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Business News

FOUNDED 1980 | National Distribution | SEPTEMBER 2026

Mooted Port of Cape Town Wind Shields could reduce export disruptions

Transnet explores wind shields and advanced predictive modelling to curb weather-related disruptions at South Africa's key export gateway.

By Larry Claasen

TRANSNET is considering installing wind shields to mitigate the impact of severe wind, which has seriously disrupted export operations at the Port of Cape Town.

The impact of high winds hangs over the port's ability to export produce, despite a R3,4 billion investment in rubber-tyred gantries (RTGs) to improve the performance of the port late last year, and the acquisition of four new hybrid straddle carriers worth R96 million in July.

In February, Transnet Group CEO Michelle Philips said extreme winds, with speeds exceeding 100 km/h –120 km/h, meant the new RTGs could not be operated for 30 days between November and December. The RTGs shut down completely at wind speeds of 90 km/h or above for safety reasons.

Wind shields on the table following CSIR study

In response to questions from CBN, Transnet confirmed it is actively investigating the "feasibility of installing wind shields" to reduce the impact of severe gusts on port operations. The move follows a comprehensive study by the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), which identified wind mitigation as a priority.

The installations of wind shields could be an effective tool when it comes to mitigating the impact of high speed wind on the port's operations.

The Port of Castellón in Spain, for example, completed the installation of dust-trapping screens at its South Dock, which not only reduced particles generated from handling solid bulk cargo from blowing into the surrounding areas, but also cut wind speed behind the screens by 60%.

The canvas screens at the Port of Castellón consist of a fabric specially designed for wind reduction which alters wind speed and turbulence.

Predictive modelling offers smarter decision-making

Aside from the possibility of putting in place wind shields, Transnet said it used the CSIR study to develop and improve its wind prediction model.

This provided the rail and port monopoly with more accurate forecasting to support operational decision-making and enabled more effective planning for recovery following significant wind events.

This means, the port is better able to react to lulls between severe wind sessions by having its staff ready to resume full operations when wind speeds drop off.

In August, the CSIR announced it had developed PortOps, a decision-support platform developed for the Transnet National Ports Authority (TNPA), which will assist the Port of Cape Town in improving container planning and handling operations at its container terminal.

PortOps is designed to support cargo owners, the fresh produce industry and exporters.

The CSIR said its predictive wind model, scheduled for release later this year, will also deliver more reliable wind predictions across two forecast horizons by integrating wind operability forecasts with operational decision support.

"The availability of this technology is opportune, as the Port of Cape Town continues to experience extremely strong summer winds that hinder productivity at this critical global trade gateway. While every effort is made to ensure reliability, forecasts remain subject to uncertainty," says CSIR engineer Johan Kieviet. "Weather remains one of the biggest operational constraints, as ships cannot be loaded in high winds."

During the pilot phase, validation results achieved up to 85% operability prediction accuracy between September 2025 and January 2026.

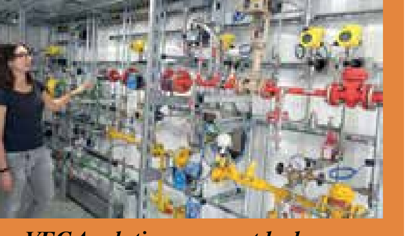
Climate resilience central to long-term planning

Transnet added that the impact of climate change was central to the 'weather proofing' of the port.

"Climate change and its impact on port operations are important considerations in

Continued on P2

VEGA: Precision measurement for the hydrogen economy



VEGA solutions support hydrogen processes with real-time, reliable field data.

THE hydrogen economy is shifting from concept to reality as industries pursue lower-carbon energy, energy security and reduced dependence on fossil fuels. Safe hydrogen use in hard-to-abate sectors such as heavy industry, long-haul transport and chemical processing depends on precise control across production, storage, distribution and end use.

Hydrogen production is typically grouped into grey, blue and green pathways. Grey hydrogen is made from natural gas via steam methane reforming and produces significant carbon emissions. Blue hydrogen uses the same process with carbon capture and storage, while green hydrogen uses renewable-powered electrolysis for a near-zero-emissions route as renewable costs fall.

Despite its promise, hydrogen brings demanding technical and safety challenges. Its small, light molecules leak and diffuse easily, and its wide flammability range requires strict control. Accurate pressure, temperature, level and flow measurement are essential to protect people and assets, maintain efficiency and support compliance.

Storage and transport add complexity. Hydrogen can be compressed, liquefied or moved via carriers such as ammonia or liquid organic hydrogen carriers. Each route needs measurement technology matched to its conditions, from cryogenic sensors and high-pressure monitoring to compatible instruments for safe chemical-carrier handling.

Read full article on page 6

Mooted Port of Cape Town 'Wind Shields could reduce export disruptions

Continued from p1

TNPA's planning for the Port of Cape Town. The work currently being undertaken with the CSIR reflects the importance of understanding evolving weather patterns and their potential impact on operations, with the aim of strengthening resilience and improving operational planning."

In addition to its work with the CSIR, Transnet said it collaborates closely with shipping lines and logistics partners and has implemented a standardised, step-by-step recovery process to improve port operations.

"As part of its long-term planning, TNPA will continue to assess opportunities to strengthen the Port of Cape Town's resilience to adverse weather while supporting improved operational performance," the parastatal said.

Lost hours mount despite progress

Despite these efforts, the impact remains severe. Between November 2025 and February 2026, wind-related stoppages cost the port a total of 1,026 hours – compounding the challenges for fruit exporters in the Western Cape. Transport Minister Barbara Creecy, responding to parliamentary questions, noted that wind-related stoppage hours surged from 479 hours to 915 hours during the 2025/26 export season.

Nevertheless, Transnet reported that the Cape Town Container Terminal recorded improvements in both productivity and annual throughput volumes.

The progress was driven by new equipment and a range of operational improvement initiatives – though clearly, the weather remains the dominant variable.

Project preparation key to fast-tracking South Africa's infrastructure pipeline

President Cyril Ramaphosa addressed attendees at the Sustainable Infrastructure Development Symposium South Africa (SIDSSA), hosted by Infrastructure South Africa (ISA) in Cape Town in August.

PROJECT preparation, once a stumbling block in the way of critical infrastructure development, has been significantly improved in South Africa, paving the way for the faster implementation of Strategic Integrated Projects (SIPs).

This is according to South African President Cyril Ramaphosa, who was addressing the Sustainable Infrastructure Development Symposium South Africa (SIDSSA), hosted by Infrastructure South Africa (ISA) in Cape Town.

The event brought together over 1,200 local and pan-African government officials, infrastructure industry experts, project sponsors, investors, financiers and technical professionals, to review progress on national Strategic Integrated Projects.

The President said: "One of the most important lessons we have learned is that South Africa doesn't suffer from a shortage of infrastructure proposals, but our constraint was that too many of them were not adequately prepared."

He said: "We recognised that our infrastructure system was too fragmented, causing delays and escalating costs, and there were too many projects that did not progress. That gave rise to the reform processes through which we have strengthened coordination through the Infrastructure Development Act and the work of ISA to help prepare and advance the SIP pipeline. ISA identifies blockages and brings the relevant institutions together to solve them.

"We expect ISA to ensure that the pipeline progresses, that projects are properly planned, that funding is secured and that procurement takes place when it is supposed to," he said.

"The economic imperative for this is clear. South Africa's level of investment is far below what is required to achieve faster and more sustained economic growth. The gross fixed capital formation of the country, which measured investment in productive assets such as infrastructure, stood at around 12% in 2025 - less than half the 30% investment level envisaged in the National Development Plan for 2030. These figures should alarm us and motivate us to work with greater urgency to build the infrastructure our country needs.

"As we meet at SIDSSA, we can say with confidence we are moving ahead at a greater pace. The estimated capital value of our SIP portfolio has grown to approximately R340 billion in 2020 to over R1.7 Trillion - that is phenomenal growth."

He added: "The project pipeline is becoming more mature, and our attention must now be focused on converting plans into prepared projects, investment, construction and ultimately infrastructure that supports economic activity and improves the lives of our people."

He said ISA played a vital role in coordinating and facilitating SIPs.

Dean Macpherson, South Africa's Minister of Public Works and Infrastructure, told delegates at SIDSSA: "To move projects forward, we also launched South Africa's project bid window initiative, with our first-of-its-kind R600 million commitment to project delivery support in 2024. Through this, ISA is helping public institutions develop high-value projects into bankable and investment-ready opportunities.

"ISA now provides preparation support to 26 projects with a value of R150 billion. A further R60 billion in projects is in Bid Window II, while Bid Window III opened in July this year. The strength of the programme lies in its bespoke approach to prepare projects properly, take them to market and support them to financial close," the Minister said.

Over the past 18 months, ISA has also committed R131 million to supporting local government infrastructure. In Matjhabeng Local Municipality, an investment of approximately R1.8 million to prepare a non-revenue-water programme across a network of around 1,700 kilometres helped unlock an R800 million debt-financing facility from the Development Bank of Southern Africa.

Through the Presidential Adopt-a-Municipality pilot, ISA is helping Metsimaholo, Govan Mbeki, uMngeni and Ramotshere Moiloa municipalities prepare projects seeking to unlock approximately R7 billion in water, sanitation, energy and waste-management investment.

Macpherson said: "These figures demonstrate the multiplier effect of proper project preparation - it unlocks billions in infrastructure investment."

Freeport Saldanha SEZ unlocks R4bn investment after legal resolution

Landmark agreement resolves years of conflict between the Ports Act and SEZ Act, paving the way for a national pilot framework and a major green-hydrogen hub.

By Larry Claasen

THE red tape holding up the development of Freeport Saldanha – the Special Economic Zone (SEZ) in Saldanha Bay – is finally being cleared, opening the door to major investments.

Established in 2013 as the first SEZ to incorporate a working port, Freeport Saldanha was designed to attract investment in oil, gas, marine and related services.

Ports Act vs SEZ Act: a legislative clash

However, its progress has been hamstrung by a persistent "misalignment" between the National Ports Act – which dictates that Transnet runs the country's ports – and the SEZ Act, which places SEZs under provincial control. According to a presentation to parliament in June, the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition (DTIC) said the conflicting legislation over who was responsible for what had created investor uncertainty and resulted in slow project execution.

This legislative dilemma carried significant financial consequences.

It created confusion over the respective obligations of the two entities, undermining coordinated investment and long-term commitment, and making it difficult to attract outside investors.

Provincial report warns of litigation risks

A report by the Western Cape provincial legislature, released in March 2025, echoed these concerns and highlighted the legal risks. "The lack of alignment between the Port Act and the SEZ Act has caused significant challenges," the report stated. "Numerous engagements took place, at times nearly leading to litigation, due to substantial investments in port land rental without any tangible returns."

Breakthrough: Commercial Terms Framework agreed

Fortunately, this issue is now being addressed. In the same parliamentary presentation, the DTIC confirmed that a Commercial Terms Framework (CTF) and lease agreement between Freeport Saldanha and the Transnet National Ports Authority (TNPA) was being concluded.

The CTF is regarded as a critical step towards ensuring sustainable, mutually beneficial operations within the zone and providing much-needed investor certainty.

R4 billion in committed projects on the horizon

The agreement is already unlocking lucrative opportunities. "The finalisation of the CTF and forthcoming conclusion of a new long-term lease between Freeport Saldanha and TNPA will unlock R4 billion in committed investments that require access to land and enabling infrastructure on the TNPA-owned portion of the SEZ," the department added.

The DTIC also argued that there is now a clear opportunity to harmonise implementation through bespoke regulations for SEZ–port interfaces, including standardised head-leases, clarified risk-sharing and single-window approval. "Freeport Saldanha is the most logical 'sandbox' to pilot this proposed new National Port–SEZ Framework before rolling it out to other SEZs and ports," it said.

GoTyme Bank SME loans deliver R17 Billion to 90,000 businesses in one year

Flexible repayments tied to business performance are helping SMEs manage cash flow.

GoTyme for Business Group Executive, Miguel Da Silva.

By Larry Claasen

GoTyme Bank says its working capital offering, which does not require collateral, has seen it grant R17 billion in working capital loans to 90,000 businesses in about a year.

The digital bank, founded in 2015, says its working capital lending products are gaining traction because they are designed specifically with SMEs in mind.

Lending built around how SMEs actually trade

"When you speak to these business owners, they feel neglected, they feel unsupported and unheard. And it's not just about giving them another bank account. Entrepreneurs are looking to get paid fast, manage their unpredictable cash flows," says GoTyme for Business Group Executive, Miguel Da Silva.

This is why it provided them with a user friendly interface and by assessing businesses on their actual performance. This means cash is advanced to them based on their turnover, and not on collateral and or if they've got assets to back the funding.

Flexible repayments ease cash flow pressure

GoTyme also takes turnover into account when it comes to repaying the loan.

"When the business does well, it pays a bit more. When the business has a bit of a downturn, it pays less," Da Silva says.

This flexibility on repayment enables businesses to better manage their cash flow particularly when it comes to seasonal highs and seasonal lows.

"Our objective here is really to make the whole process of funding simple, easy to understand, and to give the business owner the ability to make decisions very fast. They need to have certainty that when they do so, the whole process is frictionless," said Da Silva.

70% of SMEs return for additional funding

So far, these efforts have paid off. Of the 90,000 businesses that accessed its working capital loans offering, 70% of these business owners come back for additional funding.

GoTyme has also turned 70,000 of these businesses into a community.

Flex for Business: Mentorship and peer support

"The entire journey of an entrepreneur is actually full of challenges and can be quite lonely. So we designed and launched something called Flex for Business. Basically, it's a free entrepreneur community app which offers mentorship, events, resources, financial education, and support for businesses on what's relevant in the market," Da Silva says.

The app allows founders to talk to each other on a platform. This peer-to-peer connection is "incredibly powerful," Da Silva says, because it allows business owners to ask sensitive questions.

"You'd be very surprised how other business owners are very supportive and ready to help other business owners."

The payoff for this type of support has been huge for these businesses. A trader at a weekend market, for example, built a large enough revenue and customer base to move to a physical location, which in turn become multiple locations.

Da Silva, however, also points out that though there are many successes, often a business just needs some breathing room to deal with an emergency. "Funding can be used for both purposes."

Data-Driven lending beyond the balance sheet

Though GoTyme has gotten buy-in from businesses when it comes to using its finance products, it is well aware of the risk that comes with lending money to fledgling businesses.

To mitigate this risk, it bases its lending decisions on information on how the businesses are actually trading, and not just on what the balance sheet shows.

Da Silva says TymeBank looks at bank statements, point-of-sale data, accounting records, purchases, supply data and, in some cases, the business's social media.

"What we're trying to really understand is to get a real-time picture of how the business really trades. And once you understand that, you can see the consistency."

IN THIS ISSUE

From waste to raw material: Recycled plastics find new commercial markets

By Tarryn-Leigh Solomons

SOUTH Africa's plastics recycling industry is moving beyond collecting and processing waste, with recycled polymers finding new commercial markets across construction, packaging, household products and manufacturing.

This shift was highlighted at the 2026 South African Plastics Recycling Organisation (SAPRO) Awards in Cape Town, where products manufactured using post-consumer plastics showed how material traditionally destined for landfill can be turned into commercially viable products.

SAPRO General Manager Oliver Bonstein said developing sustainable end-markets for recycled material is critical to increasing recycling rates.

"To give recycled material a fighting chance, you need innovation, companies putting it into new products and into places it hasn't been used before," he said.

But collecting and processing more plastic solves only part of the problem. As South Africa's Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) framework places greater emphasis on recovering and recycling plastic waste, the industry also needs sufficient demand for the recycled material it produces.

EPR investment supports recycling capacity

Polyco CEO Patricia Pillay said businesses need to adapt as technology, climate pressures and changing global markets reshape their operating environment.

She pointed to more than R100 million in projects approved by Polyco to support businesses in the recycling sector, including investment in infrastructure.

"That's EPR in action. EPR works," Pillay said.

Polyco operates an EPR scheme for plastic packaging on behalf of producers, importers, brand owners and converters.

Pillay said supporting recyclers extends beyond recognition through awards and includes responding to infrastructure and operational needs. She also encouraged businesses to invest in research, collaboration and new applications for recycled materials.

Waste finds new commercial uses

The SAPRO Awards demonstrated how recycled plastics are finding applications across different industries.

