and argue that the government's R156 billion commitment must flow into these solutions, not simply into new bulk infrastructure.

Smart metering and flow measurement allow municipalities to see in real time where water is entering and leaving distribution networks, detecting leaks, identifying illegal connections, and generating accurate billing data.

Pipe lining and rehabilitation technologies such as cured-in-place pipe (CIPP) lining can extend the lifespan of deteriorated mains without excavation, providing a faster and more affordable fix than full replacement.

Pressure management, controlling pressure within distribution networks, remains one of the most cost-effective non-revenue water interventions available, with municipalities that have implemented district metered areas recording significant reductions in both burst frequency and volumetric loss.

Funding the fix

A performance-based conditional grant introduced in 2025, allocated R27.7 billion over the medium term, requires metropolitan service entities to reinvest revenues from services into infrastructure. A further R54 billion in incentives has been directed at metros to reform water and sanitation services, with the explicit goal of ringfencing water revenue for reinvestment. PPP regulations have also been revised, with municipal amendments expected by June 2026.

Melanie Humphries of Investec Sustainable Solutions put it plainly: "Water is the crisis that has been building quietly in the background. Too often, it only becomes urgent once systems are already under strain."

The R400 billion problem is not solved by R156 billion in commitments alone. But targeted investment in technologies that reduce losses, rehabilitate pipes and build measurement intelligence into municipal networks could stabilise a system currently losing nearly half of what it produces. The engineering solutions exist. What is needed now is the institutional will, the ring-fenced funding and the technical capacity to deploy them at scale - before the window for intervention closes.

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Tuning into your hydraulic system: Hydrasales' maintenance insights

By Hydrasales, leaders in hydraulic filtration and accessories

WALK along the edge of a busy harbour and the rhythm of industry is unmistakable. Vessels ease into berth, dockside activity welcoming the cargo, cranes swinging into motion, and cargo moves transferred between ship and shore.

Towering mobile harbour cranes lift heavy loads with remarkable precision, their hydraulic systems quietly providing the force and control that keeps operations flowing.

From the outside it appears effortless. But often the earliest signs of trouble and inconsistencies are not dramatic failures; they are subtle declines in the way a system behaves.

To illustrate this, a mobile harbour crane began displaying small but noticeable changes in its performance during load operations. Although it remained fully functional, experienced operators noticed that the smooth

movements were no longer as easy as before.

These cranes rely heavily on precision hydraulic components which are sensitive and particularly vulnerable to contamination within the hydraulic fluid.

Even microscopic particles can gradually corrode and damage internal surfaces, affect seals, or interfere or impede with valve spools. Contamination rarely causes sudden failure; instead, it slowly degrades system performance until a serious fault develops.

Fortunately, this crane's hydraulic system had been equipped with effective and comprehensive filtration and monitoring. These monitoring systems delivered real-time cleanliness readings according to the ISO 4406 standard, allowing maintenance personnel to observe changes in fluid condition as they occurred.

During routine monitoring, the contamination monitor recorded a steady increase in particle levels. The re-

turn filter's clogging indicator activated, signalling that the filter media had reached its holding capacity.

Maintenance teams responded promptly, replacing the return filter. Investigation traced the source to early internal wear within the boom cylinder. Guide rings had begun wear, allowing slight piston misalignment that ultimately damaged a piston seal. The wear had generated metallic debris into the hydraulic circuit. Left undetected, this contamination could have accelerated component wear, damaged control valves, and ultimately led to a major failure of the boom cylinder during lifting operations.

Instead, the early warning provided by contamination monitoring allowed technicians to intervene before a catastrophic breakdown occurred.

This scenario highlights an important principle: filtration does more than simply remove contaminants. It preserves system performance

and protects critical components.

Modern hydraulic systems operate under extreme pressures and high flow rates, making it essential that filtration equipment is constructed to perform under demanding conditions.

However, even the best filter is only effective when properly monitored. Tools such as clogging indicators and real-time contamination monitors provide valuable insight into the system, allowing maintenance teams to respond early.

At Hydrasales, our philosophy around hydraulic performance and reliability is based on prevention rather than reaction. Our extensive range of filtration and contamination monitoring solutions include:

- High-pressure in-line filters for core system protection
- Return-line and suction filters for complete loop filtration
- Tank-mounted breathers and accessories to prevent



Hydrasales provides an extensive range of filtration and contamination monitoring solutions.

- external contamination
- Contamination monitors and clogging indicators for real-time condition monitoring
- Monitoring products for, level, pressure, flow and temperature.

We work closely with engineers and workshop managers to supply components and help build hydraulic systems that remain clean, efficient, and reliable over the long term.

Whether supporting mobile harbour equipment, industrial

machinery, and other heavy-duty hydraulic applications, understanding what your system is telling you can make all the difference.

For more information contact harpo@hydrasales.co.za or visit www.hydrasales.co.za

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BMG's world class valves support uptime in challenging environments



BMG's Fluid Technology division plays a major role in the local valves sector.

BMG's Fluid Technology division works closely with industry in sub-Saharan Africa to ensure that all valves, strainers and flow control equipment supplied, meet the exact requirements of every application and also conform with stringent industry standards.

"It is critical in chal-

lenging environments that the correct valve is selected and properly installed, to ensure efficient operation, maximum safety and extended service life of each system," explains Susan Victor, Sales Manager, BMG's Fluid Technology division. "No two industrial processes are alike, which

is why technical advice from our experts is critical when selecting fluid control components. Valve choice is based on various factors, including the size and shape of particles, pressure, temperatures and chemical content.

Failure of a valve and subsequent leaking of corrosive media can have devastating effects on the environment and is detrimental to the safety of personnel and equipment, leading to premature system failure and costly downtime.

It is very important to ensure safety, environmental protection and high productivity at a plant, by closely monitoring the condition of process valves. It is crucial that operators are aware if a valve is leaking, or if there are any valve failures that could expose operators and the plant to unnecessary risks.

By combining condition-based maintenance products for process valves with planned maintenance programmes, downtime at a plant is reduced and productivity and safety levels are significantly improved.

"BMG specialists have a thorough understanding of the processes where valves are installed and are able to specify the correct valves required for every application. We also assist customers in solving the problems of difficult installations and applications," says Victor.

"The team keeps abreast with global trends and ensures the local market has access to the latest products, with advanced developments in design, materials and coatings."

Field service technicians and trained regional specialists are available to conduct site and plant surveys,

to monitor the condition of valves and make recommendations for improved performance. Regular surveys ensure that valves and automation systems function to exact requirements and enable the team to identify equipment that should be included in scheduled maintenance programmes, to reduce unplanned plant downtime and loss of production.

The company's well-equipped workshops, which are approved warranty centres for leading manufacturers, enable reliable repair and testing of pumps, motors, valves and cylinders. Only quality-branded spares and components are used to ensure compliance with strict OEM standards.

Regional Service Centres in Cape Town, Port Elizabeth, Kimberley and Pinetown are equipped to offer a comprehensive range of services and workshop capabilities.

The company's extensive portfolio includes ball valves designed for efficient shut-off control and smooth operation; gate valves that offer minimal pressure loss in high-pressure environments and globe valves for precision flow regulation and throttling.

Lightweight butterfly valves have been designed for quick adjustments, ensuring cost efficient operation, while check valves ensure backflow prevention and system integrity. BMG specialists recommend the use of diaphragm valves for aggressive fluids and slurry handling and control valves for automating flow, pressure and temperature with ease.

Other products in the fluid technology range include hydraulic hoses and fittings, accumulators, cylinders, heat exchangers, hydraulic motors and hydraulic plumbing, as well as pumps and reservoir accessories.

BMG's 24-hour process support services for production efficiency and reliability-centred maintenance result in optimum efficiency and increased service life of every system.

For further information contact Susan Victor, Fluid Technology Sales Manager – BMG
Mobile: +27 82 491 9950 susanv@bmgworld.net, www.bmgworld.net

Equipment manufacturers in the water industry should play a central role in developing solutions - KSB



Critical Water Pump Station in the Free State where two FBL 500-400 Double Suction Split Casing Pumps have been in operation since 1967. They were built in South Africa and regularly maintained

EQUIPMENT manufacturers in the water industry should play a central role in developing solutions to the country's growing potable and waste water challenges.

Hugo du Plessis, market area manager for KSB Pumps and Valves, says manufacturers of pumps, valves and related equipment have an important role to play when systems are being designed or upgraded, as they know their products' capabilities better than anyone else and should be included at every stage of a project to ensure that the work is carried out within the equipment's capabilities.

Furthermore, global companies like KSB have a wealth of institutional knowledge as well as technical expertise that they can lend to consulting engineers, municipalities and waterboards to determine the best solutions for a region's challenges.

"In South Africa, our water boards manage decades-old infrastructure. Their challenges include leaks and maintenance of equipment such as pumps and valves. During Water Week from 16-20 March, we made our services available to assist them to run more efficiently. Also how best to address issues like skills shortages and training of staff."

"It is clear that our water delivery infrastructure is in need of an overhaul with ageing pump stations, rising demand and treatment of water that cannot be billed due to leakages or other forms of losses which make reliable water supply a daily challenge for municipalities and water utilities. Ensuring that water reach-

es households, businesses and even livestock requires technical expertise and partnerships with original equipment manufacturers (OEMs).

"Our operations combine local manufacturing with global engineering knowledge and our engineers are able to support municipalities directly, evaluating systems and optimising pump performance for bulk water transfer, treatment works and reticulation networks. Working closely with OEMs also ensures local authorities have rapid service response and on-the-ground technical support once projects have been completed. "The pump stations operate 24/7 under heavy demand. Having trained engineers who understand the full system helps utilities maintain supply," Du Plessis adds.

He explains that KSB is currently helping many of the country's utilities and municipalities to map and measure water supply, assess pump performance and plan remedial action where necessary to ensure systems are operating at full capacity. Advanced tools, including smart meters and data-driven pump monitoring for system optimisation as well as preventative maintenance is also being used to allow water boards to identify problem areas and adjust operations before minor issues escalate into major failures

KSB staff are currently working with a number of progressive municipalities on maintenance programmes and refurbishment projects to ensure pumps operate efficiently and safely over the expected decades-long operation of such a system.

