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GrandWest Mall evolution: Bold new retail destination



By Adrian Ephraim

IN a city world-famous for its natural beauty and vibrant culture, GrandWest Casino and Entertainment World has long stood as a landmark of leisure in Cape Town.

Now, as it prepares to launch a high-end retail mall within its sprawling complex, the Sun International flagship is signalling a bold new chapter - one that blends retail, hospitality, and entertainment into a single, future-forward destination.

Retail mall investment drives growth

R600-million will be invested in the new GrandWest Mall - two-thirds owned by Flanagan & Gerard and one-third by Sun International.

For Mervyn Naidoo, general manager of GrandWest, the development is more than just bricks and mortar. It's a strategic pivot designed to unlock new commercial value, enhance guest experience, and anchor GrandWest even more firmly in the lives of Capetonians.

"GrandWest is much more than just Cape Town's only licensed casino. It is the largest entertainment and leisure destination of its kind in the country," Naidoo explains.

"We attract around 500 000 visitors a month - locals meeting up with friends,

families enjoying our restaurants and entertainment, and guests coming to see shows or attend events."

Mixed-use precinct enhances guest experience

Yet one question kept surfacing from customers over the years: Why isn't there a shopping mall? With no high-end retail destination nearby, GrandWest identified a gap - and an opportunity. Inspired by the success of the Mall at Boardwalk in Gqeberha, another Sun International property, the GrandWest team began planning a retail expansion that could complement their core offering while serving both visitors and surrounding communities.

"We already have the space, the foot traffic, and the parking. Adding a mall simply made sense," Naidoo says.

Enhancing experience, expanding reach

The new mall is not expected to change the core DNA of GrandWest, but it will enhance it. With easy access to secure parking and the convenience of shopping within the precinct, guests will have more reasons to extend their stay.

"Imagine coming to a concert or conference, and being able to grab dinner and do some shopping afterwards, all in one place," says Naidoo. "Even our own staff, many of whom work shifts, are looking for-

ward to it. It's about convenience, safety, and quality."

From a business development perspective, the retail expansion also opens up new avenues for hosting events. GrandWest already boasts world-class facilities such as the Grand Arena (the largest indoor venue in the Western Cape), an Olympic-sized ice rink, cinemas, and conference spaces. The mall will become an additional asset that makes GrandWest a go-to venue for product launches, trade expos, and corporate activations.

"Retailers could even use the mini-ice rink to host children's fashion shows," Naidoo muses. "It's this kind of creative thinking that sets us apart."

Economic boost for Cape Town

The mall development also carries important implications for the local economy. True to its long-standing commitment to community upliftment, GrandWest plans to extend procurement and employment opportunities to nearby businesses and residents.

"Since our inception, we've worked closely with doorstep communities to make a real impact," Naidoo affirms. "With the mall, that impact will only grow."

Local SMMEs stand to benefit not just from construction and fit-out phases, but also from long-term operational opportunities - whether in retail, services, events, or support roles.

For a city grappling with youth unemployment and spatial inequality, developments like this represent more than just convenience - they're a catalyst for inclusive growth.

A new business model for GrandWest

While GrandWest has always been a multifaceted venue, the addition of a mall signifies a strategic shift toward becoming a true multi-use commercial precinct. The synergies between conferencing, entertainment, and retail are ripe for unlocking, and GrandWest's integrated model is well-positioned to capitalise.

Continued on P2

Sheraton Textiles: IDC seeks strategic equity partner



SHERATON Textiles, a designer and manufacturer of fine household linen and accessories since 1920, could be getting a strategic equity partner.

Sheraton, which is a 100% subsidiary of the Industrial Development Corporation (IDC), incurred a net loss of R16-million for the 2024 financial year. This followed its loss of R23m in 2023.

Sheraton Textiles financial performance drop

"Turnover was reduced by 10% from 2023 due to a depressed retail market; however, with slightly improved margins and efficiencies resulting in cost savings. Working capital requirements remain high with logistical delays globally impacting stock days," according to the IDC's 2026 Annual Performance Plan.

According to the plan, Sheraton has been experiencing poor trading conditions and has been unable to generate profits since the pandemic.

The challenging economic environment was exacerbated by Sheraton's reliance on retail clients who had been trading below expectations due to adverse economic conditions.

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GrandWest Mall evolution: Bold new retail destination

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“We are already seeing strong growth in conferences, exhibitions, and private functions,” Naidoo notes. “The mall will offer an extra layer of service and convenience for those guests. It’s about evolving with the times and needs of our customers.”

The diversification also supports long-term sustainability by reducing reliance on gaming revenue. With a more balanced income stream from events, conferencing, dining, and now retail, GrandWest is fortifying its position for the next decade.

Eyes on the future

Looking ahead, the GrandWest team isn’t ruling out further phases of development. With ample land and a well-established brand, the possibilities are numerous—from expanded hospitality

offerings to new entertainment zones.

“We do have a large property, and this opens up many exciting options for us,” Naidoo says.

“The mall is just the beginning of a new chapter for GrandWest.”

As Cape Town continues to evolve into a world-class urban destination, developments like GrandWest’s new mall illustrate how legacy properties can reinvent themselves, bridging lifestyle, commerce, and culture under one roof.

Sheraton Textiles: IDC seeks strategic equity partner



By Staff Writer

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Equity partner considerations at Sheraton Textiles

Sheraton’s management implemented a turnaround plan, but this plan had not de-

livered the intended results as Sheraton continued to generate losses.

The IDC approved R21,4-million in funding for a turnaround plan to support Sheraton’s board and management. This plan will see the group based in Diep River, Cape Town, diversify its customer base to address its over-reliance on the retail market.

The turnaround plan will also look at improving its efficiencies and exploring cost savings.

“It’s imperative for local companies to invest in state-of-the-art plant and production facilities and machinery so that locally produced goods can compete against imports.”

IDC said the funding it provided also included filling of “critical vacancies” to ensure succession planning and the appointment of a dedicated business development executive and chief operating executive.

The IDC is also open to bringing in a new shareholder as part of its efforts to turn the group around.

“Whilst the IDC remains a committed shareholder, the possibility of introducing a strategic equity partner which could grow the business and provide equity capital is one option being considered by IDC to secure the sustainability of the business.”

Turnaround plan funding and facility upgrade

In May 2024, the IDC announced that it invested R140-million into a state-of-the-art production facility at Sheraton’s Diep River plant.

Speaking at the launch event, then Minister of Trade, Industry and Competition (DTIC), Ebrahim Patel said, this development is in line with the government’s localisation and industrialisation initiatives aimed at strengthening the competitiveness of the local clothing, textiles, footwear and leather industries.

“It’s imperative for local companies to invest in state-of-the-art plant and production facilities and machinery so that locally produced goods can compete against imports. This way, we

are helping to preserve local jobs and, in the process, enhancing the country’s industrial capacity,” said Patel.

The IDC initially invested in Sheraton in 2009 as part of a business rescue process in support of the SA government’s strategy to support the textile industry.

Worker ownership trust initiative

IDC has approved the sale of a 15% share in the company to a newly established workers’ trust for a nominal amount.

The IDC has invested R1,6-billion to support employee stock ownership plans (ES-OPs) and their related worker and community trusts, according to its Development Report 2018–2022. This has seen it establish 110 workers and 45 community trusts, which include 24 community trusts funded under the Renewable Energy Independent Power Producer Procurement Programme.

In the 2026 Annual Performance Plan, the IDC said Sheraton’s workers’ trust has been registered, and the transfer of shares was imminent.

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London’s mayor has a message for Cape Town entrepreneurs

By Adrian Ephraim

THE Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, described Cape Town as “alive with ideas” during a speech at the Grow London Global event held on 18 July at Innovation City. The visit marked the first official trip by a London mayor to Africa.

Khan praised the city’s entrepreneurial spirit and extended an invitation to Cape Town businesses to deepen ties with London. “Several people warned me about coming to Cape Town. They said, ‘Sadiq,

the thing is, if you go, you’ll never want to come back,’” he joked.

Grow London Global is a trade mission aimed at strengthening London’s economic, cultural and innovation ties with Cape Town. The mission included Deputy Mayor for Business Howard Dawber OBE, London & Partners, and the British High Commission in South Africa. Delegates included 13 London-based scale-ups across tech, sustainability and innovation.

Khan acknowledged the complex shared history between the



UK and South Africa but said it was time to “stand side by side as equal partners... focused on the future we can build together.”

He emphasised that Cape Town is a key hub for UK investment in

Africa and reaffirmed London’s openness to partnerships in tech, fintech, AI, green energy and life sciences.

“London is open to your talent, your ambition, and your ideas,” he said.

Cape Town digital visa boost spurs R745m surge



By Adrian Ephraim

CAPE Town's position as a global hub for film production and business events just received a major boost, thanks to the national government's launch of two new digital visa schemes.

Designed to attract international delegates and productions, the schemes are set to deliver a projected R745-million economic injection into the Mother City and bring over 27 000 visitors by 2028.

Unveiled by Minister of Home Affairs Dr Leon Schreiber, the digital visa programmes – STAGES (Screen Talent and Global Entertainment Scheme) and MEETS (Meetings, Events, Exhibitions and Tourism Scheme) – aim to streamline access to South Africa for two high-value visitor segments: film crews and business event delegates. Both categories will now benefit from fully digital visa applications, with faster processing and fewer administrative hurdles. The MEETS scheme, targeted specifically at

business tourism, will enable international delegates to apply online for event-related visas, cutting out the red tape that often deters attendance.

For Cape Town, the timing could not be better.

Visa-driven events forecast for the Mother City

According to Alderman James Vos, Mayoral Committee Member for Economic Growth, the city has already secured 36 international business events through the Cape Town & Western Cape Convention Bureau for the 2024/25 financial year. These events are expected to attract approximately 27 230 delegates and inject R745-million into the local economy over the next four years.

"This announcement comes at the perfect time for Cape Town, which is fast becoming a premier hub for global meetings, conferences, and events," said Vos. "The STAGES and MEETS digital visa categories will make it significantly

easier for international organisers, producers and delegates to choose Cape Town as their destination."

Unlocking jobs and investment

The STAGES visa category for film crews is being welcomed as a potential game-changer for Cape Town's creative economy. Already recognised as a leading location for international film and TV productions, the city offers world-class infrastructure, skilled crews, and diverse natural backdrops, but bureaucratic delays have previously dampened its competitiveness.

"The film industry is a high-impact sector," Vos said. "Every production generates employment, brings in hard currency, and creates long-term economic value through skills transfer and local supplier spend. With STAGES, we remove a major barrier to entry."

Industry reaction

The move by Home Affairs has been welcomed by the events in-

dustry, which is eyeing a boom in events and attendees in the coming years. "The introduction of the digital visa system will significantly streamline the travel process for international delegates," says Devi Paulsen-Abbott, an events management consultant. "By replacing cumbersome, inconsistent application procedures with a mobile-enabled platform it reduces wait times and logistical hurdles. This ease of access will make South Africa a more attractive destination for exhibitors, speakers, and visitors."

Paulsen-Abbott says the use of AI technology will help standardise visa procedures for large markets like China and India, ensuring a more uniform, reliable process that minimises the risk of cancellations – an essential factor for attracting high-value participants and maintaining the integrity of our exhibitions.

She has a message for the events industry as it prepares for the September 2025 roll out: "Industry stakeholders should begin educating clients, partners, and international audiences about the upcoming digital visa system and its advantages – highlighting how AI will address current inconsistencies, especially for large markets like China and India, reducing cancellations and delays," Paulsen-Abbott says. "Updating marketing materials, hosting informational webinars, and encouraging early engagement with the platform are key steps."

Glenton de Kock, CEO of the Southern African Association for the Conference Industry (SAACI), says, "We are pleased that our work and engagements have yielded this progress, which will aid our bidding process. The changes will enhance accessibility and improve the country's global competitiveness as a destination for international business events."

South Africa's deindustrialisation dilemma

By Chris Hattingh

BUSISIWE Mavuso, CEO of Business Leadership South Africa, recently wrote that the government must act urgently to mitigate the impact of United States (US) President Donald Trump's tariffs on South Africa's vehicle manufacturing sector. With the US being one of South Africa's main vehicle export markets, heightened tariffs will pose a major risk to the local automotive sector. However, reciprocal tariffs are only a recent threat.

South Africa's manufacturing and mining industries have been operating under pressure for decades. In 2000, manufacturing grew by 8.1%, compared to a contraction of 0.4% in 2024.

South Africa's deindustrialisation dilemma: steep manufacturing decline

The manufacturing business confidence index has more than halved from a high of 77 in the first quarter of 2007 to just 33 in the second quarter of 2025. In 1994, a quarter (25.8%) of the world's gold production occurred in South Africa compared to just 3% in 2024. During that same period, the number of people formally employed in the mining industry dropped by 30%.

A myriad of domestic issues have led to the deterioration of its mining and manufacturing sectors. The mining sector has been saddled with over-regulation of labour, environmental regulations and licensing requirements, and the effective nationalisation of mineral rights.

Deindustrialisation impacts South Africa's mining sector

The South African Mining Charter, aimed at transforming the mining sector by promoting Broad-Based Black Economic Em-



powerment, has faced criticism for hindering investment and operational efficiency.

The Charter's onerous requirements, frequent revisions, and lack of clarity have created uncertainty and increased costs for mining companies, making them globally less competitive. At an infrastructure level, the inconsistent and increasingly costly supply of electricity, underperforming ports and railways, and increasing water disruptions have made domestic mining and manufacturing operations inordinately inefficient and unnecessarily more expensive.

Reindustrialisation requires policy and infrastructure reform

To pull South Africa out of its low-growth trap, policy reforms that will strengthen property rights and mineral rights need to be implemented. A higher level of investment in mining and manufacturing is also predicated on a sufficient level of investor confidence. The government will therefore have to refrain from using anti-investor rhetoric and should focus on introducing investment-friendly policies. Steps should also be taken to reverse infrastructure and municipal decay.

If the government can achieve this, mining and manufacturing will once again become lucrative, growing sec-

tors, putting the country on the path towards reindustrialisation. Growing mining and manufacturing sectors would help combat one of South Africa's major social ills: unemployment. Historically, the manufacturing sector has been one of the largest employers of low-skilled workers.

If South Africa can get its manufacturing sector to grow, kickstarting a second industrial revolution, the country would finally be able to provide opportunities for the 45.1% of young people (15-34 years) who are not in employment, education or training. In addition, the US tariff hikes have created major global trade volatility, providing South Africa with the opportunity to objectively assess its trade and investment policies.

The disruptions in global trade, specifically of supply-and-value chains, coupled with heightened uncertainty that will persist throughout the second Trump administration, present an ideal opportunity for South Africa to up its manufacturing and mining game. Unless the government can address the domestic issues affecting the country's industrial base, South Africa will continue to waste its trade potential and lose out on the opportunities emerging in 2025 - a moment of significant global trade upheaval.

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AI hacking: Ethics, threats & business preparedness



MAGIX R&D Lab has published an insightful white paper titled "The Role of AI in Ethical and Unethical Hacking: Implications for Business", authored by Tim Butler, with contributions from Floyd Tshoma and Hlayisani Shondlani from the Magix R&D Lab.

The report provides a comprehensive examination of Artificial Intelligence's dual role in cybersecurity - both as a powerful defence tool and a weapon for cybercriminals.

"The white paper stresses the urgent need for businesses to adopt proactive, AI-aware cybersecurity strategies."

AI hacking: A double-edged sword

As AI continues to transform the digital landscape, its impact on cybersecurity is becoming increasingly significant. The white paper details how AI is enhancing the capabilities of ethical hackers by improving threat detection, speed, accuracy, and scalability. It enables cybersecurity teams to automate reconnaissance, uncover vulnerabilities, and simulate sophisticated attack scenarios.

From defender to attacker

However, these same capabilities are being harnessed by malicious actors. AI is now being used to create adap-

tive malware, execute autonomous network intrusions, and deliver hyper-targeted phishing campaigns. The technology's growing accessibility is also lowering the barrier to entry for attackers, allowing even less-skilled individuals to launch highly effective cyberattacks.

The white paper stresses the urgent need for businesses to adopt proactive, AI-aware cybersecurity strategies. With the threat landscape evolving rapidly, companies must invest in red-team testing, AI-driven defence mechanisms, continuous staff training, and strict policy enforcement.

While AI is a formidable ally, the study emphasises that human intuition, critical thinking, and contextual understanding remain essential.

AI-powered threats by the numbers

Key findings from the white paper include:

- 85% of cybersecurity professionals believe AI-powered attacks are more sophisticated and harder to detect.
- AI-assisted ransomware attacks increased by 67% in the past year.
- AI-generated malware saw a 125% year-on-year surge.
- 60% of cybercriminal groups now leverage generative AI in their operations.

- Credential stuffing attacks driven by AI rose by 150%.
- AI-enhanced spear phishing emails now have a 92% higher success rate than traditional methods.

Magix R&D Lab encourages businesses to engage with its inaugural white paper, which includes real-world case studies and strategic recommendations for strengthening cybersecurity defences in the AI era.

Business response: AI-ready defences

Magix R&D Lab, a division of Magix, is at the forefront of cybersecurity research and innovation. The team is led by:

- Tim Butler, chief operations officer at Magix, brings over 15 years of IT leadership and a collaborative, innovation-focused approach.
- Floyd Tshoma, Cybersecurity consultant, is known for his critical thinking and expertise in identifying and resolving IT vulnerabilities.
- Hlayisani Shondlani, Cybersecurity consultant, specialising in ethical hacking, pattern recognition, and proactive threat mitigation.

Together, they are driving forward-thinking research that addresses both current and emerging cybersecurity threats.

To download the white paper "The Role of AI in Ethical and Unethical Hacking: Implications for Business", visit www.magix.co.za/magix-lab or contact the team at sales@magix.co.za or +27 11 258 4442.

BPO Western Cape: Office property growth surges

Demand for call centre space has seen BPO operators set up across the region

By Staff Writer

THE growth in the international Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) sector in the Western Cape has seen it become a major driver in office commercial property occupancy in the region, post-pandemic.

The COVID pandemic, along with the work-from-home trend, knocked commercial property, but the move by global BPO operators to set up call centres that service international companies in South Africa has driven office occupancy.

BPO Western Cape office demand rises

Catalyst Fund Managers' bi-annual dashboard local listed property report for the first half of 2024 said: "The BPO sector accounted for 60% of net office space absorption over the past 18-24 months in Cape Town and as space runs out and rentals increase, there is potential for the expansion to spill over inland to oversupplied markets such as Gauteng."

For its part, Rode's Report on the South African Property Market 2024:1 said that "the BPO sector was booming and that it already employed at least 90 000 people in the Mother City."

Rode, for example, pointed out that Philippines-headquartered BPO firm, Sourcefit, opened its doors in De Waterkant in March 2024, and that India's Wipro set itself up in Century City in 2023.

Call centre space demand expands

CapeBPO CEO Clayton Williams said demand has not slowed down and that this has



Sigma Connected's call center in Paarl.

seen the emergence of BPO nodes in Century City, Salt River and Wynberg/Claremont, in addition to the Cape Town CBD.

Williams pointed out that the sheer number of people getting employed was driving demand for office space. With about 10 500 people getting employed in the Western Cape in 2024, and each of these people each needing about 10m² of space, this meant office space of 105 000m² was needed to house these new employees.

When looked at this way, the BPO sector needed to find over 100 000m² of office space every year since the end of the pandemic, as the sector has grown by about 10 000 seats a year since then.

Office space expansion challenges

It showed no signs of slowing down, as it's on target to add over 11 000 jobs for this year. The Cape Town CBD is not only close to reaching peak capacity, its inventory of office towers is not suited for call centres.

Investicore chief operating officer Kevin Padayachee said the CBD tended to have "small tall buildings" that only had a capacity of 500m² to 800m², whereas a call centre needed about 3 000m².

Aside from space constraints, BPO operators are also moving outside of the CBD as a way to reduce travelling time for their staff and transport costs.

Call centres moving beyond CBD

Though operators are also open to setting up call centres in townships, where most of their staff are based, Williams and Padayachee agreed this was easier said than done.

Williams said this would require a lengthy rezoning process, as well as the establishment of infrastructure to support up to 1 000 people. Padayachee said there was also commercial risk, as a BPO operator would likely have to invest in the call centre itself, and the only likely buyer would be another call centre operator.

Padayachee said people and operators also want to be based in places where they have convenient facilities, like eating places, stores and transport hubs.

This could be seen when Investicore came up with an offering to set up a call centre in an industrial area. It ticked the boxes for lower rentals, reduced transport cost and commute times, but the lack of facilities did

not see this offering get off the ground.

The importance of having call centres close to facilities is only going to grow, given the growth in US operators setting up in South Africa. Williams said, given the time difference, these centres would be operating at night, meaning the staff's needs would have to be catered for.