The overall award went to MAK Plastics for its BOPP Wash Basin, manufactured from 100% post-consumer heavily printed BOPP. The material can be difficult to recycle because of its inks, contaminants and composition, yet the product has already used 960 tonnes of recyclate.

Construction also emerged as an important end-market, with three products manufactured from 100% post-consumer LLDPE receiving Gold awards in the Construction and Building category.

Innovation extended into the wine sector, where the Eco-Flat Wine Bottle, developed by Safripol, Polyoak Packaging and Stellenbosch Vineyards, received the Gold Award for Innovation.

Other Gold winners included the Strata Nova Light in the Creative category, Tuffy Refuse Bags in PCR Demand Champions, and Organics and TRESemmé bottles in Packaging.

The Plush Suede Renew Range lids received the Special Award for Technical Achievement.

From recycling targets to market demand

The products recognised at the awards point to a broader commercial challenge for South Africa's recycling sector: recovering more plastic will have limited impact if viable markets do not exist for the recycled material produced.

Greater use of post-consumer recycled content in manufacturing can stimulate demand for recyclate, reduce reliance on virgin polymers and keep more plastic in productive use rather than sending it to landfill.

Growing these markets could also strengthen the business case for investment in recycling infrastructure and give recyclers greater certainty that recovered material has somewhere to go.

For South Africa, this presents an opportunity to treat plastic waste not only as an environmental challenge, but as a manufacturing resource with economic value.

The products recognised by SAPRO show that commercial applications already exist across several sectors. The challenge now is to expand those markets and take recycled plastics from individual product innovations into wider manufacturing use, creating more consistent demand for the material recovered through South Africa's recycling system.

Table View beachfront project now in final phase with refurbishing of ablution facilities

THE City has made significant progress with the upgrade of the Table View beachfront, with major infrastructure upgrades now being completed.

The final phase of the project entails the refurbishment of the ablution facilities at Dolphin Beach and Bokkomsbaai, among others. If all goes as planned, the project will conclude before the festive season.

The upgrade of the Table View beachfront commenced in July 2022 and included major improvements to rehabilitate and revitalise what is one of the city's prime tourist attractions along the Atlantic coastline.

The work is taking place along a stretch of 3km of coastline from Dolphin Beach in the south to Bokkomsbaai in the north, and entails rehabilitating the dune system, improving pedestrian access to the beach and parking, creating a new pathway along the coast, implementing sand management, and upgrading various facilities, services, and infrastructure.

"We are now in the final stretch with all of our efforts focused on meeting the project deadline. On this note, I want to thank the local businesses and residents for their ongoing support over the past four years," said the City's Deputy Mayor and mayoral committee member for spatial planning and environment, Eddie Andrews.

Precision measurement: The foundation of effective climate control

By Specialised Climate Engineering®

IN any climate-controlled environment, the equipment doing the heating, cooling, ventilation or dehumidification tends to get most of the attention. But behind every control decision is something much smaller: a sensor measuring what is actually happening in the environment.

Temperature, humidity, CO_2 and differential pressure data tell a climate control system when and how to respond. Accurate, stable measurement allows equipment to respond to actual environmental demand, maintain specified conditions and perform consistently.

"World-class instrumentation delivers its greatest value when it is correctly specified and integrated into the system it controls."

The importance of that data increases as the environment becomes more critical. A poorly specified, incorrectly applied or inaccurate transmitter can affect the entire control strategy. Equipment may operate unnecessarily, increasing energy consumption, while conditions can move outside specification. In critical facilities, inaccurate measurement can introduce compliance risks, compromise product integrity, disrupt production, and increase operating costs.

The level of measurement required depends on what the environment is protecting and what the business needs the system to achieve.

A small variation in an ordinary occupied space may have relatively limited consequences. The same variation in a pharmaceutical environment, cleanroom, cold store, climate-sensitive manufacturing process or data centre can be considerably more significant.

Before a sensor is selected, we begin by understanding what is being controlled and why, to determine the accuracy, stability, durability and measurement technology required at each point. Is the priority product safety, regulatory compliance, energy efficiency, process consistency, indoor air quality, or equipment protection?

Room transmitters monitor CO_2, relative humidity and temperature in occupied environments and cleanrooms, while wall-mounted instruments can serve more demanding HVAC and industrial environments. Duct and immersion transmitters provide feedback within air-handling and process systems, while differential-pressure measurement supports applications such as filter monitoring, room pressurisation and cleanroom airflow. Outdoor instruments provide environmental information for outdoor-air compensation, while handheld meters support diagnostics, commissioning and spot-checking.

The objective is not simply to install more sensors but to measure what matters and where it matters.

Initial accuracy is only one part of measurement performance. Long-term stability determines how reliably a transmitter continues feeding accurate information into the control loop. Drift increases recalibration requirements and maintenance interventions, while creating the risk of a system making decisions based on increasingly inaccurate information between service intervals.

This is why Specialised Climate Engineering® (SCE®) chose to partner with Vaisala for HVAC measurement in South Africa. The technology is engineered for continuous industrial duty, from sub-zero cold stores to high-humidity processing environments, combining precision with long-term stability. Minimal drift means calibration can be measured in years rather than months, while selected instruments carry two- to five-year warranties.

For facility operators, this supports reliable control with fewer recalibrations, less maintenance and a lower total cost of ownership.

World-class instrumentation delivers its greatest value when it is correctly specified and integrated into the system it controls.

Through SCE®'s authorised Vaisala partnership, we assess the application, understand the performance requirements, identify the appropriate measurement technology and integrate it into the control strategy from the outset, rather than treating the transmitter as a standalone component.

This is particularly important within the specialised environments we engineer. In systems such as DrySPACE® and DryWORKS®, accurate measurement provides the feedback needed to verify that the temperature, humidity and environmental conditions the system was designed to maintain are actually being achieved.

For facilities focused on energy efficiency, compliance, productivity and consistent environmental conditions, measurement is fundamental to how effectively the entire system performs.

By combining Vaisala's measurement technology with SCE®'s climate engineering expertise, integration and local support, SCE engineers a measurement strategy around the performance requirements of the facility itself.

For more information, email info@sc-engineering.co.za or visit www.sc-engineering.co.za and www.andinnovate.co.za

VEGA: Precision measurement for the hydrogen economy

VEGA solutions support hydrogen processes with real-time, reliable field data.

THE hydrogen economy is shifting from concept to reality as industries pursue lower-carbon energy, energy security and reduced dependence on fossil fuels. Safe hydrogen use in hard-to-abate sectors such as heavy industry, long-haul transport and chemical processing depends on precise control across production, storage, distribution and end use.

Hydrogen production is typically grouped into grey, blue and green pathways. Grey hydrogen is made from natural gas via steam methane reforming and produces significant carbon emissions.

Blue hydrogen uses the same process with carbon capture and storage, while green hydrogen uses renewable-powered electrolysis for a near-zero-emissions route as renewable costs fall.

Despite its promise, hydrogen brings demanding technical and safety challenges. Its small, light molecules leak and diffuse easily, and its wide flammability range requires strict control. Accurate pressure, temperature, level and flow measurement are essential to protect people and assets, maintain efficiency and support compliance.

Storage and transport add complexity. Hydrogen can be compressed, liquefied or moved via carriers such as ammonia or liquid organic hydrogen carriers. Each route needs measurement technology matched to its conditions, from cryogenic sensors and high-pressure monitoring to compatible instruments for safe chemical-carrier handling.

VEGA's measurement portfolio addresses these requirements across the hydrogen value chain. For gaseous hydrogen tanks, VEGABAR 83 measures pressure using a hydrogen-compatible stainless-steel, oil-free thin-film cell for stable, reliable performance. An optional gold-coated diaphragm helps reduce diffusion, supporting dependable measurement in critical storage applications.

In green hydrogen production, electrolysers depend on precise control of water purity, temperature, current density, level and pressure.

Even small deviations can reduce efficiency or shorten stack life. VEGA solutions support these processes with real-time, reliable field data. VEGABAR 28 measures PEM electrolyser inlet and outlet pressure for hydrogen and oxygen, offering Bluetooth setup and BAM-assessed oxygen ignition resistance. For water control, VEGAPULS 6X provides non-contact radar level measurement, while VEGAFLEX 81 offers guided-radar level measurement for small ranges or vessels with internal installations.

VEGA's measurement portfolio addresses production and storage requirements across the hydrogen value chain.

Distribution networks require the same level of measurement confidence. As gas networks are assessed for hydrogen blending or conversion, operators must manage pipeline integrity, leakage, metering accuracy, gas composition and low-density flows. VEGABAR 82 provides long-term stable pressure monitoring in hydrogen pipelines up to 100 bar, using an oil-free ceramic measuring cell for reliable performance in demanding applications.

As hydrogen infrastructure scales, digitalisation and automation will become increasingly important. Smart sensors, predictive maintenance and cloud monitoring rely on accurate field data, reinforcing the role of robust measurement technology.

For technology providers such as VEGA, the priority is clear: deliver instruments that withstand extreme conditions, support safety requirements and perform consistently across electrolysis, storage and distribution.

The hydrogen economy will depend not only on advances in production, but also on the reliability of the infrastructure that moves, stores and controls it. VEGA's precision pressure and level measurement solutions help form this backbone, enabling hydrogen to become a cleaner, safer and more scalable part of the future energy landscape.

Contact: Miguel Petersen, Marketing Manager, VEGA Instruments & VEGA Controls Miguel.petersen@vega.com

TYROLIT POWER drives faster, more efficient composite machining

LIGHT weight, durability, and freedom of design are material characteristics that typically exclude one another, but not in the case of composites. Across industries, the demand for advanced materials that can withstand high mechanical stress while supporting lightweight design continues to grow. As a result, the need for efficient machining solutions for these high-performance materials has become increasingly critical.

With TYROLIT POWER, results can be achieved four to five times faster, contributing to more efficient workflows and measurable productivity gains.

Innovative materials such as carbon and aramid fibres, however, introduce new challenges. Their complex composition quickly reduces the sharpness and form of conventional tools, leading to downtime, inconsistent finishes, and unnecessary cost.

> "This range is specifically designed and rigorously tested for composite materials."

This range is specifically designed and rigorously tested for composite materials.

Engineered for surface activation and optimal adhesion across marine and aerospace applications, this tool is ideal for preparing boat hulls, decks, floors, aircraft fuselages, wings, and other composite components — ensuring a clean, properly profiled surface for superior coating performance and structural bonding.

> "TYROLIT POWER's innovative design which has been engineered for intuitive, user-friendly operation, minimises dust generation during application while promoting a safer, more ergonomic working posture."

TYROLIT POWER's innovative design which has been engineered for intuitive, user-friendly operation, minimises dust generation during application while promoting a safer, more ergonomic working posture.

Now available as a complete solution, including service level agreements, spare parts, and on-site technical support, TYROLIT POWER delivers a competitive edge to move a business forward.

This exciting new range is being led by Deon Truter, current Business Development Manager at Grinding Techniques. With over 34 years of industry experience, Deon brings both technical depth and strategic leadership to the launch of this new product range.

He began his professional journey in 1992 as a counter salesman and progressed through technical sales, customer service, and sales management, ultimately advancing into the role of Application Engineer specialising in precision products.

Having worked closely with manufacturers, engineers, and commercial teams throughout his career, Deon has developed a strong understanding of customer requirements, application challenges, and market dynamics.

His expertise will be instrumental in positioning this range for success - driving adoption, building key partnerships, and ensuring the products deliver measurable value across the composites sector.

Visit https://www.grindtech.com/tyrolit-power/ or call +27 11 271 6400 or email info@grindtech.com.

Unlocking the smart factory

Delta Industrial Automation: Integrated solutions for modern manufacturing.

SOUTH Africa's manufacturing sector is at a turning point. While Industry 4.0 technologies are reshaping global production, many local manufacturers still rely on legacy equipment and traditional processes. This limits efficiency, increases operational costs, and makes it harder to compete with digitally integrated factories worldwide.

ElectroMechanica (EM) recognises that transitioning to smart automation isn't just about adopting new technology; it's about solving real challenges. Labour shortages, rising costs, and downtime due to outdated machinery make digital transformation essential for long-term competitiveness.

Together with Delta Electronics, EM brings over 40 years of industry expertise to help manufacturers integrate scalable automation solutions tailored to South Africa's industrial landscape.

While automation technologies could displace around 576,000 jobs in the sector by 2030, they also present significant opportunities. With the right approach, productivity-driven growth could generate up to 4.5 million new jobs across the country.

Realising these benefits depends on a structured transition. Manufacturers must prioritise upskilling and infrastructure modernisation to unlock automation's full potential. A skilled workforce is key to maximising efficiency. However, meeting future demand will require significant investment in workforce development, as South Africa is projected to need 1.7 million additional skilled professionals by 2030.

EM focuses on practical solutions to close skill gaps, reduce risk, and simplify the adoption of automation technologies. By combining intelligent automation with targeted workforce development, manufacturers can build a more resilient, future-ready industry.

Labour shortages and skills gaps remain significant barriers to manufacturing efficiency. Many production lines struggle with shortages as repetitive manual tasks lead to fatigue, lower productivity, and increased safety risks. At the same time, the transition to Industry 4.0 requires a highly skilled workforce, yet existing training initiatives fall short of meeting demand. Without strategic upskilling initiatives, manufacturers risk falling behind in an increasingly digitalised industry.

In a common scenario, production teams grappling with persistent labour shortages and safety risks could substantially benefit from integrating Delta's D-Bot cobots, a solution which enables seamless human-robot interaction.

EM supports manufacturers beyond supplying automation hardware and software by providing comprehensive training programmes that equip workers with the skills to confidently operate and integrate smart technologies into their workflows. Combining intelligent automation with structured upskilling improves efficiency, reduces absenteeism, and fosters a workforce that sees automation as a tool for safer, more productive operations, not as a replacement for human expertise.

By integrating predictive analytics into everyday operations, businesses gain greater control over maintenance planning, turning automation investments into data-driven, economically-sound decisions.

For many South African manufacturers, upgrading legacy systems remains a challenge. The cost and complexity of replacing outdated machines often deter investment, particularly for smaller operations. Yet, as industrial automation advances, the need for seamless integration between old and new technologies has never been greater.

With a scalable, modular design, Delta's controllers enable manufacturers to upgrade at their own pace, minimising disruption and controlling costs.

Infrastructure limitations remain a major obstacle to digital transformation in manufacturing. Many factories hesitate to upgrade, concerned about high costs and operational disruptions. However, with the right approach, manufacturers can enhance visibility and control without overhauling existing systems.

Secure remote monitoring solutions through advanced SCADA systems are designed for seamless integration. VTScada enables real-time monitoring and control while maintaining robust cybersecurity protections.

As manufacturing becomes more connected, cybersecurity risks are becoming an increasingly urgent concern. Industrial control systems and factory networks are frequent targets of cyberattacks, leading to production losses, data breaches, and reputational damage. Manufacturers, particularly those reliant on legacy systems, may not have the internal expertise or infrastructure needed to address these evolving threats.

The transformation to smart manufacturing is strategic. Automation is about intelligently and incrementally using technology to achieve meaningful growth. Digitalisation and automation offer substantial opportunities, provided manufacturers proactively manage workforce transitions, skills development, and integration complexities.

The future of South African manufacturing depends not merely on technology adoption but on strategic decisions and investments made today. Industry 4.0 is no longer distant. The real question is, are businesses ready to lead or risk being left behind?

www.em.co.za

Allmech: Integrated boiler water treatment cuts costs and downtime

When water treatment and softener systems are planned, supplied and managed as an integrated solution, businesses can reduce operating costs, minimise downtime and benefit from clear accountability throughout the system.

BOILER water treatment is often viewed as a service, while water softener systems are treated as a separate equipment purchase. In practice, however, the two are closely connected. When water treatment and softener systems are planned, supplied and managed as an integrated solution, businesses can reduce operating costs, minimise downtime and benefit from clear accountability throughout the system. According to Lionel Maasdorp, MD of Allmech, the company has increasingly encountered sites where customers have invested in new boilers or upgraded existing equipment, only to discover that the accompanying softener has been undersized or is not suited to the application. This can lead to frequent regeneration cycles, poor water quality and additional expenditure to correct the installation after the fact.