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LEVEL 1
BBBEE

Western Cape wine industry urged to adopt irrigation automation



By Kris van der Bijl

WESTERN Cape wine producers are being encouraged to adopt irrigation automation and precision viticulture technologies to remain competitive in an increasingly data driven agricultural sector.

Speaking at the January 2026 Vinpro Nedbank Producer Day, precision viticulture expert Dr Luca Brillante said vineyard resilience depends on data, monitoring systems and smarter irrigation strategies that improve efficiency and decision making.

While the technology is available, adoption across the Western Cape wine industry remains uneven, largely due to financial pressure.

Economic strain slowing irrigation automation uptake

Charl van Reenen, Agronomy Manager at Netafim Southern & East Africa, says economic realities continue to affect technology adoption.

“The wine industry has been under massive pressure due to many economic factors for a very long time, and this does affect the adoption rate of new technologies.”

He stresses that producers are not resistant to change. Most wine grape farmers are open to new systems, provided the investment is financially viable under current operating conditions.

Tight margins, limited capital reserves and high upfront infrastructure costs make irrigation automation a difficult decision for farms already under sustained pressure.

Water use efficiency and yield management

Despite these constraints, progress has been made. Van Reenen believes Western Cape producers have made significant strides in improving water use efficiency in

recent years.

Industry collaboration has focused on better irrigation scheduling and improved understanding of soil water movement, ensuring producers optimise existing systems before investing in advanced automation.

“The focus is not only on adopting new technologies, but also on building the knowledge required to manage both existing and new systems effectively,” he says.

He cautions against viewing automation purely as a water saving measure.

“It is important to remember that it is not only about water use efficiency, but also about optimal yield size and the precise management of yield quality.”

Precision irrigation allows growers to manage vine stress more accurately, directly influencing grape development and overall wine quality.

Cost and return on investment

For many producers, the first consideration is cost.

“The main challenge is often the high initial cost. However, this cost will be offset by the resulting long term savings in resources.”

Modular systems allow producers to scale automation according to operational needs rather than committing to full farm upgrades.

Return on investment remains central. Higher value vineyards justify more advanced systems, while lower margin operations must balance automation against expected returns.

“There is no need to over invest or over design systems for crops that cannot return your investment,” he says.

However, some level of irrigation automation is viable across vineyard sizes.

“Automation is scalable, and it unlocks precision, allowing you to get the most from the resources you do invest.”

The technology and expertise are increasingly in place. The question remains whether economic conditions will allow wider adoption across the Western Cape wine industry.

Protecting every drop: Verder Pumps’ hygienic pumping solutions that perfect vinification

By Verder Pumps South Africa

A recent BFAP Baseline 2025 report anticipates a global wine market slowdown across production, exports and consumption as younger consumers favour innovation and wellness, and producers adapt to climate and market pressures.

Yet, South Africa’s winemakers have continued to innovate and deliver world-class products despite recent market challenges. To maintain performance during the expected slowdown, a lean and flexible vinification process is the engine of world-class delivery.



At the same time, it is imperative to maintain impeccable standards of hygiene to guarantee product quality and preserve each vintage’s signature flavour.

- Producing

high-quality products consistently requires machines and equipment that are 100% fit-for-purpose. Selecting the correct pumping solution is critical, considering factors such as:

- Reduced product losses through leaks or product damage.
- Cleanability: ability to handle products with care and meet clean-in-place (CIP) and sterilisation-in-place (SIP) hygiene standards.
- Cost effectiveness through proven operational efficiency.
- Lower total cost of ownership (TCO), due to longer lifecycle and flexibility to replace ancillary equipment.

- Ease of disassembly and reassembly for maintenance.
- Maintaining O₂ levels while transferring wine.



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In the delicate art of vinification, hygiene and precision are paramount. Verder Pumps’ Packo ZW Series of rotary lobe pumps are crafted specifically for the wine industry. They offer a gentle yet robust solution for transferring wine and juice - preserving the integrity of grape skins, seeds, and stems throughout the process. Standard rubber heli-lobe rotors (and optional bi-lobe configurations), a precision-cast stainless steel gearbox, and a hygienic CIP-compatible design support critical winemaking stages like fermentation pump-

overs and maceration recirculation. A triple lip seal enhances reliability and longevity, while flexible connection options and certified front-loading seals ensure seamless integration across winery operations.

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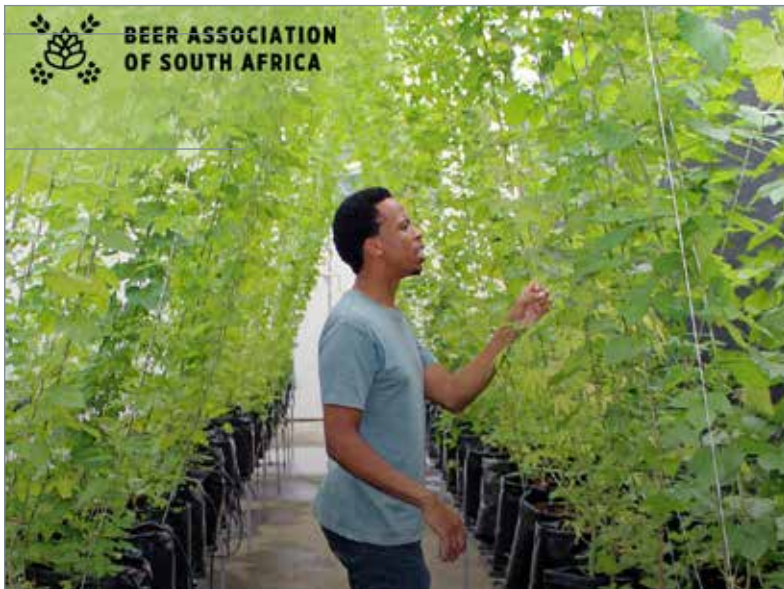
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Brewing a better future: Sustainability must move beyond the month



By Charlene Louw,
CEO, Beer Association
of South Africa

WITH Sustainability Month behind us, South Africa faces a simple reality: sustainability cannot be treated as a once-off campaign. It must be embedded in how industries operate, how policy is shaped, and how economic growth is pursued.

Globally, sustainability has shifted from a “nice to have” to a business imperative. In South Africa, the beer industry is demonstrating that environmental responsibility, economic contribution, and consumer protection can - and must - go hand in hand.

Beer is produced through a highly regulated, quality-driven value chain that spans agriculture, manufacturing, logistics, retail and hospitality. This is where sustainability becomes tangible and where policy decisions have real consequences.

Local value, national impact

Beer is inherently local. The industry supports a deeply embedded

economic activity in communities that need it most. Water stewardship sits at the centre of this model and the threat of the Cape Town Day Zero crisis was a stark warning to brewers and the country.

Through partnerships with organisations such as The Nature Conservancy and WWF, The South African Breweries has supported the restoration of critical water catchments in the Western Cape. Clearing invasive vegetation is improving water flow, rehabilitating ecosystems, and supporting surrounding communities.

These interventions create jobs and strengthen local resilience. Similarly, HEINEKEN Beverages continues to invest in resource efficiency, local sourcing, and farmer support.

Sustainability, quality and consumer protection

Sustainability in brewing cannot be separated from quality. Every stage of production is governed by strict standards to ensure safety, consistency and product integrity.

and destabilise compliant businesses that invest heavily in sustainability and regulation.

The formal beer industry plays a critical role in setting and maintaining these standards, but it cannot do so in isolation.



Charlene Louw, CEO, Beer Association of South Africa.

If South Africa is serious about sustainability, policy must actively support compliant industries.

Excessive and unpredictable excise increases place pressure on the formal sector, limiting its ability to invest in sustainability, innovation, and jobs. Mean-

There's a clear contradiction: while sustainability is prioritised in principle, policy misalignment can weaken the very players delivering on it.

A balanced, evidence-based approach comprising predictable excise frameworks, stronger enforcement against illicit trade, and recognition of the role formal industries play in advancing national sustainability goals is essential.

Innovation as a growth lever

The industry continues to innovate, reducing water and energy use, improving efficiency, minimising waste, and adopting circular packaging. Growth in lower- and no-alcohol options reflects changing consumer preferences and a commitment to

responsible consumption.

This is modern sustainability: not constraint, but competitiveness.

Beyond the month

Sustainability Month is a reminder of a continuous commitment tied to quality, economic contribution, and long-term resilience.

The opportunity is to ensure that policy, enforcement, and industry efforts are aligned to strengthen this progress.

At the Beer Association of South Africa, we remain committed to raising the bar. But sustaining momentum will require a shared commitment - from industry, from policymakers, and from society.

Because sustainability, like brewing itself, is not a once-off process. It is built over time and it must be protected.

Tired of your brew tasting like a maybe? Precision brewing gets a boost with VEGA instrumentation



VEGA's solutions give breweries the confidence to maintain consistency, reduce waste, and deliver the flavour profiles consumers expect: batch after batch

CONSISTENCY is the currency of modern brewing. Whether you're a craft producer scaling up or an established brewery protecting brand reputation, even small deviations in pressure, temperature, or ingredient dosing can shift a beer from exceptional to average. As South Africa's beer market becomes increasingly competitive, brewers are turning to smarter, more reliable instrumentation to safeguard quality at every stage.

Why precision matters in the wort kettle and hops dissolver

The heart of flavour development happens when wort and hops meet. Achieving the right hop balance—bitterness, aroma, and stability—depends on accurate dosing and controlled cooking. This is where pressure and point-level measurement become mission-critical.

- Breweries face a demanding measurement environment:
- Level ranges up to five metres
- Temperatures from 10°C to beyond 100°C
- Pressures exceeding 2 bar
- Foam, condensation, and suspended solids

These variables can easily compromise inferior sensors. Reliable instrumentation ensures that hop additions, boil intensity, and wort volumes remain consistent from batch to batch directly influencing flavour, yield, and production efficiency.

Instrumentation built for brewing's toughest conditions

VEGA's process instrumentation is engineered specifically for food-grade environments. All wetted materials comply with FDA and EC regulations, supporting breweries that prioritise hygiene, traceability, and export readiness.