As things currently stand, there are also no incentives by municipalities around the country to set up call centres in townships.

Even so, the Rode report noted that call centres were now being set up in Diep River, Mitchells Plain and Retreat because of the high commuting cost for employees. The move away from the city centre could also be seen in UK operator Sigma Connected setting up a call centre in Paarl in January.

The group said at the time, the location, only 45 minutes from Cape Town, meant less of a commute for people in the area, and the feedback so far had been exceptional, as they were excited to be part of a rapidly growing business and industry.

This centre would create 250 jobs in the first phase and grow to around 1 000 roles in the coming years.

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Assembly line, redefined: How AI is powering safer factories



By Gary Ng

THE rhythmic score of conveyor belts. The sharp sound of welding arms. The synchronised chaos when human hands and heavy machines move in perfect timing. This is the everyday story of a factory floor.

But under this rhythm lies a tension. Safety. One misstep, one distraction, one delay - and precision becomes peril. In an industry where downtime is expensive and danger is omnipresent, traditional safety protocols are being pushed to their limits.

"AI-powered video analytics can monitor factory zones 24/7, identifying a range of breaches..."

Today, this scenario of manufacturing safety is redefined by AI. It is not working just as a digital co-pilot, but as a real-time sentinel, where scanning, learning and predicting is a continuous process. This isn't a new tool. It's a new mindset.

Beyond human limits: What AI really sees

Artificial Intelligence, especially when coupled with video analytics and computer vision technology, brings awareness that never fades. In high-risk environments, where seconds matter, this state of vigilance is a game-changer.

AI-powered video analytics can monitor factory zones 24/7, identifying a range of breaches - right from PPE compliance to fatigue or irregular movement among workers.

More than observation, AI connects to alert systems: site-wide buzzers, in-helmet alerts, smartwatches,

SMS and WhatsApp notifications - triggering a fast, multi-channel response before accidents escalate.

In a leading electronics factory in Hong Kong, video-based monitoring detected over 8 000 near-miss incidents in one quarter, many of which were never reported before.

After implementation, the plant saw a 67% drop in zone violations and a 35% improvement in worker response time to hazards.

Predictive safety: When cameras understand context

Video feeds, unlike static CCTVs on premises, are no longer just recordings. With the provision for 100+ AI modules integration, they become predictive tools.

In one deployment at a Latin American automotive parts facility, computer vision detected repetitive poor posture and hand-over-speed violations during part assembly. The data was used to redesign workstation layouts and retrain workers. The result showed in the form of 41% fewer musculoskeletal complaints and a 29% reduction in manual error rates.

The movement matrix: Vehicles, workers, and real-time awareness

Forklifts, AGVs, pallet jacks and pedestrians often share the busy factory floor space. At a leading Malaysian plastics manufacturer, AI-powered zone mapping and anti-collision alerts created a digital buffer between humans and vehicles. Visual warnings were triggered when a worker came within 2 metres of a moving forklift. In-vehicle alerts helped reduce braking response time by 2.5 seconds. Within three months, incident reports dropped by

52%. A 12% increase in worker productivity was also noticed.

From near misses to safety mastery: Detection to intelligence

Near misses in high-risk worksites are safety whispers in disguise. The problem lies in understanding them at the right time. And now AI has learned how to listen.

At a metal treatment plant in Saudi Arabia, AI video analytics flagged frequent over-reaches near hot zones. These weren't yet injuries, but they could be. After retraining and minor spatial re-designs, the plant reported a 43% decrease in hazard zone entries and a 70% reduction in repeat violations. With thousands of near-miss instances recorded weekly, the factory now uses AI to create monthly trend reports, guiding everything from floor layout to training modules.

A Safety Score calculated in the centralised dashboard allows supervisors and EHS teams to monitor a real-time health score of their operations. Using metrics such as Serious Injuries and Fatalities (SIFs), Lost Time Injury (LTI) and Days Away Restricted or Transferred (DART), these scores provide the intelligence to stay ahead.

AI in workplace safety is not here to take over human judgment; it's here to support it. By helping EHS teams in factory floors see risks earlier, act faster, and understand patterns better, AI turns everyday monitoring into a smarter, more connected process.

This shift isn't just about reducing accidents. It is also about building industrial sites where people feel safe and safety becomes a habit.

So, the next time an AI CCTV spots a risk before anyone else does, think of it as more than just technology. It's trust. Built into every step of the job.

Gary Ng, CEO and Co-Founder of viAct comes with a background in building engineering who turned into an AIpreneur with the inception of viAct in 2016. He has 10+ years of experience in implementing technological innovations in the construction industry.

Hino 300 Hybrid makes its SA debut

THE Hino 300 Hybrid is officially making its way to South Africa. Hino South Africa is set to pilot an eco-friendly Hybrid variation of the tried and trusted Hino 300 in the South African market, aiming to further improve hybrid energy mobility solutions in the country.

With a limited introduction planned for key customers, the Hino 300 Hybrid comes as an addition to the newly implemented New Energy Vehicle (NEV) approach led by parent company Toyota South African Motors (TSAM).

Durable, safe, and now more sustainable than ever, the Hino 300 Hybrid comes with some impressive updates. With improved fuel efficiency, as well as a reduction in both fuel consumption and exhaust emissions, the Hino 300 Hybrid comfortably boasts a cleaner drive for consumers,



The Hino 300 Hybrid is being trialled in South Africa with selected customers. It will not be available for customers to purchase.

while still maintaining the reliability that consumers know and love. A combination of a petrol engine and battery, the Hino 300 Hybrid provides the same great performance that customers can trust.

Along with its class-leading hybrid technology, the Hino 300 Hybrid is equipped with comprehensive safety

features and enhanced in-cab technology that are standard across the entire Hino 300 range. With features like an Anti-Lock Braking System, Multi-function display, and Auto-adjusting Drum Brakes, the Hino 300 Hybrid prioritises your safety so you can prioritise your business.

Whether you're

looking to build a home or transport your goods safely, the Hino 300 Hybrid is the reliable partner for all your business needs. Now, with the added benefit of this eco-friendly iteration, Hino South Africa is excited to help drive the future of mobility solutions in South Africa forward, together.

PC Replacement: When your business should upgrade hardware

By Adrian Ephraim

WALK into any office in Cape Town, and you might still find a desktop from 2018 quietly humming away. For many businesses, computers are seen as long-term assets, but holding onto outdated hardware may cost more than you think.

So, when is the right time to replace your business's PCs?

The 3-4 year rule

Most experts agree: the ideal window to replace business PCs is every three to four years. After this point, machines begin to slow down, repairs increase, and security risks multiply.

"The costs of old machines aren't always obvious," says IT consultant Mark du Toit. "But downtime, slower performance, and frequent support calls add up."

Intel research shows that helpdesk calls for older PCs rise by over 50% in year four, and employees lose up to 42 hours a year due to performance issues. That's a full workweek lost per employee, every year.

Desktops can stretch to five years, while laptops, thanks to battery wear and portability damage, generally need replacing sooner. Power users like designers or developers may require even more frequent upgrades.

The cost of hanging on

"The costs of old machines aren't always obvious," says IT consultant Mark du Toit. "But downtime, slower performance, and frequent support calls add up."

According to Microsoft and Intel, PCs older than four years cost businesses R50 000 per year, per machine in lost productivity, downtime, and maintenance - double what it costs



creating the risk of breaches and data loss.

When to upgrade

Common red flags include sluggish startups, overheating, frequent crashes, and apps failing to run properly. "If one machine is being logged for issues every week, it's already costing more than it's worth," adds Du Toit.

Budgeting for upgrades

A smart solution is the phased refresh strategy - replacing 20-25% of your hardware every year. This avoids large capital outlays while ensuring your tech remains current. Keep an updated asset register noting purchase dates, warranties, and performance issues. This helps you plan replacements in advance instead of re-

acting to sudden failures.

Think beyond disposal

Strategic replacements also allow for older machines to be refurbished or donated before they become e-waste. Several Cape Town NGOs and schools accept working PCs for training and education purposes.

An investment, not a grudge purchase

Replacing PCs can feel like an expense to delay, but doing so often costs more in the long run. In a digital-first business world, reliable hardware isn't a nice-to-have - it's essential. If your business still runs on machines older than your smartphone, it's time to ask: Are your PCs helping you grow, or just helping you get by?

FireDos: Advanced firefighting systems for jetties and freight ships



IN the maritime industry, fire safety is crucial, especially during the loading and unloading of hazardous materials like fuel or liquid natural gas (LNG). These operations can present significant risks, including fuel leaks that may become ignition sources. Effective, reliable, and adaptable firefighting systems are essential for protecting not only assets but also human life and the environment.

FireDos offers advanced firefighting solutions designed to perform under the most demanding conditions, ensuring robust protection for both jetties and freight vessels.

Adapting to changing maritime conditions

Fire protection systems in maritime settings must be versatile enough to handle fluctuating weather conditions and water levels. Jetties, where fuel or LNG leaks are common risks, require firefighting systems that can respond quickly and efficiently. FireDos foam proportioners and firefighting monitors, crafted from high-grade seawater-resistant materials, are built to withstand harsh environments. These systems handle water pressures up to 16 bar, ensuring durability and reliability even after long periods of inactivity.

Designed for pinpointed fire suppression from a safe distance (reaching 150 metres and more), FireDos monitors are capable of achieving high reach, with flow rates ranging from 500 l/min to 60 000 l/min. The Flow-Optimised Oval Flat Design minimises pressure loss, providing maximum reach even under windy conditions or changing water levels. This

makes our systems ideal for long-range, remote-controlled firefighting, ensuring safety for personnel while effectively managing fire risks.

Protecting critical maritime assets

Effective fire protection focuses on safeguarding essential assets, such as:

- Flammable liquids (fuel, LNG)
- Loading arms and pump manifolds
- Engine rooms and freight goods

FireDos systems are designed to protect these critical areas, reducing the potential for fire-related damage and ensuring operational continuity during cargo operations.

Efficient onboard firefighting solutions

Onboard freight vessels, quick response times and effective foam deployment are vital. FireDos on-deck foam monitors are strategically placed to quickly suppress fires with low-expansion foam. These monitors are positioned along the central deck line, ensuring rapid firefighting and minimising the spread of flames. A 25% safety margin is recommended for monitor dimensioning, ensuring that the system's reach and flow rate can handle fires under variable wind conditions.

To support firefighting efforts, stationary foam proportioners on board ensure a constant supply of foam, whether on deck or inside the vessel. These units are highly reliable, capable of dispensing all foam agent types, including high-viscosity foam agents. The mechan-

ical design of FireDos proportioners guarantees reliability, reducing the risk of failure, while their eco-friendly testing process ensures no waste from premix or extinguishing foam.

Risk reduction and compliance

FireDos systems are designed to reduce operational risks by incorporating automated fire extinguishing technologies that allow for remote control and precise firefighting. This reduces human exposure to dangerous situations and improves operational efficiency. Furthermore, our systems meet International Maritime Organisation (IMO) regulations and Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) standards, ensuring compliance with global fire safety and environmental guidelines.

Cost-effective and environmentally friendly

By using a purely mechanical design, FireDos systems provide highly reliable fire protection with minimal complexity. This approach reduces both failure risks and operational costs. Additionally, our foam proportioners allow for cost-effective testing without the need for foam, making them an environmentally conscious choice that eliminates the need for waste disposal and cleaning.

FireDos offers long-term, reliable fire protection systems that improve port safety, mitigate risks, and ensure compliance with maritime safety standards. Our systems are a smart investment for ports and freight vessels, delivering cost-effective, eco-friendly solutions without compromising on performance.

How Africa's retirement sector is building resilience

THE IRFA 2025 Conference heads to Cape Town with a bold agenda for policy, sustainability, and tech-driven change.

Cape Town will host Africa's leading voices in retirement reform this August, as the Institute of Retirement Funds Africa (IRFA) stages its flagship 2025 Annual Conference at the Cape Town International Convention Centre.

Taking place from 25–26 August, the event promises to spotlight the future of retirement across the continent under the theme: "Building Resilience: Leading Change for a Lasting and Positive Impact."

For a sector grappling with increased regulatory scrutiny, technological disruption, and shifting member expectations, the IRFA conference offers a crucial platform to explore solutions that address both immediate pressures and long-term structural shifts.

Reform, regulation, and resilience

Key on the agenda is the ongoing implementation of South Africa's Two-Pot Retirement System, a seismic shift in how South Africans access and manage their retirement savings. As funds and administrators navigate the operational complexities of the new system, IRFA will convene panels to unpack

early lessons, behavioural trends, and reform-led investment strategies.

"The retirement fund industry across Africa is experiencing unprecedented change," said an IRFA spokesperson. "Our 2025 conference provides a vital platform for industry leaders to share insights and collaborate on solutions that will shape the sustainability of retirement provision for decades to come."

Regulators, including the Financial Sector Conduct Authority (FSCA) and the Pension Funds Adjudicator, will lead discussions on compliance, governance, and the broader regulatory reforms reshaping fund operations.

Pension funds as engines for infrastructure development

A major theme this year is how retirement funds can unlock infrastructure development on the continent while delivering sustainable returns for members. With Africa facing a substantial infrastructure deficit, pension funds are increasingly being positioned as strategic investors in public-private partnerships and alternative assets.

Day One of the conference delves into infrastructure and alternative investment strategies, with parallel sessions



from asset managers and analysts exploring new investment vehicles, risk frameworks, and ESG-aligned infrastructure opportunities.

Speakers from major financial institutions—including Ninety One, FutureGrowth, Momentum Corporate, Old Mutual, Nedgroup Investments, Sanlam, Discovery, Alex Forbes, and Prescient—will present cutting-edge research and case studies across specialised tracks.

Member-centric innovation and tech integration

The second day focuses on member engagement, global investment themes, and emerging technologies. From artificial intelligence in fund governance to data analytics that enhance decision-making, the conference will explore how digital transformation is improving fund performance and customer experience.

Workshops on AI and cybersecurity will offer

insights into building robust systems that protect member data while supporting more efficient fund administration and personalised financial advice.

Networking, learning, and sector influence

Beyond the formal sessions, IRFA 2025 is geared toward connection and collaboration. Delegates can expect structured networking sessions, a gala dinner with industry awards, and informal engagements with peers across the retirement ecosystem.

This year's event is expected to attract a broad cross-section of Africa's retirement sector, including trustees, fund managers, administrators, consultants, and regulators.

Registration open

Professionals interested in attending can register at <https://irf-conference.co.za>. Demand is high, so get your tickets early.

SAMRRA appoints first full-time CEO to steer South Africa's growing rental housing sector

THE South African Multifamily Residential Rental Association (SAMRRA) has announced the appointment of Palesa Mkhize as its first full-time Chief Executive Officer, a move that signals both maturity and momentum in the country's growing multifamily rental housing sector. Formed in 2024, SAMRRA is the industry body for institutional landlords and stakeholders in South Africa's professionally managed, purpose-built rental housing market. The appointment of a permanent CEO reflects the sector's shift toward institutionalisation, with more than R40-billion in assets and over 75 000 residential units now represented across SAMRRA's membership.

Sector enters new phase of institutional growth

"The appointment of a dedicated CEO reflects the growing scale and

strategic importance of professionally managed rental housing in South Africa," said Myles Kritzinger, SAMRRA's founding and outgoing CEO. "We've laid a strong foundation built on data transparency, aligned communities and long-term value. The next phase is about deepening that impact and unlocking further growth. Palesa is the right leader for this moment." Mkhize steps into the role with over 16 years of experience in banking, infrastructure investment and housing finance. Most recently, she served as Head of Affordable Housing Development at Standard Bank's Investment Banking Division, where she led large-scale housing projects, secured green construction funding from global institutions like the International Finance Corporation (IFC), and pioneered blended finance models in partnership with developers such as Calgro M3.

Her earlier roles included infrastructure and housing finance at Old Mutual Investment Group. Mkhize is well regarded in the industry for her ability to link capital, policy and housing delivery with social and economic inclusion.

"Multifamily is dignity, opportunity and stability - and it is a great investment," Mkhize said. "SAMRRA is well placed to help shape a more inclusive and investable multifamily future for South Africa. Over the past 18 months, the organisation has established excellent momentum. I'm honoured to help carry that vision forward."

Market shows strong fundamentals

Mkhize's appointment comes as the multifamily rental housing market demonstrates increasing resilience and appeal to institutional investors. According to data from

SAMRRA, average occupancy rates in the sector exceed 95%, rent collections consistently top 98%, and tenant arrears remain below 1% — outperforming many traditional commercial real estate benchmarks.

These figures highlight the growing stability and investability of purpose-built rental schemes, especially in the face of ongoing economic volatility.

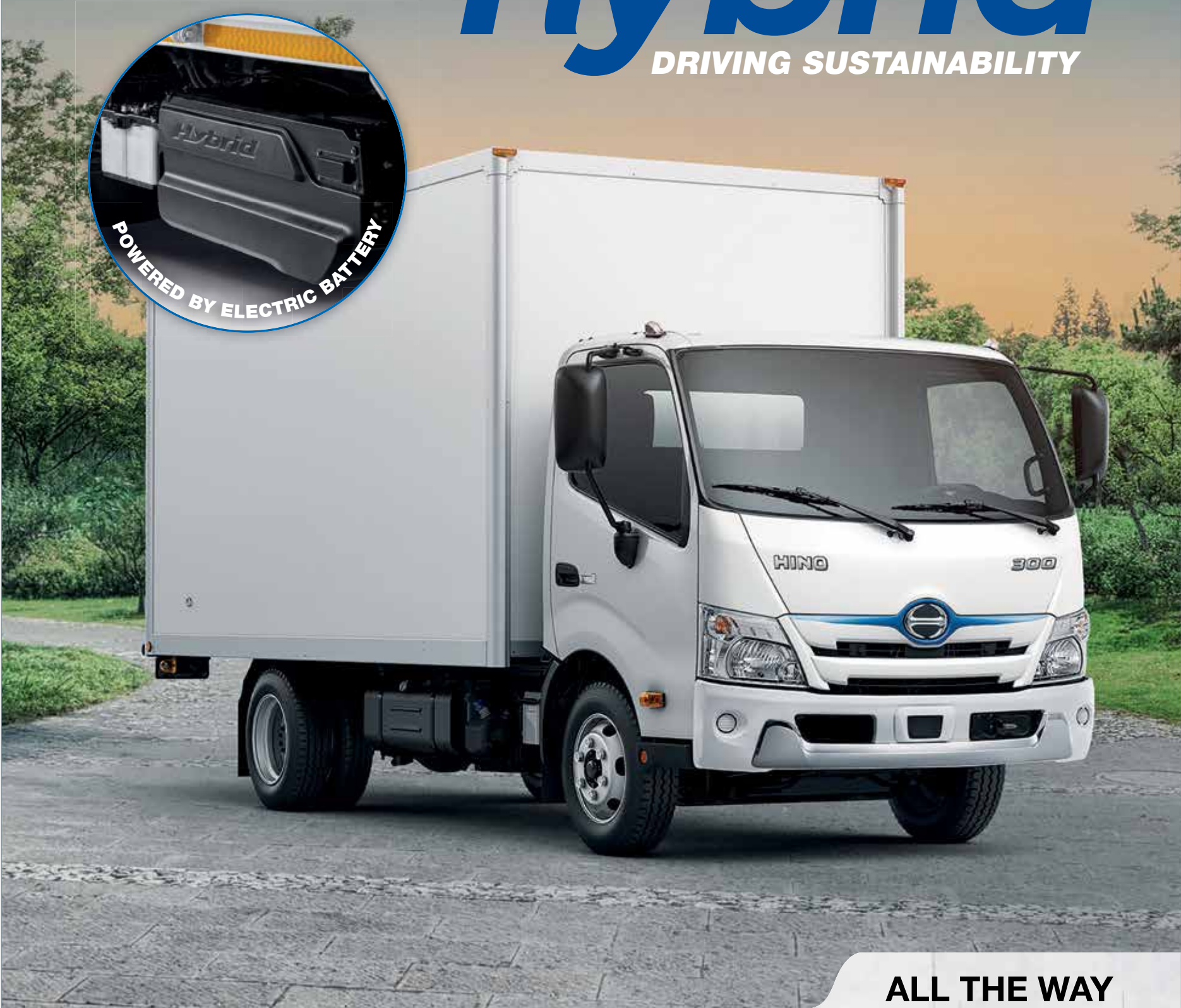
A mandate to grow transparency and investment

As CEO, Mkhize will focus on three core priorities: improving transparency in the sector, boosting investor confidence, and enabling data-driven decision-making. Her leadership is expected to help accelerate capital flows into this emerging asset class and position SAMRRA as a key voice in shaping housing policy and private sector collaboration.