"Some suppliers take a one-size-fits-all approach instead of gathering all the information about the application," says Maasdorp. "If the equipment has not been sized correctly or the plant design does not address the actual shortcomings on site, the customer ultimately pays the price."

Designing the softener system, dosing programme and overall water treatment strategy together helps ensure that every component performs the role it was intended to. It also reduces the risk of different parts of the system working against one another rather than as an integrated whole.

For example, Maasdorp says, because Allmech supplies both the equipment and the ongoing water treatment programme, its technicians visit customer sites regularly and develop a detailed understanding of each plant over time. This means potential issues can often be identified before they become major failures, while any upgrades or changes to the system can be considered within the context of the entire operation. It also creates a clear line of accountability.

Just as a good physician will consider a patient holistically, seeking to understand all factors contributing to a medical issue, a competent supplier should address the entire system to fix boiler problems. Similarly, with boiler water treatment, rather than different suppliers attributing problems to one another, a single partner can take responsibility for identifying and addressing the root cause of an issue.

"An integrated relationship also prevents unnecessary duplication," he says. "A new supplier may unknowingly repeat troubleshooting steps that have already been tried without success, while a long-term partner builds valuable knowledge of a site's operating history. Over time, this familiarity can translate into faster problem solving, more informed recommendations and, in many cases, cost savings for the customer."

Despite manufacturing and supplying softener systems, Allmech has found that some customers are still unaware of this capability. Maasdorp believes this is likely because, in many organisations, procurement decisions are made separately from day-to-day plant management, meaning opportunities to consolidate suppliers are sometimes overlooked.

"It's important for internal stakeholders to work together," he says. "Your whole team needs to understand that if good-quality salt isn't maintained, chemicals are diluted or recommended operating practices aren't followed, the system won't deliver the results it's designed to achieve, and you're putting your equipment at risk."

For maintenance managers and procurement teams evaluating water treatment suppliers, the conversation should therefore extend beyond the price of equipment and look at total cost of operation. Reducing chemical treatment may appear to save money initially, but premature boiler wear and reduced equipment life can make it a far more expensive decision over time.

Ultimately, Maasdorp says, the most effective water treatment programmes are built on partnership.

"When equipment, chemistry and technical support work together as part of a single strategy, businesses are better positioned to protect their assets, reduce operating costs and keep critical steam systems performing reliably."

www.allmech.co.za

Sasol Green Hydrogen strategy shifts towards Northern Cape partnerships

The energy giant admits it cannot go it alone at Boegoebaai, pivoting to a collaborative 'catalyst and integrator' role as it eyes a broader portfolio of renewable projects across the province.

By Larry Claasen

SASOL's decision to bring in partners for its Boegoebaai Green Hydrogen project is an acknowledgement that it cannot go it alone.

Earlier this year, the group completed a pre-feasibility study into producing Green Hydrogen and ammonia at Boegoebaai, in the Northern Cape. The process would use renewable energy to power electrolysis, turning seawater into clean fuel for export.

Boegoebaai is envisaged as a major Green Hydrogen hub, with Transnet expected to build a R13,8 billion deep-water port there to support the sector. The Northern Cape government has previously indicated that R122 billion in greenfield projects could be required to realise the full vision, encompassing the port, a dedicated rail link and the hydrogen production facilities.

Why Sasol is pivoting to a partnership model

Although Sasol's study confirmed strong technical and economic potential, the energy group said it is pivoting away from sole development and towards a "catalyst and integrator" role, bringing in multiple partners.

"Bringing in partners will de-risk early-stage development and also offers the best opportunity to unlock investment," Sasol said in response to questions from CBN. By securing a diverse array of partners, the company hopes to mitigate the significant financial risks associated with a project of this magnitude.

"Large-scale Green Hydrogen development cannot be delivered through a single project alone," Sasol stated. "Success will depend on coordinated development of renewable energy generation, transmission capacity, logistics infrastructure, land access and market demand across the province."

Dr Sarushen Pillay, executive vice president for business building, strategy and technology at Sasol, told the group's results presentation that while the Northern Cape is one of the best areas in the world for both wind and solar, unlocking its potential would require significant effort.

"We're working quite closely with the Northern Cape government, other industrial partners, Business Unity South Africa (BUSA), and the national government on how we can unlock that region," he said.

Grid access remains the biggest bottleneck

The key obstacle is grid access; the region currently lacks a robust connection to South Africa's national electricity network. Pillay noted that the national government is actively working to build grid capacity by involving the private sector.

"You'll see the Department of Electricity and Energy (DEE) is moving in terms of bringing Independent Power Producers (IPPs) on board to participate in grid development. So that will help unlock it," he added.

Transmission capacity is expected to receive a significant boost, with the government reporting progress on expansion in the region.

"We are encouraged by the commitment the DEE and the National Transmission Company of South Africa (NTCSA) have shown to accelerating a 765kV super-high-voltage line linking the Northern Cape to major industrial load centres, as profiled in the NTCSA's presentation at the recent SA-China investment conference in Beijing," Sasol told CBN.

Small steps towards a larger goal

Despite the hurdles, Pillay reaffirmed Sasol's commitment. "It's something that we're working to unlock and we certainly see the potential of that opportunity," he said.

Sasol has already demonstrated this commitment. In July, it commissioned a 2kW proton exchange membrane electrolyser at its research and technology campus in Sasolburg. Shortly afterwards, it appointed China-based Envision Energy to conduct a design study, assessing how renewable generation, storage and electrolyser technologies could be integrated to support Green Hydrogen production at its Sasolburg operations.

Sasol said its Green Hydrogen ambitions now extend beyond Boegoebaai, as it looks to encompass a broader portfolio of renewable energy opportunities across the province.

"The pre-feasibility study confirmed the strong technical and economic potential of Boegoebaai, but it also reinforced that large-scale Green Hydrogen development cannot be delivered through a single project alone," the company reiterated to CBN.

South African fishing sector faces quota, court and cold chain pressure

David Maynier, Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment.

By Adrian Ephraim

DAVID Maynier has walked into one of the most contested portfolios in government. The new Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and Environment takes the helm of a fishing sector under simultaneous pressure from the courts, from the sea itself, and from years of underinvestment in the infrastructure that keeps the industry globally competitive.

"The South Africa fish and seafood market is projected to grow at a CAGR of 5.8% between 2026 and 2032, but capturing that growth requires the kind of infrastructure investment that uncertainty has repeatedly delayed."

The legal battles alone would keep most incoming ministers occupied. Court challenges are targeting the recent rights allocation process, quota disputes are multiplying across species, and small-scale fisher protests have intensified along the West Coast. The squid sector is a particular flashpoint, with large commercial right-holders in court to stop part of the quota being reserved for small-scale cooperatives. Maynier, who built a reputation as a reform-oriented administrator during his tenure as Western Cape MEC for Finance, is approaching the complexity with deliberate pragmatism. "The fishing industry is a sector with a wide variety of stakeholders and complex regulatory processes," he told CBN. "It is not surprising that the sector is contested, and I look forward to providing an environment in which all stakeholders feel heard."

On the rights allocation controversy specifically, Maynier stops short of prejudging the court processes but is clear about his philosophy. "I think every policy-maker should be open to reviewing and improving any policy or process when there is sufficient evidence to do so. That doesn't mean it is possible to eliminate contention when you are managing a finite resource, but I believe that stakeholders will always appreciate clear, consistent and timeous decision-making."

That principle extends to his broader approach to policy uncertainty, the complaint most consistently raised by commercial operators and investors. Cold chain infrastructure, vessel upgrades, and processing capacity have all been held back by years of regulatory unpredictability. South Africa exports over R20 billion in marine products annually, yet port performance bottlenecks, rail limitations, and broader freight logistics inefficiencies continue to undermine the Western Cape's ability to compete in international markets. The South Africa fish and seafood market is projected to grow at a CAGR of 5.8% between 2026 and 2032, but capturing that growth requires the kind of infrastructure investment that uncertainty has repeatedly delayed.

Maynier is candid that fixing fishing infrastructure is not a task his department can accomplish alone. "Improving fishing infrastructure will require a joint effort with partners such as the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure along with local government and industry," he says. "A coordinated programme will maximise the impact of any intervention in this regard." The signal here is collaborative rather than unilateral, and it is consistent with the GNU's broader emphasis on intergovernmental cooperation. A R170 million fishmeal plant investment at Sandy Point Harbour in St Helena Bay, welcomed by the previous minister in January 2026, offers at least one recent data point that private capital is prepared to move when the conditions are right.

On fish stock sustainability, Maynier has already been tested. A mass sardine mortality event on the West Coast, caused by pilchard herpesvirus, prompted an immediate response from his department. "Having been alerted to the mass sardine mortality currently being experienced on the West Coast due to pilchard herpesvirus, we urgently convened a Task Team including the department, key stakeholders, industry, and local and provincial government to respond to the risk to the stock of sardines," he explains. The response also flagged the threat to African penguin populations, which depend on sardine as a primary food source, underlining what Maynier describes as a core principle: "Environmental management and economic development are not mutually exclusive."

That framing matters because the fishing sector's commercial case and its environmental case are more tightly bound than in almost any other industry. Faster vessel turnaround times at the Port of Cape Town have offered some recent encouragement for the cold chain sector, but industry observers caution that sustained performance will depend on more than infrastructure investment alone, requiring close coordination between shipping lines, terminal operators, transport companies, and exporters.

Maynier's instinct appears to be exactly that kind of coordination. Whether a sector this legally entangled and environmentally pressured will give him the space to deliver it is the question his first 100 days will begin to answer. The industry, which has been waiting for a minister willing to listen before acting, is watching closely.

Nine things leaders say that reveal decision fatigue and low energy

The three-month rollercoaster to get 2026's must-dos over the line.

By Joni Peddie, CEO, Resilient People

SEPTEMBER in South Africa means one thing: Spring. The jacarandas are getting ready, the light shifts, and there's a change in the air we feel every year without needing a reason. I still catch myself standing in the driveway sniffing the air like it owes me an explanation.

Hmmm, but the calendar feels heavy. This is the same three-month rollercoaster before we all crash into December. And right on cue, our focus softens and attention scatters: holidays, family gatherings, year-end everything.

"Change your words to change your world and do something different today."

We have a window: three months to get 2026's must-dos over the line.

And yet, in boardrooms and coaching sessions these past two weeks, I've heard the opposite of spring in people's voices. Not quite burnout. Something quieter, and honestly more worrying: an early checking out. One client, a sharp, capable Ops Director I've worked with for years, said it to me almost apologetically on a Tuesday morning call: "I think I've already gone into December mode". It was the first week of September. She wasn't being dramatic. She meant it.

Here are nine things I keep hearing leaders say and what each one is really telling me about their CAN DO energy.

- "Can we take this offline?" about something solvable in under a minute. Avoidance, dressed up as efficiency.
- "I'm fine, just a lot on," said flatly, eyes already on the next slide. Emotional Agility gone flat.
- "Give me a sec, I've lost my thread." Mental Clarity, slipping.
- "Whatever the team thinks," about a decision that was theirs to make. Decision fatigue.
- "Sorry, can you say that again?" Twice in one meeting, from someone who never used to miss a beat. Mental Clarity, worn thin.
- "Let's just do what we did last time," reached for on autopilot. Coasting, not choosing.
- "I don't have the bandwidth," said with a small, tired laugh. Physical Nexus, running on empty.
- "Honestly, ask me again in the new year," said with three good months still on the table. Energy, written off early.
- "I just need to get through to December." The sentence that quietly turns three productive months into a waiting room.

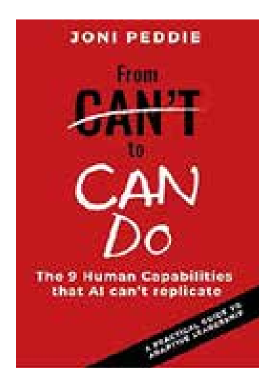
Every one of these is a tell, not a character flaw. I'd know, I caught myself saying versions of at least three of them in the last fortnight, and I'm the one who built the framework. Physician, heal thyself, and all that. In my CAN DO Adaptive Leadership Framework, they all trace back to one of three dimensions: Mental Clarity, Emotional Agility, or Physical Nexus (Vitality).

Spring isn't just a season change outside the window. It's a decent prompt to ask which of those three needs tending in you, right now, before the year quietly makes the decision for you. You don't need a retreat or a five-step plan to start. Pick one dimension, pick one small, deliberate action this week - a walk without your phone for Physical Nexus (Vitality), one undistracted conversation for Emotional Agility, ten minutes of actual quiet planning for Mental Clarity, and let that be enough for now.

Thirty-five years in this field, and I still need the reminder. If anything, that's the tell within the tell: knowing the framework and living it are two different jobs, and I fail the second one regularly. September isn't the home stretch. It's a runway.

Which one do you recognise, in yourself or your team? Change your words to change your world and do something different today. Don't wait to hit December frazzled. Pace yourself, and make these three months count. Don't just tolerate them while you wait for your December break.

Build change-fit teams. Bounce Forward™ together.



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South African battery manufacturers secure 15% import tariff win

Newly formed industry body SABMA secures 15% import duty and designation pledges, as local manufacturers push back against ‘misconceptions’ over cost and capacity

Eskom’s Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) project site at Worcester

By Larry Claasen

SOUTH African battery manufacturers are making progress in getting the government to respond to their concerns that they are not part of the country’s renewable energy programmes.

This follows the formation of the South African Battery Manufacturers Association (SABMA) in October 2025 by several local manufacturers – Balancell, BlueNova Energy, Creslow Energy Solutions, Freedom Won, maxwell+spark and Solar MD – as a lobbying vehicle to promote the sector’s interests

Industry unites to form SABMA amid policy neglect

South Africa has strong renewable energy policies but local batteries have historically never been seen as adequate and treated as an add-on rather than a core local technology, said SABMA chairperson Dr. Louis Serfontein.

> "...ITAC recommend a 15% ad valorem customs duty on fully assembled lithium-ion batteries imported into South Africa, in the Government Gazette published on 26 March 2026."

This type of policy neglect has had far-reaching implications. “This has resulted in imported turnkey systems dominating utility-scale procurement, despite South Africa having manufacturers that meet International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC), Underwriters Laboratories (UL) and United Nations (UN) standards and have the capacity,” said Serfontein.

One area where the government can help is in providing tariff protection for the industry.

For example, battery energy storage systems (BESS) are not designated under local content rules, even though PV modules, trackers and inverters already are.

Serfontein said until this happens, battery manufacturers would remain under-represented in national programmes, despite being essential to grid stability, municipal resilience and renewable energy uptake.

Government responds with tariff protection and designation pledges

This was why SABMA called on the International Trade Administration Commission of South Africa (ITAC) to review the tariffs on imported battery cells, which the country does not currently produce, and those that are made here.

Serfontein said it met with state entities like ITAC, Department of Trade, Industry and Competition (dtic), the Local Content Compliance Unit (LCCU), and Invest SA to address its concerns, and the meeting was fruitful.

“The government has responded positively and has already taken several steps aligned with SABMA’s requests.”

This has seen ITAC recommend a 15% ad valorem customs duty on fully assembled lithium-ion batteries imported into South Africa, in the Government Gazette published on 26 March 2026.

> "...there were several misconceptions regarding battery storage, the biggest being that South Africa must import battery storage because local manufacturers cannot meet utility-scale requirements."

Aside from tariff support, the dtic has also confirmed that renewable energy components are next in line for designation, and SABMA is actively working with the government on standards, localisation and industrialisation pathways.

“In short, government engagement has been constructive, and SABMA is now a recognised stakeholder in shaping national energy storage policy,” said Serfontein.

Building partnerships

Besides working with state institutions to address its concerns, SABMA is also working with other associations in the renewable energy sector, like the South African Photovoltaic Industry Association (SAPVIA) and wind and solar industry bodies and grid-integration working groups to advance their collective agenda.

Serfontein said SABMA was open to having members that were not manufacturers, but also to suppliers, researchers and industry stakeholders. This was because it was intentionally structured as an ecosystem organisation – not a closed club.

SABMA tackles ‘misconceptions’ over cost, capacity and capability

Serfontein also noted that there were several misconceptions regarding battery storage, the biggest being that South Africa must import battery storage because local manufacturers cannot meet utility-scale requirements.