The equipment is designed for maintenance-free operation, reducing downtime and long-term operating costs, an important consideration for breweries managing tight margins.

Setup is streamlined through a VDMA-compliant interface, allowing quick commissioning and easy integration into existing control systems.

Two standout solutions for brewers:

1. VEGAPOINT 23 – Reliable point-level detection for liquids

The VEGAPOINT 23 is a compact capacitive limit switch ideal for water-based liquids in brewing applications. Its key strengths include:

- Tube extension options for flexible installation
- Universal hygienic adapter compatibility, reducing installation complexity
- IO-Link connectivity for continuous digital data transmission and improved process transparency

This makes it particularly effective for monitoring fill levels in the hops dissolver and ensuring accurate dosing.

2. VEGABAR 39 – Robust pressure measurement for demanding processes

The VEGABAR 39 is a universal pressure transmitter designed for gases, vapours, and liquids up to 130°C. It offers:

- A fully welded metallic measuring cell for long-term reliability
- A 360° status display for instant visual feedback
- On-site operation via an integrated display
- IO-Link communication for seamless integration into brewery automation systems

For brewers, this means stable pressure control during wort boiling and hop addition; two stages where precision directly affects product quality.

Raising the bar for South African breweries

Brewing is both craft and science. As local producers innovate with new styles and scale production to meet demand, the need for dependable, hygienic, and digitally integrated instrumentation becomes even more important. VEGA's solutions give breweries the confidence to maintain consistency, reduce waste, and deliver the flavour profiles consumers expect: batch after batch.

For further information, email Miguel Petersen, Marketing Manager, VEGA Instruments (Pty) Ltd and VEGA Controls (Pty) Ltd at Miguel.petersen@vega.com



ecosystem that sustains thousands of livelihoods.

Local sourcing reduces transport emissions, strengthens food security, and anchors

This is important in a market where illicit and unregulated alcohol poses serious risks. These products undermine public health, erode consumer trust,

while, these pressures risk pushing consumers toward the illicit market, which has no quality controls, no environmental standards, nor contributes to the fiscus.

Land bank capital injection needed to avoid funding shortfall crisis



By Larry Claasen

THE National Treasury has not yet provided a much needed capital injection to the Land and Agricultural Development Bank of South Africa (Land Bank) to help prevent an impending funding shortfall.

The state-owned lender, which has a mandate to support agricultural development in South Africa, warned that it would face liquidity issues, as it would have a surplus of only R158 million in 2028 if it did not receive a much-needed capital boost from the national government.

Without this cash injection, the surplus is projected to become a R1,96 billion shortfall in 2029, which would then grow to R4,2 billion in 2030, according to its corporate plan for the financial years 2026 to 2028.

Land Bank capital injection urgent to meet debt and liquidity needs

The bank said it needed to raise new funding by 2027 to maintain “a reasonable level of liquidity” and meet its debt capital repayments due in 2028. It must resolve this issue before the debt restructuring agreement reached with its lenders — which saw them provide R10 billion in funding — comes to an end in 2028.

When asked about the bank’s funding, National Treasury said it was in talks with the bank on the matter but had yet to resolve the issue. “Discussions between the Land Bank and National Treasury are taking place with regards to the form of support the Land Bank can receive from the government. We are optimistic that we will reach an agreement soon,” it said in a statement in response to CBN.

Although the statement from National Treasury did not provide details, it indi-

cated that National Treasury was at least prioritising the bank’s funding concerns. This follows the lender’s saying in its 2025 annual report that it had submitted a capital allocation request to National Treasury through the 2024/25 Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) process. It noted that the application appeared unsuccessful, as it was not included in the 2025 National Budget. No allocation was made by the National Treasury to the bank in the 2026 budget either.

Land Bank capital injection efforts expand to global funding sources

Aside from seeking state support, the Land Bank said in its annual report that it was also looking to external funders for financing. “Engagements are underway to explore alternative sources of funding, including potential funders who may require state guarantees.”

A local lender to the bank said it was looking for support from global institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. According to the Land Bank’s corporate plan, it had not yet secured funding from these institutions.

The group’s role as a development finance institution, which involves supporting emerging farmers and agri-businesses, limits its ability to generate income from operations.

In addition to the commercial revenue limitations arising from this developmental mandate, the bank defaulted on its R50 billion loan book in April 2020 due to a high number of non-performing loans, poor governance, and a shrinking loan book. This default led to the R10 billion debt restructuring agreement with its lenders in late 2024.

Wheat farming in South Africa crisis threatens sector sustainability

By Larry Claasen

THE country consumes more than 3,5 million tons of wheat a year, yet domestic production struggles to reach two million tons, leaving South Africa structurally dependent on imports for up to 50% of its needs.

“If shipments arrive before revised tariffs are gazetted, importers and millers may face unexpected cost exposures that can amount to millions of rands for a single shipment.”

“Wheat producers in the Swartland, Overberg and Southern Cape regions, for example, are clear: wheat farming under current market and policy conditions is no longer economically sustainable, and intervention from the broader value chain is critical,” Agriculture Minister John Steenhuisen told the Grain SA Congress last month.

Rising costs are making wheat farming in South Africa unsustainable

Steenhuisen’s assessment reflects a sector caught between rising input costs, volatile global markets and administrative delays that hit winter grain farmers hardest.

Fertiliser – up to 50% of a farmer’s production bill – is largely imported and has been battered by supply chain disruptions, and diesel, which accounts for 12–18% of costs, is expected to jump by roughly R4.40 a litre from next month, he said. A strong local harvest has meanwhile pushed grain prices down, meaning many farmers are harvesting an “expensive crop into a cheaper market”.

For wheat farmers, the timing of policy decisions has become a matter of survival. Steenhuisen acknowledged that delays in publishing revised wheat tariff adjustments have created “unnecessary volatility within the value chain”.

Policy delays and tariffs are disrupting wheat farming in South Africa

South Africa uses a variable tariff mechanism for imported wheat, designed to provide a stabilising adjustment when international prices move sharply enough to undermine domestic production. A

reference price formula triggers a recalculation of the tariff – but the change only takes effect once the Minister of Trade, Industry and Competition publishes it in the Government Gazette. Administrative delays between the trigger and publication have left importers, millers and farmers in

through the market and ultimately affect our wheat farmers, particularly in the Western Cape, Free State and Northern Cape, who have reached a point where predictable tariff implementation [is] essential for their survival,” he noted.

Steenhuisen said his department is now looking at moving towards a more automated tariff adjustment system, where changes triggered by the reference price formula would take effect automatically.

“Predictability, in the end, is what allows markets to function properly,” he said.

Export opportunities could support the future of wheat farming in South Africa

On a more positive note, Steenhuisen pointed to growing export opportunities that confirm the qual-



Agriculture Minister John Steenhuisen

ity of South African grain. Japan, one of the world’s most demanding grain import markets, has shown strong interest in South African yellow maize. A delegation visited last year, and another visit is planned for April.

“Access to markets such as Japan is significant because it confirms that South African maize meets

some of the strictest food safety and phytosanitary standards globally,” he said. “It demonstrates that our producers can compete successfully with major exporters such as the US Brazil and Argentina, and it speaks volumes about the discipline, quality and professionalism of South African grain farmers.”



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"All Fronius welding systems are engineered and tested for long-term reliability in tough real-world environments."

Welding anywhere, anytime

For agricultural operators working across large properties, mobility and uptime are critical. Breakdowns seldom happen next to a workshop or power source: "Ignis Battery is designed to give farmers true welding mobility," explains Edric van der Walt, Welding Specialist at Fronius South Africa. "This allows users to carry out quick-fixes and permanent repairs directly in the field, without relying on grid power."

Typical applications include repairing trailers, tractors and implements; as well as fence and gate repairs, irrigation systems, wind pumps, feedlots and general workshop maintenance.

The compact unit

weights just 11.4 kg. "You can have it on your tractor, in your vehicle or carry it by hand," comments Marcel Pretorius, Welding and Cutting Specialist – Technical Support at B.E.D.

Next-generation performance

Ignis Battery represents the next generation of Fronius's very popular AccuPocket battery welder, which has been available since 2012: "We have improved the battery capacity by approximately 80% compared to the earlier model, but without compromising on size and weight," says van der Walt.

Available in both MMA (manual metal arc) and MMA/TIG (manual metal arc and tungsten inert gas) variants, the unit delivers up to 150 amps of welding power.

The system features a 750 W lithium-ion battery with flexible charging options. Standard charging reaches 100% capacity in around 85 minutes, with 80% achieved in approximately 55 minutes. A rapid charging mode reduces this to 60 minutes for a full charge. A built-in battery management system protects against overcharging, deep discharge and overheating.

"This ensures stable performance and addresses safety concerns often associated with battery technology," says van der Walt, adding that the system is designed to meet international safety standards.

Built for tough farming conditions

Agricultural environments are tough, exposing equipment to dust, vibration, temperature fluctuations and transport over rough terrain. The Ig-

nis battery carries an IP23 rating and is subjected to rigorous durability testing.

"All Fronius welding systems are engineered and tested for long-term reliability in tough real-world environments. As such, we simulate vibration, heat, cold and water exposure to ensure the machine can withstand years of transport and outdoor use," van der Walt explains. "If the machine is maintained correctly, it can easily last ten years."

Ignis Battery incorporates advanced arc technologies to ensure consistent weld quality in the field: "The system includes ACU Boost technology for smoother ignition and stable arc dynamics. Dynamic settings allow precise control, so users can confidently weld thinner materials as well," van der Walt observes.

Pulse modes, hot start, soft start and end-of-weld controls further support cleaner welds and reduced defects: "The result is stable, efficient welding performance, even in demanding agricultural conditions," he says.

National support and NAMPO demonstration

As Fronius's exclusive distributor in South Africa, B.E.D. supports Ignis Battery with demonstrations, technical guidance and after-sales service through its national branch network.

Pretorius explains that some customers still find it hard to believe that battery-powered welding can be efficient. "We prefer to demonstrate it and let customers experience it for themselves."