HINO 300

hybrid

DRIVING SUSTAINABILITY



ALL THE WAY

Committed to improving hybrid mobility solutions in the country, Hino South Africa is set to pilot* the Hino 300 Hybrid, an eco-friendly take on the tried and trusted truck. With impressive reductions in fuel consumption and exhaust emissions, this proven performer is an example of our commitment to driving cleaner energy on our roads. Add to that our standard comprehensive safety package and in-cab technology, the Hino 300 Hybrid is set to deliver all the way.

**The Hino 300 Hybrid is being trialled in South Africa with selected customers. It will not be available for customers to purchase.*



HINO

A Toyota Group Company

BMG and Rollon elevate industrial machinery with precision linear motion systems



BMG - in partnership with Rollon, specialises in the production and development of linear motion systems - delivering high-performance solutions for industrial machinery across diverse manufacturing sectors in Southern Africa.

BMG - in partnership with Rollon, specialises in the production and development of linear motion systems - delivering high-performance solutions for industrial machinery across diverse sectors in Southern Africa.

"As manufacturers face growing demands for productivity, uptime and cost-efficiency, linear motion technology plays an increasingly greater role in the performance of industrial machinery. Rollon's engineered components - distributed and supported locally by BMG - offer measurable improvements in positioning accuracy, load handling and system durability," says Leon Koekemoer, BMG's Linearway & Ball Screw product specialist. "The critical function of linear motion components in modern industrial machinery cannot be overemphasised. Our partnership with Rollon ensures that manufacturers across Africa have access to world-class components that deliver the precision, reliability and performance required for competitive operations."

"These advanced linear motion products, which contribute to sustainable production, are supported by our team's technical expertise.

Services include system design consultation, application-specific selection, installation assistance and condition-based maintenance planning. Our in-house engineering team ensures that every solution is tailored to specific

operational requirements, from cleanroom environments to challenging outdoor mining installations."

Rollon's portfolio includes linear guides, telescopic rails, actuators and multi-axis systems, as well as ball screws and rotational units - engineered to function reliably in heavy-duty industrial operations. These robust components withstand high loads, continuous use and exposure to harsh environments, making them suitable for sectors including automotive assembly, electronics manufacturing, packaging and materials handling.

"Our in-house engineering team ensures that every solution is tailored to specific operational requirements, from cleanroom environments to challenging outdoor mining installations."

Recent system advancements have been designed to reduce energy loss, minimise lubrication needs and extend service intervals, lowering the total cost of ownership and enhancing environmental compliance. The incorporation of smart features for real-time diagnostics and predictive maintenance aligns these systems with Industry 4.0 initiatives.

In automated systems, linear guides provide smooth and precise motion that enhances the repeatability of robotic arms and CNC machinery. In packaging plants, telescopic rails and ac-

tuators enable efficient material movement and positioning, contributing to production speed and quality. Applications in machine tools benefit from the high rigidity and vibration resistance of Rollon guides, ensuring machining accuracy under dynamic conditions.

In the semiconductor and medical device industries, where cleanliness and sub-micron precision are essential, customers rely on Rollon's specialist products designed for cleanroom compliance and low particle generation.

Similarly, it is critical in the aerospace sector that linear systems operate with absolute reliability under extreme conditions. Rollon's quality-controlled manufacturing systems ensure consistent performance that meets these rigorous standards.

Rollon's robust systems are also used in heavy industries, including mining and metals processing. These components are designed to function efficiently under high temperatures, exposure to contamination and heavy mechanical stresses - conditions where conventional motion systems may fail.

Through BMG's partnership with Rollon, the team can supply and support advanced linear motion systems to meet growing demand for precision in industrial automation, ensuring sustainable production.

For more information: <https://bmgworld.net/>

Modular mezzanine floors: GMS Systems maximises capacity

By Diane Silcock

AS South Africa's e-commerce and retail warehousing needs surge, Cape Town-based GMS Systems has positioned itself as a pivotal supplier of materials handling equipment and custom-built mezzanine flooring systems — solutions that allow clients to scale storage capacity and operational output.

Warehouse mezzanine solutions: More products per m²

Furthermore, what gives the company its competitive edge is that its solutions allow more products to be stored per square metre – a big plus for retailers and e-retailers.

For over 25 years, GMS Systems has delivered mechanised, design-led infrastructure to clients across South Africa as well as in the Middle East, the UK and the US. The company's major focus is retail, but the business also extends into the manufacturing and automotive sectors.

Mezzanine flooring systems built in Cape Town

At the heart of GMS Systems' offering is its Cape Town-based manufacturing facility and a skilled work-

force of designers, engineers, draftsmen, welders and project managers. Every solution is tailored to the clients' specific needs.

COO of GMS Systems Jan Tukker, who has 22 years of working in retail, says, "One of the biggest benefits to our clients is that we offer quite compact solutions which are designed to interleave and maximise the footprint by optimising the warehouse space. Our bespoke mezzanine flooring systems can be incrementally expanded as clients grow. We have unique solutions in that the storage itself is built into the mezzanine and the upright posts double as structural supports for shelving and pick equipment, maximising both floor area and vertical space."

With clients where GMS Systems' infrastructure is already in place, the company undertakes big enhancements to their clients' facilities to cater for volume growth. One such example is the ongoing expansion project in Montague Gardens in Cape Town, where GMS Systems is currently installing 4 800m² of additional mezzanine flooring.

Other impressive projects include the manufacture, supply and installation of a six-level high industrial lift at a big retailer in



One of the many multi-level GMS systems installed in South Africa.

Saudi Arabia.

"The majority of our retail work is in the e-commerce space, but a big chunk of those retailers also have distribution centres, which need big trolleys and totes and mezzanines. So there is a mix between serving the e-commerce market and serving their stores," says Tukker.

Market trends

Tukker says that as e-commerce grows, which is growing faster than store retail, their clients' needs change and what may seem insignificant in terms of the items being picked, can be a big change in the warehouse environment.

He says retailers have been slow to adopt robotics and full automation, even the big blue-chip retailers, but GMS Systems is poised to address such developments as

the demand increases, having already established ties with a Chinese robotics vendor of such products and services.

Scalable infrastructure solutions: Designed for growth

From entry-level mechanised systems to multi-tier mezzanine expansions, GMS Systems offers practical and scalable warehouse infrastructure solutions that support the retail industry's evolution in South Africa.

"We make it easy for clients to grow. Our modular designs, fast turnaround, flexibility and local manufacturing give us a real edge," says Tukker.

As retail continues to shift and scale, GMS Systems is shaping the warehouses that power South Africa's future supply chains.

Cut-Off Discs: Ride the Rails with Grinding Techniques



GRINDING Techniques manufactures a range of cut-off discs in the Superflex brand to suit various application requirements.

When selecting a cut-off disc, certain important points have to be considered, including the material to be cut, the power rating of the machine, the speed at which the machine operates and the required accuracy and neatness of the cut.

When considering rail cutting applications, additional safety and material requirements are presented.

Conventional cut-off discs are designed to operate at a maximum peripheral speed of 80M/s. Due to the nature of rail cutting machines used, Superflex rail cut-off discs are designed to operate at a maximum peripheral speed of 100M/s to suit the more powerful petrol-driven machines.

Cut-Off Discs: Speed vs Safety

These machines have a remarkably high torque, which improves the performance, but also presents a safety issue upon cut completion. The discs may experience an overspeed due to the torque, which is accommodated for in the improved design.

Rail Cut-Off Discs: Zirconia Performance

When it comes to heavy-duty applications, the Superflex range includes two products that stand out.

The 350x4x25.4 A24Q and 400x4.2x25.4 A24Q rail cut-off discs. These discs are designed for use on large, portable petrol cut-off saws for cutting railways and other large steel

sections.

When it comes to rail tracks, which are typically manufactured to be very hard to better handle the weight and stresses exerted upon them, updated grain technology has seen the introduction of the 350x4.2x25.4 ZA24S and 400x4.2x25.4 ZA24S Superflex Zirconia Alumina Rail cut-off discs.

Not only do these products reduce cutting time and overall cost per cut, but they also improve the effectiveness of each cutting operation. Capable of faster cuts, these discs also reduce the heat of the material on application for further improvement of overall performance.

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Absa, CV VC pull back the curtain with new Africa Blockchain Report



By Adrian Ephraim

WITHIN the next 10 years, more Africans may transact in stablecoins than through bank accounts. This is the bold assumption made in the Africa Blockchain Report, presented by Absa and blockchain venture capital firm CV VC Africa today.

The claim is based on trends revealed in the report that relate to mobile-first adoption, currency volatility, and limited access to traditional banking.

While global venture funding cooled off in 2024, Africa's blockchain sector bucked the trend. According to the newly released Africa Blockchain Report 2024, blockchain ventures captured a record 7.4% of all venture capital funding in Africa - more than double the global average - and 12.7% of deal volume, even as the continent's total VC funding shrank by 39% year-on-year.

This divergence is more than a statistical anomaly - it's a signal of blockchain's growing relevance in solving Africa's long-standing infrastructure and financial inclusion challenges.

Speaking at the launch of the report, Brenton Naicker, Principal and Head of Growth at CV VC Africa, said blockchain in Africa is no longer speculative. "We're seeing real-world use cases driving adoption - from cross-border payments to agricultural traceability - and venture capital is following that utility."

From crypto hype to practical infrastructure

The 2024 report shows a noticeable shift from hype-driven crypto investments to more grounded applications of blockchain technology. Centralised financial services and decentralised finance (DeFi) together made up over 70% of blockchain investment, while other high-growth areas included data verification, agri-tech, and carbon credit tokenisation.

The median blockchain deal size in Africa reached \$2.8 million, twice the all-sector median and a 10% year-on-year increase - proof that while ticket sizes are down globally, African investors are making more focused bets on digital infrastructure. Still, the average deal size dropped by 44%, underscoring a flight to quality over scale.

Stablecoins lead Africa's leapfrogging moment

One of the strongest drivers of blockchain adoption is stablecoins, with use cases ranging from SME trade finance to corporate treasury and on-demand cross-border liquidity.

Rob Downes, Head of Digital Assets at Absa CIB, noted that stablecoins are fast becoming an integral part of Africa's financial systems, without the visibility of traditional reporting.

"Institutional clients are using stablecoins for settlement and liquidity management, but they're not broadcasting it," said Downes during the report's launch panel. "It's about outcomes: faster, cheaper, more transparent transactions - not just the technology behind it."

The report projects that within the decade, more Africans may transact in stablecoins than through bank accounts - a trend driven by mobile-first adoption, currency volatility, and limited access to traditional banking.

Nigeria, South Africa, and Seychelles dominate activity

According to the report, Nigeria, South Africa, and Seychelles emerged as the leading markets for blockchain venture funding. Nigeria's rebound was particularly notable following a regulatory thaw in 2024 and remains Africa's largest crypto user base. South Africa continues to attract investors due to its regulatory clarity and stable financial infrastructure.

Interestingly, Seychelles accounted for nearly a third of funding, though this is partly attributed to the country's tax and legal advantages for companies operating globally. "It's a blockchain hub on paper, but not all activity is targeted at African markets," Downes cautioned.

Real-world Impact: From farms to fintech

Beyond finance, African startups are pioneering blockchain solutions in supply chains, agriculture, mining, and ESG. One such example is Shamba Records, a CV VC-backed agri-tech firm in East Africa helping over 30 000 smallholder farmers build verifiable yield data, gain access to insurance, and increase incomes by up to 30%.

"Blockchain is helping smallholder farmers secure credit, prove product provenance, and weather climate shocks," Naicker said. "These are the kinds of innovations that make Africa one of the most promising blockchain frontiers."

Regulatory clarity is key to growth

Seven African countries now offer full regulatory clarity for digital assets, while only five enforce outright bans. This evolving policy landscape is vital to investor confidence. South Africa, for instance, has moved decisively, classifying crypto assets as financial products and introducing crypto asset service provider licenses and on-chain transaction monitoring rules.

As Downes noted, "Regulation doesn't stifle innovation - uncertainty does. Clear frameworks are encouraging capital inflows, especially in jurisdictions where it's easy to repatriate funds."

Despite representing just 1% of global blockchain funding, Africa's 2.3% share of global blockchain deals and strong median deal size may signal the practical potential of blockchain on the continent.

With rising digital adoption, a young population, and deep infrastructure gaps to solve, Africa is uniquely positioned to shape the future of blockchain.

As the report puts it, "Africa isn't just adopting blockchain. It's building with it."

Capitec launches low-cost cross-border transfers

SOUTH Africa is home to one of the most expensive remittance corridors in the world. According to the World Bank, it costs nearly 12% to send just \$200 abroad, making it the most expensive G20 country for outbound money transfers. These steep costs are borne largely by low- and middle-income earners, who make up more than 90% of the remittance market.

Capitec, South Africa's largest digital bank with over 24 million clients, is stepping in to change this. The bank has launched a cross-border payments solution integrated directly into its mobile banking app, offering clients a simple, secure, and more affordable way to send money to friends and family in eight African countries: Zimbabwe, Zambia, Uganda, Malawi, Lesotho, Mozambique, Tanzania, and Kenya.

Francois Viviers, Group Executive of Marketing and Communications at Capitec, says the service responds to a longstanding challenge facing millions across

the continent. "We live in a connected Africa, where supporting family and community is part of everyday life. But the systems people rely on to send money have often been expensive, complicated, and unreliable," he says. "We saw an opportunity to solve that problem by applying our ethos of simple, affordable, and transparent banking."

Capitec's new service is powered by a partnership with Mama Money, a leading fintech focused on inclusive and affordable cross-border transfers. The integration allows clients to send money directly through the Capitec app without the need to download additional software or visit a branch.

Mathieu Coquillon, Co-founder and Director of Mama Money, called the partnership a "game changer" for millions of migrants. "We're enabling peace of mind for families who rely on remittances for basic needs. By working with Capitec, we're scaling affordable money transfers across the continent."

Unlocking a R100-billion opportunity

The South African cross-border payments market is among the largest in Africa, with an estimated R100-billion transferred annually through both formal and informal channels. For decades, consumers have had to choose between paying high fees through formal providers or taking the riskier route of informal money couriers.

Capitec believes it has created a solution that breaks this costly trade-off. "We've built a model that uses our scale and digital infrastructure to drive efficiencies," says Viviers. "Most services charge up to 12% in combined fees and exchange rate markups. Our solution cuts that figure in half."

A broader ecosystem for African financial inclusion

The launch builds on Capitec's 2024 international payments offering, which enables account-to-account transfers to more than

50 countries. The new cross-border service complements this by focusing on remittances, often the primary financial link between working migrants and their families across Africa.

"This is about more than just moving money," says Viviers. "It's about building bridges of support, trust, and inclusion for communities across borders. Our clients work hard for every rand, and we want to make sure as much of that money reaches its destination as possible."

As South Africa - and the continent at large - embraces digital financial solutions, Capitec's move signals a deeper commitment to inclusive banking. By addressing one of the region's most pressing financial pain points, the bank is not just offering a product - it's empowering a way of life.

"Our purpose is to make a real difference," concludes Viviers. "This is another step in helping our clients grow and support the people who matter most to them."

SA women retire with 21% less than men, Discovery data reveals

FEWER than 10% of South Africans retire with enough savings to maintain a comfortable standard of living. But new insights from Discovery Corporate and Employee Benefits highlight a deeper disparity: South African women retire with 21% less in retirement assets than men.

This data, released in July 2025, is based on a detailed analysis of contribution behaviour, earnings, fund choices and family dynamics across Discovery's umbrella funds.

"With August being National Women's Month, we examined how women are faring in retirement," says Nonku Pitje, CEO of Discovery Corporate and Employee Benefits. "While women are actively saving for retirement, the system still works against them." Pitje notes that although unequal pay contributes to the gap, the issue is more complex: "Women face a lifetime of disproportionate financial pressures. Retirement systems often don't reflect their lived realities, which makes them more financially vulnerable in retirement."

Key findings:

- Women have 21% less in pension and

provident fund balances compared to men.

- They earn 76 cents for every R1 men earn - a 24% gender pay gap. Among older women, the gap widens to 39%, likely due to fewer promotion opportunities.
- Caregiving responsibilities skew careers. Stats SA's 2021 Household Survey shows that 43.4% of children live only with their mothers, versus 3.9% with their fathers. This places a tenfold financial burden on women, who often need flexible work arrangements or higher net pay.
- Women are 1.3 times more likely to withdraw from their retirement savings under the new two-pot system, and 80% more likely to use the funds for school fees.

- They live longer. A healthy 65-year-old woman is expected to outlive a man of the same age by two years, which stretches retirement savings over a longer period.
- From age 55, women are 25% more likely to invest conservatively, potentially limiting investment growth

during critical pre-retirement years.

Despite these challenges, the data also shows that women are 1.2 times more likely to contribute above their employer's default rate, indicating a strong commitment to long-term financial planning.

However, Pitje warns that these dynamics accumulate over time: "By retirement, women have saved less, live longer, and are more likely to support family members across multiple generations. The gender pay gap is just the starting point - we're looking at deeply systemic issues."

Rethinking retirement benefits

With most South Africans depending on employer-sponsored retirement funds, employers are uniquely positioned to drive change.

"Retirement benefits are still designed as if one size fits all," says Pitje. "Employers can be powerful agents of equity by redesigning benefits not just for compliance, but for impact."

She outlines three priorities for more inclusive benefits:

1. Stronger financial education and

tools - Equip employees with simple, accessible information about their retirement status and how to improve it.

2. Flexible contribution models - Reflect real-life events like career breaks, caregiving, and part-time work. Discovery data shows that engaged members aware of their incentives preserve their assets at significantly higher rates - nearly 50%, compared to an industry average of 10%-20%.

3. Support for financial stress - Implement structures that help employees manage debt and the burdens of the "sandwich generation", who support both children and aging parents.

"Employers influence how people save and how confident they feel about their financial futures," says Pitje. "As an industry, we need to evolve the design of benefits. Even small structural changes - from contribution flexibility to education - can help close the gender retirement gap."

Women of WearCheck: Driving innovation and shaping change



Thelma Horsfield

IN traditionally male-dominated industries like mining, engineering, and industrial maintenance, a new wave of leadership is emerging - led by women who are not only experts in their technical fields but also passionate advocates for progress, inclusion, and innovation. Three such women are Thelma Horsfield, Steven Lara-Lee Lumley, and Vanessa Evans, who occupy crucial roles at condition monitoring company WearCheck.

Thelma Horsfield: Pioneering water quality monitoring

With a career spanning nearly three decades, Thelma Horsfield, general manager of WearCheck Water, has become a driving force in the field of analytical chemistry and water-quality monitoring. Today, she leads a team - 95% of whom are women - delivering

essential water analysis services to the mining and industrial sectors.

Under her leadership, over 90% of WearCheck Water's testing methods have been accredited under the ISO 17025 standard. Horsfield was instrumental in launching the Cape Town water laboratory in 2019, achieving method accreditation within nine months - a remarkable achievement in the industry. The division currently boasts 33 accredited methods, with plans to add more in the next audit cycle.

Her journey hasn't been without challenges. As a 27-year-old shift leader managing an all-male team at Anglo Platinum, she had to dig deep to find her voice. "I was shy and soft-spoken, but I learned to lead with confidence," she recalls. "When I started, men were often paid more because they were seen as bread-

winners. That mindset is shifting, but there's still work to do - especially in pay equity and workplace flexibility."

Horsfield actively mentors the next generation of scientists and urges women to build networks, continually upgrade technical skills, and invest in confidence and soft skills. "In analytical work, accuracy, critical thinking, and attention to detail are everything. There's always something new to learn."

tions - including being a Honeywell Aerospace Certified Tribologist - Lumley is a respected subject-matter expert in tribology and oil analysis.

She joined WearCheck in 2008 as a diagnostician and rose through the ranks to become technical manager by 2015. Along the way, she diagnosed her millionth oil sample and facilitated technical training sessions across multiple countries. Her recent speaking engagements

and corporate dynamics. You can master every concept, but if you can't convey it or see the bigger picture, your impact is limited."

Adaptability is her cornerstone. "In our field, technology never stands still. The ability to evolve, respond to change, and see opportunities - even in adversity - is what truly defines your value." Her accolades, including the SA Institute of Tribology's Best Technical Presentation Award in 2023, underscore her technical brilliance and communication prowess.

To young women entering science and engineering, Lumley offers this advice: "Don't underestimate the importance of people skills. Pair your technical mastery with empathy, clarity, and strategic thinking. That's the real game-changer."