“This is simply not true. South African manufacturers already comply with IEC 62619, IEC 62933, UL 9540 and UN 38.3, and have systems operating well beyond 10-year warranty period.”

Another misconception was that imported systems are cheaper. With new tariffs on fully assembled batteries and upcoming local content rules, imported turnkey BESS will become significantly more expensive — while locally manufactured systems offer faster support, Rand based pricing, shorter lead times and long-term serviceability, he said.

Serfontein pointed out that many assume battery storage is only about backup power, but in reality, modern BESS provides frequency regulation, peak shaving, grid support, wheeling optimisation and renewable firming, which are all essential for South Africa’s evolving electricity market.

He also stressed that in some aspects of battery storage the country has shown itself to be a world leader.

“South Africa has been on the forefront of BESS technology and even higher voltage applications given its very early work in the EV space. The South African manufacturers are actually the only manufacturers that have batteries in the field that have been operating for more than 10 years.”

THE BOTTOM LINE

Why South Africa keeps failing its SMEs

The GEM report diagnoses the disease, but the cure – political will and execution – has been gathering dust for years. It is time to unlock the entrepreneurial flair of ordinary South Africans.

By Larry Claasen

SOUTH AFRICA is falling short when it comes to providing support for SMEs.

That is the findings of the 2026 Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) National Expert Special Report on South Africa, which said the country's enabling environment for entrepreneurship scores a low 3,9/10, trailing the global average of 4,7.

South Africa's National Entrepreneurship Context Index (NECI) score of 3,9, which has changed little over the past five years, falls below those of "peer emerging economies" such as Indonesia (5,8), as well as its BRICS partners, India (6,1), Brazil (4) and China (5,4) and changing social and cultural norms that support or discourage entrepreneurship.

The GEM report is insightful and provides a pathway, but at its heart, it does not say anything new. Over the years, several reports have come out with similar findings, yet the

> "If an SME reform package is implemented, side hustles will become full-time businesses..."

Angus Bowmaker-Falconer, research fellow at Stellenbosch Business School and co-author of the report, says: "The problems of a substantial gap between good policies and on-the-ground reality are well-diagnosed. What is needed now is not new policies or additional funding, but the political will and institutional discipline to translate the policies and financial resources we already have into action."

Bowmaker-Falconer said the performance of countries like India, Indonesia and that of the top-ranked UAE was a result of deliberate, coordinated policy choices.

The report makes a number of recommendations like making regulatory/bureaucratic and access reforms; putting in place support like formalising entrepreneurship as a school learning area; response from the state has not really changed.

The truth of the matter is that the government - even the current GNU - has not prioritised SME development.

Understandably, pressing issues like the power crisis, and the problems at the country's ports and in its rail network have taken most of its focus. But in neglecting the lot of SMEs, it is missing an opportunity to address the high unemployment rate in a way that does not cost too much.

A review of the regulatory and bureaucratic issues would lift the administrative burden of running a business. A centralised online funding portal would match SMEs with funders. The state can also come up with programmes that provide them with access to markets.

Thought also has to be given into how to enable these businesses to scale up their operations.

Such interventions can easily be addressed in Operation Vulindlela, a joint initiative of The Presidency and National Treasury designed to accelerate structural reforms, modernise network industries, and boost economic growth.

If the state makes the necessary SME reforms using Operation Vulindlela as its change agent, and also brings in the financial sector as development partners, it could effectively transform the South African economy in a way that directly affects ordinary people.

If an SME reform package is implemented, side hustles will become full-time businesses, existing businesses will be able to scale up production, and all of them will be able to get access to new markets they never even envisaged getting into.

The upside to this kind of package is immense. It will have an almost immediate impact on employment, salaries and production capacity.

Put another way, it will unlock the latent abilities of South Africans.

This country clearly has entrepreneurial flair and putting some effort into unleashing it could not just boost its collective bottom line but also allow people to fully express who they are.

Beckhoff expands MX-System for control cabinet-free automation

High-performance power supply modules for motion and robotics applications

BECKHOFF has expanded its MX-System portfolio with four new 48 V / 40 A power supply modules designed for motion, robotics and other control cabinet-free automation applications. The MX-System integrates functional modules onto a backplane system, creating a waterproof and dustproof composite of metal enclosures for a wide range of manufacturing and production applications, including those that use 48 V motion components.

In line with the basic principle of the MX-System, the new 48 V power supplies are plugged onto a baseplate and supplied with the primary voltage via the standardised system interface without manual wiring. This can be the 3-phase mains voltage or the 600 V DC voltage of the drive system.

Like all MX-System function modules, the power supplies become participants in the EtherCAT network via the second MX-System interface. This data interface also offers the possibility of feeding the 48 V voltage into the baseplate. In this case, both the 48 V DC and 24 V DC can be used by the corresponding function modules.

The most common use cases for the new power supply modules are motion applications. Here, the MX-System portfolio already offers function modules that provide 48 V as power voltage for servo drives and stepper motors. Corresponding power supplies with 10 A and 20 A output current were announced with the market launch of the MX-System. While these modules feed exclusively into the backplane, the new 40 A variants are designed in such a way that 48 V DC devices can also be directly attached via connectors on the front of the function module. The following power supply versions are available:

- a module variant with M12 connectors for attaching a total of six AMI8100 distributed servo drives
- a version with two B23 connectors for attaching feed segments of the XTS transport system
- a power supply module for connecting a base module of the ATRO modular industrial robot
- a power supply variant without connectors for direct line connection that feeds exclusively into the backplane

In accordance with the normative requirements, measures for the protection of the lines and cables are integrated into the power supplies for each slot on the output side. Several power supplies can also be connected to a baseplate and operated in parallel to balance peak loads at the outputs, for example. Not only do the front connectors facilitate the power supply to external devices, but they also offer direct connection to the EtherCAT network.

Another special feature is the ability of the power supplies to feed regenerative energy directly back into the machine's supply network, such as that generated while the servomotors are braking. This eliminates the need for additional external braking resistors. Like all MX-System modules, the new power supplies also support the Beckhoff Service app for convenient hardware diagnostics.

www.beckhoff.com/mx-system

TGRC strengthens South Africa's glass recycling ecosystem through its members' commitment

By Shabeer Jhetam, CEO of The Glass Recycling Company

EVERY bottle and jar collected for recycling represents something far greater than waste diverted from landfill. It reflects the collective commitment of South Africa's glass packaging industry to keeping valuable materials in circulation and building a stronger, more resilient circular economy.

At The Glass Recycling Company (TGRC), we see this commitment in action every day. As the Producer Responsibility Organisation (PRO) for South Africa's glass packaging industry, TGRC works on behalf of our members to strengthen the country's glass recycling ecosystem. Together with manufacturers, brand owners, collectors, processors, transporters, waste pickers, retailers, government and consumers, we help ensure that glass remains a valuable resource rather than becoming waste.

Our members' commitment goes far beyond compliance. Through their continued investment, they fund the infrastructure, partnerships and programmes that enable glass recycling to happen at scale across South Africa. From glass recycling banks and collection networks to transport subsidies, consumer education initiatives and the payment of waste picker service fees, these investments strengthen the systems that keep glass in circulation and support the country's transition towards a circular economy.

This collective approach demonstrates what meaningful Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) looks like in practice. By working together through TGRC, producers are investing in long-term solutions that strengthen the entire glass recycling value chain and create lasting value for communities and the environment.

Because glass is 100% recyclable and can be recycled endlessly without losing quality, every bottle and jar recovered through South Africa's recycling network has the potential to become a new bottle or jar again. This is why investing in collection systems matters. The more glass that is recovered, the less material ends up in landfill, the lower the demand for virgin raw materials, and the more efficiently valuable resources remain in circulation.

However, recycling does not happen simply because glass is recyclable. Behind every bottle collected is a network of people working to recover it, from households separating their recyclables to waste pickers, collectors, transporters, processors and recycling businesses that ensure glass is returned to production.

For many South Africans, recycling is also a source of income and opportunity. Waste pickers, collectors, entrepreneurs and buy-back centres play an integral role in the glass recycling ecosystem. Through the initiatives supported by TGRC and our members, recovered glass helps create sustainable livelihoods, enables businesses to grow and thrive, and contributes to local economic development while ensuring valuable material remains in productive use.

This demonstrates that the circular economy delivers far more than environmental benefits. It creates jobs, stimulates local economic activity and strengthens communities, while enabling businesses to meet their sustainability commitments through practical, measurable action.

Through the continued support of our members, TGRC will continue strengthening South Africa's glass recycling ecosystem by further investing in infrastructure, supporting entrepreneurs and waste pickers, and driving initiatives that increase glass collection. Together, we are creating economic opportunities, reducing waste and delivering lasting environmental, economic and social value for South Africa.

Learn more about TGRC's work and our members at: https://theglassrecyclingcompany.co.za/

Cape Town businesses face waste changes as organic landfill deadline nears

By Kris van der Bijl

HOTELS, restaurants, retailers and food processors in Cape Town face a new waste-management cost as the Western Cape moves to keep organic waste out of landfill.

The City's 2026/27 waste budget prioritises collection, transfer, landfill and waste-minimisation infrastructure. The budget documents do not identify a new municipal commercial food-waste processing facility.

This leaves us with a question for the city: where will their organic waste go?

So far, the province has kept a target of 100% organic waste diversion from landfill by 2027. Its latest performance report says the target remains in place, while the province is assessing Organic Waste Diversion Plans from municipalities.

Enforcing organic waste compliance

The Western Cape's organic-waste requirements arise from a combination of national waste legislation, provincial policy, waste-management licence conditions and municipal by-laws.

The City of Cape Town requires large organic-waste generators, including hotels, restaurants, retailers and food processors, to submit an Integrated Waste Management Plan (IWMP) showing how they will divert 50% of organics immediately and 100% by 2027.

It requires them to include and address waste quantities, storage, collection, transport, separation and recovery, and specifically to include a strategy to reduce organic waste sent to landfill.

The City's spending leaves a capacity question

The City has allocated R488 million to waste-management equipment and infrastructure for 2026/27.

It is also spending R1.2 billion over three years on refuse-removal vehicles and plants.

The programme includes R203 million for extra airspace at Vissershok landfill, R135 million for a new refuse transfer station at Coastal Park and R123 million for landfill-gas infrastructure.

The listed 2026/27 investments focus largely on collection, transfer, landfill and waste-minimisation infrastructure rather than a new dedicated commercial food-waste processing plant.

This despite food waste often accounting for up to a third of organic waste dumped on landfill sites.

The budget documents also do not identify new municipal capacity dedicated to processing commercial food waste into compost, biogas or other products.

Budget alignment, but where is the plan

The 2026/27 budget is already in effect. The provincial deadline is less than a year away.

For a large food business, setting up separation, finding a processor and changing collection contracts takes time.

But smaller businesses are equally hit. Such businesses, often lacking the funds and capacity of their larger counterparts, are not exempt from dealing with this new deadline.

The risk is therefore that businesses will be competing for limited processing capacity while landfill acceptance becomes more restrictive, all while the City officials and private companies scamper to conform to the new restrictions.

CBN asked Mayoral Committee Member for Urban Waste Management, Alderman Grant Twigg, whether the City's existing organic waste processing capacity is sufficient to meet its share of the Western Cape's 2027 organic waste diversion target, and where additional processing capacity will come from should current infrastructure prove insufficient.

At the time of publication, CBN had not received a response to these questions. Clarity on the City's capacity and implementation plans will be important for businesses preparing for the 2027 deadline, particularly smaller operators that may have fewer resources to adapt their waste management and collection arrangements.

EPR changes how SA businesses deal with old appliances

By Tarryn-Leigh Solomons

SOUTH Africa's appliance manufacturers and retailers are having to account for what happens to products long after they leave the shop floor.

Under Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR), producers, importers and brand owners carry responsibility for products at the end of their useful lives, bringing collection and recycling into the cost of doing business.

For white goods such as fridges and washing machines, this has implications for everything from product design and repairability to take-back systems and reverse logistics.

> "Convenience shapes behaviour far more than good intentions,..."

Chris Bischoff, Managing Director of the Sustainability Communication Company, said responsibility is now shared across the value chain.

"Under the Extended Producer Responsibility regulations, producers, importers and brand owners are legally accountable for their products once they reach end-of-life, not the consumer or the municipality alone," he said.

In practice, this includes funding and coordinating collection and recycling through registered Producer Responsibility Organisations (PROs).

Consumers still have a role in handing unwanted appliances over responsibly. Bischoff said e-waste has been banned from landfill since 23 August 2021.

"The obligation to close that loop sits firmly with those who put the product on the market."

EPR changes the cost equation

For manufacturers, EPR means considering end-of-life costs much earlier in a product's lifecycle.

"EPR makes the end of a product's life a live commercial and legal concern from the moment it's designed," Bischoff said.

Producers carrying collection and recycling costs have a financial reason to consider how long appliances last and how easily they can be repaired or dismantled.

Retailers face a different operational challenge.

"Retailers are having to build take-back and reverse logistics into operations that were only ever set up to move stock outward," he said.

Bischoff said take-back systems can also recover materials, generate data needed for reporting and provide another point of contact with customers.

Collection remains a weak link

The system still depends on getting unwanted appliances into formal collection and recycling channels.

Bischoff said many households do not know where to take a fridge, washing machine or other appliance once it is no longer usable.

"Convenience shapes behaviour far more than good intentions," he said.

Product design also affects how quickly appliances become waste. Bischoff pointed to longer-lasting products, access to spare parts and repair options as ways to extend their useful life.

He said the "right to repair" debate matters, while waste pickers and smaller collectors already recovering e-waste should be brought more formally into the system.

Companies need to prove where waste goes

For businesses reporting on waste targets, traceability is another consideration.

"Without documented traceability, there's no way to prove material didn't end up in landfill," Bischoff said.

Companies should be able to establish who processed their e-waste and what was recovered or disposed of. He said this means working with licensed, audited recyclers and obtaining certificates and downstream reporting.

Claims such as "zero waste to landfill" also need evidence.

Bischoff said businesses should account for how much material entered the system and where it ultimately went, including material that could not be recycled. He said independent verification should support these claims.

Recovering value from old appliances

End-of-life appliances can also contain materials with a resale or recovery value.

Fridges, circuit boards and other electrical products contain steel, aluminium, copper and other metals that can be recovered, a practice often referred to as "urban mining".

"Too many businesses still see an end-of-life appliance as a disposal cost rather than a source of value. This is a missed opportunity," Bischoff said.

The economics depend partly on how products are made. Appliances that are difficult or costly to dismantle make material recovery less viable.

Bischoff expects that calculation to shift as EPR internalises end-of-life costs and material prices rise.

Plastic bags deserve a second life, not a ban

RECENT calls to ban plastic carrier bags or replace them with paper overlook an important reality: South Africa is less than five months away from a significant circular-economy milestone that will require compliant plastic carrier and flat bags to contain 100% post-consumer recyclate from 1 January 2027.

According to Anton Hanekom, Executive Director of Plastics SA, abandoning plastic carrier bags now would undermine years of investment in recycling and market development at precisely the point when South Africa is positioned to close the loop.

"The 2027 deadline should be recognised as an environmental opportunity, not a reason to abandon plastic carrier bags. Moving to 100% post-consumer recycled content creates a significant and sustainable end-market for locally recovered plastic. Removing that market will risk weakening the economics of collection and recycling," Hanekom says.

Claims that paper or other materials automatically offer a more environmentally responsible alternative are also not supported by life-cycle research. Plastics SA has previously highlighted the CSIR findings showing that plastic carrier bags compare favourably with alternatives on factors including water and land use, carbon emissions and overall environmental footprint.

Hanekom cautions against assuming paper bags are equally practical for every local consumer. "Many consumers rely on taxis, trains or walking to transport groceries home. They need a carrier bag that is strong, affordable, moisture-resistant and capable of being reused."

Plastics SA stresses that while plastic litter remains unacceptable, banning carrier bags will not repair inadequate municipal waste collection or prevent other waste from entering the environment.

The priority should instead be keeping valuable materials in circulation through separation at source, effective collection and recycling.

"Stronger enforcement is also needed against non-compliant, ultra-thin bags, including imported products that do not meet South Africa's regulatory requirements," Hanekom advocates.