At the NAMPO Harvest Day expo, Pretorius enthuses, "Farmers can get hands-on experience and see that the technology has reached a point where they can trust a battery-operated welder to make life easier."

With increasing pressure on reliable power supply in rural areas, mobile, battery-powered welding offers agri sector users greater independence and flexibility.

<https://bolteng.co.za/>

BMG' smart farming solutions boost crop yields, save energy, and reduce costs

BMG's Smart-Farming agricultural team works closely with farmers throughout Southern Africa, assisting them with the selection, installation and operation of new electromechanical systems. These projects are designed to improve efficiencies, reduce energy consumption and minimise maintenance requirements.

"Like all sectors of business, farming operations are facing the challenges of power supply limitations and the rising costs of electricity and water consumption, as well as crippling labour, capital equipment investment and maintenance expenses," says Carlo Beukes, BMG's agricultural manager. "BMG's team of agricultural experts – through its 'Boer Slim'/Smart Farming initiative – continues to offer local farmers sustainability solutions that focus on effective food production."

"As part of our Smart-Farming initiative, we are assisting farmers with cost-efficient solutions to improve crop production output, to enhance efficiencies of every operation by conserving power consumption and to minimise downtime by implementing practical maintenance programmes."

In a recent project, the BMG team assisted a local farmer who wanted to accelerate



BMG's agricultural team works closely with local farmers, assisting them with the selection, installation and operation of new electromechanical systems to improve efficiencies, reduce energy consumption and minimise maintenance requirements.

his tobacco drying process and expand crop production, but was restricted by power supply limitations. After the installation of electronic variable speed drives (VSDs), the farmer is able to run 22 tobacco drying containers at once, where previously he could only run and alternate between nine drying containers at any one time.

As a result, he has more than doubled his crop production output. Other positive feedback is there are no more noticeable voltage dips when the process is started up and wear and tear on mechanical components is reduced. Production is also now less labour intensive, which reduces his shift costs.

The company assisted a farmer in the Barkly West area, who was limited by a power

supply of only 200 KVA +/- 300 Amps, to significantly reduce the cost of irrigation per hectare.

missioning of these projects. Added to this, farmers have the assurance of support from BMG, which is

"BMG's team of agricultural experts – through its 'Boer Slim'/Smart Farming initiative – continues to offer local farmers sustainability solutions that focus on effective food production"

After the installation of VSDs on all pump sets, the power supply is used more efficiently, resulting in improved crop production and expansion of the farmer's supply of maize, to now also include pecan nuts.

Danfoss VLT AQUA Drive FC 202 VSDs - which offer additional energy savings compared with traditional VSD controls – have been designed for water and wastewater applications, including irrigation. These VSDs have been fitted to all pumps in this installation and are controlled by pressure transducers that are set to match the varying demands of different irrigation requirements. The only peripheral component required was a pressure transducer. Pump controllers and valves were not necessary for flow control in this system.

To ensure absolute dependability and the highest performance of these systems, BMG was responsible for the installation and com-

missioning of these projects. Added to this, farmers have the assurance of support from BMG, which is

an authorised DrivePro® service partner of Danfoss. With a projected annual power saving of 155 491 kW/hr, BMG expects the farmer to benefit from cost savings of approximately R108 444.00, with a payback time of less than 12 months.

BMG is also committed to preventing unnecessary breakdowns, which is why reliability is the main focus when designing the drive systems for new and upgraded facilities.

The company's broad branch network offers original spares and advanced workshop resources that ensure all repairs to agricultural components meet pristine OEM standards.

The company provides solutions to all key players in the agricultural sector - including local manufacturers of equipment and implements, as well as agricultural resellers and farmers.

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Zimi EV charging targets commercial fleets for growth in South Africa



By Larry Claasen

STELLENBOSCH-based EV charging company Zimi is bypassing the consumer market to focus exclusively on commercial fleets, betting that partnering with logistics companies before building infrastructure will give it an edge in South Africa's nascent electric vehicle (EV) sector.

Zimi EV charging strategy focuses on fleet-based infrastructure

The company, founded by Michael Maas and Stefan Georgiev, deploys charging stations only where clients operate their vehicles — typically at depots, transit hubs and along high-frequency routes.

"When you remove 40% of the moving parts that usually break in a diesel engine and slash your 'fuel' bill by two-thirds, the vehicle pays for itself..."

"We don't build speculative public networks," Maas said. "This strategy ensures maximum operational uptime and high charger reliability, allowing professional fleets to transition to electric with guaranteed power reliability and no wasted capital on 'ghost' infrastructure."

Zimi estimates there are three million commercial vehicles in South Africa that need to transition away from diesel, representing a significant market opportunity.

Zimi sees the commercial sector as the primary growth engine for EVs in South

Africa, driven by hard economics and global compliance pressures.

The financial savings from moving to EVs are amplified at scale, making the transition an easy decision for logistics companies. "For a business, the cost savings are a 'no-brainer.' When you're running dozens of vehicles 24/7, those cents saved per kilometer turn into millions of rands over the year," Maas said.

While the initial purchase price is higher, the long-term operational savings Total Cost of Ownership are substantial and make the business case.

"While an EV might cost more on day one, the Total Cost of Ownership is the real winner. When you remove 40% of the moving parts that usually break

in a diesel engine and slash your 'fuel' bill by two-thirds, the vehicle pays for itself," Maas said.

Zimi EV charging delivers cost savings and emissions reduction

Though still a young company, Zimi is starting to have an impact on local businesses. Bakers SA, a logistics firm with more than 1,000 vehicles, has deployed Mercedes-Benz eActros electric trucks using Zimi's 120kW DC fast-chargers at its Midrand depot. The company reports nearly 70% fuel savings and a 33% reduction in

fleet carbon emissions.

"By integrating electric vehicles such as the Mercedes-Benz eActros and eSprinter into our fleet, powered by Zimi's advanced charging technology, we have significantly reduced our environmental impact while enhancing operational efficiency," said Bakers GM Luqmaan Hansa.

The charger is integrated with Zeus, Zimi's software platform, offering real-time insights into energy consumption, fuel savings, and carbon emissions.

When it came to funding, Zimi has benefited from grants, which helped it de-risk its technology and prove its concepts. "We have successfully leveraged grant funding from organisations like P4G and EEP Africa, which has allowed us to de-risk our 'always-on' technology and V2G pilots without the immediate pressure of traditional equity," Maas said.

Even so, as a capital-intensive startup in an emerging market, securing funding has been a significant challenge, requiring a creative approach beyond traditional venture capital. The South African venture capital environment is risk-averse, creating a difficult funding gap for hardware and energy startups.

"Securing funding for a startup in South Africa, especially in the capital-intensive hardware and energy space, is undeniably a challenge. The local venture landscape often demands more proven stability than international markets, making the 'early-stage' gap difficult to bridge."

Cape shipping detour offers SA strategic opportunity, SAAFF | BUSA Cargo Report says

By Larry Claasen

THE rerouting of global shipping around the Cape of Good Hope as a result of the latest war in the Middle East presents a strategic opportunity for South Africa to convert passing traffic into economic value, according to the Southern African Association of Freight Forwarders (SAAFF) | Business Unity South Africa (BUSA) Cargo Report.

With an estimated 15% to 25% of global container capacity having shifted around the Cape, it should be an opportunity for South Africa to provide services for cargo ships.

This has not happened as local volumes have increased only marginally, indicating that South Africa remains "a transit geography rather than a service hub", the report states, citing author Dr Jacob van Rensburg, head of strategic research & industry intelligence, SAAFF.

The strategic opportunity lies in converting passing traffic into economic value, "especially through bunkering and maritime services — but this is contingent on system wide reliability", van Rensburg explains. "Geography provides exposure, but performance will determine conversion."

South Africa failed to fully grasp a similar opportunity when the Suez Canal was blocked from 23 to 29 March 2021 when the Ever Given, a container ship that had run aground, disrupted the global supply chain.

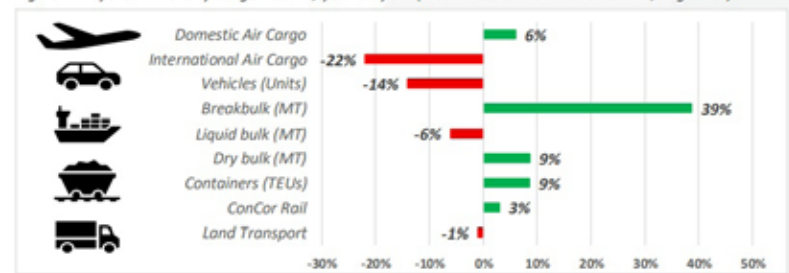
Converting this latest opportunity is also made difficult by the lack of investment in South Africa's port infrastructure. This is currently being addressed as President Cyril Ramaphosa recently said that up to R250 billion would be invested in ports and logistics modernisation.

"The Port of Durban is being expanded to handle higher container volumes and improve efficiency, with similar upgrades in Cape Town and Ngqura," he said at the Sixth South Africa Investment Conference.

Flows	Current ¹			Previous ²			Growth
	Import	Export	Total	Import	Export	Total	
Port Volumes (TEUs)	24,697	28,136	52,833	20,918	23,832	44,750	↑18%
Air Cargo (tons)	4,544	3,142	7,686	4,262	3,182	7,445	↑3%

Monthly Snapshot

Figure 1 – Cyclical¹ monthly cargo volume, year on year (most metrics: Feb '25 vs Feb '26, % growth)



Pressure at the pump

The report also notes that the current global disruption is being transmitted primarily through energy, with rapid pass-through into domestic logistics costs.

In road freight for example, fuel constitutes up to 30% to 50% of total costs, placing immediate pressure on inflation, transport margins, and trade competitiveness.

The Strait of Hormuz disruption, which has seen Iran prevent the passage of certain nations through it, represents an energy-driven systemic trade shock, affecting approximately 25% of seaborne oil flows. Resulting oil price spikes – potentially exceeding

\$150 to \$200 per barrel – are transmitting into higher transport costs, inflation, and weaker trade.

Second-order risks include fertiliser supply and food security, while global trade growth has been revised to roughly 1,5% to 2,5%.