Vanessa Evans: Translating Science into Strategy

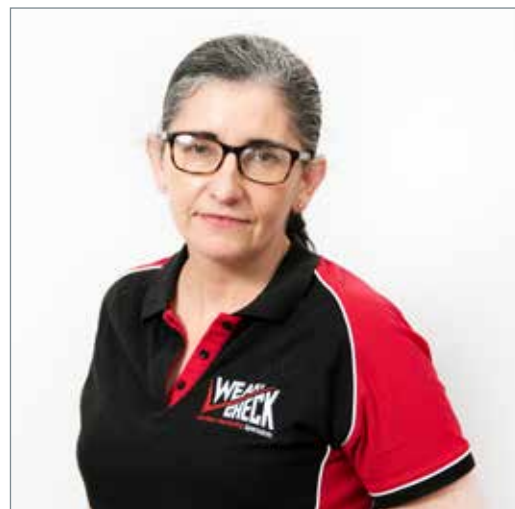
Bridging the gap between technical teams and industry stakeholders is Vanessa Evans, marketing manager at WearCheck. With more than 15 years of experience in strategic communications, she has become a powerful voice for industrial innovation and inclusion in Africa's technical landscape.

Evans plays a key

role in translating complex engineering solutions into accessible, client-focused messaging. Her marketing strategies support WearCheck's visibility across mining, transport, construction, aviation, and other industrial sectors - especially in Africa, where engineering solutions are crucial to infra-

also trust our capabilities."

Evans is also a champion for women in technical marketing. "Being one of the few women in this space allows me to bring fresh perspectives to how we communicate complex solutions," she says. "I'm especially proud of our educational campaigns that



Steven Lara-Lee Lumley

Steven Lara-Lee Lumley: Driving research, training and technical excellence

As technical manager at WearCheck, Steven Lara-Lee Lumley leads the company's oil analysis R&D strategy and global training initiatives. With over 30 years of experience and multiple certifica-

at international forums like the ICIS conference in London and Mobius Institute's global webinars highlight her growing influence in the global condition monitoring field.

"Success in this field isn't just about technical knowledge," Lumley explains. "It's also about navigating people, communica-



Vanessa Evans

structure development. A familiar face at industry events like Mining Indaba and Electra Mining, Evans leads outreach efforts that elevate the profile of condition monitoring and predictive maintenance. "Staying current with tech trends is critical," she notes. "I work closely with our technical experts, attend global conferences, and monitor innovation in asset reliability. My job is to ensure our clients not only understand but

empower clients to improve performance and reduce downtime."

To young professionals, especially women, she says: "Don't be afraid to lead with your values and your voice. Build a strong foundation, seek mentors, and embrace technical challenges with confidence. Your ideas and leadership are needed."

For more information: <https://www.wearcheck.co.za>

Changing the way we think about death



By Lindiwe Gumede, chief marketing officer at Metropolitan

AFTER just over a year as chief marketing officer at Metropolitan, I've found myself thinking very differently about death, and the business of death.

Coming from the fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) world, shifting into funeral and life insurance was a significant change. Yet, both sectors are built on the same foundation: a promise made to the customer that must be kept.

In the insurance

world, that promise becomes particularly meaningful when someone has passed away. It's in those moments, when we're able to deliver on our promise to a grieving family, that I've found the most purpose in my role.

Death is a deeply sensitive and often taboo subject in many South African cultures, despite funerals being highly significant events. At Metropolitan, we recognise that death is just as much about those left behind as it is about those who've passed. That's why clear, accessible, and compassionate communication is central to what we do.

Unlike FMCG, where products offer instant gratification, funeral policies require long-term thinking. The policyholder doesn't benefit

from the payout - it's their loved ones who do. This makes trust, transparency, and education absolutely essential. We've invested in simplifying the way we explain financial concepts like saving, debt, and intergenerational planning, as well as the terms and conditions of our policies.

The pandemic accelerated our digital transformation. Today, we meet clients where they are, including through WhatsApp - a platform where, in some cases, we've paid out valid claims in under an hour. That speed brings real peace of mind. At the same time, our presence on the ground remains crucial. We employ agents who live within the communities they serve, helping people understand their policies from the moment they sign up through to

the claims process. It's this personal connection that builds trust.

Over the past year,

"...funeral policies aren't just pieces of paper. They are living agreements that bring structure to chaos, clarity to uncertainty, and comfort to grief."

I've also become more comfortable discussing death - timing and empathy are everything. My father once gathered our family elders to share his wishes for after his death. That experience stayed with me. It made me realise how much easier death becomes for the living when there is openness and preparation.

Sadly, many families are left scrambling to find out whether a

loved one even had a policy. That's why it's critical to share this information before the inevitable occurs. It's one of the kindest things we can do for those we leave behind.

I've also come to appreciate the cultural complexity of our work. I once believed repatriating my body to KZN would be too costly for my family. Yet my family's desire to bury each of us on our ancestral land never wavered. At Metropolitan, we understand that cultural expectations often include the repatriation of a body, which is why our policies cover those additional costs. But not everyone understands terms like "repatriation," which is why we work hard to remove jargon and explain policies in plain language.

Our advisors are trained to guide fam-

ilies through difficult decisions, even when conversations about death never took place. They help design policies that reflect people's lifestyles, beliefs, and budgets. Ultimately, our work is about more than payouts. It's about dignity, legacy, and peace of mind.

What I've learned over the past year is this: funeral policies aren't just pieces of paper.

They are living agreements that bring structure to chaos, clarity to uncertainty, and comfort to grief. The real gift isn't just financial - it's the assurance that, even in death, our loved ones are taken care of.

At Metropolitan, we honour that responsibility with empathy, honesty, and humanity. That's how we breathe life into the business of death.

Solutions for modern data centres



By Phoenix Contact

DATA centres are essential, but energy-intensive infrastructures. At Phoenix Contact, we are committed to reducing carbon emissions while ensuring continuous operation. We provide solutions where reliability and environmental responsibility go hand in hand.

Phoenix Contact's power reliability solutions provide significant advantages for data centres by ensuring a continuous and stable power supply, which is critical to uninterrupted operation. Together, our solutions improve the reliability, efficiency, and resilience of data centres and support their continuous and optimum operation.

To reduce energy consumption and improve sustainability, data centre operators are looking for solutions to address growing environmental concerns. As manufacturers ourselves, we are striving for the All-Electric Society, where electrical energy is affordable and available in sufficient quantities, which is perfectly suited to the needs of state-of-the-art data centres.

Our technologies in data centre applications

Power Distribution

Reliable power distribution is crucial in the fast-moving world of data centres to ensure smooth operation and to protect critical data. Our advanced solutions, which are seamlessly integrated into Power Distribution Units (PDUs), are at the heart of this reliability, efficiently distributing energy to the server racks. Phoenix Contact improves this reliability with solutions for control cabinet building that increase efficiency and durability. In addition, our connector portfolio provides robust and secure connections from the PDUs to the server racks, making your data centre's energy infrastructure both resilient and reliable.

Energy resilience

Integrated, coordinated supply concepts, which include power supply in UPS systems, device protection, and surge protection, help prevent unplanned system failures and downtime. Lightning strikes and current peaks are unpredictable risk factors. They can cause fires, downtimes in important systems, and even data loss. Considering lightning and surge protection in the early planning phase makes implementation easier.

Phoenix Contact provides robust solutions for energy reliability that effectively

address these risks.

Monitoring and control

The Phoenix Contact building automation and energy monitoring solutions, supported by the Niagara Framework, improve the efficiency of data centres by optimising energy consumption through comprehensive monitoring and load

management, integrating renewable energy sources, and providing data-driven insights for operational optimisation. Their systems support seamless integration and centralised control, reduce manual intervention and errors, resulting in lower operating costs, greater user convenience, and a more

sustainable data centre environment. To ensure reliable temperature control and reduce energy consumption, the use of our solution is an example of optimising cooling efficiency.

Phoenix Contact strives to partner with suppliers and end users to provide sustainable technologies that add

value and ensure optimal efficiencies and reliability for their continuous operation.

With our proven knowledge and world-renowned product offering, we can reach our overall goal of ensuring that we meet our commitment of creating a sustainable world through the All-Electric Society.

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PLCnext Technology enables the integration of current and future interfaces and protocols for open communication in highly networked automation systems. Implement new IoT-based business models through direct connection to cloud-based services and databases.

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Cape Town data centre surge: Boon or burden?



By Adrian Ephraim

A quiet digital revolution is unfolding in the shadow of Table Mountain. Rows of humming servers, shielded behind biometric access and climate-controlled walls, are steadily transforming Cape Town into one of Africa's most critical nodes in the global cloud infrastructure boom.

Cape Town data centre surge drives global interest

From the Brackenfell hyperscale campus of Teraco to Africa Data Centres' expanding CPT1 site in Elfindale, the Mother City is fast becoming a magnet for data centre investment, both local and global.

Amazon Web Services and Microsoft have deepened their stakes, while Google, through its Equiano submarine cable, has reduced latency and increased access, placing Cape Town on the radar of multinationals hungry for African bandwidth.

"Across the continent, data centres are being established not just for cutting-edge AI experimentation but to serve immediate, community-based needs like powering local economies, enabling digital inclusion, and bridging the persistent divide between urban and rural access to technology," says Ben Selier, Vice President, Secure Power for Anglophone Africa at Schneider Electric.

Data centre infrastructure under pressure

But as investment pours in and server farms rise, a more complex narrative is emerging - one that stretches far beyond the data halls.

The digital engine of economic growth

Data centres are often seen as mere back-end

utilities - out of sight, out of mind. But in truth, they form the invisible backbone of the modern economy. Every e-commerce transaction, bank transfer, and AI query runs through these digital nerve centres.

The impact on Cape Town's business ecosystem is already being felt. With increased local capacity, South African companies can now access faster, cheaper, and more secure cloud computing infrastructure. They no longer need to route through Europe or North America, which changes the game.

The ripple effects are far-reaching. Financial services, health tech, logistics, and even agriculture startups benefit from lower latency and regulatory compliance with local data residency laws. The arrival of hyperscalers also elevates Cape Town's global competitiveness, drawing in international partnerships and investment.

Infrastructure under pressure

Yet, the surge is not without friction. Power, the lifeblood of any data centre, is also South Africa's Achilles' heel.

Data centre energy and efficiency challenges

Data centres account for about 1% of the world's total energy consumption, according to the International Energy Agency. With the rapid growth of AI, edge computing, and 5G networks, this figure is expected to rise. Cooling systems alone can consume 30% - 40% of a data centre's energy, making them an essential area for improvement.

A recent MyBroadband report warned that unless South Africa urgently resolves

its grid instability, the data centre industry could face multi-billion-rand losses.

Cape Town's relative grid stability has made it an attractive location for these facilities. But the city's infrastructure, electricity, water, and even fibre, will need significant upgrades to keep up with demand.

Data centres can use as much electricity as a small suburb. Without a long-term energy plan and a green power transition, this growth could become unsustainable.

Encouragingly, many operators are embracing efficiency: Teraco's CT2 site is built to world-class environmental standards, targeting low Power Usage Effectiveness (PUE), AI and water-saving technologies. But scaling green infrastructure at the pace of digital demand remains a major challenge.

Data centre workforce skills and training

While machines may power the cloud, it's people who will make or break the sector's promise.

In recent months, Amazon and Microsoft have launched aggressive hiring drives in South Africa.

However, a looming skills gap threatens to slow momentum. Without deliberate training and placement programmes, South Africa risks becoming a mere consumption market for cloud services, without growing the local capacity to run and innovate within them.

Industry leaders and educational institutions are taking note. Graduate programmes, internships, and certification partnerships are on the rise, aiming to ensure that the digital economy is both inclusive and future-proof.

Responding to changing requirements in African data centres

By Craig Blankers, Regional Director for WSP in Africa

THE data centre landscape in Africa is evolving rapidly. What was once a peripheral market has become a magnet for global investment, with projections indicating the industry could nearly double in value to \$6.81-billion by 2030. Driving this momentum are accelerated digitisation, growing cloud infrastructure needs, and a surge in AI-related applications across both public and private sectors.

As this expansion takes hold, traditional infrastructure models are being challenged. The ability to design for flexibility is no longer optional—it is a foundational requirement. Across a continent where energy constraints, uneven growth, and changing regulations are the norm, clients need facilities that are resilient, scalable, and future-ready.

permitting, and the availability of specialist skills. In this context, design flexibility becomes a powerful tool. Infrastructure must be able to navigate complex realities like policy shifts, water shortages, and load-shedding. It must anticipate future IT loads, support efficient retrofits, and meet growing Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) expectations.

According to the Africa Data Centres Association's 2023 report, operators face increased pressure to align with ESG standards and localise more of their supply chains and operations. Design strategies must make space for these priorities.

Engineering responsiveness into every layer

Flexibility touches every layer of a data centre's design and operation—from site selection and energy modelling to cooling



improving water efficiency, and prioritising local sourcing becomes even more important. These priorities all require a highly adaptive engineering approach.

Global standards, local context

WSP's Centre of Excellence in South Africa plays a key role in enabling globally competitive data centres within Africa's unique operating environments. We support both hyperscale and colocation providers, delivering facilities that meet international standards while adapting to local challenges - be it poor soil quality, unreliable power grids, or compliance with local labour laws.

Our model blends global best practices with deep local knowledge. We deploy advanced digital workflows, stringent risk modelling, and strong governance across all our projects. We invest

terms, compliance requirements, or customer base.

We approach flexibility not as an add-on, but as a core design principle. By aligning engineering, architecture, and sustainability disciplines, we ensure our facilities can support AI workloads, scale modularly, and meet shifting regulatory demands - all without compromising uptime.

This might involve planning for phased expansion, ensuring compatibility with on-site renewables, or integrating design elements that accommodate data sovereignty rules. Flexibility also extends to people: transferring skills, empowering local teams, and designing with long-term operational success in mind.

Building for tomorrow

Africa's digital transformation must be underpinned by future-fit

"WSP's Centre of Excellence in South Africa plays a key role in enabling globally competitive data centres within Africa's unique operating environments."

At WSP, we view flexibility as a strategic design choice. It begins long before ground is broken. It means anticipating shifting user needs, evolving legislation, and designing data centres that can adapt with minimal disruption. While modularity forms part of the solution, true flexibility stems from foresight.

A fast-moving market under pressure

Africa's digital appetite is growing. From fintech and e-commerce to health services and government platforms, data consumption is soaring. Statista projects sustained double-digit growth in data centre revenue across the continent through 2028. In response, data centre developments are springing up in key hubs like Johannesburg, Nairobi, Lagos, and Accra.

However, despite the opportunity, challenges persist—especially around power, water,

systems, power distribution, and maintenance strategies. With the rapid uptake of AI, capacity requirements are increasing far faster than in the past. Addressing this from the outset is critical.

Client expectations are also changing. Many now demand plug-and-play, scalable facilities that support phased capital investment while ensuring long-term adaptability.

Our design teams are integrating modular UPS systems, adaptable floor layouts, and phased buildouts that enable facilities to grow alongside demand.

We use digital twins for real-time performance monitoring, allowing clients to preempt issues and manage energy and water usage with precision.

As data centres become more AI-capable—and thus more resource-intensive—our focus on driving down Power Usage Effectiveness (PUE), integrating renewable energy sources,

"Data centres are long-term investments. The most competitive facilities in Africa will be those designed to evolve..."

in local talent pipelines, build relationships with domestic suppliers, and ensure that design decisions reflect the on-the-ground realities of African markets.

Designing for resilience

Data centres are long-term investments. The most competitive facilities in Africa will be those designed to evolve - whether in terms of their energy profiles, cooling sys-

infrastructure. Raw capacity is only part of the story. How data centres are designed, powered, and maintained will determine their relevance in the years to come.

In a region where energy is expensive and regulatory complexity is rising, data centre strategies must go beyond the go-live date. They must account for lifecycle adaptation, operational optimisation, and the long-term sustainability of the facility.

EDS Switchboards: Modular systems built for Africa's future

FROM humble beginnings in a modest 300-square-metre factory in 1997, EDS Switchboards has evolved into one of South Africa's most respected manufacturers of electrical distribution and control systems, under the leadership of CEO Johan Human.

to scale, standardise and improve production time - while still offering tailored solutions to our clients."

EDS Switchboards partners with Siemens for global quality

In 2015, EDS elevated its offering through a partnership with Sie-

me, becoming a certified local manufacturer of the German engineering giant's Sivacon S8 system. This SANS 61439-compliant system has become a benchmark for quality and performance, particularly in industrial applications such as mining, where safety, durability, and intelligent control are paramount.

compliance are central to our business," explained Bothma. "By manufacturing the Sivacon system locally, we reduce costs, lead times, and import dependencies - all while meeting global standards."

Smarter systems, faster delivery

To stay ahead in a price-sensitive, quality-driven market, EDS is betting on digitisation. The company's EPLAN is an advanced design and engineering software that integrates with SolidWorks to streamline the design and documentation of modular switchboards.

"We've rebuilt our entire modular structure library in EPLAN," said Bothma. "Now we can turn around detailed, compliant designs in under a day - what used to take up to five. It's all about being faster, more accurate, and more collaborative."

This digitisation extends to the customer experience as well. Clients will soon be

able to review and approve panel designs in a virtual reality (VR) environment, reducing misunderstandings, accelerating approval cycles, and eliminating design waste.

EDS Switchboards expands into new growth markets

While EDS continues to service South Africa's mining, agricultural, renewable energy, food, beverage, and packaging sectors, it's the data centre boom in Cape Town and growing infrastructure needs in the water sector that are driving its local growth.

"We've been heavily involved in the Riverlands development project and several other data centre builds," said Human. "But water infrastructure is the next big frontier. Years of neglect mean there's massive demand for electrical distribution and control systems in that space."

Internationally, EDS has delivered projects in Ghana, Ethiopia, Zambia, and beyond - servicing both mining and data centre clients. "Africa is where we see real potential," he added. "To grow, we need to work beyond our borders."

The containerised advantage

Among EDS's more innovative offerings are



its containerised substations - refurbished shipping containers converted into turnkey substations complete with modular switchboards, lighting, fire detection, and ventilation systems. This flexible, cost-effective solution is gaining traction across industrial and remote applications.

"It's a product line we're really excited about," said Bothma. "It aligns with our modular philosophy and allows for rapid deployment in harsh environments - perfect for mining and infrastructure projects."

A business built to adapt

Despite the challenges of operating in a volatile economic environ-

ment, EDS maintains a nimble structure that allows it to scale up or down quickly. "We're small enough to be agile, but experienced enough to deliver at scale," said Human. "That's our superpower."

Internally, the company is restructuring its sales and design teams and investing in upskilling staff to meet the growing demand for smart, compliant systems. "Our systems are the same whether you're operating in a mine, a data centre or a water treatment plant - it's the control logic that changes," said Bothma.

But retaining talent remains a concern. "There's a shortage of skilled artisans in our sector," he added. "We train interns ourselves,

but often lose them to competitors or overseas opportunities. South Africa needs to reinvest in vocational training and trade skills."

Looking ahead

As EDS approaches its 30-year milestone, the focus remains clear: to deepen technical capacity, embrace digital tools, expand across Africa, and continue building high-impact partnerships with suppliers such as Siemens, ABB, Schneider, and Hager.

"We're not just building boards," said Human. "We're building future-ready systems - faster, smarter, and closer to the client. That's how we'll stay ahead for the next 30 years."



With a stronghold in key sectors such as mining, data centres, food & beverage, and infrastructure, the Cape Town-based company is not only celebrating nearly three decades in business but is also laying the groundwork for the future of intelligent energy systems in South Africa and across the continent.

EDS Switchboards embraces digital transformation

Human and executive manager Chris Bothma reflected on EDS's journey, detailing how the company is embracing digital transformation, modular design, and international partnerships to stay competitive in a rapidly evolving landscape.

A foundation of innovation

EDS's story is one of continuous reinvention. Initially outsourcing its sheet metal needs, the company soon invested in its own sheet metal workshop and, by 2005, had relocated to its current facility in Paarden Eiland. That strategic shift enabled EDS to develop and refine its modular switchboard system, paving the way for large-scale projects like Cape Town Stadium, Cape Town International Airport, and the Nelson Mandela Bay Stadium ahead of the 2010 FIFA World Cup.

"The modular approach was a game-changer," said Human. "It allowed us



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Teboho Moloji, Business Development Executive: Africa at SEW-EURODRIVE South Africa.

What's the key to SEW-EURODRIVE's growth in Africa?

OPERATING successfully in Africa demands far more than the delivery of products or technology - it requires a deep understanding of local conditions, proactive skills development and sustained collaboration across borders.

While industry sectors such as mining, food and beverage, water treatment and manufacturing share some common operational requirements, each African country presents its own distinct set of challenges shaped by infrastructure limi-

tations, environmental conditions and regulatory variations.

As a leading provider of drive and automation solutions across the continent, SEW-EURODRIVE recognises that local insight and on-the-ground capability

are critical to delivering effective, sustainable results. The company continues to invest in people development and technical training within its network of African subsidiaries and partners, supporting the long-term growth of its customers

and the broader industrial ecosystem.