"We believe that the answer is not to replace one material with another and hope that litter disappears. It is using resources responsibly, reusing them for as long as possible, collecting them effectively and recycling them into new products. From 2027, South Africa has the opportunity to demonstrate exactly that with a carrier bag made from 100% post-consumer recycled plastic," Hanekom concludes.

www.plasticsinfo.co.za

South African plastic bag regulations - 100% recycled content required by 2027

By Kris van der Bijl

SOUTH AFRICAN businesses that manufacture, trade or commercially distribute plastic carrier bags and plastic flat bags will face a major compliance change from 1 January 2027, when the bags must be made from 100% post-consumer recyclate.

The requirement is the final step in a phased increase introduced by the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment. The minimum was 50% from January 2023 and increased to 75% from January 2025.

For businesses, the change is not simply a matter of buying recycled plastic.

"In order for paper packaging to take the place of plastic packaging, both individuals and businesses need to find ways to make them economically viable, locally recyclable as well as convenient for their customers."

The regulations prohibit the manufacture, trade or commercial distribution of domestically produced or imported plastic carrier bags and plastic flat bags for use within South Africa unless they comply with the applicable compulsory specification and minimum post-consumer recyclate requirements.

Businesses involved in manufacturing, importing, trading or commercially distributing affected bags will therefore need to establish whether the bags in their supply chains comply with the new requirement before the deadline.

Plastic bag regulations change

From 1 January 2027, plastic carrier bags and plastic flat bags covered by the regulations must be made from 100% post-consumer recyclate. This follows the phased requirements introduced by the 2021 amendments. The requirement applies to domestically produced and imported bags intended for use in South Africa.

"Post-consumer recyclate" means material generated by households or by commercial, industrial or institutional facilities in their role as end-users, where the material can no longer be used for its intended purpose.

The definition also includes returns from the distribution chain and certain in-house scrap containing post-consumer recyclate.

Paper packaging gains attention

The Paper and Allied Manufacturers of South Africa (PAMSA) has highlighted the role of paper packaging in the local recycling system.

Samantha Choles, communications manager at PAMSA, said businesses have a role in making packaging part of a functioning circular economy:

"South Africa has some good examples of brands leading the way, especially with packaging design and substitution, and ensuring local recyclability, while also being fit-for-purpose and safe for food contact."

In order for paper packaging to take the place of plastic packaging, both individuals and businesses need to find ways to make them economically viable, locally recyclable as well as convenient for their customers.

There is a fine line between making the switch from plastic to paper-based substrates and ensuring that the packaging can be locally recovered and recycled.

This is why the circular economy begins in the packaging design phase.

How businesses are preparing for the 2027 change

Some South African businesses have already moved towards the standard that will apply from 2027, while others have reduced or eliminated their use of single-use plastic bags.

Clothing and retail group TFG says it has phased in plastic bags made from 100% post-consumer recyclate in South Africa.

Boxer Retail says its in-store plastic bags are already made from 100% post-consumer recyclate. The retailer also says it has measures in place to support recycling of plastic and cardboard entering its stores.

The approaches illustrate the choices facing businesses ahead of 2027: continue using plastic bags while increasing the recycled content, or reduce their use by introducing reusable or alternative packaging.

Plastics recycling and sustainable packaging take centre stage at Propak Cape

Visitors to this year's Propak Cape exhibition in October can expect to see and experience the latest in sustainable plastics and recycling solutions.

THE South African plastics recycling industry continues to make strides in creating a circular economy for plastics. Recent statistics from Plastics SA revealed that plastics recycling increased by 3% in 2025 to 485-thousand tons, across the packaging, building, construction, agriculture, mining, automotive and consumer goods sectors. While the use of virgin polymer decreased by 2.8% and domestic plastic consumption decreased in 2025, plastics recycling and the use of recycled materials increased. Circular plastics content in new products now sits at 22%, compared to 16% 10 years ago.

These statistics highlight South Africa as a leading performer in plastics recycling and the largest plastics recycler in Southern Africa.

The plastic recycling industry has shown strong growth over more than a decade with the domestic consumption of recyclate growing by 62% over the past ten years. These figures show the industry commitment and investment in the creation of a circular plastics economy. More than 30% of recycled plastics is used in the packaging industry.

Packaging remains the main growth area for the plastics sector with demand for polypropylene (PP), PET and HDPE for the packaging industry remaining strong. In addition, plastics recycling creates an estimated 111-thousand income generating opportunities across the entire value chain.

Visitors to this year's Propak Cape exhibition in October can expect to see and experience the latest in sustainable plastics and recycling solutions. The exhibition takes place once every three years in the Western Cape, offering a focused, three-day platform for innovation, collaboration and industry engagement. The sustainable properties of plastics, as well as all the latest recycling solutions will be highlighted at the event.

Plastic packaging that is properly disposed of is not harmful to the environment but is a reusable resource that keeps producing after the initial product lifespan. Plastics are one of only a few substances that retains its value even beyond its end of life. Its ability to be reused and recycled into new products makes it a sustainable resource, reducing the consumption of fossil fuels and protecting the environment.

Plastic packaging also protects product contents, preventing waste and reducing the carbon and water footprints associated with manufacturing. Its lightweight nature enables more efficient transport, generating fewer carbon emissions than heavier packaging materials. Plastic is also highly durable, reducing spoilage and breakage during transport and handling.

In store, plastic packaging can significantly extend shelf life, helping to reduce food waste. It protects food, medicines and household cleaning products from damage, contamination, moisture and UV radiation. Lightweight, resilient, flexible, hygienic and innovative, plastic is an excellent material for the processing, storage, transport, protection and preservation of products. Across the product life cycle, it helps lower greenhouse gas emissions and can offer a smaller environmental footprint than many alternatives.

The programme of free-to-attend seminars hosted by the Institute of Packaging SA (IPSA) will also have sustainability as an overarching thread during the three days. These sessions will deliver insights into key packaging and processing trends aligned with the theme days New Products and Technology, Sustainability and Automation. Producer Responsibility Organisations will be part of the programme.

Printing SA's one-day industry conference will provide additional value through expert-led discussions and knowledge sharing, and the FTASA Print Excellence Awards will also take place during Propak Cape.

Propak Cape, which incorporates Pro-Plas Expo, together with Print Expo, Pro-Label Expo and FoodPro is an opportunity for visitors to see the latest innovations, products, technologies and solutions in packaging, food processing, plastics, printing and labelling.

The exhibition will take place at the Cape Town International Conference Centre (CTICC) from 27-29 October 2026. The event is supported by IPSA, Packaging SA, Plastics SA and Printing SA.

For further information, visit www.propakcape.co.za

Wet dust suppression systems: How to choose the right nozzle

AIRBORNE dust poses a major health and safety risk in industrial settings such as in mining, quarrying, construction, material handling, crushing, conveying, and stockpiling. This is where wet dust suppression systems play a key role in these industries in keeping dust under control.

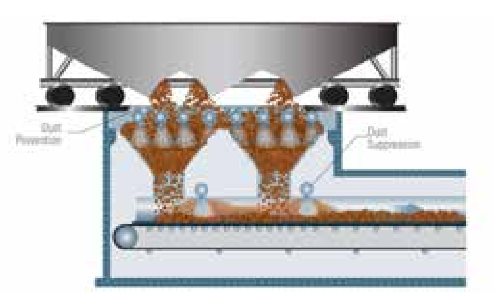
These systems work by generating fine water droplets that collide with and encapsulate dust particles. The added moisture increases the particles' mass and weight causing them to fall to the ground or return to the material source instead of remaining suspended. This reduces health risks from respirable silica or other fine particulates, improves air quality, helps meet environmental and safety regulations, and can lower explosion risks for combustible dusts.

There are two main approaches:

- Dust prevention: Moisture is directly applied to the material source such as ore, aggregate, or stockpiles, increasing their moisture content and preventing dust from becoming airborne. This typically uses larger droplets and higher water volumes at lower pressure.
- Airborne dust suppression: Fine mist or fog is sprayed into the air to capture particles already airborne. Smaller droplets at higher pressure and lower overall water volumes are typically used.

Water alone works well for coarser dust, but surfactants, wetting agents, foaming agents, or binders are often added to reduce surface tension, improve wetting of hydrophobic materials (such as coal), enhance agglomeration, and minimise water use while avoiding excess mud or material degradation.

Wet dust suppression systems are typically installed at dust-generation points such as transfer points, crushers, conveyors, dump hoppers, loading terminals, roads, and stockpiles, and can be fixed, mobile, or automated with sensors.



Choosing the right nozzle

Selecting the right nozzle for the application is critical, according to spray nozzle expert Monitor Engineering. Factors include dust particle size, whether the objective is prevention or airborne capture, the level of enclosure (open or enclosed), water quality, available pressure/air supply, and the need to minimise drift or over-wetting.

For airborne fine dust, droplets of roughly 10–200 μm should be targeted to effectively collide with and agglomerate particles. Smaller droplets generally perform better but are more prone to evaporation or wind drift. Air-atomizing nozzles usually produce the smallest droplets, followed by hydraulic fine-spray/hollow-cone, then flat-fan and full-cone.

A range of nozzles is available including FogJet, WhirlJet, and VeeJet styles:

- Ultra-fine respirable dust: Air-atomizing ("dry fog") nozzles are suited to enclosed or semi-enclosed areas such as crushers, transfer points and hoppers. Using compressed air, they create very small droplets while minimising water addition and mud.
- Airborne suppression without compressed air: Hydraulic fine-spray or hollow-cone nozzles produce fine droplets efficiently and are widely used at transfer points, crushers, and ROM Bins. High-pressure systems can generate fine mist with lower water volume.
- Open-area dust prevention: Full-cone nozzles deliver medium-to-large droplets with good throw distance and coverage, making them suitable for stockpiles and road wetting.
- Targeted coverage: Flat-fan nozzles are useful for narrow or linear applications such as conveyor belts and stockpile edges.

Practical tips

- Match droplet size to dust size and use the lowest effective water volume.
- Choose large free-passage or clog-resistant designs for recycled or dirty water.
- Position nozzles close to the dust source, use adjustable fittings, and incorporate filtration.
- High-pressure misting systems are often preferred overall for efficiency and reduced peripheral issues (less material over-wetting) compared with low-pressure high-volume sprays.

There are many variables to consider when specifying a spray system for dust suppression. Correct nozzle selection, droplet size, pressure, positioning and water quality all influence system performance. A properly designed and maintained system can provide effective long-term dust control while reducing water consumption and over-wetting.

Email grant@monitorspray.co.za for a no-charge plant dust assessment. www.spray.co.za

Steenkampskraal rare earth mine - Local processing gains momentum

By Kris van der Bijl

FEW mining stories have captured the Western Cape business community quite like Steenkampskraal. The monazite mine north of Vanrhynsdorp announced on 23 June 2026 that it had produced high-purity mixed rare earth products with Mintek at laboratory scale.

Such a facility opens the possibility for South Africa to move beyond exporting raw concentrates and instead produce higher-value rare-earth products used in advanced technologies.

In time, this could support domestic manufacturing of components such as permanent magnets for electric-vehicle motors, wind turbines and defence systems, rather than finished lithium-ion battery cells.

The long-term goal is to keep more of the value chain on shore, reducing reliance on imported processed materials for the energy transition.

Steenkampskraal targets local rare earth separation

Steenkampskraal is the world's highest-grade rare earth element and thorium deposit. Anglo American opened it in 1952 to extract thorium for international nuclear energy programmes. It was later placed on care and maintenance.

The mine came out of care and maintenance in 2024. Approvals came from the National Nuclear Regulator and the Department of Mineral and Petroleum Resources.

The Industrial Development Corporation funded the phase 1 metallurgical processing plant in full. Construction is under way and commissioning is scheduled for August 2026.

The June result made South Africa the first African country to produce mixed rare earth products through a partnership between a mining company and a national research institution.

Steenkampskraal executive chairman Enock Mathebula said the company is "advancing discussions and development work aimed at establishing separation capabilities in South Africa".

Separation turns mixed product into individual oxides. It is the step that would keep the higher-value work on shore. Mathebula said concentrate production starts later this year, with first shipments before the end of 2026.

Accredited laboratory testing supports Cape beneficiation

But a new beneficiation laboratory attained new accreditation, a story that slid under the scope of the new Steenkampskraal mine.

The Council for Geoscience announced on 14 August 2026 that its Analytical Services laboratory attained ISO/IEC 17025 accreditation.

ISO/IEC 17025 is the international benchmark for testing and calibration laboratories. Accreditation confirms technical competence, impartiality, consistency and a quality management system.

Council for Geoscience chief executive Mosa Mabuza said the accreditation "demonstrates that our laboratory capabilities meet an internationally recognised standard of technical competence".

Mabuza said the milestone strengthens confidence in the scientific services the Council provides. He said it creates opportunities to expand partnerships and services as the organisation positions geoscience at the centre of development.

What accredited results mean for Western Cape operators

The new accredited laboratory can serve the following: mining, environmental, infrastructure and research. Western Cape quarries, exploration companies and environmental consultancies fall inside those categories.

The Council states that operating to internationally recognised standards gives assurance that analytical results are accurate, reliable and globally comparable. It lists the applications as exploration, environmental monitoring, resource management and scientific research.

The Council also states that the accreditation supports regulatory compliance requirements.

Tronox Namakwa Sands restarts furnace as global zircon demand rises

US-listed miner restarts production just nine months after idling furnace, as market reports forecast years of sustained growth for the critical mineral

By Larry Claasen

THE restarting of Tronox Holdings's furnace and the plans to bring production back online at its Namakwa Sands mine in Saldanha comes as long-term demand for zircon strengthens.

The move follows the group's November 2025 announcement that it would temporarily idle one furnace in Saldanha and initiate a temporary shutdown of its West Mine to reduce inventory and enhance cash flow, thereby supporting its new East OFS (Orange Feldspathic Sand) project.

In an August 2026 quarterly results conference call, the New York Stock Exchange-listed mining group said growing demand for zircon had led it to restart the furnace and resume production.

Tronox CEO John Romano said: "We are making targeted operating decisions to support future demand and product availability, including the restart of a furnace and advancing plans to bring production back online at our West Mine, both at Namakwa, to support inventory levels, including zircon, to meet demand."

The Namakwa West Mine, an open-cast heavy mineral strip mine, produces titanium dioxide feedstock suitable for both chloride and sulphate TiO_2 processes. It is based at Brand-se-Baai, about 270km from the Saldanha Bay smelter.

Alongside these products, it also produces zircon, rutile and pig iron, which are used as feedstock across a wide range of applications, including pigments, metals, ceramics and foundries.

From ceramics to computer chips: why zircon is becoming a high-tech heavyweight

Zircon is also used in refractory applications to protect the interior of high-temperature furnaces, as well as in foundries and precision investment casting processes for the casting of metals and alloys into various products.

Another application is the production of a broad range of zirconia chemicals, which in turn, have a diverse range of end uses including ceramics, refractory, catalysts, coating electronics and biomedical related products.

Cognitive Market Research and Mordor Intelligence have both said demand for zircon is expected to grow over the next few years.

They say the main drives for this growth are stable demand from traditional industries like ceramics, refractories, and foundries, but added that high value-added applications in cutting-edge sectors are also set to play a part.

The new growth areas are sectors like solid-state batteries, aerospace and electronics and biomedical applications.

Tronox is set up to take advantage of this growing demand. The restarting of the furnace and production at its West Mine follows Tronox commissioning the East OFS mine in November.

East OFS and Fairbreeze Expansions secure Tronox's long-term feedstock supply

The East OFS, also based at Brand-se-Baai, along with the Fairbreeze Expansion, Tronox's mineral sands mine based on the east coast of KwaZulu-Natal (near Mtunzini and Richards Bay) are replacing existing mines that are nearing the end of their lives.

"These new sites [East OFS and Fairbreeze Expansion] are expected to provide abundant reserves of natural rutile and zircon, along with high-grade ilmenite suitable for direct use or slag processing, ensuring a secure and cost-effective feedstock supply for years to come," Tronox said in its 2025 annual report.

Monazite offers bonus rare earths potential – but recovery remains uncertain, says Tronox

Aside from zircon, Tronox also notes the potential of monazite, which is contained at both ore bodies and in stockpiled sources at Namakwa Sand.