Shipping networks have adjusted by re-deployment capacity rather than withdrawing it. This move avoided a system-wide shock but created localised congestion.

Though freight rates are up modestly at 4,9% and geographically concentrated, there are rising concerns over opaque, non-cost-reflective war-risk surcharges, signalling "pricing power, risk transfer,

and declining trust in carriers".

In global air cargo, connectivity has been severely disrupted following the escalation in the Middle East, with approximately 73% of seat capacity withdrawn within ten days.

Despite strong February demand (cargo ton-kilometres up 11,2%) and capacity growth (up 8,5%), high-frequency data now indicate tightening conditions.

Volumes are declining 1% week-on-week and 6% year-on-year. At the same time, spot rates are rising 7% week-on-week and 26% year-on-year. This is driven by significant capacity shortfalls in the Middle East, which are down 37% year-on-year.



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Keeping SCR systems healthy – why AdBlue® handling and testing matter



AdBlue® is stored in a dedicated tank and injected into the exhaust stream ahead of the SCR catalyst. Regular testing for contamination ensures that emissions are reduced.

CORRECT AdBlue® management is now a fleet-maintenance priority as South Africa's transport sector adapts to tighter emissions expectations and the wider use of Selective Catalytic Reduction (SCR) systems.

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Exhaust Fluid (DEF), is not a fuel additive. It is stored in a dedicated tank and injected into the exhaust stream ahead of the SCR catalyst, where heat converts it into ammonia, which reacts with nitrogen oxides (NOx) to produce harmless

nitrogen and water vapour.

Condition monitoring specialist company, WearCheck, warns that AdBlue®'s performance hinges on quality. ISO 22241-compliant AdBlue® offers reduced engine risk and compliant emis-

sions performance in a healthy system. WearCheck Water laboratory manager, Michelle Wium, explains that the fluid is a precise 32.5% high-purity solution, where synthetically manufactured urea is mixed with demineralised water. She says even minuscule contamination can trigger expensive SCR problems.

WearCheck helps fleet operators, depots and OEM stakeholders manage contamination risks. WearCheck Water is the company's water analysis division, and its laboratory, which is ISO 17025 accredited by SANAS to test AdBlue®/DEF, is the first laboratory in Africa with this specific accreditation. The test confirms whether AdBlue meets ISO 22241 requirements and provides objective, scientific evidence in quality disputes.

Wium notes a concerning rise in the rejection rate of fleets'

OEM warranty claims based on poor-quality AdBlue®. "Regular testing is essential," she says. "Contamination can occur even before the fluid reaches the vehicle, if wholesalers use unclean containers, allow dust and microbes to enter, or reuse equipment previously exposed to diesel, oil or grease. The consequences include crystallisation and deposits that clog injectors and lines, corrosion of components, SCR faults, limp-mode events and increased emissions exposure."

WearCheck Water's AdBlue® analysis focuses on compliance markers that indicate whether the solution is fit for purpose, including urea concentration and other chemical indicators that reveal contamination or degradation. Correct sampling is equally important. Wium recommends a clean container, typically HDPE/stainless steel, which is

sealed properly and labelled. "First flush the sampling point, discarding the initial volume to remove residue. Store the sample cool and dry until delivered for testing."

"Great results begin with storage discipline," says Wium. "AdBlue® should be stored between 0°C and 30°C, out of direct sunlight, in sealed containers to prevent moisture ingress and airborne contamination. Shelf life shortens at higher temperatures, so cool storage is critical. Dispensing systems, dedicated to AdBlue®, must be clean and protected from dirt and oil. Suspect contamination? The safest decision is to test or replace the fluid immediately, rather than risk SCR-system damage."

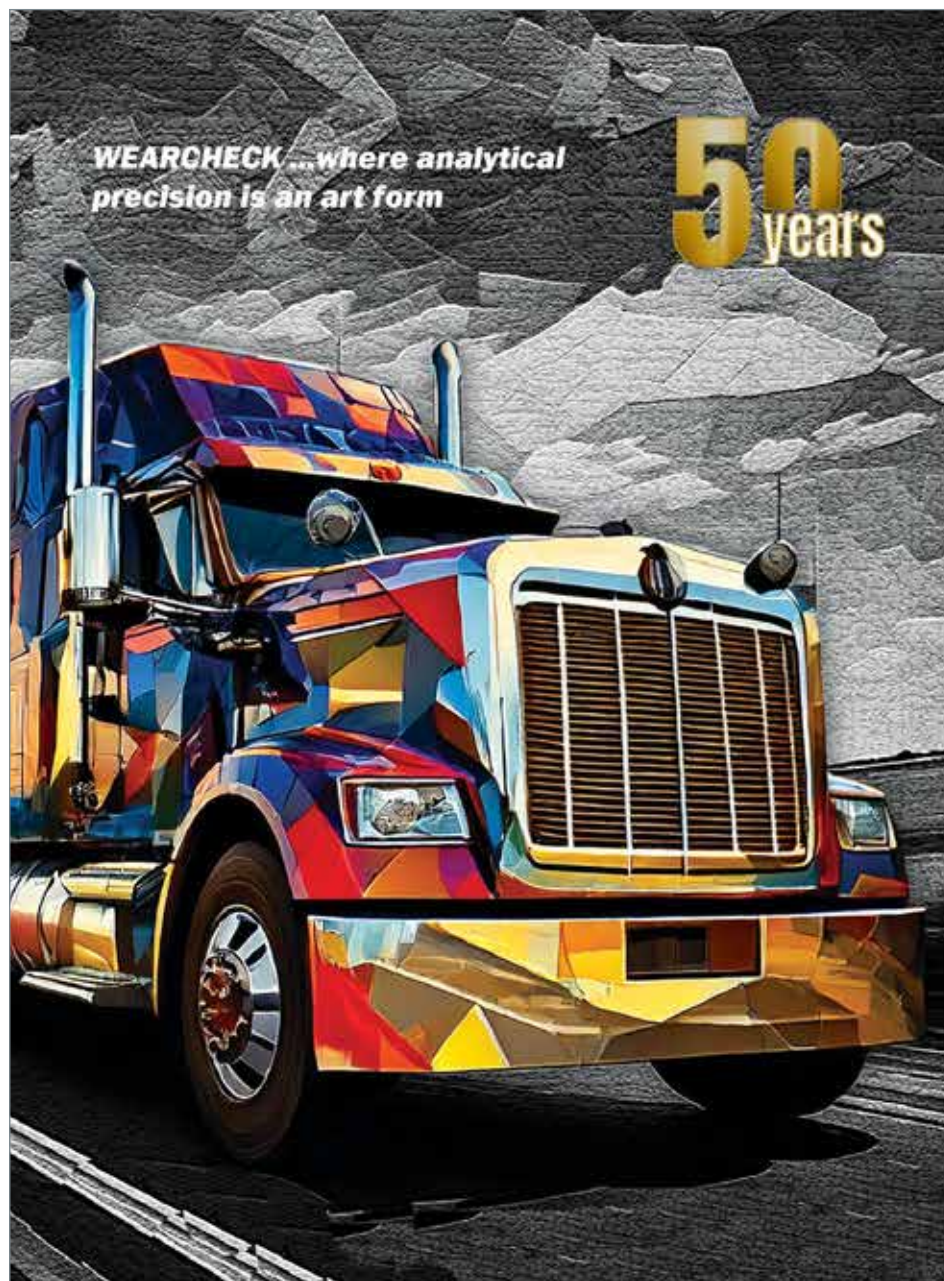
Fleet operators are urged to treat AdBlue® like a critical operating fluid, not a commodity. Combine reputable supply,



WearCheck Water laboratory manager, Michelle Wium, advises fleet operators to view AdBlue® as a critical fluid rather than a commodity, in line with tighter emissions legislation and the wider use of Selective Catalytic Reduction (SCR) systems.

correct storage and periodic verification testing, to avoid maintenance headaches with SCR systems.

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Namibia Oil Discovery: What it means for South Africa's energy security



By Adrian Ephraim

AS fuel prices continue to climb and South Africa's energy crisis deepens, Namibia's massive offshore oil find is set to reshape the regional energy landscape. The Venus discovery in the Orange Basin, estimated at 5.1 billion barrels and the largest ever in sub-Saharan Africa, is advancing toward production, strengthening Namibia's position as a future energy hub. Meanwhile, South Africa's reliance on imported fuel is increasing, raising urgent concerns about long-term energy security and supply stability.

From 1 April, South Africans have faced one of the sharpest petrol and diesel price hikes in recent years, driven by elevated Brent crude prices, a weaker rand and rising fuel levies. Yet the immediate pain at the pump underscores a broader structural weakness: declining domestic refining capacity, rising import reliance and limited up-

stream oil development, even as the Orange Basin's geological potential may extend into South African waters.

In February 2022, TotalEnergies drilled the Venus-1X well approximately 290 kilometres off the Namibian coastline in the Orange Basin, confirming an estimated 5.1 billion barrels of light, sweet crude - the largest sub-Saharan oil discovery in Africa's history. A Final Investment Decision (FID) is targeted for the fourth quarter of 2026, with first oil planned for 2029. The development concept centres on a 160,000-barrel-per-day FPSO vessel. Subsea contracts alone are estimated to exceed \$2.5 billion.

Namibia's Petroleum Commissioner, Maggy Shino, has made clear that the timeline is firm and the intent unambiguous.

"We are confident in TotalEnergies' ability to navigate these challenges and deliver a final investment decision by 2026," Shino told the Invest in Africa Energy

Forum, in Paris last year.

TotalEnergies Chairman and CEO Patrick Pouyanné reinforced the ambition in January 2026, following a high-level meeting with Namibian President Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah in Windhoek.

"By aligning our strengths across both Venus and Mopane, we are laying the foundation for a new energy hub in the region - one that combines operational excellence, local development and shared prosperity," Pouyanné said.

The Orange Basin straddles the maritime boundary between Namibia and South Africa. The two countries share a land border, a power grid relationship through the Southern African Power Pool, and operate within the same SADC economic architecture.

From this month, South Africans face one of the most severe fuel price shocks in the country's post-apartheid history.