A recent regional workshop hosted at SEW-EURODRIVE's Johannesburg facility brought together team members from several African countries for intensive product training and inter-regional knowledge exchange. The focus extended across the company's full suite of advanced technologies, including its modular X.e-series industrial gear units, energy-efficient IE3 electric motors, decentralised MOV-IGEAR® mechatronic drives and the sophisticated MOVI-C® automation platform.

"Workshops like this are invaluable because they not only upskill our people but also help us connect the dots between what we do in different regions," says Teboho Moloji, Business Development Executive: Africa at SEW-EURODRIVE South Africa. "Our teams face very different realities depending on where they are operating, from remote mining operations in Zambia and the DRC to agro-processing plants in Kenya and Ghana. By sharing technical experiences across these sectors, we enhance our ability to apply the right solution for each unique application."

Moloji highlights the value of knowledge-sharing in building a robust reference base across industries. "In the sugar sector, for instance, we've successfully deployed helical and bevel geared motors on conveyors and mill drives, while in water treatment, our compact and corrosion-resistant solutions help ensure uptime in aggressive environments. These learnings are not only relevant to similar applications elsewhere in Africa, but they also allow us to anticipate challenges and fast-track problem-solving."

By equipping its people with the latest product expertise and encouraging collaboration across borders, SEW-EURODRIVE is strengthening its ability to serve Africa's evolving industrial and mining landscape. The company's commitment to developing regional capability ensures it remains responsive, reliable and aligned with its customers' strategic needs.

"Ultimately, our investment in people and technology is what sets us apart," says Moloji. "It is how we grow with our customers - and grow Africa's industries at the same time."



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Matcha Craze: Love Matcha shakes up Cape Town cafés



By Adrian Ephraim

IN THE restless city of Cape Town, a new player has taken the centre court of the beverage world, and it's not coffee.

Love Matcha, a creation of businessman and marketing guru Elad Weiss, is serving up a fresh, vibrant alternative to the usual caffeine suspects, and the city is going bonkers for it.

But what's the deal with this green "wonder drink", and how has it managed to capture the hearts and taste buds of Capetonians? This is the tale of Love Matcha's rise.

Matcha craze hits Cape Town

Elad Weiss's matcha journey began unexpectedly in the buzzing streets of Barcelona. Drawn in by a charming matcha shop and a crowd of enthusiastic patrons, Weiss took his first sip of the verdant tea and was instantly hooked. It sparked an obsession that soon led him to Japan, the birthplace of matcha, where he soaked up the tea's rich cultural heritage and undeniable health benefits.

"It was like finding love at first sip," Weiss reminisces, attributing the brand name 'Love Matcha' to this serendipitous experience. The name Love Matcha came from the experience, the tasting, and the respect that

they have for their tea.

Matcha's story begins during China's Tang Dynasty, way back in the 600s, when people first started drinking it as a healing tonic. Buddhist monks fell in love with the stuff because it helped them stay calm and focused during their meditation sessions. When the practice spread to Japan, that's where things took off.

The Japanese put their spin on it, coming up with clever techniques like growing the tea plants in the shade and carefully grinding the leaves into that vibrant green powder we now know as matcha.

Love Matcha's winning game plan

Weiss quickly realised the untapped potential of matcha in South Africa, a market still dominated by coffee. He saw matcha as not just a beverage but a lifestyle choice for the health-conscious, offering a steady caffeine boost without the crash.

"It convinced me that there is something very special about that. And I decided to open the first store in Mojo Market, in Sea Point." They sold over 400 cups on opening day. The city was ready for something new.

Matcha beyond the cup

To keep up the momentum, Love Matcha is innovating beyond the

cup. Think matcha-infused sushi, ice cream, and even cocktails. Weiss believes matcha is not just a drink but an ingredient that can elevate various culinary creations.

"We enjoyed the journey, so we decided to take matcha to the next level because there are a lot of health benefits to it. We decided to make matcha sushi, we have matcha ice cream, and different desserts and pastries. This whole journey has made me addicted to matcha," Weiss says.

What is the business case for matcha?

According to Weiss, there's no competition for coffee - and there's also no alternative. "That's what convinced me that it could have a good purpose, that you can give a person an option to have a coffee or to have matcha, but still receive the benefits, the energy and the caffeine - the amount of caffeine that you need."

The matcha movement is fuelled by

Kloof Street store. "Social media helps to create the awareness, but the product needs to be good at the end of the day, to keep that kind of awareness and going on trend," Weiss explains.

Matcha movement goes nationwide

Weiss has plans to spread the love of matcha to Durban, Johannesburg, and beyond. Love Matcha is on a mission to make matcha a household name in South Africa and even internationally, with franchises opening in Washington and Ireland. For Weiss, success means seeing Love Matcha recognised on the streets and becoming a staple in people's daily routines.

"What's unique is the experience that people have when they come to the store, from the partners of Love Matcha. Their smile, their love, their greeting. The client is getting closer to us when we're preparing the drink. It's creating



social media, and extremely popular with younger customers, as evidenced by the fans of the brand who congregated at the opening of Love Matcha's

a kind of experience which is unique for Love Matcha. The love that you're getting, the attention that you're getting, the hug that you're getting."

Spraying Systems Co.: Cutting oil use in cheese demoulding



Spraying Systems Co. automatic spray guns and controller.

SPRAYING Systems Co. USA, represented in Southern Africa for over 75 years by Monitor Engineering, offers a wide range of precision automated spray solutions suited to the cheese industry. These spray systems' efficient application of release agents, coatings and mould inhibitors ensures food safety, extends shelf life, reduces waste and provides cost savings.

Spraying Systems Co. addresses cheese factory challenges

With Spraying Systems Co. being a trusted supplier to the cheese factory, introducing a new system to address these challenges was fast and efficient, as validation had already taken place when the previous system was installed; an atomising spray bar used to lubricate the moulds.

of mould sizes. The AutoJet® F1850+ controller ensures a reduced amount of oil flow by spraying when only necessary. The air control cabinet develops a more secure environment for users around the spray zone as well.

Cheese factory reduces oil consumption with new Spraying Systems Co. solution

The cheese factory was highly satisfied with the upgrade to their existing lubrication system. By installing the new system, they reduced their oil consumption by 30%. Furthermore, the ability to control the pressure enables micro-spraying, which significantly reduces the amount of fog in the lubrication room.

This improvement eliminates oil buildup on the floor, reducing the need for frequent cleaning. Additionally, electrical cabinets near the spray zone are now protected from potential damage.

Not only do these improvements deliver significant cost savings for the cheese factory, they also promote a more sustainable and efficient production process.

Choosing Spraying Systems Co.® and Monitor Engineering, means partnering with a spray technology leader with over 85 years of expertise.

For more information contact grant@monitor-spray.co.za, www.spray.co.za

"The cheese factory was highly satisfied with the upgrade to their existing lubrication system. By installing the new system, they reduced their oil consumption by 30%."

A cheese factory specialising in producing a wide variety of cheeses, was experiencing a challenge related to oiling of their cheese moulds during the production process. Their outdated boom regulation system no longer provided precise spray control or consistent oil pressure, leading to inefficiencies.

To ensure easy demoulding, it is necessary to spray the empty moulds with oil before adding the cheese ingredients. Skipping this step could result in most of the cheese sticking to the mould. Additionally, the lubrication room at this particular cheese factory was filled with excessive mist, and there was no mechanism to stop the spray between moulds.

To enhance their customer's current situation, Spraying Systems Co.'s experts installed the AutoJet® F1850+ spray controller paired with a hygienic header and 20L pressure tank. It's a more advanced system with even more benefits and cost savings. The header is equipped with 16 air atomising spray guns, allowing the customer to select from three different nozzle numbers to match the mould dimensions; a feature that was not possible with the previous system. The nozzles are precisely positioned to ensure each mould is sprayed accurately, eliminating overspray.

With this solution, the cheese factory has a certified food contact installation which can handle different kinds



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PTD Plug Diverter Valve: Fastest valve for bulk processing

Why speed matters: Redefining efficiency in dry bulk solids processing



IN high-performance dry bulk processing environments, every second of downtime is costly. That's why DMN-WESTINGHOUSE developed the PTD plug diverter valve - a fast, easy-to-service solution that sets a new standard in conveying system efficiency.

With decades of experience supplying rotary and diverter valves, DMN-WESTINGHOUSE continues to lead the way with future-ready solutions. The newly improved PTD valve is proof of that commitment.

At a Glance: What makes the PTD Plug Diverter Valve exceptional?

The PTD plug diverter valve is engineered to route powders and pellets in pneumatic conveying systems with minimal product degradation and maximum uptime. Key features include:

- Aluminium housing and end covers for lightweight durability
- Stainless steel product contact surfaces to meet hygiene and wear standards
- No external moving parts - minimising risk of leakage or contamination
- Compatible with systems operating at 3–6 barg, shock-resistant up to 10 barg*
- Multiple seal options:
 - Static belly seals with solenoid

- valves and position sensors
- Inflatable belly seals with electro-pneumatic control systems
- Temperature range: -25°C to 80°C (higher-temp versions available)
- Optional features: electrical drive, wear-resistant pipes
- Compliant with EC 1935/2004 and available with ATEX 2014/34/EU certification

*Size 200 model excluded from pressure shock resistance specification

Industry versatility: Built for a wide range of applications

The PTD plug diverter valve is trusted by operators across numerous industries handling dry bulk solids, including:

- Food & Dairy (including infant formula)
- Pharmaceuticals & Cosmetics
- Plastics, Chemicals, Rubber & Recycling
- Aquaculture, Animal Feed & Pet Food
- EV Batteries, Biomass & Paint
- Minerals and more

Smarter design for faster, safer servicing

The PTD plug diverter valve doesn't just route product efficiently - it's

built for fast maintenance, making it ideal for facilities prioritising uptime and safety. Key service benefits include:

- Two-sided access for flexible maintenance from either side
- Adhesive-free belly seals for quick, clean replacement
- Quick-connect position sensors that simplify wiring
- Easy-release actuator linkage to reduce service time
- Reinforced jacking points for safe, stable handling

These features translate directly into less downtime, lower costs, and greater operator confidence.

Future-proof your operation with DMN-WESTINGHOUSE

The PTD plug diverter valve is more than just a piece of equipment—it's a strategic asset for dry bulk processing plants. It reflects DMN-WESTINGHOUSE's long-standing dedication to quality, innovation, and future-ready design.

"The PTD doesn't just save time—it changes how we define efficiency in servicing," says the DMN-WESTINGHOUSE team.

The fastest route to uptime starts with the PTD Plug Diverter Valve

For operations looking to cut downtime, streamline servicing, and improve long-term reliability, the DMN-WESTINGHOUSE PTD plug diverter valve delivers on all fronts. Whether you're in food, pharma, plastics or industrial manufacturing, this valve offers the fastest way to efficiency—and the smartest choice for tomorrow.

Specialised Climate Engineering (SCE): A decade of building sustainable growth

By Adrian Ephraim

IN a world where efficiency and sustainability are paramount, companies are seeking partners who can not only solve their immediate problems but also help them thrive for years to come.

SCE, with over a decade of experience in climate control innovation, has cemented its position as a strategic partner in this journey, particularly within the food and beverage, HVAC and pharmaceutical industries. The company's story is one of evolution, empathy, and a commitment to helping South African businesses achieve their full potential.

SCE was founded on a vision to assist people and businesses in becoming the best versions of themselves in terms of production, manufacturing, productivity, and quality. The company's founder, John Andersen, spent a significant part of his career working abroad, gaining a wealth of knowledge in "world process compliance and capabilities and practices". This international experience laid the foundation for SCE's mission: to help South African businesses and factories adopt the best available technology.

"First, it's about doing things "right, do it green, do it in a manner in which you can save energy and be globally compliant from a carbon footprint perspective."

The company's evolution has been driven by the market's needs. With the onset of load shedding in South Africa, energy efficiency became a monumental focus. Andersen explains, "Energy ef-



iciency has become monumental after load shedding really started hitting us, and so in other words, reducing energy cost, reducing energy consumption, not just the cost but the consumption thereof".

This need to reduce energy consumption also helps clients reduce the cost of diesel generation. The company's solutions also address the need for global compliance, as many South African food manufacturers supply to international brands. "Compliance is a global standard and is necessary, and sometimes that is a bit tough for people to get going on," Andersen says.

For SCE, "sustainable growth" isn't just a buzzword; it's a core philosophy with two main focus points. First, it's about doing things "right, do

around the availability of water and power is crucial.

The company focuses on reusing and repurposing resources, such as using grey water and recovering lost energy from systems

as well". John states that their work matches a client's "vision and your planning going forward".

SCE's commitment to innovation is evident in its portfolio of patented technologies, in-

"SCE's business model is built on long-term partnerships. "We're in business because of them and they're in business because of us and their success is our success,"

like compressors and heat rejection plants. "The fundamental truth is our energy cost is only going to become more expensive as we go forward," Andersen says. He believes that "reusing what we have and having a less or smaller footprint of energy consumption is really important".

The second focus of sustainable growth is ensuring a solution is viable for a client's long-term business vision. SCE gets involved from the very beginning, asking clients about their five- and ten-year plans to ensure that any project undertaken aligns with their future goals.

This approach ensures that every action taken and every project completed becomes a "sustainable growth path for their business

cluding DryJET®, DryJET-THERMAL®, DryGYRO®, DryZONE-PLUS® and FREECOOL®. These patents are the result of specific research and development to solve real-world problems for their customers.

SCE's business model is built on long-term partnerships. "We're in business because of them and they're in business because of us and their success is our success," says Andersen.

In a significant development, SCE has also signed an agreement with the Finnish company Vaisala, a world leader in temperature, humidity, and air quality measurement.

"It becomes part of our portfolio to be able to represent them in the HVAC and industrial sectors", Andersen says.



FUCHS LUBRICANTS boosts plant efficiency with LCCP Audit



Ashleigh Pollen, national sales manager - Industrial and Speciality at FUCHS.

By FUCHS LUBRICANTS SOUTH AFRICA

IN the highly scrutinised business of food and beverage manufacturing, keeping your production line running smoothly is critical. Balancing operational efficiency, product quality, and adherence to stringent safety standards leaves little room for error.

FUCHS LUBRICANTS SOUTH AFRICA understands these challenges and now, in addition to their extensive range of food-grade lubrications, they are also able to help optimise your lubrication application and bring significant improvements to your plant with their new LCCP Audit tool.

What is the FUCHS LCCP Audit?

The Lubrication Critical Control Point (LCCP) Audit by

FUCHS LUBRICANTS SOUTH AFRICA is an in-depth study designed to assess lubrication risks and identify opportunities for improvement in food safety, maintenance efficiency, and energy cost savings. By conducting the LCCP Audit, FUCHS LUBRICANTS SOUTH AFRICA helps you avoid costs associated with the rejection of defective products, cross-contamination, or damage to your brand image.

Whether you're managing high-speed conveyors, heavy-duty mixers, or complex packaging machinery, the FUCHS LUBRICANTS SOUTH AFRICA LCCP Audit takes it all into account, providing tailored solutions for your specific needs.

Benefits of the LCCP Audit

- 1. Reduced Downtime:** By identifying and

addressing lubrication issues, the audit minimises equipment downtime, ensuring consistent production flow.

- 2. Improved Efficiency:** Optimised lubrication practices lead to smoother operations and increased output.
- 3. Cost Savings:** The audit helps reduce lubricant consumption and maintenance costs, directly impacting your bottom line.
- 4. Ensured Food Safety:** Proper lubrication safeguards against contamination, protecting consumer health and maintaining your brand reputation.
- 5. Energy Savings:** Efficient lubrication reduces friction, leading to significant energy cost reductions.

The LCCP Audit process - What to expect?

When you request a FUCHS LUBRICANTS SOUTH AFRICA LCCP Audit, here's what happens next:

- **Expert Visit:** One of our seasoned Sales or Technical experts will visit your facility for a detailed assessment of your lubrication practices.
- **Evaluation:** All lubrication points will be thoroughly evaluated, and

current products will be reviewed for effectiveness and safety.

- **Comprehensive Report:** A detailed lubrication report will be compiled and shared with you within a few days, outlining findings and recommendations for improvement.

"A robust focus on food safety is essential not only for protecting public health but also for ensuring business viability and fostering a positive reputation in the competitive market", says Warren Stevenson, Food Business Development Specialist at FUCHS LUBRICANTS SOUTH AFRICA.

"We are proud to bring our innovative LCCP Audit tool to local food and beverage manufacturers and to support them in achieving the collective goal of enhancing operational efficiency, reducing the risk of contamination, and ultimately contributing to a safer food supply chain," adds Stevenson.

Your trusted partner in food-grade lubricants

Beyond the audit, FUCHS LUBRICANTS SOUTH AFRICA offers the ISO 21469 certified CASSIDA range of food-grade products that meet the rigorous demands of industry.

"Whether in gear

units, hydraulic systems, or compressors, our products prevent contamination, ensuring the highest standards of safety, efficiency and regulatory compliance," explains Ashleigh Pollen, national sales manager - Industrial and Speciality at FUCHS.

"This also applies to sprays and single point lubricators, where FUCHS is one of the very few companies entitled to use the strict ISO 21469 mark. Also, kosher and halal certificates ensure that the lubricants meet stringent cleanliness requirements for Jewish and Islamic dietary laws," Pollen concludes.

Take control of your plant

Unlock the benefits of optimised lubrication practices with the FUCHS range of food-grade products and their expert LCCP Audit tool and services. Ensure your production line runs smoothly, translating to consistent quality and an improved bottom line.

Ready to take control of your plant's efficiency and safety? Request your FREE FUCHS LUBRICANTS SOUTH AFRICA LCCP Audit today and experience a world of difference.

<https://www.fuchs.com/gb-en/za/industries/f-m/food-grade-lubricants/lccp-audit/>

BMG's high-temperature furnace belts: Three times more service life



Knuckleback belts collect bottles from the furnace.

BMG's Power Transmission division supplies and supports a comprehensive range of conveyor components which is suitable for use in diverse sectors, including high-temperature applications, like glass bottle manufacturing, high-speed applications in bottling plants and food-safe conveying.

"Due to the extreme heat generated by furnaces in glass bottle manufacturing plants, we recommend installing flat top chains that operate efficiently at a safe distance from these high-temperature zones," explains Carlo Beukes, BMG's Power Transmission Division business unit manager. "For opti-

mal bottle handling and safety during production, we advise the following procedure: bottles should be conveyed from the furnace through a dedicated cooling system and then transported on a specialised Stainless-Steel flat top belt to the packaging area for final distribution."

"In high temperature conveying applications near ovens, kilns and furnaces, extreme heat causes conventional metal belts to stretch. This damage adversely affects performance and results in costly downtime for urgent repairs. BMG's Cambridge Knuckleback belts, which have been developed specifically for high-temperature applications, offer three times the belt-life of conventional furnace belts, ensuring minimal down-

time and reduced maintenance requirements."

Fully customisable high-temperature Knuckleback belts have a reinforced proprietary reverse back-edge weld that prevents belt breakage by moving the tension away from the weld point. This robust design reduces stretching and camber in high-temperature applications and extends belt life by strengthening and lengthening the connection between the belt's spirals and rods. The uniform surface helps remove excess deposits and minimises slag build-up.

These durable belts, which can withstand temperatures up to 1 176°C, are available from BMG in widths up to 5 080 mm. BMG also offers Knuckleback Platinum belts that undergo an additional treatment

process to reduce carbon diffusion, which extends belt life by an additional 25%.

All products for food handling, bottling and packaging applications are carefully selected by BMG specialists to meet the highest conveying and packaging standards in terms of reliability, flexibility, safety and consistent quality and hygiene controls. The company offers a technical advisory and support service throughout Southern Africa. Workshops and stock depots are equipped with the latest tooling and equipment and manned by skilled belting technicians.

For more information: <https://bmgworld.net/bmg/en/ZAR/All-Categories/Power-Transmission/Drive-Belts/c/E20101>

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MOVING YOUR WORLD

Amid US uncertainty, citrus industry looks to G20



Citrus Growers' Association CEO Dr. Boitshoko Ntshabele.

By Diane Silcock

FACING yet another serious challenge, South Africa's citrus industry is hoping the country's hosting of the G20 summit will soften the blow of US tariffs.

Challenges are not new to the industry, which is the world's second-largest exporter of citrus, contributing approximately R34-billion in foreign revenue per season.

The Citrus Growers' Association (CGA), however, is hopeful this latest threat to the industry can be countered to a certain extent. It sees a clear opportunity to leverage South Africa's role as G20 host this year to build diplomatic momentum and fast-track efforts to broaden market access for South

Africa's fresh produce.