"Monazite has increasing commercial value due to a high concentration of rare earth metals which can be separated by well-established methods. Rare earths are expected to remain in high demand as demand grows for electric vehicles, wind turbines, and consumer goods that require rare earth-containing permanent magnets."

It points out, however, that it does not know the metallurgical recovery potential for the monazite as our processes have historically focused on traditional value minerals.

Even so, given the increasing importance of monazite, it is evaluating new processes to better understand the grade and recoverability of it in its mining tenements.

Exxaro marks 20 years of building resilient communities and sustainable local economies

EXXARO Resources is marking 20 years of advancing sustainable social impact through long-term investments in communities across South Africa. Since its inception in 2006, Exxaro has spent over R70 billion on initiatives supporting inclusive socio-economic development, community empowerment and sustainable livelihoods that extend beyond the life of mining operations.

Through a strategic approach aligned with the organisation's Sustainable Growth and Impact (SG&I) strategy, Exxaro continues to invest in education, enterprise and supplier development, and land rehabilitation initiatives designed to create enduring social and economic value.

The SG&I strategy is centred on supporting scalable socio-economic upliftment, creating opportunities that strengthen community resilience and adopting an integrated, multi-stakeholder approach to building sustainable futures for communities and local economies.

"Our approach to social impact is rooted in partnership, inclusion and long-term sustainability. By working alongside our communities and other stakeholders, we aim to create meaningful impact that supports both economic resilience and shared prosperity. Mining has a responsibility to contribute to sustainable development in a way that extends beyond operational timelines. At Exxaro, we are focused on helping build resilient communities and future-ready local economies that can continue to grow long after mining activities conclude," says Neo Monareng, Executive Head: Sustainability.

In education, Exxaro continues to invest across the value chain – from early childhood development to youth skills development – helping to improve access to quality learning environments and future employment opportunities.

> "Our approach to social impact is rooted in partnership, inclusion and long-term sustainability."

Exxaro invested more than R27 million in infrastructure upgrades at Nelsonskop Primary School near the Grootegeluk Mine in Limpopo. The company also completed the upgrade of Bonginhlanhla Primary School in Kriel, Mpumalanga, transforming the facility into a safer and more modern learning environment for learners and educators.

In healthcare, Exxaro partnered with its non-profit company, Aga Setshaba, to support Hope for the Blind Hospital in Modimolle through a R15 million medical equipment donation aimed at improving eye care services and addressing preventable blindness in underserved communities.

Enterprise and Supplier Development (ESD) remains a key pillar of Exxaro's social impact strategy. Through funding, mentorship, skills development and market access support, the organisation works to strengthen local entrepreneurship and create sustainable economic participation opportunities.

Programmes such as the Pitch for Funding initiative enable entrepreneurs and small businesses to access resources needed to scale their operations and create employment opportunities in their communities.

These initiatives align with Exxaro's broader commitment to enabling thriving local economies, supporting inclusive growth and creating opportunities for local businesses to contribute to socio-economic development in host communities.

Exxaro's land rehabilitation and agricultural initiatives are designed to create sustainable livelihoods that can continue beyond the operational lifespan of its mining activities. The organisation's integrated land management approach focuses on balancing operational requirements with environmental stewardship, biodiversity protection and long-term community development.

Exxaro continues to support emerging farmers through initiatives such as its Agricultural Land Lease Programme, which provides access to land, mentorship and agricultural support. Its minerals succession programme in Tshikondeni, Limpopo, has supported the growth of several agribusinesses that collectively contribute to local employment creation and agricultural production.

Exxaro's social impact programmes are designed to drive lasting, scalable socio-economic upliftment and prosperity that can continue independently beyond the organisation's direct involvement.

BMG expands portfolio with Autogard torque limiters to protect mining machinery

Through the availability of Autogard torque limiting technology, BMG ensures improved equipment protection, more predictable maintenance outcomes and reduced downtime in industries exposed to frequent overload events.

BMG has extended its power transmission portfolio to include Regal Rexnord Autogard torque limiters, which have been developed to protect machinery and enhance safety in demanding environments.

Autogard torque limiters provide mechanical protection for drive systems in many industries, including mining and quarrying, that operate under uneven torque loads, shock loads and overload conditions.

Autogard 820 Series torque limiters are particularly well suited in mining applications, like horizontal Semi-Autogenous Grinding (SAG) mills, where reliable power transmission is critical and where sudden jams or load fluctuations can cause significant damage to motors, gearboxes and couplings. In these challenging applications, torque limiters act as a protective interface, disconnecting the drive as soon as a preset torque threshold is exceeded.

Autogard torque limiters protect drive systems by mechanically disengaging when the torque limit is reached. Once the overload condition has cleared, operation can resume without damage to upstream components. This system reduces the risk of mechanical failure and limits unplanned downtime in continuous process operations.

In ball and SAG mill applications, uneven torque loads are unavoidable due to the crushing process itself. Autogard 820 Series torque limiters are designed for very high-torque drives in heavy-industry environments and provide bidirectional protection with a high degree of accuracy. The modular design allows trip torque capacity to be set to suit specific operating conditions, with repeatable disengagement in the event of overload. After a trip event, modules can be reset quickly using standard tools, allowing maintenance teams to restore operation with minimal delay.

"In many industries, including mining, cement, sugar milling, bulk materials handling, wineries and breweries, conveyor blockages and process surges are common," says Leon Alberts, Manager - Internal Operations, Mechanical Power Transmission Division, BMG. "Autogard torque limiters efficiently protect high-value drive equipment against overload, preventing damage and minimising downtime in operations that depend on continuous production."

Unlike conventional shear pins or friction-based devices, the Autogard system offers repeatable disengagement accuracy, with low maintenance requirements. Torque capacities across the range extend from approximately 3 Nm to 45 000 Nm and are suitable for light, medium and heavy-duty applications, including conveyors, crushers, mixers and process machinery. Units can be installed in standard shaft or coupling configurations in both new installations and retrofit projects.

BMG's Regal Rexnord power transmission components also include industrial gear units, low-speed backstops, idlers, couplings, bearings and shaft locking assemblies. Other important components are Falk True Hold low speed backstops and Rexnord Omega and Viva elastomeric couplings.

BMG's power transmission specialists provide support throughout the specification and implementation process, including sizing, alignment and commissioning assistance. This technical solutions capability is enhanced by the company's established branch network, ensuring ongoing service for critical drive components in the field.

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Condra ramps up overhead crane production to meet African mining demand

AN unusually high demand for very large overhead cranes from mining companies across Africa is keeping Condra's Johannesburg manufacturing facility exceptionally busy, with the company introducing additional shifts. Condra is currently manufacturing six 50-ton cranes for a mine in Zambia and a 5-ton crane for a Namibian mine. Three of the cranes have box-girders of more than 30 metres long.

Large cranes such as these present different manufacturing challenges because of their girder dimensions. Two metres. In addition to their length, box girders for 34-metre spans stand two metres high and measure just under one metre wide.

A Condra spokesperson explains that these cranes are particularly large, long and heavy fabrications to manage. "Manufacture involves intricate welding and very careful jigging to incorporate the correct camber to counter the girders' natural tendency to sag under load. Girders this long are also quite delicate to manoeuvre on the shop floor. They require resource and workflow planning, and tie up use of the 50-ton cranes have spans of 34 metres, and a third, high-lift, 5-ton crane spans 35 metres. Condra is simultaneously completing manufacture of a further four 50-ton cranes with spans of around 20 of our factory cranes," he said.

Factory testing of one of the four 50-ton, 20m-span cranes for Zambia. This particular crane also features a 10-ton auxiliary hoist.

Factory work on a girder for one of the 50-ton, 20m-span Condra cranes.

"End-carriage design has been important to ensure crane longevity, because the wheels must accommodate continuously changing stresses imposed by the girders as they flex under different loads. Our design team paid attention to both camber and end-carriage design to ensure durability. Condra cranes are known for their low overall lifetime cost," said the spokesman.

Also under manufacture for Namibian mines are three single-girder overhead cranes, two portal cranes and a jib crane. The company behind these orders, with which Condra has a long association, is an engineering and project management consultancy with worldwide representation. It has additionally ordered 18 electric hoists with capacities ranging from two to 25 tons, as well as four chain blocks.

In the Northern Cape, Condra is currently commissioning two substantial cranes at Gamsberg Phase II, where the same consultancy contributed to metallurgy and process plant design; one is a 40/5-ton crane with a 22-metre span, the other an 80/20-ton machine with an 18-metre span. In addition, Condra has delivered two more cranes at the same site for installation as structural steelwork progresses. Gamsberg Phase II is an expansion of the open-cast zinc mine near the town of Aggeneys.

Condra anticipates further orders from southern and east Africa, notably Tanzania and Mozambique, where a marketing drive is currently under way.

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Konecranes spare parts help protect lifting equipment safety and reduce downtime

Regular inspections of critical components ensure safe and optimised equipment performance, helping to extend the lifespan of lifting equipment and reduce downtime.

LIFTING equipment such as cranes, hoists, winches, slings and their relevant components are all subject to wear and tear over time and parts failure due to lack of maintenance or incorrect usage. Being able to source genuine spare parts quickly is the key to ensuring production and operational safety is not compromised.

During the lifespan of lifting equipment there are a vast number of fast-moving components that will need attention and or replacement during the normal operational wear and tear process. Incorrect usage can also play a role in component breakdowns. Konecranes' local distribution centre supplies guaranteed Konecranes spare parts in addition to replacement parts for all other makes and models of lifting equipment so that customers can have quick access to sourcing replacements or to maintain their own stock of needed spare parts.

Ian Grobler, Sales Manager, Konecranes South Africa says, "Worn components if left to continue operating can lead to safety consequences not only within the plant but for operators as well. Regular inspections of critical and essential performing parts ensure a safe and optimised equipment performance, which can enhance the equipment's lifespan and reduce downtime dramatically."

The stockholding of spare components at the company's distribution centre is sufficient to meet customer demand. Genuine Konecranes parts might be slightly more costly than generic equivalents, but they are of high engineering quality and provide customers with greater protection for their investment in Konecranes lifting equipment.

"With over 600,000 assets covered by service agreements, our knowledge of our customer's processes and environment allows us to provide recommendations for the establishment of a spare parts inventory. Thousands of fast-moving parts are stocked across all of our distribution centres. Our technicians are able to install any parts required as well as support any in-house maintenance via an inspection programme," commented Grobler.

Over the years, Konecranes has through strategic acquisitions acquired a number of brands which now fall under the Konecranes umbrella, making them a preferred OEM for replacement parts. Equivalent parts either manufactured by them or sourced from suppliers other than the original manufacturer are available and backed by the Konecranes warranty.

Additionally, Konecranes Performance Parts have been engineered for arduous and demanding environments offering improved durability for cranes in critical process applications.

The company recommends that customers maintain a healthy stock of parts subject to normal wear and tear, ensuring that replacements are readily available when needed. In the event of an emergency, having spare components on hand can reduce costly downtime.

Grobler says, "Keeping an eye on the performance of your crane's components (Konecranes or any other lifting equipment brand) is critical to keeping your crane's operation optimised. We believe that regular inspections and online loading of reports give the customer and the Konecranes technicians quick and easy access to the condition of a customer's lifting equipment. This also enables the customer to stock those components that have been identified as possibly needing replacement in the short to medium term."

Genuine Konecranes parts are of high engineering quality and provide customers with greater protection for their investment in Konecranes lifting equipment.

Konecranes' extensive knowledge of crane components and maintenance enables their technicians to understand the unique requirements of each brand and to provide a professional service in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations and the industry's best practice codes.

For further information, email Ian Grobler, Sales Manager, Konecranes at info.za@konecranes.com or call +27 11 898 3500 or visit their website.

Sandvik Rock Breakers gain foothold across Africa through quality and support

Sandvik hydraulic rock breakers deliver reliable high performance breaking for mining and quarrying applications.

SANDVIK Rock Processing is gaining a stronger foothold across Africa as mining and quarrying customers increasingly recognise the quality, reliability and performance of its hydraulic rock breakers and breaker boom systems.

Backed by strong regional service and aftermarket support, the company is helping customers maximise equipment availability, reduce downtime and improve long-term operational performance. For applicable breaker boom installations, Sandvik also offers a tele-remote option that allows operators to safely control breaking operations from a remote location, moving them away from hazardous crusher and grizzly areas without compromising precision or productivity.

Sandvik Rock Processing is steadily gaining a stronger foothold across the African market with its range of hydraulic rock breakers and breaker boom systems as customers increasingly recognise the value of equipment quality, reliability and strong aftermarket support.

As mining and quarrying operations across the continent place greater emphasis on maximising plant availability and reducing downtime, demand for dependable rock breaking solutions continues to grow. Sandvik Rock Processing has responded by combining proven technology with regional service capabilities that support customers throughout the equipment lifecycle.

According to Tarynn Yatras, vice-president sales area Africa for Sandvik Rock Processing, the company's growing success in Africa is being driven not only by the performance of its rock breakers but also by the technical support, service expertise and genuine spare parts backing available to customers.

"Customers are increasingly looking beyond the initial equipment purchase and focusing on long-term performance, reliability and support," Yatras says. "This is where Sandvik Rock Processing has been able to differentiate itself in the market."

Sandvik offers a comprehensive range of hydraulic rock breakers and stationary breaker boom systems designed for mining, quarrying and aggregate applications. The range extends from compact breakers for smaller carriers and construction applications through to heavy-duty units for large mining excavators and primary crushing installations. Breakers are available for carrier classes ranging from less than one tonne to more than 100 tons, allowing customers to select solutions that precisely match their operating requirements.

The company's stationary breaker boom systems are specifically engineered for grizzly stations and primary crushers where they safely and efficiently clear oversize material and crusher blockages. Depending on the application, these systems can be configured with varying boom reaches, breaker sizes and hydraulic power units to suit both smaller quarry operations and large mining installations, helping to maintain crusher availability and uninterrupted material flow.

Building on these safety and productivity benefits, Sandvik also offers a tele-remote option for applicable breaker boom installations. This enables operators to control the system from a safe, ergonomic location away from the crusher or grizzly area, significantly reducing exposure to hazardous working zones while maintaining precise, efficient clearing of oversize material and blockages.

Across the range, Sandvik rock breakers incorporate features such as optimised hydraulic efficiency, high impact energy, robust construction and idle blow protection. These technologies enable reliable breaking performance under demanding conditions while reducing maintenance requirements and unplanned downtime.

IMT provides innovative maritime solutions

The Institute for Maritime Technology (IMT), a subsidiary of Armscor under the leadership of Advocate Solomzi Mbada, is an accredited world-class facility strategically providing science-based technological and engineering support to the South African Navy and other members of the maritime community locally and globally. With close to 50 years' of success, IMT is an ISO 9001 accredited organisation located in Simon's Town, Western Cape; specialising in maritime technologies, sciences for military defence applications, defence research, development, testing and evaluation of maritime systems for the defence and commercial sector.

Why choose us

IMT is renowned for its capabilities and delivering value to its customers. The facility boasts modern well-equipped workspaces, including laboratories, workshops, test platforms for boats, Autonomous Underwater Vehicles (AUVs) and Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs). The Institute uses cutting-edge hardware across its premises, including sensors, instruments, research equipment and information technology systems. IMT professionals are highly competent and are its competitive advantage; involved in research, development, data gathering, analysis, and interpretation in addition to operating and maintaining the equipment and facilities.

Services offered

- Environmental Characterisation (ENCH)
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- Maritime Decision Support (MDS

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South Africa Gas Bill adds internal appeal process for NERSA disputes

Government amends bill in response to stakeholder concerns

By Larry Claasen

IN one of its most significant decisions on the Gas Bill, the Department of Electricity and Energy (DEE) has announced the introduction of a new internal appeal mechanism to resolve disputes with parties unhappy with decisions made by the energy regulator, NERSA.

During a presentation on submissions made to Parliament by industry participants, the DEE said the new mechanism would provide a dedicated, streamlined avenue for anyone dissatisfied with a NERSA ruling to challenge it. The aim is to avoid costly and time-consuming appeals to the High Court; instead, an aggrieved party would first have the option to seek redress through a specialised internal process.

Department introduces internal tribunal to resolve NERSA disputes

Under the proposed system, aggrieved parties will submit an appeal to NERSA, which must then establish an independent body to hear the case. This newly formed tribunal will review the matter.