Speaking at the Southern Africa Oil

and Gas Conference in Cape Town in March, Mineral and Petroleum Resources Minister Gwede Mantashe was blunt about what the crisis exposes.

"Countries that rely heavily on imports of refined petroleum products remain particularly vulnerable to global market shocks. The sustainable long-term solution to our challenges lies in domestic production. South Africa must not stand on the sidelines while the global energy landscape evolves and while our neighbouring countries unlock the value of their resources," Mantashe told the conference.

Mantashe himself has acknowledged the geological logic: SA has considerable offshore petroleum potential, and geological evidence suggests the Orange Basin's productive structures may extend southwards into South African waters.

As Namibia advances toward becoming a major oil producer by the end of the decade, South Africa faces a pivotal policy choice: remain dependent on imported fuel and vulnerable to global oil price shocks, or accelerate upstream exploration and domestic energy development.

The regional energy shift is already underway. The question is whether South Africa will move in step - or watch from the sidelines as Namibia reshapes southern Africa's oil and gas landscape.

Volvo tests hydrogen-powered trucks with diesel-like performance ahead of 2030 launch

VOLVO has begun on-road testing of heavy-duty trucks powered by hydrogen combustion engines, marking a significant step toward net-zero CO₂ emissions in transport. The company's hydrogen solution is positioned as industry-leading, with a commercial launch planned before 2030.

Volvo's hydrogen-powered trucks are expected to deliver strong performance, combining higher energy efficiency, lower fuel consumption, and increased engine power compared with conventional hydrogen combustion technologies.

This performance is enabled by High Pressure Direct Injection (HPDI), a technology in which a small amount of ignition fuel is injected at high pressure to enable compression ignition before hydrogen is introduced. Volvo has already deployed HPDI in its gas-powered trucks, with more than 10,000 units sold globally.

"On-road testing is an important milestone for our hydrogen combustion engine trucks. I am confident they will lead the industry in fuel efficiency, power, torque, and drivability. Customers will be able to operate them just like die-



sel trucks," says Jan Hjelmgren, Head of Product Management at Volvo Trucks.

Hydrogen combustion engine trucks are particularly suited to long-haul transport and regions where charging infrastructure is limited or where there is insufficient time for recharging battery-electric trucks.

When powered by green hydrogen and renewable HVO (Hydro-treated Vegetable Oil) as ignition fuel, these trucks have the potential to deliver net-zero CO₂ emissions on a well-to-wheel basis. Under current EU CO₂ emission standards, they are classified as Zero Emission Vehicles (ZEVs).

Volvo's hydrogen engine technology builds on its proven diesel powertrain platform, offering familiar performance characteristics while significantly reducing emissions.

The hydrogen combustion trucks will

complement Volvo's broader portfolio of low- and zero-emission solutions, including battery-electric trucks, fuel cell electric trucks, and vehicles powered by renewable fuels such as biogas and HVO.

"We see strong potential for hydrogen combustion engine trucks, and they will play an important role in the transition to zero tailpipe emission transport. Decarbonisation will require multiple technologies. As a global truck manufacturer, we offer a range of solutions to help customers choose the best option based on their transport needs, available infrastructure, and access to green energy," Hjelmgren adds.

Volvo hydrogen combustion trucks use fuel-efficient HPDI technology developed by Cespira and are expected to offer range exceeding daily driving needs. Hydrogen can also power fuel cell trucks.

Volvo and Babcock power Hamilton Plant Hire's bulk earthworks in the Western Cape's tough terrain



A Volvo A30G articulated hauler being loaded on a site where Hamilton Plant Hire is currently executing a major bulk earthworks and civils project for a new housing development.

DELIVERING bulk earthworks and civil construction in challenging terrain places high demands on equipment performance, reliability and operator confidence. For Hamilton Plant Hire, a Cape Town-based plant hire and civil construction

contractor operating across the Western Cape, those demands are being met through a strong Volvo-focused fleet, supported locally by Babcock.

Hamilton Plant Hire is currently executing a major bulk earthworks and civils project for a new

housing development in the Constantia hills in the Western Cape, involving approximately 50,000 cubic metres of earthworks and the construction of access roads across steep, elevated terrain.

"The ramps and slopes on this site are steep, and the machines

are working hard," says Ryan Plasket, Owner at Hamilton Plant Hire. "Even when fully loaded, we haven't had issues getting up and down. The hauls are short, but the articulated dump trucks are performing exceptionally well."

Fuel efficiency has also stood out on the project. "We've been very impressed," Plasket adds. "Fuel consumption has been consistently strong, which makes a significant difference on a job like this."

The machines were delivered to site on 13 December 2025 and have since been operating full shifts without any performance issues, delivering consistent output under demanding site conditions.

Hamilton Plant Hire operates a substantial

Volvo fleet, with between 30 and 40 Volvo machines across its operations, including articulated dump trucks, wheel loaders and excavators. According to the company, fleet consistency and familiarity have played an important role in supporting growth and operational efficiency.

"We've always liked the machines and the quality," says Plasket. "Our mechanics are used to working on them, which helps from a maintenance and uptime point of view. That consistency has supported the growth of our business."

The company's applications are typically demanding, with equipment regularly operating in hard ground conditions and undertaking specialised tasks.

"Our work is generally

tough," Plasket explains. "We do a lot of work with hydraulic hammers on the excavators, as well as munchers, rotating lines and other attachments. We don't have issues - the machines handle it. They do what we need them to do."

Support from Babcock, as the authorised Volvo Construction Equipment dealer, has been a key factor in maintaining reliability across the fleet.

"Babcock is a class leader on the loaders and the articulated dump trucks," says Plasket. "We've been very happy with the excavators as well. Overall, we're very happy with the fleet and the support behind it."

From Babcock's perspective, aligning the right equipment to demanding applications is

critical.

"Our customers operate in tough conditions, often on complex sites with steep gradients and hard materials," says Quintin O'Reilly, Head of Sales at Babcock. "The focus is on supplying equipment that can perform consistently in those environments and backing it with responsive support so customers can deliver with confidence."

The working relationship reflects Babcock's broader Lifetime Engineering approach - delivering solutions that perform reliably on site today while enabling customers like Hamilton Plant Hire to grow and take on increasingly complex projects.

<https://www.babcock.co.za/>

Iran conflict impact on South African ports driving Cape route delays



By Adrian Ephraim

THE Iran conflict that erupted on 28 February 2026 is no longer a distant geopolitical event. For South African businesses, farmers and consumers, it is arriving at the port gate, in the form of congestion, surcharges, unpacked containers and the looming spectre of higher prices.

"The immediate challenge now facing exporters is what happens to containers that are already on the water or in transit to these affected markets."

Major shipping lines, including Maersk and Hapag-Lloyd, have begun rerouting vessels around the Cape of Good Hope, circumventing the now-closed Strait of Hormuz. The consequence for Cape Town has been dramatic. The Cape Chamber of Commerce and Industry confirmed a 112% surge in Cape diversions as of early March 2026, adding roughly 10-14 days to transit times and significantly increasing fuel and insurance costs for global trade.

But the surge in vessel traffic is not the windfall it might appear. The Cape Chamber confirmed ongoing cargo disruptions at Cape Town Port, with some shipments to or transiting the Middle East placed on hold until further notice. A major international shipping line issued instructions to Cape Town shipping agents to remove and unpack containers already packed for export at the Cape Town Container Terminal.

Iran conflict impact on South African ports drives surge in cape shipping traffic

For Western Cape exporters, the timing is painful. Exporters Western Cape chairperson Terry Gale said: "The immediate challenge now facing exporters is what happens to containers that are already on the water or in transit to these

affected markets." Agricultural producers face a compounding problem: soaring costs of diesel and fertiliser - essential components for a viable yield - are adding another layer of pressure on an already strained system, according to Agri Western Cape.

Iran conflict impact on South African ports increases costs across supply chains

The cost pressure is moving fast up the supply chain. MSC announced an emergency fuel surcharge on select routes from 16 March, with companies on the Europe-Southern Africa route paying \$60 per standard TEU and \$90 for refrigerated containers.

Supply chain industry body SAPICS has warned that the effects will be far-reaching. "Supply chains are highly interconnected global systems," says SAPICS president Thato Moloi. "When geopolitical tensions affect major energy corridors or shipping

routes, the consequences travel quickly through logistics networks and ultimately reach businesses and consumers everywhere."

Moloi points to diesel as the most immediate transmission mechanism. "Higher fuel prices increase the cost of every kilometre travelled by a transporter. That cost moves through the entire supply chain and eventually shows up on store shelves." He notes that expected interest rate cuts in South Africa are likely to be delayed as a result of inflationary pressures triggered by the oil price spike.

South Africa's largest retailer is already feeling the impact. Shoprite flagged that 162 containers carrying goods to stock its shelves were stuck as a result of the mounting crisis.

With oil reaching \$78 a barrel, up from roughly \$64 a week prior, and \$100 a barrel viewed as a real possibility, any prospect of another interest rate cut has effectively evaporated, with some analysts warning the Reserve Bank could be forced to reverse course entirely.

"The war in Iran highlights a growing reality for supply chain professionals: disruption is no longer the exception; it is the norm"

Against this backdrop, Iran's ambassador to South Africa, Mansour Shakib Mehr, has indicated that the same "special arrangement" extended to China and India - allowing their bound cargo to continue through the Strait of Hormuz - could potentially be offered to South Africa, given the two countries' diplomatic ties. South Africa sources approxi-

mately 24% of its crude oil from Saudi Arabia, with Nigeria and Angola supplying the bulk of the country's needs - meaning the Strait's closure is more disruptive to container trade routing than to direct oil supply.

On the insurance front, marine hull rates in the Gulf have reportedly surged by up to 50%, with insurers issuing cancellation notices within 48 to 72 hours as they rapidly reassess risk exposure. "These changes can significantly increase operating costs for shipping companies," says Moloi. "And as with fuel and freight costs, those increases ultimately move through supply chains and into the price of goods."

The Chartered Institute of Procurement & Supply (CIPS) has urged procurement leaders across Southern Africa to stress-test their supply chains immediately, modelling scenarios including a 100% container-rate increase sustained over 60 days and a 14-day lead-time extension on all European and Middle East routes.