CGA'S call for public-private partnerships and strategic diplomacy

With ministers from 19 countries arriving in South Africa, CGA CEO Dr. Boitshoko Ntshabele believes that herein lies the ideal opportunity for industry and governments to collaborate and work hand in hand by hosting sidebar meetings, sharing sector-specific pain points, and negotiating bilateral market access improvements.

"Before handing over the G20 to the US, we must try and take advantage of all the opportunities including negotiating deals with these ministers as they visit our shores, to deepen access in those countries where we already have markets, and to resolve and exchange questions. These efforts will benefit all G20 nations and support the G20's shared goal of fostering a thriving global economy," says Dr. Ntshabele.

Citrus industry on growth trajectory

The citrus industry is on a huge growth trajectory, according to the CGA. The latest estimates are that South Africa will

export about 180 million 15kg cartons this year. This is almost 15 million cartons more than what was exported in 2024. By 2032, the projection is 260 million 15 kg cartons with the potential to create 100 000 jobs. However, the 30% reciprocal US export tariff could impact this outlook.

Dr. Ntshabele says, "Our citrus industry is diversified and we export to over 100 destinations. We are trying to deepen market access where we are active but we are also looking at newer markets such as South East Asian countries, India, South Korea and Japan, and trying to recoup some of our lost market share in China."

However, he notes that developing new markets can take up to 15 years due to the need for pest risk assessments and strict sanitary and phytosanitary standards to ensure biosecurity and food safety.

Why is the US so important since only 5%-6% of South Africa's citrus is exported to it?

"Many rural communities in the Western and Northern Cape are heavily dependent on these exports," explains Dr. Ntshabele. "Towns

like Citrusdal — where citrus exports to the US form the economic heart of this town — are not so resilient to external shocks. The regions' growers have worked hard to develop this market, building relationships with exporters and US consumers.

"There is a deep appreciation of South African citrus by US customers, and exports to that market have almost doubled since 2017. 35 000 jobs are connected to US-SA citrus exports, so we could see job losses."

The CGA has appointed representatives in major export markets and is collaborating closely with South African government departments, embassies, and international citrus forums to close the loop between industry and diplomacy and to fast-track negotiations.

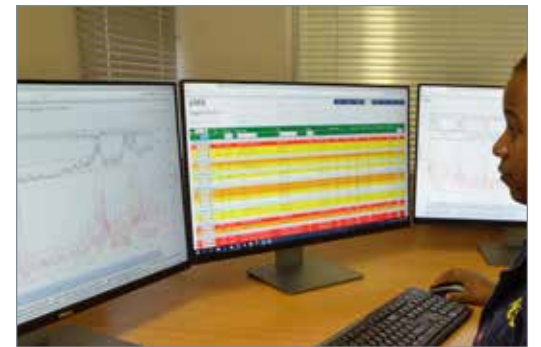
There is hope that these types of interventions will succeed in a growing industry that can play a crucial role in tackling South Africa's rising unemployment, while keeping consumers the world over interested in citrus.

Critical to this, as outlined by CGA, all role players in the industry must seize the opportunities presented by the G20.

Partnering with AES for thermal combustion optimisation: Cut fuel costs, boost steam plant efficiency

Fuel costs are only one piece of the puzzle

FUEL may dominate a boiler's operating budget, but it is just one lever in the complex chain of steam generation. "Air-to-fuel balance, heat losses and operator skill all interact. Managing those moving parts in real time demands specialist oversight," says Gavin Evezard, Projects Director at Associated Energy Services (AES).



Why outsource thermal combustion optimisation?

Plants whose core business is manufacturing rarely have the time, resources or deep experience needed to run high-performance steam systems. Dennis Williams, Commercial Director at AES, notes: "Our teams operate more boilers than any single client. We apply one proven standard across every site and pass new learnings straight on."

Because AES sells steam at a guaranteed Rand-per-ton price, the company carries the performance risk - covering any shortfall itself. That commercial model keeps total energy-plant cost visible and predictable.

Common steam-plant pitfalls

A site audit often uncovers hidden losses:

- Fuel-oil sludge blocking filters and burners.
- Air leaks that push hot gases - and profit - up the stack.
- Under-grate dampers and draft controls left uncalibrated.

Emission-abatement systems running below spec.

"These issues seldom surface until an unscheduled outage occurs," Williams says. "Taking a boiler off-line is when we find the real opportunities to optimise."

Data-driven improvements

"If we don't measure it, we can't manage it," Evezard emphasises. AES logs every critical variable—oxygen, stack temperature, blow-down rate, water chemistry—and turns that data into actionable insights. While remote monitoring and AI already help on gas- and oil-fired units, coal systems still need experienced operators to respond to fluctuating fuel quality.

Proven results: Up to 35 % efficiency gains

A recent multi-site engagement delivered 21 % fuel savings at one plant and 35 % at another through thermal combustion optimisation alone. Further gains are achieved by improving condensate return, water treatment and overall boiler-house management.

Safety and compliance built in

Combustion excellence is inseparable from safety. AES follows ISO 9001, 14001 and 45001 standards, runs routine statutory inspections and insists on surplus boiler capacity wherever possible so equipment can be rotated for maintenance without halting production.

Founded 25 years ago, AES is South Africa's leading specialist in steam and boiler operations and maintenance. The company supports clients in power generation, chemicals, pulp and paper, food and beverage, mining and more. Core services include:

- Risk mitigation and downtime reduction
- Efficient fuel procurement and combustion tuning
- Asset-lifetime care and energy-mix diversification
- Site-operations improvement and carbon-footprint reduction

AES invests heavily in training and equal-opportunity development, believing that sustainable industry growth benefits both communities and the environment.

DesignSpark keeps production lines moving

IN South Africa's food and beverage sector, unplanned equipment failures can significantly impact productivity and profitability. RS South Africa, a trading brand of RS Group plc, is helping manufacturers reduce downtime with its intuitive engineering design platform, DesignSpark.

Ageing machinery and mechanical failures are among the top causes of stoppages. DesignSpark allows maintenance teams to design and 3D print custom replace-

ment parts on-site, reducing the need for costly bespoke solutions or long lead times. DesignSpark Mechanical, in particular, is widely used to replicate worn or damaged parts quickly, combining them with standard RS components such as bearings and aluminium tubing.

With a library of over one billion manufacturer-approved parts linked to RS product codes, users can generate accurate bills of materials and streamline ordering.

The platform also offers professional-grade design tools, supported by tutorials and community forums, making it accessible to users with varying skill levels.

"From urgent repairs to long-term efficiency planning, RS empowers engineering teams to respond faster and reduce risk," says Erick Wessels, Sales Director at RS South Africa.

This design-led approach complements RS's broader offering of 800 000 stocked items



Erick Wessels, Sales Director at RS South Africa.

and industry-specific services, supporting smarter, more sustainable production across the sector.

We understand the challenge of finding the right balance between plant efficiency and compliance with industry standards and legal requirements.

OBSERVE + CONSERVE

You meet your efficiency goals and reduce costs without compromising on water quality.

Endress+Hauser

People for Process Automation

Veolia champions sustainability with funded environmental solutions

WITH over 170 years of global experience and a strong presence in South Africa, Veolia is leading the charge in helping local food and beverage industries meet their sustainability goals.

Backed by a global record of building over 1 000 water and wastewater facilities and managing more than 200 service contracts, Veolia is reshaping the environmental landscape for manufacturers across the continent.

At the heart of Veolia's offering is advanced water treatment technology, tailored to the critical needs of the food and beverage sector. From water purification to wastewater recycling, it ensures not only regulatory compliance but also significant reductions in water consumption. This is vital in South Africa, where water scarcity is an ongoing challenge. By optimising water use, the company helps industries build resilience against climate uncertainties while maintaining high production standards.

Veolia's innovative waste management strategies embrace a circular economy model, turning industrial by-products into valuable resources. Through its cutting-edge recycling and recovery processes, waste is transformed into energy or raw materials, reducing landfill use and creating new revenue streams for businesses. This model promotes sustainable growth and aligns perfectly with global trends toward zero waste.

Another critical pillar of our support is energy efficiency. Veolia's solutions, including co-generation systems and renewable energy integration, enable manufacturers to cut energy costs while lowering carbon emissions. In a region where energy reliability and pricing remain concerns, its systems offer long-term stability and sustainability.

We bring the power of digital innovation to our clients through smart monitoring and real-time analytics. Veolia's digital tools allow businesses to optimise operations, prevent issues before they arise, and make data-driven decisions that improve efficiency across the board.

Veolia's success in Southern Africa is built on deep local knowledge paired with a global expertise network. Its understand-

ing of regional regulations, climate realities, and economic pressures ensures that solutions are both relevant and impactful.

This tailored approach makes it a trusted partner in navigating the complexities of sustainable

industrial operations. Moreover, through a strategic partnership with Norfund, Veolia offers funded environmental solutions, giving industries across South Africa and Africa the financial and technical support needed to pursue de-

carbonisation, depollution, and resource regeneration.

In a sector where environmental performance is as crucial as product quality, Veolia stands out as a leader in sustainable innovation, helping food and beverage manufactur-

ers strive towards a greener future.

Learn more about transforming your business with Veolia Southern Africa: +27 11 663 3600 info.southafrica@veolia.com | <https://www.africa.veolia.com>



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SCE's integrated climate control systems optimise energy use, prevent condensation, and create stable, compliant environments across your cold chain. Whether managing temperature-critical logistics, high-traffic freezer access points, or moisture-prone production zones, SCE is your end-to-end partner for smarter, more sustainable, cold production halls, cold storage and refrigeration. Our integrated systems are trusted by some of Africa's top logistics, food, and pharmaceutical companies for their unmatched durability, energy savings, and long-term operational value.

Explore our full range of patented technologies:

DryJET® Ceiling Diffuser

It provides smooth airflow, across and from the ceiling to prevent warm air condensation on cold surfaces in cold production rooms. By creating a laminar air layer, it maintains consistent temperatures, keeps ceilings dry, and reduces HVAC size. It efficiently protects products and improves temperature-sensitive working environments.



DryJET-THERMAL®

It's an advanced thermal barrier air curtain that replaces strip curtains. It creates a high-velocity stream of the colder room air across doorways, minimising temperature loss and energy waste. By sealing the space with the spaces own air it maintains cold room integrity, improves

hygiene, and creates smoother operations.



DryZONE® & DryZONE-PLUS®

These permanent dry tunnel systems create a dry air shield at door-ways, preventing moisture and warm air from entering cold or humidity-sensitive areas. DryZONE-PLUS® enhances protection in high-traffic or high-risk environments, with the absence of strip curtains allowing fast operations 24/7 for continuous thermal and moisture defense.



DrySPACE®

It's an advanced airflow solution that keeps processing areas free from condensation and fog. By managing humidity and air movement while cooling the environment, it prevents moisture on surfaces and equipment, ensuring a cleaner, safer working environment while protecting product integrity and reducing maintenance and corrosion risks.



DryGYRO®

This unique Gyro and Carton Freezer

protection system, focuses on keeping the fast freezing device free from ice improving yield and reducing energy consumption. Further the DefrostMODE® accelerates defrost and dries the inside of the freezer for a clean, dry start-up after washdown.



Energy Recovery & FREECOOL® Systems

These systems repurpose excess cooling and waste energy from refrigeration, intelligently redirecting it within the facility to reduce energy demand, improve efficiency, and lower costs. They are ideal for sustainable HVAC, cold storage and processing environments aiming to maximise energy savings and performance.



WHY SCE:

- Cut refrigeration costs
- Maintain dry, condensation-free environments
- Eliminate strip curtains and high-maintenance doors
- Protect ceilings, floors, and air quality
- Ensure food safety and HACCP compliance
- Reduce your environmental footprint



Contact us

info@sc-engineering.co.za
sc-engineering.co.za
011 568 4440

CLEAN-UP & RECYCLE SA WEEK 2025: Make a difference where you work, live and play

South Africans are once again being called to action this spring as Clean-Up & Recycle SA Week 2025 takes place from 15-20 September 2025.

ORGANISED annually by Plastics SA, the umbrella body representing the entire plastics industry and supported by the packaging industry, this inspiring initiative encourages all citizens to take pride in their environment by actively participating in clean-up and recycling activities, making a difference where they work, live, and play.

September has become synonymous with “spring cleaning” the environment, and this year promises to be no exception. Throughout the month, various clean-ups will take place across the country, uniting communities, schools, businesses, and individuals in the shared goal of protecting our environment.

According to Douw Steyn, sustainability director at Plastics SA, the week highlights the importance of responsible plastic and packaging use, ensuring that plastic and packaging products are reused and recycled after use, and not allowed to pollute our rivers, beaches, or landscapes.

“Clean-Up & Recycle SA Week is more than just picking up litter; it’s about fostering a culture of accountability and respect for our environment,” says Steyn. “Plastics and packaging are valuable materials that should be recycled and kept in the circular economy. By working together to clean and recycle, we are preserving our natural resources and ensuring a healthier planet for generations to come.”

Highlights of the week include:

- National River Clean-Up Day – Wednesday, 17 September 2025
- National Recycling Day South Africa – Friday, 19 September 2025
- International Coastal Clean-Up Day / World Clean-Up Day – Saturday, 20 September 2025

Plastics SA and our partners will once again sponsor thousands of bright yellow branded bags, which will be distributed to coordinators and volunteers around the country. These bags will help collect and sort the litter gathered during the clean-ups.

While Plastics SA is spearheading the initiative, various material

streams (including paper, glass and metals) will also be involved, showcasing how collaboration between industries and citizens is key

to tackling pollution. “We invite everyone to join us — whether it’s at your local beach, riverbank, park, or neighbourhood. Each bag of litter

collected, each bottle or bag recycled, is a step towards a cleaner and more sustainable South Africa,” Steyn adds. Schools, businesses,

and communities are encouraged to organise their own clean-up events, register them online (www.cleanupandrecycle.co.za),

and share their successes on social media to inspire others.

For more information on how to get involved

in Clean-Up & Recycle SA Week 2025, visit www.cleanupandrecycle.co.za or www.plasticsinfo.co.za.



Let's
**Clean-up
and Recycle**
South Africa

Clean-Up & Recycle
S O U T H A F R I C A

Spring time is clean-up time.

This is the ideal time to turn our attention and efforts to cleaning up our environment. Every piece of litter that is carelessly discarded, makes its way via waterways, rivers and streams, to our oceans! As the weather warms up, head outdoors and make a difference wherever you are! At work, school or play, your smallest actions make the difference and create awareness!

SEPTEMBER 2025

15 – 20 Clean-up and Recycle SA Week	17 National River Clean-up Day	19 National Recycling Day	20 International Coastal Clean-up Day	20 Let's Do it World Clean-up Day
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The plastics industry and partners taking action www.cleanupandrecycle.co.za supported by global networks.



Metal packaging: The ultimate circular solution



Dr Kishan Singh, CEO of MetPac-SA.

METAL packaging is emerging as one of the most sustainable and recyclable packaging solutions worldwide. In South Africa, MetPac-SA - the Producer Responsibility Organisation (PRO) for metal packaging - is leading

efforts to improve collection, recycling, and sustainable design, helping to drive a circular economy.

“Metal packaging, whether used beverage cans (UBCs) or ferrous containers, is infinitely recyclable without loss

of quality. Every can recycled saves energy, conserves resources, and supports a greener economy,” says Dr Kishan Singh, CEO of MetPac-SA.

Designing for recyclability

A major focus is designing packaging that supports recyclability. By optimising can body and closure thickness using advanced forming techniques, manufacturers reduce material use while maintaining strength and performance. These design efficiencies lower raw material demand, cut energy use during production, and reduce carbon emissions.

Closing the loop with recycled content

Another key strategy is increasing post-consumer recycled content in metal packaging, in line with Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) regulations. MetPac-SA works with producers to source and certify recycled aluminium and steel feedstock, ensuring traceability and quality.

Aluminium, in particular, is a circular economy success story. Nearly 75% of the 1.5 billion tonnes ever produced is still in use. Globally, over 30 million tonnes of aluminium scrap are recycled annually, using up to 95% less energy than



producing primary aluminium.

“Each recycled beverage can is a testament to circularity. It can return to the shelf within 60 days, without losing strength or quality,” adds Dr Singh.

Smarter material choices

MetPac-SA promotes mono-material designs and compatible alloys to avoid contamination and improve recycling efficiency. Simplifying packaging by avoiding multi-material components or making them easy to separate enhances recyclability. Standardising parts - like closures and diameters - supports closed-loop recycling and eases sorting.

Eco-friendly coatings and inks, such as water-based or UV-curable systems, reduce emissions and support sustainable branding. Minimalist decoration, laser etching, and embossing reduce material layers while preserving shelf appeal.

Reuse, efficiency, and pollution reduction

While most metal packaging is recycled, certain products like tins, pails, and specialty cans are also designed for reuse. Durable and resealable containers extend the life of packaging while supporting refill systems.

Packaging logistics are improved through stackable, space-saving designs that reduce transport emissions and costs. Many manufacturers are also switching to lightweight alloys, energy-efficient equipment, and cleaner production processes to minimise air and water pollution.

“We urge the industry to consider the full lifecycle of packaging—from material choices and energy use to logistics and end-of-life disposal,” says Dr Singh.

Driving collection and recycling in South Africa

Through EPR schemes, MetPac-SA incentivises producers to reduce waste and ensure the materials they place on the market are responsibly collected and recycled. By working closely with informal waste collectors, recyclers, and local partners, the organisation strengthens recycling infrastructure and supports job creation.

“South Africa has made tremendous progress in recycling metal packaging, thanks in large part to the thousands of informal collectors retrieving cans daily,” notes Dr Singh. “Our goal is to continuously improve these systems and raise awareness to keep more metal in circulation and out of landfills.”

Building a circular future

With its durability, infinite recyclability, and low energy requirements, metal packaging plays a critical role in creating a more sustainable future. MetPac-SA's work in advancing design innovation, recycling, and producer responsibility shows how industry collaboration can turn circular economy principles into action.

“The circular economy isn't just an idea—it's something we're building every day,” concludes Dr Singh. “Metal packaging proves that performance and sustainability can go hand in hand.”

For more information, visit www.metpacsa.org.za



Shaping Tomorrow

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MetPac-SA is dedicated to leading the way in creating a sustainable future by focusing on metal packaging. As the registered Producer Responsibility Organisation (PRO) with the Department of Forestry, Fisheries, and the Environment, we take our sustainability pledge seriously. Here's how we're doing our part:

- **EPR Compliance:** We offer our members support by taking on part of their Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) related obligations. This ensures compliance with regulatory requirements and makes things easier for them.
- **Recycle & Reuse:** We aim to reduce waste management and encourage the recycling and re-use of metal packaging across the industry. This conserves resources and reduces the environmental impact.
- **Stakeholder Acceptance:** We collaborate with stakeholders, including the South African Government and the metal industry, to devise solutions that are both sustainable and acceptable in their form and operation.

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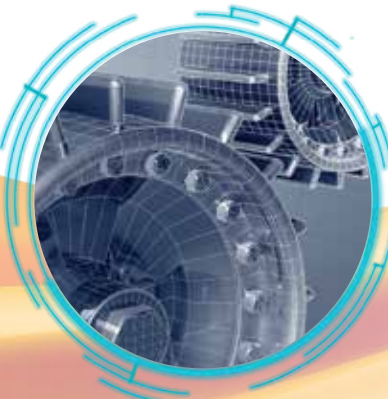

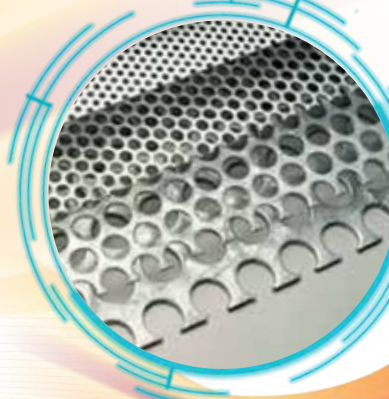
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Understand the solar energy hype

By Green Solar Academy

SOUTH Africa's solar boom is no longer confined to the renewable energy sector. Today, solar is a strategic cost-saving and risk-mitigation tool across multiple industries, including farmers installing off-grid systems for pumps and cold storage, property developers incorporating solar into tenant offerings, and school boards investing in solar for energy resilience and long-term savings.

The majority of these systems are no longer just about "keeping the lights on." Solar now sits at the intersection of operations, finance, compliance, and strategy, and it demands informed decision-making.

As it is with every new technology, you need to understand the basics to be part of the conversation and use it to your advantage. But how do you filter the noise in a space overflowing with tech jargon, product pitches, and contradictory advice? Find a training

"Solar now sits at the intersection of operations, finance, compliance, and strategy, and it demands informed decision-making."