"We are proposing the insertion of a new section 39, to the effect that should anyone be aggrieved by a decision of the regulator, they must appeal to the regulator," said Robert Phupheli, DEE director for gas.

The change is one of several proposed amendments to the bill made by the DEE in response to stakeholder submissions. The proposed legislation will replace the Gas Act of 2001. Acting DG Thabo Kekana said the current legislation was "no longer fit for purpose", as it is very narrow, contains no provisions for offences or penalties, lacks environmental protection and rehabilitation measures, and restricts the regulator's enforcement and oversight powers.

Although broadly welcomed by organised business, stakeholders raised several issues in their submissions to Parliament's Portfolio Committee on Electricity and Energy that they wanted changed. The South African Oil and Gas Alliance (SAOGA), for example, called for the bill to enhance regulatory certainty and institutional roles, strengthen environmental and climate governance, and include a dedicated internal appeal mechanism. It also sought increased institutional coordination, proportionality in enforcement, and alignment and planning certainty.

Stakeholder pushback prompts flexibility on licensing and environmental rules

On these issues, the DEE showed some flexibility. While it did not directly address the separation of policy versus regulatory functions, it proposed amendments to strengthen the regulator's role in considering transformation objectives. In response to SAOGA's call for independent licensing decisions, the DEE proposed a new subsection requiring the regulator to consider government transformation objectives — effectively tying licensing criteria to policy directives rather than purely objective commercial benchmarks.

SAOGA also sought greater clarity on the scope and limits of ministerial intervention. On this point, the DEE proposed that the minister must consult with the regulator and the public before issuing "imperatives" for licensing decisions.

The department also demonstrated flexibility regarding requests to clarify environmental authorisation requirements, supporting the integration of environmental compliance throughout the life cycle of a facility, rather than only at decommissioning.

The DEE further supported expanding the consultation list for the Gas Master Plan to include provinces, municipalities, traditional leaders, communities, and private landowners for municipal works.

Flexibility was also shown on licensing. Whereas the Gas Act of 2001 fixes the licence validity period to a minimum of 25 years, industry wanted the option of a shorter period. "The bill seeks to provide an alternative scenario intended to enable the regulator to issue a licence period that is justified by prevailing supporting information and the applicant's request, where shorter periods are sought," Phupheli said.

Ministerial veto retained for private gas projects despite industry objections

However, the DEE showed no flexibility on certain issues. SAOGA, for instance, wanted the private sector to be able to invest in gas infrastructure, including storage and trading facilities, without requiring additional ministerial approval. The DEE rejected this proposal, insisting that even private projects (storage and trading) must obtain a ministerial determination, arguing that this signals government support and thereby unlocks investment in the sector.

Namibia green hydrogen hub powers clean transport and industry

By Adrian Ephraim

NAMIBIA has taken a significant step towards establishing itself as a major player in the global green hydrogen economy, with the commissioning of what Siemens describes as Africa's first fully integrated green hydrogen facility.

Located in Walvis Bay, the CMB.TECH facility combines solar generation, green hydrogen production and battery storage in a single off-grid operation, providing a working model for how renewable energy can be deployed at industrial scale.

The project is significant for Namibia's ambitions to develop a hydrogen economy while reducing the carbon intensity of its transport, logistics and industrial sectors.

"Africa's first fully integrated green hydrogen facility demonstrates that large-scale clean energy production is not a future ambition, but a present-day reality," said Sabine Dall'Omo, CEO of Siemens Sub-Saharan Africa.

The facility currently comprises a 5MWp solar park spanning 6.5 hectares, a 5MW Proton Exchange Membrane electrolyser and a 5.9MWh battery energy storage system.

The solar park's electricity powers the electrolyser, which uses electricity to split water into hydrogen and oxygen. The hydrogen is then available for industrial and transport applications without relying on grid electricity or fossil-fuel-based power.

CMB.TECH is using the hydrogen itself, making the company the facility's first customer and providing an immediate source of demand for the fuel.

This addresses one of the key challenges facing emerging green hydrogen projects: securing commercial offtake for the hydrogen produced.

"Many green hydrogen projects are stalling because, while they invest heavily in solar energy and green hydrogen production, there is often no commercial offtake agreement in place to secure demand for the hydrogen produced," Dall'Omo said.

From trucks to ships

The initial applications include dual-fuel trucks, generators and Namibia's first hydrogen-powered freight locomotive.

The longer-term ambition is considerably larger. CMB.TECH plans to integrate the facility with port infrastructure and eventually produce ammonia from green hydrogen for use as a marine fuel.

The process involves combining hydrogen with nitrogen extracted from the air to produce ammonia, which can then be liquefied and potentially used to refuel ships.

That could position Walvis Bay as a future hub for lower-carbon maritime transport, while strengthening Namibia's role in regional and international renewable energy supply chains.

Wiebke Polomka, senior manager for Southern Africa at Afrika-Verein der deutschen Wirtschaft, said the project demonstrated how hydrogen could help decarbonise transport and logistics.

"From supporting local mobility solutions to enabling future maritime refuelling infrastructure, it provides a tangible pathway toward lower-carbon industrial and shipping ecosystems," she said.

Siemens is providing the electrical, automation and safety systems supporting the facility, with the technology designed to allow the different components to operate as a single integrated system.

Building local skills

The project is also being positioned as a skills-development platform rather than simply an energy-generation facility.

CMB.TECH has established a Hydrogen Academy at the site to train drivers, technicians and scientists. Of the facility's 25 employees, 24 are Namibian and have received training through the academy.

The company is also working with local universities and institutions, including the Namibia Institute for Mining Technology, to develop engineering and technical skills required to support a domestic hydrogen industry.

"The project is training a new generation of engineers and technicians," said Johannes Shimbilinga, municipal mayor of Walvis Bay. "This creates a sustainable pipeline of local expertise, positioning Namibia as an exporter of not just green molecules, but also the technical knowledge required to operate and maintain a hydrogen economy."

The facility is effectively being used as a "Living Lab" for Namibia's emerging hydrogen economy, according to Roy Campe, chief technology officer at CMB.TECH.

Scaling from 5MW to 500MW

The current installation is intended to be the starting point rather than the end state.

Campe said CMB.TECH plans to increase the solar capacity from the current 5MWp to 250MW and eventually 500MW.

The existing solar park comprises around 7 000 panels, with the company envisaging a future facility containing millions of panels.

"We want to turn Namibia into a global energy hub and export energy to Europe and the rest of the world," Campe said.

Namibia's exceptionally high solar resource is central to the ambition. The country experiences around 300 sunny days a year, providing significant potential for large-scale renewable generation.

For Namibia, the opportunity extends beyond replacing fossil fuels in domestic applications. Green hydrogen and its derivatives could become an export industry, allowing the country to convert its abundant renewable resources into energy products for international markets.

The Walvis Bay project therefore offers an early test of whether Africa can move beyond plans and announcements around green hydrogen and develop commercially operating infrastructure.

John Thompson drives sustainable industrial manufacturing in South Africa

Skilled engineering supports sustainable industry.

AS South Africa's industrial sector navigates an evolving energy and economic landscape, manufacturers face a dual priority of maintaining operational reliability while accelerating the drive toward sustainability. At the heart of this transition is heavy engineering and manufacturing excellence, the backbone supporting key sectors from mining, pulp, and paper to utility power generation, petrochemicals and large-scale infrastructure.

With a global heritage spanning nearly two centuries and over 90 years of continuous operation in South Africa, John Thompson, a division of ACTOM (Pty) Ltd, has been a cornerstone of the country's industrial development. Today, as power utilities, infrastructure projects, and industrial plants face increasing pressure to modernise their processes, John Thompson's localised manufacturing facilities and engineering capabilities are playing a vital role in keeping critical industries running efficiently and sustainably.

Whether supplying industrial steam boilers, engineered energy systems, or custom-fabricated pressure vessels, John Thompson's local manufacturing capabilities are well positioned to provide EPC partners with the technical precision and quality assurance needed to execute high-stakes power generation and infrastructure builds on schedule.

Industrial steam generation and power production remain critical to South Africa's growth. To meet today's stringent environmental regulations and energy demands, power generators and heavy industries require solutions that maximise thermal efficiency while curbing emissions.

Through continuous innovation and technological advancement, John Thompson designs, fabricates, and services advanced boiler equipment, biomass-fired energy systems, and utility air pollution control technologies. Manufactured at the John Thompson facility, low Nox burners improve plant safety and significantly lower flue gas emissions at power plants. By enabling the transition toward cleaner fuels and co-generation, the company provides practical and scalable pathways for heavy industry and utility providers to reduce their carbon footprint without compromising production output or energy supply.

The strategic value of local manufacturing goes far beyond equipment delivery. Fabrication and engineering within South Africa offer distinct operational advantages. These include reduced lead times and localised technical support mitigate global supply chain disruptions. High-tech manufacturing supports local job creation, upskilling artisans, welders, and engineers in critical technical disciplines.

"Modern industry requires more than just standard equipment, customers need agile engineering partners who understand their operational challenges and environmental targets," says Shane Mackay, John Thompson Factory Production Manager. "Our focus remains on delivering world-class manufacturing and engineering solutions that drive energy efficiency and contribute directly to a sustainable future for South Africa and the broader continent."

Modular construction moves into larger infrastructure projects

By Tarryn-Leigh Solomons

SOUTH Africa's modular building market is moving beyond temporary site offices and accommodation as companies consider prefabricated structures for longer-term infrastructure projects.

Demand now extends across mining, agriculture, renewable energy, education and healthcare, while projects are placing greater requirements on structural performance, compliance and lifespan.

Ashley Adams, Cape Town Regional Branch Manager at Kwikspace, said the shift in the market has been from temporary structures towards more permanent infrastructure solutions.

The company has supplied mobile clinics, classrooms, mine camp accommodation and government infrastructure, with modular buildings increasingly being considered for projects that may previously have used conventional construction.

Delivery time remains part of the business case

Construction time remains one of the reasons companies consider modular buildings.

Kwikspace offers rental units with delivery times of between five and 14 working days. Purchased units can be supplied fully erected or in kit form for assembly on site.

The latter has applications in industries operating in remote areas, where moving construction teams and materials to site can add time and cost to a project.

"Our Cape Town branch works closely with producers and suppliers across the Western Cape," Adams said.

"Agricultural clients often operate in areas where timelines are tight and access is limited. That's exactly where modular solutions excel."

Clients are also looking beyond delivery time when assessing modular projects. Kwikspace rates its units for a minimum lifespan of 20 years and uses polyurethane foam insulation and Aluzinc painted steel cladding.

For procurement teams, lifespan becomes important when comparing the cost of modular infrastructure with a conventional building over the period it will be used.

Solar projects raise technical requirements

The type of work going to modular suppliers is also changing.

Kwikspace recently designed and supplied two 450m² Operation and Management facilities for the Graspan and Grootspruit solar photovoltaic projects in the Free State and Northern Cape.

The buildings had to meet 30-minute fire-rating requirements under SANS 10400 and undergo seismic analysis in line with SANS 10160 and EN1998-1.

Kwikspace developed load-bearing wall panels capable of supporting 12.8kN each, removing the need for a traditional steel portal frame. The company said the completed design matched, and in some cases exceeded, the load-bearing capacity of conventional brick-and-mortar buildings.

For the modular sector, projects of this nature are important because they put the construction method into tenders where engineering specifications and regulatory compliance form part of the procurement decision.

Rental market moves beyond construction sites

The rental side of the market is also finding applications outside the construction and mining sectors.

Kwikspace recently supplied a modular lounge to an aviation company for international passengers arriving in South Africa.

The facility accommodates about 30 passengers and includes management offices, ablutions, a kitchen and veranda.

The design can be adapted for uses including cafeterias, convenience stores and mining canteens.

Renting gives businesses the option of adding facilities without purchasing a building outright, particularly where the requirement is linked to a project, contract or changing demand.

Financing and perceptions remain hurdles

Despite the broader applications, Adams said perceptions about the lifespan of temporary structures remain a barrier to wider use of modular construction.

Financing and assumptions about design limitations also affect uptake.

This becomes relevant when businesses compare building options at the capital planning stage. Modular construction still has to compete with conventional building methods on cost, financing, lifespan, regulatory requirements and suitability for a particular site.

Education is one sector where Kwikspace expects continued demand. Schools and tertiary institutions can use modular buildings to add classrooms and other facilities where enrolment growth creates pressure on existing infrastructure.

The bigger commercial opportunity, however, lies in getting modular construction considered before a project reaches the procurement stage.

Projects such as the Graspan and Grootspruit facilities show that modular suppliers are competing for work with structural and compliance requirements that extend beyond temporary buildings.

Spear to develop Mambos Storage & Home new flagship national distribution centre

Quintin Rossi (Spear), Santos Francesco (Mambos), Demetre Nikolopoulos (Mambos), James Bylos (Spear).

WESTERN Cape-focused real estate investment trust Spear REIT has concluded a long-term agreement with Mambos Storage & Home to develop the retailer's flagship 7,150m² distribution centre in Blackheath, Cape Town.

Mambos has grown into one of South Africa's leading retail and wholesale distributors of storage, homeware and related lifestyle products. The company currently operates 22 stores nationwide and is advancing plans to expand its national footprint in the near term.

> "This development is the result of a longstanding relationship and a clear understanding of where our tenant's business is headed."

The new national distribution centre will enhance Mambos' operational capacity and support the group's growing national retail footprint from its purpose-built Blackheath base, which will also house the company's head office and supply chain operations.

According to James Bylos, Head of Leasing at Spear REIT, the project reflects the value of long-term tenant relationships and Spear's proactive approach to supporting tenant growth.

"This development is the result of a longstanding relationship and a clear understanding of where our tenant's business is headed. We have worked closely with Mambos throughout the planning process and are pleased to support the next phase of their growth trajectory," says Bylos.

"Businesses should not be constrained by the space they occupy. As operational requirements evolve, our objective is to ensure our properties evolve with them. That approach allows our tenants to focus on growth while ensuring our portfolio continues to meet the demands of a changing market."

The expansion will provide additional warehousing capacity, improved logistics functionality and upgraded operational infrastructure to support increased volumes, enhance distribution efficiencies and enable future growth.

Demetre Nikolopoulos, CEO of Mambos Storage & Home, says the new distribution centre will strengthen the core foundation of the business and provide the capacity needed to respond to an ever-evolving customer base.

"We look forward to continuing our strong and long-term partnership with Spear as we transition from one Spear real estate solution to another in support of Mambos' ongoing growth.

"The Blackheath property plays a critical role in our business, serving as both our head office and national distribution hub. As we continue to grow, additional capacity and operational efficiencies become increasingly important. Spear has taken the time to understand our requirements and develop a property solution that supports our long-term national expansion plans."

Quintin Rossi, CEO of Spear, says, "The investment comes at a time of sustained demand for well-located industrial property across the Western Cape. Blackheath continues to demonstrate strong industrial demand, supported by its strategic location, access to major transport routes and proximity to Cape Town International Airport. We are proud of our long-term association with Mambos Storage & Home and its shareholders, and we look forward to delivering a world-class distribution facility that will serve as a growth accelerator for Mambos."

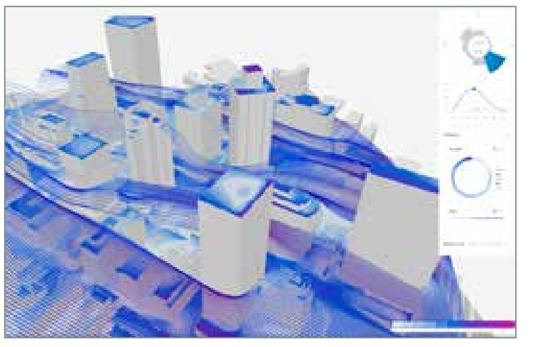
Blackheath continues to experience heightened demand from logistics, warehousing and distribution operators, with distribution centres remaining among the most active segments of the Cape industrial market. Limited availability of appropriately zoned land and quality industrial stock, combined with ongoing occupier demand, has reinforced Blackheath's position as a key industrial and logistics hub within the Western Cape.

Rossi concludes, "This new development forms part of Spear's active asset-management strategy to unlock embedded value within our core portfolio in a manner that consistently enhances the growing regional portfolio while maintaining long-term, sustainable income streams. With development costs at circa R90 million, the development reinforces the group's commitment to investing in its existing portfolio while enabling tenant expansion in a high-performing Western Cape industrial precinct."