Iran conflict impact on South African ports forces businesses to rethink supply chains

For SAPICS, the deeper lesson runs beyond the immediate crisis. "The war in Iran highlights a growing reality for supply chain professionals: disruption is no longer the exception; it is the norm," Moloi says. "The organisations that have responded by redesigning their supply chains

to absorb disruption, and that have invested in skilled, suitably qualified supply chain professionals, will be best placed to weather the impacts."

For now, with containers being unpacked at the Cape Town Container Terminal and farmers watching the diesel price, the geopolitics of the Persian Gulf have a very local address.

Port of Cape Town operations disrupted by extreme winds despite R3.4 billion investment



By Larry Claassen

EXTREME winds continue to hurt exports from the Port of Cape Town despite Transnet investing R3,4 billion in rubber-tired gantries (RTGs) to improve the performance of the port late last year.

The 28 new RTGs, which arrived in September 2025, were meant to optimise operational efficiency and increase volume throughput at the port, which has underperformed as a result of a lack of investment.

Extreme weather is disrupting Port of Cape Town operations

Though designed to cope with wind speeds of up to 90km/h, which surpassed the port's older RTGs' maximum operating wind speeds of 72km/h, the port was dealing with winds exceeding 100-120 km/h for much of the summer.

Speaking at a presentation to Parliament early this year, Transnet Group CEO Michelle Philips said although the gantries were designed to operate at wind speeds up to 90 km/h, for safety reasons, they automatically reduce speed at around 80 km/h and shut down completely at 90 km/h or above.

"Transnet turned to the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) in 2023 for assistance in dealing with extreme winds at its ports"

Philips added that for 30 days in November and December, wind speeds exceeded 100-120 km/h, which was unprecedented in

recent years.

The extreme winds have persisted into 2025, with the Port of Cape Town losing a total of 1,026 hours between November 2025 and February 2026.

"The gantries were designed to operate at wind speeds up to 90 km/h, for safety reasons, they automatically reduce speed at around 80 km/h and shut down completely at 90 km/h or above"

Though this is down from the 1,095 hours lost in the same period last year, it compounds the problem for fruit exports, which are dealing with tariff uncertainty in the US and ship availability as a result of the war in the Middle East.

New equipment investments aim to improve Port of Cape Town operations

Philips told Parliament that to mitigate the disruption to port operations brought by the extreme winds, Transnet had secured production slots for two new ship-to-shore cranes with remote operation functionality. She pointed out, however, that no crane can operate safely in winds above 120 km/h.

Aside from the investment in new RTGs, Transnet has also implemented several

wellness, suitable for 24-hour operations.

This has seen the terminal increase its refrigerated container volumes by 32%, as of the end of August 2025, when compared

to the same period in the previous year.

Climate research and adaptation plans target Port of Cape Town operations

Transnet turned to the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) in 2023 for assistance in dealing with extreme winds at its ports.

This was especially true for the Port of Cape Town, which in the last few years has experienced an average of 1,200 hours per year. The project saw University of the Witwatersrand experts study the seasonal climate patterns that result in these extreme winds to establish trends and whether the wind is indeed intensifying with time.

They are also looking into how wind patterns in the Cape Peninsula and the port are likely to change because of climate change.

University of Kwa-Zulu-Natal and University of Cape Town (UCT) researchers are examining the current and future economic impact of these disruptions on specific value chains to estimate the financial losses and assess the required investment in adaptation measures to deal with the problem.

initiatives to improve efficiency at the Cape Town Container Terminal, such as the addition of a fourth shift to enhance employee



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Raysonics Industrial celebrates 6.5 million lost-time injury-free hours



Raysonics Industrial's safety team (left to right): Paul Caswell (Cape Health Safety and Environment Practitioner), Collen Molekwa (Mpumalanga Health Safety and Environment Practitioner), Carina Kleinhans (Health Safety and Environment Manager), Louis Pieterse (Gauteng and Sasolburg Health Safety and Environment Practitioner), Gunther Burger (IOL Health Safety and Environment Practitioner).

RAYSONICS Industrial has achieved a significant safety milestone, recording 6.5 million lost-time injury-free hours across its national operations. This landmark builds directly on the company's long-standing track record of health, safety and environmental (HSE) excel-

lence. This was most recently recognised through its 11th consecutive NOSCAR Award in September 2025, including over 6.4 million lost-time injury-free hours worked at that point.

For Raysonics Industrial - formerly DEKRA Industrial - this latest milestone

not only reflects continuity through a period of organisational transition, but also the strength of an embedded, measurable and independently-verified safety culture - which continues to evolve under the auspices of its new brand identity.

The 6.5 million lost-time injury-free hours

were achieved in January 2026, following a focused drive to maintain safety vigilance during traditionally high-risk periods in November, December and early January.

Lost-time injury-free performance is tracked internally through detailed monthly reporting, including hours worked, incidents, near-misses and root-cause investigations. All incidents are formally investigated, with findings consolidated into management reports.

Critically, these internal metrics are subject to external verification through regular NOSA audits and ISO 45001:2018 surveillance audits. Auditors review incident registers, investigation records and hours worked - ensuring that performance claims are independently validated and aligned with

international best practice.

Carina Kleinhans, Health Safety and Environment (HSE) Manager at Raysonics Industrial explains that although their name has changed, nothing has changed in the way in which they manage safety. "Our systems, our audits and our daily discipline remain exactly the same."

A culture owned by every employee

Central to this latest occupational safety achievement is the understanding that safety has no job description, and no hierarchy: "It does not matter whether you are a managing director, an administrator or a technician on site. Safety does not differentiate. It is about people and their well-being," says Kleinhans.

The company's national safety structure comprises five nationwide, dedicated safety practitioners supported by SHE representatives in each of its branches. Weekly safety meetings, quarterly SHE committee forums and monthly reporting cycles ensure visibility and accountability at every level.

Safety ecosystem

Raysonics Industrial has developed a broad safety ecosystem whereby employees can submit near misses and concerns via Microsoft Forms on their mobile phones, access digital inspection checklists through QR codes, and participate in safety campaigns which reinforce both occupational and environmental ownership and accountability.

"It is incredibly rewarding when employees begin to take personal ownership of their safety, and that of their team members," says Paul Caswell, HSE Practitioner for Raysonics Industrial in the Western Cape. "Our goal is to build a safety culture where people act because they truly believe in it - not because someone is watching."

Safety that strengthens client confidence

In high-risk sectors such as power generation, petrochemical, oil and gas and heavy industry, contractor safety performance directly affects operational continuity, regulatory compliance and corporate reputation.

"If a subcontractor is unsafe, it impacts the client's records and their risk profile," notes Kleinhans. "Our safety performance reassures them that we will not introduce hazards onto their sites. We are there to add value, not to create incidents."

A proud milestone and platform for the future

With 2026 themed 'Back to Basics', Raysonics Industrial is reinforcing its foundational safety principles, while exploring new ways to streamline processes and deepen employee communications and engagement - including a quarterly, companywide safety forum.

For the company, safety is a daily discipline, a way of life, a shared responsibility and a legacy - which continues to protect lives across every site and every sector it serves.

"This is not about one milestone. It is about what we do today, and tomorrow and every day after that. If we keep doing the right things consistently, the next milestone - and even greater occupational safety and well-being of our people and those on our clients' sites - will follow," Caswell concludes.



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South Africa proposes labour law overhaul to protect gig workers

Staff Writer

SOUTH Africa is moving to overhaul its labour laws in a bid to extend wage, safety and employment protections to gig workers and other non-traditional employees, marking a major shift in how work is regulated.

Proposed amendments to key legislation would broaden the definition of "employee" to include workers in platform-based and flexible roles, such as ride-hailing drivers, delivery couriers and freelancers. The changes aim to focus on the nature of the working relationship, rather than contractual labels, particularly where workers are economically dependent on a company.

If enacted, the reforms could grant gig workers access to core labour rights, including minimum wages, regu-



lated working hours, paid leave, collective bargaining and protection against unfair dismissal - benefits typically reserved for full-time staff.

The proposals also introduce safeguards for on-call and zero-hours workers, requiring employers to clearly outline working conditions, including hours, availability and notice periods.

Compensation may be required where shifts are cancelled without sufficient notice, addressing concerns over income instability.

Beyond gig work, the

draft laws include an increase in severance pay and expanded parental leave, alongside stronger protections against workplace discrimination.

However, the reforms also aim to balance worker protections with business flexibility. Employers may be granted more leeway during probation periods, while some smaller firms could receive temporary exemptions from bargaining council agreements.

The proposals are open for public comment, but signal a decisive policy shift.

THE NEXT GENERATION

Internships, Skills & Development Programmes

TotalEnergies partners with False Bay TVET to support entrepreneurship along the West Coast

TOTALENERGIES EP South Africa marked a significant milestone in its commitment to local economic development with the graduation of participants from the West Coast Entrepreneurial Development Programme. The graduation was delivered in collaboration with False Bay TVET College's Centre for Entrepreneurship and Rapid Incubator (CFERI).

Funded by TotalEnergies EP South Africa, the programme forms part of the company's broader community investment efforts focused on inclusive economic growth, job creation and enterprise development in communities where economic opportunities are often constrained by geography, infrastructure and access to markets. The initiative was designed to equip entrepreneurs with practical business skills, mentorship and tools to build viable, compliant and sustainable enterprises.

The six-month programme supported 30 SMMEs and small-scale fishing co-operatives from approximately 15 coastal and rural towns across the West Coast region of the Western Cape, including Doringbaai, Louwville, Paternoster, Saldanha, St Helena Bay and Lambert's Bay.

Recruitment focused entrepreneurs with particular attention given to small scale fishing enterprises and related businesses operating along the West Coast. From a total of over 300 applications, 30 were selected and onboarded. This demonstrates the demand for business development training and support in the West Coast region.

Following a structured selection process, all 30 participants were onboarded and formally registered as students on the False Bay TVET College academic system, ensuring their training was formally recognised through the institution. This enables them to pursue further vocational skills and training as part of continuous learning.