According to the South African Solar Industry Association's (SAPVIA) 2024 industry report, the private sector has installed over 5 GW of embedded generation.

provider you can trust. GREEN Solar Academy, South Africa's leading PV training provider, offers short, focused courses that empower professionals at all skill



McDonald Sekoa at one of his installations. He is an active PV practitioner, like every GREEN trainer.

levels. You can get a technical deep dive or a broad yet relevant market overview.

- For commercial building owners and property managers: the 2-day Solar 101 course provides a clear understanding of what systems should deliver, how to interpret quotes,

and what to look for in a reputable installer, reducing the risk of expensive missteps.

- For sales teams and consultants, the Solar Sales Expert course dives into ROI modelling, lead qualification, and how to translate client needs

into technically sound proposals, essential for those selling solar solutions to commercial clients.

- For technical professionals and installation teams, the flagship SuperSolarSchool is a comprehensive 5-day course that leads up to the PV GreenCard Assessment, South Africa's most recognised installer qualification. It covers design, compliance, and installation best practices, and is ideal for electricians, engineers, and solar start-ups seeking credibility in a competitive market.

Not quite your industry? We train teams across sectors. Let's explore what's possible for yours.

With over 10 000 participants trained across the continent, GREEN Solar Academy offers a practical, hands-on learning experience grounded in real-world insight. Courses are developed and delivered by active industry professionals (designers, installers, and sales experts) ensuring content that is up to date, immediately applicable, and aligned with South African standards.

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GREEN Solar Academy has been training solar professionals in South Africa since 2012 and is the 2025 recipient of the SAPVIA Empowerment Through Skills Development Award.



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Stratek Global leads small modular reactor project in SA

SOUTH Africa is set to make history with the construction of Africa's first privately funded small modular nuclear reactor (SMR). Energy technology firm Stratek Global has secured land in the North West province, near the Gauteng border, to build its demonstration SMR plant — a major leap forward in the country's efforts to diversify energy sources and reduce carbon emissions.

The project has been greenlit through a formal land agreement with the Matlosana Municipality and will be anchored around the HTMR-100, a high-temperature gas-cooled modular reactor designed by Stratek. The unit will not only generate power but also serve as a training and demonstration facility to support local skills development in nuclear science and engineering.

What makes the HTMR-100 unique?

The HTMR-100 is a next-generation small modular nuclear reactor designed to produce 35 MW of electricity or 100 MW of thermal energy. Unlike conventional reactors, which require large-scale water cooling systems, the HTMR-100 uses helium gas as a coolant and graphite as a moderator. This makes it safer, water-independent, and ideal for deployment in dry or remote regions.

The reactor is modular and can be factory-built and transported for installation — a key advantage in a country like South Africa, where energy needs are dispersed and infrastructure development faces geographic constraints.

Private investment enters South Africa's nuclear space

Unlike the Koeberg Nuclear Power Station - South Africa's only commercial reactor operated by state utility Eskom - the HTMR-100 is privately funded. Stratek Global, under the leadership of nuclear physicist Dr. Kelvin Kemm, is spearheading this R9-billion project with backing from private investors and international partners. This marks a new chapter for nuclear energy in the country, as independent projects like this one pave the way for more agile, scalable, and investor-driven energy solutions that operate outside of government bottlenecks.

SMRs offer a clean energy solution for heavy industry

Small modular reactors are gaining global

traction for their ability to provide stable, low-carbon power to industries such as mining, manufacturing, and agriculture, sectors where energy reliability is essential.

Stratek's SMR aims to fill the gaps left by intermittent renewable sources and ageing coal plants, while of-

fering a zero-emissions alternative to diesel and gas.

With rollout plans extending beyond South Africa into neighbouring African countries, the HTMR-100 could catalyse a continental shift in how clean energy is produced and distributed.

What's next for the project?

Stratek Global plans to complete the demonstration unit by 2030. If successful, it could trigger a wave of SMR deployments across Africa and position South Africa as a leader in small-scale nuclear innovation. The project arrives

at a critical time, as the country grapples with energy shortages, infrastructure challenges, and mounting pressure to meet climate commitments. The rise of small modular nuclear reactors in South Africa could be the turning point in achieving both energy security and decarbonisation goals.



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NewElec motor protection for power distribution systems

NewElec's advanced relay solutions enhance the safety, control, and operational efficiency of electrical infrastructure



ELECTRICITY is the backbone of modern society, powering homes, industries, and critical infrastructure. For electrical utilities, engineers, and infrastructure developers, ensuring reliable power distribution is essential to sustaining growth and development. NewElec specialises in delivering advanced motor protection relays and earth leakage solutions designed for the electrical distribution and utility sector.

The company's solutions safeguard electrical networks while reducing unplanned outages, improving diagnostics, and supporting intelligent control systems. They understand the chal-

lenges faced by electrical engineers, utility operators, and EPC contractors, ranging from ageing infrastruc-

NewElec's relay solutions are purpose-built to provide comprehensive protection for transformers, feeders, switchgear, and distribution panels.

ture and remote installations to increasing compliance demands.

NewElec's relay solutions are purpose-built to provide comprehensive protection for transformers, feeders,

switchgear, and distribution panels. Whether their customer is managing substations, maintaining MCC panels, or integrating renewable energy sources, NewElec provides the tools to maintain control, safety, and up-time.

Trusted motor control and relay solutions engineered for substations, MV panels and power control centres

Products are designed to ensure the protection and reliability of electrical systems across distributed locations. From primary substations

to secondary distribution boards, NewElec's relay systems prevent major breakdowns and reduce the risk of fire or equipment failure.

With free front-end configuration software

and intuitive diagnostics, the solutions provide powerful data visibility and user control. NewElec relays feature communication-ready protocols and integration flexibility across voltage levels and panel designs.

NewElec's advanced relay solutions are widely adopted in municipal and private substations, electrical engineering and EPC projects, power distribution boards and MCC panels, mining and industrial distribution centres, and renewable energy installations.

Intelligent protection solutions

With robust performance across voltage variations, temperature fluctuations, and network harmonics, NewElec delivers intelligent protection solutions - including distribution protection relays, earth leakage relays, and feeder protection systems - that ensure continuous up-time, equipment longevity, and optimised operations across the electrical utility value chain.

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Milestone reached as solar shines in SA's Bid Window 7



SOUTH Africa's solar energy sector has reached a pivotal moment with the allocation of six major solar PV projects under Bid Window 7 of the Renewable Energy Independent Power Producer Procurement Programme (REIP-PPP), affirming the central role of solar in the country's energy future.

The Department of Electricity and Energy's latest announcement awards a total of 1,290 megawatts (MW) of capacity to solar projects, all secured by members of the South African Photovoltaic Industry Association (SAPVIA). It's a resounding endorsement of the industry's maturity, competitiveness, and ability to deliver at scale.

Two companies led the charge: Scatec was awarded three projects totalling 700MW, and Red Rocket South Africa secured three projects contributing 590MW. All projects are located in the Free State, a province with abundant solar resources and significant potential for regional economic upliftment.

This brings the total capacity allocated under Bid Window 7 to more than 3,200MW, making it the most solar-intensive round since the REIPPPP launched.

The outcome highlights the technology's growing contribution to South Africa's energy security and decarbonisation efforts.

Dr. Rethabile Melamu, CEO of SAPVIA, called the announcement a "powerful signal of confidence in the solar PV industry and our members' capabilities," adding that the results reflect the sector's resilience and innovation in the face of ongoing policy and infrastructure challenges.

"Bid Window 7 proves that solar PV can deliver clean, utility-scale energy reliably and cost-effectively," said Melamu. "The solar industry is not just keeping the lights on—it is helping South Africa pivot toward a low-carbon, inclusive and economically sustainable energy future."

According to SAPVIA, the country's total operational solar PV capacity now stands at 8,969MW. This includes 2,287MW from previous REIPPPP rounds, 540MW from

the Risk Mitigation IPP Procurement Programme, and a notable 6,142MW from private sector installations, which have surged due to reforms enabling distributed generation and private power purchase agreements.

While residential solar uptake has eased somewhat since the reprieve from load-shedding in March 2024, the commercial and industrial market remains robust. SAPVIA anticipates further growth as battery energy storage systems become more cost-effective and widely integrated.

However, the association warns that grid access constraints are emerging as a critical bottleneck to further expansion. Provinces with high solar potential - including the Northern Cape, Free State, and North-West - are facing capacity limits due to outdated or under-resourced transmission infrastructure.

SAPVIA has welcomed the recent NER-SA consultation on grid capacity allocation rules and has submitted formal input. "Implementing transparent queuing and connection procedures will be vital in unlocking the next wave of renewable energy projects," said Melamu.

The association also called for accelerated investment in national grid infrastructure, strengthened municipal capacity within Eskom's Grid Access Unit, and the deployment of grid-enhancing technologies. Finalising the Integrated Resource Plan and establishing a functional wholesale electricity market were also highlighted as priority enablers.

"The future of South Africa's energy system depends not just on how much renewable energy we generate, but how effectively we connect it to the grid," said Melamu. "We urge all stakeholders to create the right enabling environment to unlock greater investment, accelerate project delivery, and ensure that renewable energy reaches every corner of the country."

Financial close for the newly awarded Bid Window 7 projects is expected in early 2026.

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Karoo Basin petroleum potential: Survey enters next stage

By Staff Writer

THE Department of Mineral Resources and Energy has completed the first phase of its investigation into the extent of petroleum resources of the Karoo for possible extraction.

The government has concluded 85% of Phase 1 of the survey for its Shale Gas Project in the Karoo Basin, said Minister of Mineral Resources and Energy Gwede Mantashe in his budget speech last month.

The government has long seen the extraction of shale gas in the region as a way to increase energy independence, but the move to assess the scale of possible petroleum deposits was new, and followed the discovery of “microseepage of oil in the basin.”

Petroleum potential assessment begins stage two

“This project is aimed at understanding the petroleum resource potential and carrying out an environmental baseline in the area. Phase 2 of the project has officially commenced to acquire new high-resolution geophysical data using 2D seismic, airborne magnetic and magneto-telluric methods,” Mantashe said.

News of the completion of Phase 2 followed the department approving the survey late last year, to assess the extent of “petroleum and assess any potential geological risks related to the exploration for and the production of petroleum” in the southern Karoo Basin.

Karoo Basin petroleum risk mapping

At least six districts across the Northern, Eastern and Western Cape provinces were being covered in the research study. The land within the defined area consists of state-owned land, privately owned farmlands, commonage land, and communal land managed by tribal authorities.

The survey will assist with the “identification and delineation of areas” that could be considered too risky from an environmental point of view and should be excluded from shale gas development.

Karoo Basin exploration for energy independence

In his speech, Mantashe stressed that this type of oil and gas exploration was needed to enable South Africa to become more energy independent. This commitment to energy independence could be seen in the

R46,1-million allocated to the Petroleum Agency South Africa (PASA) for the implementation of the Shale Gas Project.

Aside from the survey in the Karoo, he noted that recent oil discoveries in Namibia’s Orange Basin have led to considerable interest by oil and gas companies since it was believed that the Na-

mibian discoveries extend southwards into South Africa.

He said the discovery of gas and condensate from Block 11B/12B in the South Outeniqua Basin had also proven that South Africa’s under-explored deep waters have significant potential for oil and gas.

“This has signalled a need to accelerate

exploration efforts. Despite TotalEnergies leaving the block, there remains a good opportunity for other players to partner with the remaining operator and develop the block.”

The former South African national oil company SOEKOR’s survey of the area was done between 1966 and 1971. A new survey was need-

ed as the data from that survey was outdated and of poor quality.

The survey in the Karoo consists of 2 246-line km of 2D reflection seismic surveys, 21 253-line km of airborne magnetic and radiometric surveys, and approximately 2 318 magnetotelluric stations, which will be deployed along the seismic profiles.



Minister of Mineral Resources and Energy Gwede Mantashe.

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Green hydrogen powers South Africa's industrial future



By Adrian Ephraim

SOUTH Africa is emerging as a green hydrogen powerhouse, with the Western Cape at the forefront of a national drive to harness this clean energy source. From Saldanha Bay to the Karoo, large-scale projects, policy roadmaps, and international partnerships are taking shape, signalling a major shift in the country's energy landscape and opening significant business opportunities.

At the heart of this movement is the promise of a cleaner energy system that can drive economic growth, attract foreign investment, and reindustrialise key sectors. For South African businesses, the green hydrogen value chain is fast becoming a viable and lucrative proposition.

Strategic vision fuels green hydrogen growth

The Western Cape government has positioned itself as a front-runner with the release of its Green Hydrogen Strategy in 2024. The plan aims to produce 420 000 tonnes of hydrogen annually by 2035, powered by 15 GW of renewable en-

ergy. Key to this vision is infrastructure like the Saldanha Bay Industrial Development Zone (IDZ), now being developed as a multi-modal hydrogen export hub.

Premier Alan Winde has described green hydrogen as a practical, long-term economic strategy capable of attracting billions in foreign direct investment and creating thousands of skilled jobs. The province is also collaborating with the Northern and Eastern Cape on a proposed Green Hydrogen Corridor, leveraging solar and wind resources, deep-sea ports, and export potential.

Flagship projects gain momentum

Several projects are already progressing beyond the planning phase. One of the most significant is the CSIR-led Saldanha Hydrogen Hub. Supported by national and provincial stakeholders, Phase 1 includes master planning for integrated hydrogen production, processing, and export.

In Vanrhynsdorp, Keren Energy is developing a smaller-scale but strategic project targeting 800 tonnes of hydrogen annually. With engineering

design and permitting completed, it aims for financial close by late 2025 and production by 2028, offering a proof point for local viability.

Meanwhile, Phelan Green Energy is developing a R47-billion, 2.5 GW solar and wind facility near Saldanha. This massive renewable energy project will supply power for hydrogen production and potentially export surplus electricity.

Global partnerships drive confidence

South Africa's hydrogen ambitions are attracting global attention. The European Union recently pledged R700-million in grants to help Transnet develop hydrogen-ready infrastructure. In the Eastern Cape, the Coega IDZ secured \$5.8-billion for a green ammonia project, underlining rising international appetite.

Speaking at the Africa Green Hydrogen Summit in Cape Town, President Cyril Ramaphosa called green hydrogen "a key pillar of South Africa's energy and economic future." That optimism is echoed by investors.

"Africa could become the world's dominant green hydrogen

player due to its abundant solar and wind resources," says Alberto Gambacorta, Executive Vice President for Scatec in Sub-Saharan Africa. "It could offer the world's cheapest energy in future, driving growth and competitiveness."

Business opportunities along the value chain

The green hydrogen economy presents significant industrial opportunities. Engineering and construction firms are needed to build electrolyzers, pipelines, and port infrastructure. Manufacturers can produce components such as fuel cells and turbines. Logistics firms will be essential for transport, while financial and legal service providers are needed to structure deals and manage risk.

Research and skills development are also gaining traction. Universities like UWC and Stellenbosch are working with partners to train technicians and engineers for the sector.

Platforms such as Ampli Energy - a Sasol and Discovery joint venture - are helping corporates procure renewable energy through flexible wheeling agreements and innovative purchasing models.

Challenges to address

Despite the momentum, barriers remain. Regulatory uncertainty, slow permitting processes, and high infrastructure costs could hamper growth. Clear policy frameworks, faster approvals, and greater coordination across government will be crucial to unlocking the full potential of green hydrogen in South Africa.

MV XLPE cables: Aberdare's greener power solution



IN a significant step toward sustainable electrical infrastructure, Aberdare Cables has introduced a new, environmentally friendly solution to replace the ageing and less sustainable medium-voltage (MV) paper-insulated lead cables (PILC) still widely used in South Africa's coastal regions and wetlands.

While PILC cables have long been favoured for their durability and resistance to moisture, thanks largely to their oil-impregnated paper insulation and lead sheathing, their environmental drawbacks are becoming harder to ignore. Oil contamination from cable faults and the hazardous disposal of lead components pose serious environmental and regulatory challenges. Most countries have already phased out the production of PILC cables due to these concerns. Yet South Africa remains one of the few, if not the only, nations still manufacturing PILC cables for new installations, primarily for use in wet environments and select mining operations.

MV XLPE cables for harsh environments

Recognising the need for a cleaner, more efficient alternative, Aberdare Cables has developed a new generation of MV XLPE (Cross-linked Polyethylene) cables designed specifically for harsh, moisture-rich environments. These cables not only match PILC cables in moisture resistance but also offer superior electrical

performance and are significantly more environmentally responsible.

Aberdare's innovation lies in enhancing the mechanical performance of MV XLPE cables through the incorporation of a radial water-blocking feature using aluminium laminate technology. This design breakthrough addresses one of the primary reasons users have hesitated to switch from PILC, concerns about water ingress and cable lifespan in high-moisture areas.

included when required by users.

Most MV cables on the local market offer only longitudinal water blocking — an approach that is simpler to implement but often inadequate in areas with persistently high groundwater levels. Radial water blocking, by contrast, provides a more comprehensive defence against moisture penetration and is commonly used in high-voltage (HV) cables rated between 44kV and 132kV, typically using corrugated seamless aluminium (CSA) sheathing.

"Recognising the need for a cleaner, more efficient alternative, Aberdare Cables has developed a new generation of MV XLPE (Cross-linked Polyethylene) cables designed specifically for harsh, moisture-rich environments."

Innovations in environmentally friendly MV cables

Manufactured locally at Aberdare's Stanford Road facility in Port Elizabeth, the new MV XLPE cables are now ready for deployment across South Africa and international markets. The product complies with the South African National Standards (SANS) 1339:2020, which governs MV cables rated from 6.6kV to 33kV. This standard specifies that both longitudinal and radial water-blocking features must be in-

Aberdare's new MV XLPE cable technology brings this level of protection to the medium-voltage space, offering a robust, eco-conscious solution for utilities, municipalities, and industries operating in South Africa's most water-prone areas.

With this innovation, Aberdare is not only aligning with global best practices but also helping to future-proof South Africa's power infrastructure with a cable that is both high-performing and environmentally friendly.

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Redstone CSP: South Africa's first molten salt solar tower



By Adrian Ephraim

South Africa has quietly flipped the switch on one of its most ambitious energy projects to date - the Redstone Concentrated Solar Power (CSP) plant in the Northern Cape. And with that, the country has staked its claim as a serious contender in the global race for dispatchable renewable energy.

The 100 MW facility, developed by ACWA Power in partnership with the Central Energy Fund and the Industrial Development

Corporation (IDC), is the first of its kind in Africa to deploy tower-based CSP technology with molten salt storage. More than a technological milestone, Redstone represents a shift in thinking: from adding megawatts to the grid to building grid resilience and reliability in a volatile energy landscape.

A solar plant that doesn't sleep

The core innovation behind Redstone CSP is its thermal energy storage - an elegant

solution to one of renewable energy's most pressing challenges: intermittency.

Using over 12 000 heliostats to concentrate sunlight onto a central tower, the plant heats molten salt to temperatures exceeding 560°C. The stored heat is then used to produce steam and generate electricity for up to 12 hours without sunlight, delivering baseload-like performance that's traditionally been the domain of fossil fuels.

In practical terms, that means Redstone can power over 200 000

households day and night, without relying on coal or diesel peakers. And for a country wrestling with energy insecurity and an ageing coal fleet, the implications are significant.

Local jobs, global innovation: The Redstone impact

Located near Postmasburg in the Northern Cape - a region rich in solar resources but historically underdeveloped - the project is also a statement of industrial intent.

During construction, Redstone created over 2 000 jobs, with local content making up a substantial portion of the supply chain. Among the stand-out contributors was Steel Xperts, a South African engineering firm that designed and built the plant's complex molten salt storage tank - a first for the local industry and a benchmark for local manufacturing

capacity. At 250 metres, the tower itself is now the tallest CSP structure on the continent, underscoring the scale and ambition of the project.

Redstone CSP's \$800m milestone

Getting to this point wasn't easy. With a total investment of over \$800-million, Redstone's financial close in 2021 marked a critical milestone not just for the project but for investor confidence in South Africa's Renewable Energy Independent Power Producer Procurement Programme (REIPPPP).

Support from multilateral development banks was essential. The African Development Bank (AfDB) contributed \$50-million in senior debt, while the Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA) backed the project with \$88-million - one of the largest

commitments to a single renewable energy asset in South Africa to date.

Their participation wasn't just about funding - it was a vote of confidence in CSP as a long-term solution for energy storage in Africa.

Redstone as a grid game-changer

Unlike wind or PV solar, CSP with storage offers dispatchable power that can be scheduled and dispatched according to demand - a feature that becomes invaluable in a grid plagued by variability and outages.

As load shedding continues to disrupt economic activity, Redstone CSP sets a new benchmark for what's possible when energy reliability meets clean innovation. It also supports the Just Energy Transition, offering an inclusive model that addresses both decarbonisation

and local economic development.

Can Africa replicate Redstone's CSP success?