Development works commenced on 1 August 2026, with completion anticipated in mid-2027. Once complete, the expanded facility will significantly enhance Mambos' warehousing and distribution capabilities, supporting the company's continued growth across South Africa.

Digital delivery gives construction a new competitive advantage

DIGITAL delivery remains a relatively new but growing capability in South Africa. As the construction and infrastructure sector evolves, information is becoming a highly valuable asset. Technologies such as digital twins, AI-assisted design and lifecycle data integration can help investors and developers maximise that value. For built environment practitioners, the ability to structure and validate project information and use that data more effectively will become a key competitive advantage.



Study showing wind patterns for The Rubik, a mixed-use building in the Cape Town CBD.

The construction and development sector is under increasing pressure to deliver more complex projects, faster and with greater certainty. Across individual buildings, mixed-use precincts, residential estates and critical infrastructure, project teams must manage growing volumes of information while simultaneously reducing risk and improving coordination. In this environment, the ability to manage information effectively is becoming as important as managing cost, complexity, programme and design quality.

Traditional project delivery models fall short of these expectations. Fragmented information, disconnected workflows and document-based processes can hamper progress and add risk. Digital delivery addresses this fragmentation, enabling teams to work within a structured, shared environment with a single source of trusted information. Building information modelling (BIM), digital twins and lifecycle data integration improve information quality and decision-making. Together, these technologies enable better collaboration and this creates greater certainty, particularly for clients who need to balance cost pressures, programme constraints and evolving regulatory requirements.

Head of BIM, Kershlen Moodley.

For dhk Architects, that perspective has been shaped by the practical realities of delivering technically complex projects across multiple geographies. dhk's Head of BIM, Kershlen Moodley, explains: "We analysed our processes and saw that information was often dispersed across platforms, coordination relied heavily on manual processes and project teams spent significant time validating, locating and managing information rather than using it to drive better project outcomes."

The process elevated the dhk BIM team's delivery capability significantly in the last few years. "The process of digitalising our delivery has been a game-changer for our project teams. We now have 15 people; the BIM Coordinators and Managers who are working on projects all around the world, including building digital twins and developing the digital frameworks for public sector entities and private developers. It's an endorsement of the improvements we made and growing recognition of our leadership and expertise."

Reliable, real-time information reduces duplication of effort, improves efficiency and gives clients clearer visibility of project progress, and confidence in project delivery. For clients, this level of certainty supports earlier, better-informed decisions and helps professional teams manage complexity before it becomes a construction problem. "Better coordination reduces rework and improves information quality," says Moodley. "When clients have clarity on the design intent, they have greater confidence in the decisions being made,".

But information as an asset continues to add value beyond the construction period, particularly for municipalities, developers and infrastructure providers who are investing in long-term assets. "The quality of information available at handover becomes increasingly important," explains Moodley. "Structured digital information established at the outset of a building's operational lifespan can support improved facilities management, more efficient asset maintenance and stronger lifecycle planning."

Digital twins and common data environments allow owners and operators to derive value long after construction is complete. They also support sustainability objectives. Having validated coordinated design information in place reduces redesign and project waste. With better asset data, building owners and asset managers can plan maintenance schedules more effectively and can procure replacements for repairs more efficiently.

Treating information as an asset requires visionary leadership and a commitment to shared ways of working. "Meaningful and lasting change occurs when digital tools are embedded within project delivery rather than operating alongside existing processes," says Moodley. Organisations that develop the expertise to see information as a valuable asset rather than a tool for project delivery can reduce risk for project teams and clients operating in increasingly complex local and international markets.

www.dhk.co.za

Compliance awareness critical as medium to small contractors enter civil engineering

BCCEI compliance helps create fair, sustainable and legally compliant employment practices across the civil engineering industry.

AS infrastructure investment across South Africa increasingly shifts towards road rehabilitation, municipal wastewater upgrades and broader public infrastructure maintenance, a growing number of small to medium sized contractors are securing work in the civil engineering sector. However, many of these businesses remain unaware that the nature of the work they are performing places them squarely within the scope of the Bargaining Council for the Civil Engineering Industry (BCCEI) and its legally binding collective agreements.

According to Lindie Fourie, Operations Manager at the BCCEI, this lack of awareness is creating a significant compliance risk across the industry particularly as municipalities, water utilities and infrastructure clients accelerate the rollout of maintenance and upgrade projects involving roads, pipelines, stormwater systems, wastewater treatment works and associated civils infrastructure.

“Many contractors mistakenly believe that BCCEI registration requirements apply only to large construction companies undertaking major infrastructure projects,” she explains. “In reality, any business performing work that falls within the registered scope of the civil engineering industry is legally required to register with the BCCEI and comply with the applicable collective agreements, regardless of the size of the business or the value of the contract.”

She adds that this obligation also extends to companies appointed by municipalities to carry out the maintenance, repair or rehabilitation of civil engineering infrastructure. “A common misconception is that only the contractors who build infrastructure are required to register. However, businesses engaged to maintain or repair that infrastructure are equally required to register where their activities fall within the scope of the civil engineering industry.”

This includes contractors involved in activities such as:

- Road rehabilitation and maintenance
- Asphalt and paving works
- Earthworks and trenching
- Pipe laying and reticulation
- Stormwater infrastructure
- Wastewater and sanitation infrastructure
- Bulk civils and associated construction activities

The challenge, according to Fourie, is that many emerging contractors enter the sector through subcontracting arrangements or municipal procurement opportunities without fully understanding the labour and compliance framework governing the industry.

“As infrastructure investment expands, particularly at municipal level, we are seeing more small and medium sized businesses entering the civil engineering space,” Fourie says. “Unfortunately, many of these companies are completely unaware that they are legally required to register with the BCCEI and comply with the industry’s collective agreements.”

Fourie explains that registration is determined not by the company carrying out the work or the location where it is performed but by the nature of the work itself.

“If the activities being undertaken fall within the registered scope of the civil engineering industry, then the employer is required to comply with the BCCEI framework,” she says. “This applies equally to smaller contractors undertaking roads, wastewater, pipeline or related civils work.”

The collective agreements administered by the BCCEI regulate critical employment conditions within the sector including minimum wages, working hours, leave provisions, health and safety obligations and broader labour compliance requirements designed to create fair and sustainable operating conditions across the industry.

Fourie emphasises that compliance should not be viewed as a barrier to growth for smaller contractors but rather as a mechanism that helps professionalise businesses, protect employees and create a level competitive environment across the sector.

“There is a misconception among some smaller businesses that compliance is complicated or only relevant to large corporations,” she says. “In reality, registration and compliance form part of building a sustainable and credible business capable of operating responsibly within the civil engineering sector.”

Government infrastructure programmes continue to prioritise the rehabilitation of ageing municipal infrastructure and in particular water and wastewater, expansion of sanitation systems and improvement of transport networks - all areas expected to generate ongoing opportunities for civil engineering contractors of varying sizes.

The BCCEI is therefore encouraging contractors, municipalities, consulting engineers and principal contractors to play an active role in improving awareness around compliance obligations within the sector.

“We believe there is a critical need for education and awareness,” Fourie concludes. “Many businesses are not deliberately avoiding compliance, they simply do not understand that the work they are performing places them within the civil engineering industry framework. Early engagement with the BCCEI can help contractors avoid future risks and ensure that they build compliant, sustainable businesses from the outset.”

Contractors uncertain about whether their activities fall within the scope of the civil engineering industry are encouraged to engage directly with the BCCEI for guidance and clarification regarding registration and compliance requirements.

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THE NEXT GENERATION

Internships, Skills & Development Programmes

Hisense, NBI and Northlink TVET College launch Technical Academy for skills development

THE National Business Initiative (NBI), Hisense SA and Northlink TVET College have launched the Hisense-Northlink Technical Academy at the college's Belhar Campus in Cape Town, establishing a dedicated training and workplace development initiative aimed at developing technical skills in the domestic appliance repair sector.

The Academy forms part of the NBI's Installation, Repair and Maintenance (IRM) Initiative, through the Appliance Repair and Dismantling (ARAD) programme, which aims to address skills shortages in the formal appliance repair market and expand opportunities for young people to enter employment.

The initiative responds to barriers limiting young people's entry into the formal appliance repair sector, including limited access to formal training and recognised certification, a lack of opportunities for practical workplace experience, and weak linkages between training institutions and formal manufacturer service networks. These barriers can make the transition from training into the workplace difficult for students.

"For us, the value of the Hisense-Northlink Technical Academy lies in bringing industry and TVET education closer together. It creates an opportunity to ensure that young people are gaining skills that respond to a real market need, while giving them exposure to the workplace and the standards expected by industry," says Gugu McLaren-Ushewokunze, Head of Economic Inclusion at the NBI.

The Hisense-Northlink Technical Academy brings together industry expertise and public TVET education to ensure training is aligned with current market requirements. Students will combine college-based learning with structured workplace experience, creating a practical pathway into the appliance repair sector.

> This partnership is an important investment in the future of technical skills in South Africa

As part of the collaboration, Hisense will support the Academy with training appliances, technical equipment and expertise, as well as opportunities for students to gain workplace experience within its service network.

"This partnership is an important investment in the future of technical skills in South Africa," says Luna Nortje, Deputy General Manager at Hisense South Africa.

"We are developing a pipeline of qualified technicians who understand our products and meet industry standards. This strengthens service quality and supports the long-term sustainability of the appliance repair ecosystem."

Hisense entered the South African market in 1996 and has since expanded its local operations, creating jobs and exporting locally manufactured products to markets across the continent and beyond.

"Northlink TVET College highly values the partnership established with the National Business Initiative (NBI) and Hisense South Africa for this project," says Lebuhang Mosia, Acting Campus Manager for Belhar Campus, Northlink TVET College.

"This collaboration will significantly contribute to the College's vision of expanding occupational programmes that respond to skills in high demand within industry, while creating meaningful opportunities for our students to enter the workplace."

"As part of this initiative, the College is committed not only to equipping students with relevant technical skills and practical industry experience, but also to supporting them beyond their training," says Mosia.

"We aim to facilitate pathways for graduates to be absorbed into industry or, where appropriate, to establish and grow their own businesses. Through partnerships such as this, we can strengthen the link between TVET education, industry requirements and sustainable employment opportunities for our graduates."

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What if feeling is a prerequisite for performance?

By Chantelle Botha

I met a man on my morning run who said he wished he had time to do something that so clearly brought life into my face.

"You have time," I said. "You have just chosen to believe you don't."

Although my morning run is technically exercise, I run to embrace my aliveness. Every time I lose my breath, or my muscles recoil at the exertion, I get to FEEL. And the more I feel, the more gratitude I experience and the more present I become.

And, ironically, the more productive I am in the coming day.

"Feelings" have gotten a bad rap in the corporate world, so leaders can view anything emotional as a distraction from the job at hand.

You're present, but you're not really present. Your mind is running at a thousand miles an hour, and you're starting to forget things. The signs are small enough to catch, but left unchecked, they're symptomatic of a bigger problem.

What if how you feel is the prerequisite for performance?

Research tells us that 63% of South African professionals are feeling work-related stress. With burnout characterised by extreme mental, physical, and emotional exhaustion, it seems obvious that rest would provide relief. But rest doesn't necessarily address disconnection.

When we become disconnected from the signals that tell us we're heading towards burnout, we lose access to the information we need to make different choices.

There is just too much on your plate, and you've forgotten how to feel. That numbness creates disconnection – from yourself, from the people around you, from the vision and mission, and ultimately, from what really matters.

A leader can be functioning at full capacity while becoming increasingly disconnected from themselves under the demands of the role.

The smarter we've got, the more emphasis we've placed on the tail end of the domino effect (performance, productivity, results) and we've forgotten the importance of what comes before it.

Your internal state doesn't stay neatly inside you, it influences how you think. How you think influences how you behave. How you behave influences your relationships. And your relationships influence your opportunities, and ultimately your results.

It's the domino effect:

Feel → think → act → relate → perform.

We have become obsessed with the final domino while neglecting the ones that create it. You cannot isolate human state from business performance.

Earlier this year, I was poised on the precipice of burnout yet again. Of course, I was still doing what needed to be done, but internally, I was numb. I felt isolated and scared. Having stopped feeling, I stopped engaging, and my creativity went down the toilet.

The danger becomes apparent when leaders continue functioning long after they've stopped being fully present. They miss the signals needed to make sustainable decisions. They misread people, damage relationships and ultimately lose opportunities.

This matters because leadership happens through relationships. Every decision, negotiation, act of innovation and difficult conversation happens through a human being in a particular internal state.

Feeling isn't the opposite of getting things done. Feeling is information. Information that helps get the right things done at the right time.

Today, I have one question for you: What have you stopped making time for because it doesn't look productive?

Feeling ALIVE is a prerequisite for inspired and connected leadership. Not the by-product.

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Chantelle Botha is an international speaker, author and Permission Catalyst, helping leaders turn shame into desire and desire into courage. To learn how better choices can change the way you live, love and lead, visit phoenixconfidence.com.

HUMAN RESOURCES & RECRUITMENT

Psychometric Testing: How employers can improve hiring and talent development

By Diane Silcock

WITH South Africa's high unemployment rate and an ever-widening talent pool, Human Resources professionals and recruiters are often faced with the challenge of managing large volumes of job applications. Once a shortlist has been compiled, identifying the candidate most suited to a particular role can be equally challenging, particularly when applicants have similar qualifications, skills and experience.

Psychometric testing can add significant value by assessing work-related competencies and providing employers with a broader and more objective understanding of shortlisted candidates. However, its value extends beyond recruitment, supporting employee development, talent management and succession planning.

Unless a company has a robust interview process, bias can influence recruitment decisions. Organisations can also find it difficult to differentiate between candidates with similar skills and experience.

This is according to Liesl Cloete, Director of Equip Assessment and Development Services and Independent Psychometrist, who has worked with businesses across a range of industry sectors for 26 years.

"People are generally inclined to gravitate towards those who are similar to themselves, whereas psychometric testing can provide a more objective view," says Cloete.

"Depending on the role, assessments can provide insight into competencies such as cognitive problem-solving ability, resilience, leadership approach, trainability, work style, personality, and emotional intelligence. For technical roles, we also look at mechanical and spatial reasoning to get a sense of the technical aptitude of the person."

Looking beyond technical performance

Cloete, who has worked extensively in the engineering space, says strong performance in a technical role does not necessarily mean an employee will succeed in a leadership/managerial position.

"Different competencies become more important when predicting success at that level," she explains.

Context is therefore critical. The psychometrist needs to understand the role requirements, organisational cultural perspective and scope for development when selecting the appropriate assessment battery. This enables the results to be interpreted within the context of the organisation and role, helping employers identify candidates best aligned with a position, whilst providing insight into areas where development or support may be required.

Supporting development and retention

Psychometric assessments can also provide valuable insight beyond the initial hiring decision.

"Employees are more likely to remain engaged when they understand the opportunities available for their development," says Cloete. "This is why I centre interviews around understanding a person's motivations."

She says ambitious employees may want to progress relatively quickly, making it important for organisations to understand their career aspirations and development opportunities.

Cloete advises against viewing assessments as merely informing a hiring decision or using results in a reductionistic way. "The information should be used going forward," she says.

She generally includes a feedback session to both successful and unsuccessful candidates. "Providing feedback can contribute positively to a company's reputation because it demonstrates the investment it makes in people. It can also give candidates a sense of their strengths and growth opportunities that can be used for their development and onboarding."

For employers, psychometric testing can therefore provide insight beyond a candidate's suitability for a current role, supporting talent mapping, employee development and succession planning.

"The main purpose of psychometrics within work environments is to increase an organisation's ability to anticipate and make sense of behaviour as well as predict future performance and potential," concludes Cloete.

Liesl Cloete, Director, Equip Assessment and Development Services and Independent Psychometrist.

In South Africa, Cloete advises employers to ensure that psychological tests used for recruitment and selection meet the relevant professional and legal requirements, including those relating to the administration and interpretation of assessments and the Employment Equity Act.

When used appropriately, psychometric testing can benefit both employer and candidate, supporting more informed hiring decisions while providing valuable insight into an individual's strengths, development needs and potential.

Learn more at www.equipsa.co.za