The programme combined in person training workshops and field trips with online mentoring and coaching, supported by practical business diagnostics. The approach and methodology were based on action-orientated entrepreneurship. Participants received training in key ar-



Representatives of TotalEnergies EP South Africa and the West Coast Entrepreneurs, who underwent training with False Bay TVET College Centre for Entrepreneurship Rapid Incubator.

reas including legal and statutory compliance, financial skills, costing and pricing, business planning, operations management, sales and marketing, as well as leadership and strategy.

Speaking at the graduation, Mr Florent Alleau for TotalEnergies EP South Africa said the programme demonstrated the importance of targeted, community-based enterprise development. "This graduation represents more than the completion of a training programme. It reflects TotalEnergies' commitment to empowering local entrepreneurs with the skills, confidence and tools they need to participate meaningfully in the economy."

Through targeted training and mentoring, participants gained practical skills to build sustainable enterprises. Thomas Mvumvu, Programme Manager at False Bay TVET College's Centre for Entrepreneurship and Rapid Incubator said, "This is a significant step taken by TotalEnergies—investing in real, sustainable SMME development. They have demonstrated genuine commitment to the communities in which they operate. We thank TotalEnergies for their investment and congratulate our graduates on this achievement."

Mr Tom Perzens from Langebaan and

Ms Fabian Patricia Mohamed from Doringbay, both representing their respective small scale fishing co-operatives, gave testimony to the value the training added to the development of their co-operatives.

As Ms Christiana Nel, Deputy Principal for Innovation and Development at False Bay TVET College concludes, the programme reflects the importance of strategic partnerships to drive opportunities for SA start-ups and entrepreneurs, "Through this collaboration, we have delivered targeted entrepreneurial training that supports sustainable enterprise development across various West Coast communities that need it most."

The programme also brought to light the entrepreneurial appetite, resilience and passion of the West Coast communities where the small-scale fishing industry is more than just a sustainable livelihood. For the participants it has a deeper sense of purpose.

Entrepreneurship in the West Coast is embedded on a human-centred foundation which promotes and drives inclusive community development that aims to benefit the community in its entirety.

For graduation event highlights, go to: https://youtu.be/wKd4b_Jbvdc?si=6rYXCcknpIiUXoeP

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NEF partners with Altitude Group to create 50 jobs for the youth



THE National Empowerment Fund (NEF) has appointed Altitude Group as an implementing partner in a new Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) and job creation initiative that has created 50 employment opportunities for unemployed youth. The six-month programme will see the NEF invest R2.25 million to support job

creation, accredited skills development, and enterprise growth within a black-owned BPO operation delivering customer interaction services for ABSA Bank.

The initiative achieves a 100% absorption rate, ensuring all participating youth are permanently employed at the end of the programme.

This initiative directly addresses that challenge by combining job creation with structured skills development in customer service, financial literacy, and digital competencies — equipping young South Africans with transferable capabilities in a growing, technology-enabled services sector.

NEF CEO Mziwabantu Dayimani, emphasised the importance of targeted, youth-focused employment programmes. "South Africa's unemployment crisis is most acute among young people. Creating 50 jobs may appear modest in isolation, but each opportunity represents dignity, income, skills, and a pathway into the formal economy."

Altitude Group Director, Mr Kris Pillay, welcomed the partnership. "This initiative reflects Altitude Group's long-standing commitment to driving economic transformation from the ground up. We believe that sustainable change happens when young people are not only given jobs, but are also nurtured, trained and empowered to grow."

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Why leaders should treat confidence as risk management

By Chantelle Botha



EARLY in my career, a manager raised something potentially sensitive in a performance review. He told me that my capability wasn't a problem, my confidence was. At the time I thought he was commenting on personality and struggled not to take it personally. Today I know that he was managing risk.

Low confidence in capable people is one of the most expensive invisible risks inside modern companies.

When leadership treats confidence as a personality trait instead of a performance driver, we invite risk into an already uncertain commercial landscape. In diverse teams especially, people arrive carrying very different life experiences. Some have spent years learning to speak up and advocate for themselves. Others have learned, consciously or unconsciously, that speaking up comes with consequences.

There is so much going on in a person's inner world that it's easy to interpret a lack of confidence as a lack of capability. More often than not though, the capability is there, they are just lacking the internal permission to act. This becomes even more pronounced in diverse teams where people from different cultures hold vastly different perspectives.

This is where confidence becomes a risk management issue.

Most managers recognise the behaviour that comes from a lack of inner confidence, but very few address these behaviours directly. This is because confidence sits dangerously close to identity. If feedback is not framed with gentleness and empathy, it can easily feel like an attack on someone's character rather than an observation about their behaviour.

Giving feedback on a missed deadline or a technical error is straightforward. Telling someone they appear hesitant, unsure of themselves, or reluctant to contribute can feel deeply personal. Leaders fear damaging trust, overstepping boundaries, or appearing insensitive, and so the issue remains unspoken.

In my work with senior leaders, I see this pattern repeatedly. Lately, I have been coaching an executive leader who was told in her last performance review to "be more assertive". That instruction is about as useful as telling someone to travel to the moon. She left the conversation with no idea how to access the behaviour that her executive team expected from her.

Confidence is not built through encouragement. It is built through identity shifts.

When I first started working with her, we identified where her conditioning comes from and started working on shifting her internal self-image to align with the powerful role she holds. The result is that she has started negotiating as hard for her place at the table as the men who sit around the table with her. She found her voice because someone stood in her corner with her and gave her the support her company wasn't giving her. But more importantly, she started seeing herself as valuable and worthy of the role she holds.

Aside from investing in an identity coaching journey for every member on your team, here are four leadership behaviours that help unlock confidence in capable people:

1. Look beyond behaviour to understand the story behind hesitation or silence.
2. Initiate a direct conversation when you notice hesitation or withdrawal. Silence rarely fixes itself.
3. Reinforce why you hired them and the capability you see in them.
4. Ask what support would help them contribute more confidently.
5. Sometimes the most powerful intervention is simply what my manager did years ago: noticing the gap between someone's capability and their confidence, and addressing it with honesty and care.

Because when capable people start trusting their judgement, companies unlock potential that was already there.

If you suspect confidence may be holding capable people back in your company, let's talk. Unlocking that potential is the focus of my work with leadership teams.



Chantelle Botha, known globally as The Catalyst, is an Identity Architect who works with leadership teams and women to unlock the confidence of capable people. Through identity-led coaching and facilitation, she helps companies shift the internal beliefs that cause talented employees to hesitate, hold back, or underperform. The result is teams that speak up, take ownership, and contribute at the level they were hired for.

Executives who suspect confidence may be holding their people back can contact: chantelle@phoenixconfidence.com www.phoenixconfidence.com

THE BUSINESS TRAVELLER THE EXECUTIVE GUIDE TO STRATEGIC TRAVEL

Business Travel Trends 2026 show rise of risk-aware event planning and in-person demand

By Adrian Ephraim

The global meetings and events industry is entering 2026 with renewed confidence in face-to-face engagement, but a marked shift in how events are planned, budgeted, and managed.

New data from the FCM Meetings & Events (M&E) 2026 Trends Report shows that while organisations are doubling down on in-person events, safety, flexibility, and operational resilience have become central to decision-making. According to the report, 92% of organisations expect their meetings and events budgets to either increase or remain stable this year, signalling strong post-pandemic recovery. However, this growth is being accompanied by heightened scrutiny, with 79% of planners ranking safety and security as their top priority.

Confidence returns - with caution

The data reflects a sector that has regained belief in the value of physical connection. Nearly three-quarters (74%) of respondents say meetings play a critical role in driving employee engagement, reinforcing the strategic importance of in-person interaction in a hybrid work era.

At the same time, budgets are trending upward. More than a third (35%) of organisations expect their event spend to increase by over 10% in 2026, while 63% of respondents across Europe, the Middle East and Africa (EMEA) anticipate higher overall MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Ex-

hibitions) investment.

Yet this growth is not without constraints. Event planners are being forced to navigate a more complex risk environment - from geopolitical instability to logistical disruptions - fundamentally reshaping how events are designed and delivered.

Africa demand rises amid complexity

In South Africa and across the continent, demand is being driven by both local corporates expanding into African markets and international businesses looking to tap into regional opportunities.

Lance Nkwe, Business Leader South Africa at FCM M&E, says this has created a more sophisticated planning environment.

"Planners are not deterred by uncertainty - they're planning around it," he notes. "Medium-sized events, typically between 50 and 150 delegates, are emerging as the sweet spot. They offer strong engagement while managing cost and logistical exposure."

This shift reflects a broader trend toward more controlled, high-impact gatherings rather than large-scale, high-risk events.

Risk management becomes a core capability

One of the most significant shifts highlighted in the report is the elevation of risk management from a supporting function to a central planning pillar.

Event organisers are now expected to

demonstrate:

- Contingency planning for disruptions
- Flexible contracts and exit clauses
- Alternate destinations and routing strategies
- Proven crisis-response capabilities

In the African context, this complexity is amplified by additional factors such as visa constraints, infrastructure variability, and heightened security requirements.

Nkwe points out that services such as visa facilitation, VIP protection, and coordination with law enforcement - including compliance with Joint Operations Compliance (JOC) regulations in South Africa - are increasingly standard components of event briefs.

Sustainability and legacy gain traction

Beyond risk, sustainability and social impact are becoming key differentiators.

Companies are placing greater emphasis on environmentally responsible event planning, including venue selection, catering, and waste management. More notably, there is growing focus on the long-term impact of events on host communities.

"It's no longer just about the event itself, but what it leaves behind," Nkwe says. "Clients want to demonstrate that their presence contributes positively to local economic and community development."



This aligns with broader ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance) priorities shaping corporate strategy globally.

Technology and AI drive evolution

The report also highlights the increasing role of technology and artificial intelligence in enhancing event delivery - from smarter logistics planning to improved attendee experiences.

While the industry remains rooted in physical connection, digital tools are playing a critical role in improving efficiency, safety, and personalisation.

A more resilient industry emerges

Overall, the 2026 outlook points to an industry that is not only recovering but evolving.

Confidence in face-to-face engagement remains strong, but it is now underpinned by a more disciplined, risk-aware, and strategically aligned approach to event planning.



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