The launch of Redstone raises a bigger question: can this model be replicated elsewhere on the continent?

The answer may hinge on more than sunlight. South Africa brought together deep institutional capacity, a maturing procurement framework, and strong financial partnerships to get this over the line. Replicating that alignment won't be easy, but Redstone has proved it's possible - and economically viable.

For a continent rich in solar potential, the plant is more than an engineering feat. It's a strategic proof point for how Africa can leapfrog legacy infrastructure and build a sustainable, secure energy future on its own terms.



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CFAO: Why electric empty container handlers are the future of SA Ports



South African Ports enter a new era of electrification

As major infrastructure upgrades and digital transformation efforts take hold at South Africa's ports, the need for sustainable, high-efficiency port equipment is more urgent than ever.

Lenny Naidoo, national product Specialist for Heavy Lift at CFAO Equipment, says that electric empty container handlers are not just a cleaner alternative - they're a strategic asset in the transition toward greener, faster port operations.

"As port activity grows, so do carbon emissions," Naidoo explains. "Electric equipment is key to ensuring this growth doesn't come at the environment's expense."

CFAO's Konecranes E-ACE: Built for high-performance and zero emissions

The Konecranes E-ACE Electric Emp-

ty Container Handler, distributed by Heavy Lift, is purpose-built for demanding port environments. Capable of stacking up to 10 empty containers high, the E-ACE matches the top speeds and lift capacities of diesel models, while delivering between 6 to 12 hours of runtime and a rapid one-to-two-hour charge time.

"You're getting the power of diesel without the emissions or downtime," Naidoo says.

Smart features designed for congested port environments

In busy terminals like Durban, Ngqura, Cape Town, and Port Elizabeth, the E-ACE's smart features deliver a clear operational edge:

- Load control and stability systems for safe, high stacking
- Advanced HMI (Human-Machine Interface) displaying battery stats and alerts

- Fleet-wide integration through the Konecranes digital platform
- Port automation compatibility for seamless integration with Terminal Operating Systems (TOS)

These features improve both safety and productivity while aligning with global port automation trends.

Energy efficiency that saves time and costs

The E-ACE's intelligent energy management system optimises power distribution using advanced hydraulic pumps, inverters, and motors. Features like Eco Drive modes and regenerative braking can cut energy consumption by up to 20%, extending battery life and reducing total cost of ownership.

"Smart energy use is just as important as smart handling," says Naidoo. "We're talking real savings and sustainability."

Remote monitoring and predictive maintenance with TRUCONNECT®

The E-ACE includes TRUCONNECT®, Konecranes' remote diagnostics and reporting tool. It provides:

- Real-time performance data (battery status, error logs, operating hours)
- Predictive main-

tenance alerts to reduce downtime

- Usage analytics to help fleet managers cut costs and boost productivity

This makes the E-ACE ideal not just for seaports, but also for inland container depots (ICDs) and dry ports near urban centres.

Designed for sustainability and operator comfort

With no tailpipe emissions, low noise, and reduced vibration, electric empty container handlers are ideal for operators and environmentally conscious terminals alike.

"It's not just about emissions. It's about comfort, safety, and building a smarter supply chain," says Naidoo.

Electric equipment is the obvious choice for South Africa's ports

CFAO's Heavy Lift division is setting a new standard with electric port equipment that's built for durability, safety, and performance. As ports across South Africa look to reduce emissions and increase throughput, the Konecranes E-ACE Electric Empty Container Handler offers a proven, future-ready solution.

"We're proud to lead this shift," says Naidoo. "This is how ports evolve - smarter, faster, and greener."

Seascope Marine Services named official Seakeeper agents for sub-Saharan Africa



SEASCAPE Marine Services is proud to announce its official appointment as the authorised agent for Seakeeper, the global leader in marine gyroscopic stabilisation.

This partnership positions Seascope as the exclusive representative for all Seakeeper sales and after-sales support, as well as servicing across Sub-Saharan Africa.

This milestone collaboration brings together nearly 75 years of trusted marine engineering expertise from Seascope Marine Services and over 20 years of cutting-edge innovation from Seakeeper. The partnership marks a new era of vessel stabilisation access for the African continent, enhancing comfort, safety, and performance across a wide range of marine applications, from commercial fleets to private yachts.

"We're excited to

partner with a globally respected brand like Seakeeper," said Jamie de Jong, Director of Seascope Marine Services. "This is more than just a product offering - it's a promise to our clients that they'll have access to world-class stabilisation solutions, with reliable, local support right here in Africa."

"...Seakeeper's innovative gyroscopic technology is changing the way vessels perform in rough seas."

As the demand for greater operational efficiency and comfort on the water continues to rise, Seakeeper's innovative gyroscopic technology is changing the way vessels perform in rough seas. With Seascope now handling Seakeeper's

footprint in the region, clients across sub-Saharan Africa can expect faster access to products, expert installation, and dependable after-sales service - all from a name they already know and trust.

"Africa's maritime market is growing, and with that comes the need for proven technology and reliable partners," added Jamie de Jong. "This partnership means our clients no longer have to look overseas for stability solutions - they're right here, backed by a team with local knowledge trained on Seakeeper products."

This partnership strengthens Seascope's long-standing commitment to advancing maritime innovation throughout the continent and now also ensures clients have direct access to the latest in gyroscopic stabilisation technology from Seakeeper.

Port of Cape Town sees revival despite US tariffs

By Diane Silcock

THERE'S been a marked turnaround at the Port of Cape Town after years of a lack of upgrades at South Africa's ports, which culminated in last year's logistical crisis costing South African exporters and industries billions of rands. But the US tariffs could scupper the gains made over the past 12 months. This is according to Exporters Western Cape, an organisation which represents the province's diverse export community.

The organisation, which works closely with port authorities, government, and international trade partners to fa-

cilitate improved export conditions and advocate for trade-supportive policies, says that operations at Cape Town terminals have "improved exponentially" compared to a year ago, with container movement and turnaround times significantly enhanced.

Port performance exceeds expectations

"The Cape Town Container Terminal (CTCT), Cape Town Multi-Purpose Terminal (CTMPT), and the Fresh Produce Terminal (FPT) have all reported exceeding operational targets in recent weeks," says Terry Gale, chairman of Exporters Western Cape. "We've

seen a turnaround—performance is better, and the port is ready for exports. It's a big change from where we were even six months ago."

Gale attributes this to stakeholder engagement and upgrading of outdated and unreliable infrastructure. A major win has been the gradual resolution of a severe equipment shortfall. The port previously suffered from a dramatic decline in rubber-tyred gantries (RTGs).

Second-hand replacements from the US proved unreliable, but a new batch of RTGs has already enhanced the movement of containers at the terminals. A further 11 RTGs are due to arrive in September

for the peak summer export season, which will further boost container-handling capacity.

Direct US route gives Cape Town competitive edge

Gale points out that a major strength of Cape Town's port is its direct route to the US East Coast. "Once the vessel leaves Cape Town, it's full steam ahead, arriving in New York within 16 to 18 days. It's a quick transit time and a weekly service, hence it's been a very big selling factor for South Africa."

This has made the US South Africa's most profitable and accessible trade market from the Western Cape,

especially for perishable exports like citrus, grapes, and blueberries.

"By contrast, exports to other markets, such as Singapore and Australia, are routed through hubs with transit times being 50 to 60 days. That kills the market for time-sensitive goods," says Gale.

Looking ahead: Unity, investment and political will

Even though the momentum in the Port of Cape Town is positive, Gale says public-private partnerships are essential for long-term success, and if South Africa is to attract foreign investors, the process should not be fraught



Terry Gale, chairman of Exporters Western Cape.

with delays and objections, which has been the case.

He expressed how concerning the US reciprocal tariff is. "The Western Cape is our most profitable region, and the US is our biggest and best trade market. Our produce is ready to export, the port

is ready for the vessels, so this is not the setback that we need. As the organisation representing the export market, we will continue to lobby to government to forge speedily ahead with continued negotiations in the hope that the tariff can be overturned," concludes Gale.

THE NEXT GENERATION

Internships, Skills & Development Programmes

Alasia Moutzis' inspiring journey with SPAR South Africa

IN THE often unpredictable world of retail, Alasia and Stratos Moutzis faced an extraordinary challenge just eight days into their venture. The roof of their newly opened SPAR store in Lorraine, Port Elizabeth, collapsed, only prevented from hitting the floor by the store's shelving.

Despite this dramatic beginning, the Moutzis family, with support from SPAR's head office, reopened the store six months later. This second chance was the cornerstone of a fruitful 35-year journey with the SPAR brand.

A legacy of growth and innovation

After their initial hurdles, the Moutzis family expanded their retail footprint, opening a KWIKSPAR in the city and the Figtree SPAR in Lorraine. Eventually, they consolidated their efforts into the Newton Park SUPERSPAR, which opened in 1999. This store became a pioneer in transforming grocery shopping into a destination experience, a vision overseen by Alasia and her family.



Following Stratos' passing in 2017, Alasia's daughter, Narissa, stepped up to lighten her mother's load, utilising training from the SPAR Academy of Learning. With her mother's guidance, Narissa took over day-to-day operations, ensuring the store's continued success. In 2021, Alasia's dedication was recognised with the prestigious National SPAR Retail Award, acknowledging her commitment to SPAR's values in customer service, community engagement, and store performance.

Empowering women in retail

Alasia has made significant contributions to SPAR's brand, serving on the marketing board for the Eastern Cape and the regional and national Guilds. Notably, she was the first woman to serve on the national Guild, advocating for the unique strengths women bring to retail, such as customer connection and attention to detail. Her impact is evident in her community involvement, supporting nonprofits, animal welfare, and monthly events for senior customers.

SPAR's commitment to entrepreneurial growth

According to Mpudi Maubane, PR and Sponsorship Manager at The Spar Group, the brand is committed to fostering entrepreneurship and supporting community store owners. SPAR's strategy includes empowering women like Alasia, with over 30 women storeowners across South Africa.



The SPAR Academy of Learning plays a key role in developing future female leaders and store managers, aiming to bridge the gender gap in retail.

Action points for aspiring retailers:

- Embrace challenges: View unexpected events as opportunities for growth.
- Engage with your community: Build strong relationships with local organisations and customers.
- Leverage training opportunities: Make the most of learning programmes to enhance management skills.
- Celebrate diversity: Recognise and utilise the unique contributions women bring to retail.

Unforeseen changes and new opportunities have shaped Alasia Moutzis' rewarding career with SPAR, transforming her life from running an aerobics studio in Athens to owning a successful retail business in South Africa. Her journey is a testament to the power of resilience and seizing unexpected opportunities.

Baker Hughes Foundation supports Feenix's Continued Innovation



THE Baker Hughes Foundation has continued Baker Hughes' support for South African youth by awarding a grant of \$30 000 (approx. R550 000) to Feenix, A Public Benefit Organisation, established in 2017 in response to South Africa's #FeesMustFall movement, aiming to bridge the financial gap in tertiary education.

As a tech-enabled crowdfunding platform, Feenix connects students at high risk of financial exclusion with individual and corporate donors through Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives, as well as Skills Development Bursary Programmes, enabling them to fundraise for their outstanding academic fees while providing wraparound support services to ensure student success, graduation, and economic mobility.

In many ways, the story of Feenix's bursary programme cannot be told without mentioning Baker Hughes.

The relationship between Feenix and Baker Hughes began in 2018. Baker Hughes seeks meaningful ways to contribute to youth development and transformation across the globe. Feenix, in turn, was evolving its model and exploring how to connect with corporate funders to extend its reach. In Baker Hughes, they found not just a funder, but a partner, one willing to pioneer a bursary programme rooted in purpose, struc-

ture, and long-term impact.

What followed was the co-creation of Feenix's first formal bursary programme. It became a blueprint for student support that included student selection, mentoring, tracking outcomes, and building a shared cohort of resilient young people.

Between 2019 and 2022, the collaboration supported 86 students at 20 public universities and relieved more than R4-million in student debt.

By the end of 2023, 89% of Baker Hughes-funded graduates had moved beyond the NEET (Not in Employment, Education or Training) label. Many had not only found work but were also paying it forward.

Their names tell a bigger story. Young people like Siyabonga, who is now an Engineer in Training at Transnet. Musa, whose qualifications opened doors in the telecommunications industry, and Ntombikayise "Ntombi" Bhengu, whose Feenix-funded academic journey culminated in a master's degree, a leadership role at P&G, and the launch of a literacy business transforming childhood learning. Proof that the ripple effect of access extends far beyond the lecture hall.

This next chapter, through support from the Baker Hughes Foundation, is not a beginning; it's a continuation of a commitment. Previously, Baker Hughes supported Feenix through skills development funding. This grant will help enable Feenix to scale operations.

Simo-Sihle Mvinjelwa, Baker Hughes SSA Region Transformation, Diversity and Belonging Leader, has been closely involved with the Feenix partnership since its early days, recognising the platform's potential to drive lasting change in South Africa's education landscape.

Reflecting on the continued collab-

oration, Mvinjelwa shared: "At Baker Hughes, we're committed to contributing to communities by sharing our time, talent, and resources to help solve some of humanity's biggest challenges. Education and opportunity are central to that mission. Our continued support of Feenix reflects our belief in scalable, tech-driven solutions that open doors for young South Africans. Through this partnership, we're proud to help create more equitable access to higher education, taking a powerful step toward a more inclusive future."

Feenix CEO, Cara-Jean Petersen, shares what this means for the organisation: "This grant from the Baker Hughes Foundation represents so much more than financial support; it's a deliberate investment in our capacity to innovate. It gives our team the breathing room and backing to explore what's possible: to enhance our technology, reach more students through deeper engagement, and strengthen our fundraising capacity by bringing more co-creative partners into our ecosystem. With this support, we can turn ideas into action, scale our impact, and continue building a future where access to education is not dependent on wealth"

The Baker Hughes Foundation joins a growing list of partners who recognise that access to education is a catalyst for social mobility, economic growth, and generational progress. "We are excited for the opportunity to grow our relationships with the global giving team, and we look forward to the impact that we are going to be able to make in the coming months," adds Cara-Jean.

For more information:
<https://www.feenix.org/>

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EQ advantageous in high-pressure environments - Dyna Training

By Roland Innes, Group CEO at DYNA Training



DESPITE emotional intelligence (EQ) being the key to building resilience and trust in high-stakes, high-stress environments – whether in elite sports or business – many organisations still struggle to cultivate emotionally intelligent, high-performing teams through effective leadership.

Instead, companies typically prioritise critical business metrics, including revenue, safety and operations as being essential to their success, while others emphasise that their people represent their most valuable assets.

Just as championship teams rally around a shared vision, businesses must embrace EQ to drive both individual and organisational excellence.

Success, whether in sports or corporate leadership, begins with a unified goal that every team member commits to. When individuals see their personal growth as tied to collective achievement, it fosters collaboration, strengthens resilience, and shifts the mindset from self-interest to shared success.

Like captains who rally their teams with conviction, strong leaders do not just set goals, they inspire belief in them. That emotional investment transforms a group into a unified force, driving resilience through setbacks and shared triumphs. Once that buy-in is secured, managing emotions – both highs and lows – becomes more structured, as individuals recognise their role within a greater purpose. Whether on the field or in business, true leadership turns ambition into collective momentum.

Directing emotions to strengthen the collective

From there, it is about refining how those emotions are channelled. Some individuals need encouragement, others need structure, and some thrive on competition. Leadership is not about suppressing emotions but about directing them in a way that strengthens the collective.

It is about recognising that some individuals thrive under tough accountability, while others need a more supportive approach. That is where EQ really matters – knowing who needs what to perform at

their best.

If a leader chooses to ignore the emotional undercurrents in a high-pressure work environment like a mining operation, they risk creating a team that feels unheard, unsupported and disengaged. Suppressing frustration and anxiety does not eliminate them – it amplifies them beneath the surface, leading to resentment, burnout, and a breakdown in trust.

Just as captains steady their teams under pressure, corporate leaders must recognise that ignoring emotions in high-stakes moments can fracture trust and derail performance. When fear replaces motivation, decision-making suffers, collaboration weakens, and blame takes precedence over problem-solving.

A leader who acknowledges challenges openly, validates concerns and fosters a psychologically safe environment can channel emotions into problem-solving. Addressing frustration does not mean dwelling on negativity; it means recognising it, then pivoting toward collective resilience. When people feel heard, they are more likely to buy into solutions rather than resist them.

Success is not just about skill and strategy

Business leaders, like captains of elite sports teams, must too recognise that success relies not only on skill and strategy, but also on relationships and EQ. Whether in sport or the workplace, meaningful interaction beyond the immediate environment builds trust, empathy, and stronger connections.

Leadership plays a crucial role in enabling this. EQ goes beyond managing emotions—it involves understanding group dynamics, sensing the mood, and creating an environment where people feel valued and heard. When leaders focus on building this foundation, motivation grows naturally, and the team advances as a united whole rather than as disconnected parts.

Similar to elite sports captains who prepare their teams for every scenario, corporate leaders in high-stakes environments must balance preparation, accountability and emotional resilience. Success is not just about strategy; it is about ensuring every individual understands their role within the broader mission.

Ultimately, when leaders foster a culture where every individual sees themselves as part of something greater, personal disappointment does not derail the team's momentum. Instead, the focus shifts to collective success.

Editor's Note: Former sports legends Victor Matfield and Andre Arendse recently attended a breakfast event centred on Emotional Intelligence (EQ) and Leadership in Sport. The gathering brought together sporting heroes and business leaders to explore how EQ has shifted from a perceived "soft skill" to a strategic necessity in both sport and business.

CRM systems: growth engine or survival tool?

By Adrian Ephraim

FOR many Cape Town businesses, CRM systems promise to streamline operations, improve customer relationships, and unlock new insights. But according to Hayley Blane, Dynamics 365 CE Practice Head and Solution Architect at Braintree, the reality often falls short of the promise.

"Too many companies assume all CRM systems are the same, and simple enough to set up themselves," Blane explains. "That's where things start to unravel." Businesses end up with underpowered systems that can't scale or deliver meaningful reports, leading to low adoption and minimal return on investment.

CRM systems: strategy before software

This is especially problematic for small and medium-sized enterprises in sectors like retail, tourism, and manufacturing. The solution, says Blane, is to begin with strategy, not software. "You need to define your goals and pain points first, then evaluate CRM options with those in mind. Involve specialists who understand both your industry and the technology."

But what happens when you've already gone down the wrong path? Blane refers to this as "CRM quicksand" - when companies find themselves locked into fragmented systems that no longer meet their needs.

"A good CRM provides a 360-degree customer view across all channels — from phone and email to WhatsApp and social media."

These systems may lack basic accessibility, provide clunky interfaces, or fail to give a unified view of the customer. "You end up stitching together multiple tools to do what one well-designed platform could achieve," she says.

CRM solutions: balancing cost and value

One of the biggest pitfalls, especially in the South African market, is choosing CRM solutions based on cost alone. "The cheapest option often becomes the most expensive in the long run," Blane warns. Implementing a system without certified architects or neglecting change management processes only compounds the problem. "User buy-in is critical. If employees don't see the value or aren't involved from the start, adoption will suffer."

Measuring CRM success shouldn't be limited to sales metrics, either. Blane highlights customer retention, reduced duplication of effort, and more effective marketing as key indicators of value. A good CRM provides a 360-degree customer view across all channels — from phone and email to WhatsApp and social media. This visibility reduces operational inefficiencies



Hayley Blane, Dynamics 365 CE Practice Head and Solution Architect at Braintree.

and enables more personalised, responsive service.

CRM automation: efficiency and scalability

Cloud-based CRM systems can also relieve internal IT teams by managing uptime and storage, cutting infrastructure costs. "You don't need in-house servers or maintenance teams — and many platforms now offer mobile apps with offline functionality, which is crucial in data-scarce environments," she adds.

As for concerns around AI and automation, Blane advises starting small. "Features like autofill, smart prompts, or virtual assistants that schedule appointments can make a big impact without overwhelming teams or breaking budgets." These tools streamline processes and help employees focus on higher-value tasks.

Perhaps the most powerful feature a CRM can offer is scalability. For South African businesses, this means a phased rollout — what Blane calls the "land and expand" model. "Start with one division or function, solve a specific problem, and build from there." She shares an example of a client who replaced four different systems by gradually adding service, sales, marketing, and portal functionality — all within one CRM platform. "They saw value at every stage without disrupting operations."

CRM scalability: land and expand model

For Cape Town's business community, the takeaway is clear: a CRM system can absolutely be a growth engine - but only if it's chosen with care, aligned to business goals, and implemented with expert guidance. "It's not about the latest features," says Blane. "It's about fit, usability, and long-term value."

If your CRM isn't helping your business move forward, it might be time to reassess whether it's really a solution or just another survival tool in disguise.



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