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Electric truck market in South Africa needs government action to grow



By Adrian Ephraim

SOUTH Africa's commercial vehicle sector has a policy challenge. The technology for electric trucking is proven, the early operational data is compelling, and a growing number of fleet operators have already committed. But the regulatory environment is lagging so far behind industry readiness that it risks strangling momentum before the market reaches scale, and with it, one of the most accessible levers available to reduce the transport sector's contribution to South Africa's carbon footprint.

Naamsa, the Automotive Business Council, has been direct in its assessment. The industry body is actively engaging a working group within the Department of Trade, Industry, and Competition (DTIC) on two specific reforms: temporary import duty relief on electric trucks and a payload and length concession for electric truck-trailer combinations that mirrors what European regulators already permit. For Naamsa, these are not aspirational policy positions. They are the minimum conditions required to make the business case viable for mainstream fleet operators.

The payload question is particularly significant. Because electric trucks carry heavy battery packs, each vehicle's net payload capacity is reduced compared to a

diesel equivalent of the same gross vehicle mass. European regulators have addressed this directly, granting electric truck-trailer combinations an additional two-ton payload allowance. European operators are also permitted to run longer truck-trailer combinations, accommodating the extended wheelbase that comes with electric drivetrains.

Naamsa is asking the DTIC for equivalent concessions. Fleet operators already have existing trailers in their yards, and permitting electric combinations to run between 50 cm and 110 cm longer than current regulations allow would mean those operators could use their existing equipment rather than commissioning purpose-built shorter trailers, which currently cost between R2-million and R3-million per unit.

The duty structure compounds the challenge. Electric trucks sourced from the EU attract a 12% import tariff; those from all other origins face 20%, the same rates applied to conventional diesel vehicles. The problem is the base price. Electric trucks cost significantly more than their diesel equivalents, which means the rand value of the duty is substantially larger. Without a fleet-side purchase incentive to offset this, the total cost of ownership gap between electric and diesel remains a difficult conversation for any operator managing tight margins and a

sustainability mandate simultaneously.

Eric Parry, Senior Manager of Sustainability at Volvo Trucks South Africa, sits on the Naamsa HCV NEV sub-committee driving that engagement. He recently participated in the National Transport Conference hosted by the Department of Transport, which focused on accelerating the decarbonisation of road transport toward the country's net-zero target by 2050.

"I am encouraged by the quality of the discussions at the conference and am optimistic that it will help move us towards practical steps in the decarbonisation of road transport in South Africa," Parry told CBN.

Parry estimates break-even on an electric truck investment should be achievable within five to six years, depending on diesel prices, electricity costs, annual mileage and finance terms. That timeline is commercially realistic, but it remains a barrier for operators who must commit capital today against uncertain policy conditions. Government has shown it is capable of acting: the 150% tax deduction on qualifying EV production investments, which came into effect in March 2026, is a meaningful intervention on the manufacturing side. But the demand lever, a fleet-side purchase incentive, remains absent from the policy toolkit.

CBN asked the Department of Transport directly about the status of the import duty relief and payload concession proposals. The Department had not responded by the time of publishing.

The evidence base that should be informing that review is already substantial. As of October 2025, Volvo's electric trucks had covered 250 million kilometres in real-world customer operations globally. In South Africa, Vector Logistics operates two all-electric Volvo FH 6x4 tractors across Gauteng and Cape Town. DSV has added nine Volvo electric units to its local fleet, supported by solar generation and battery storage at its Gauteng depot. In August 2025, South Africa's first all-electric Superlink entered service as part of a DHL and Unilever pilot.

Continued on P2

Net Zero starts with better measurement: How VEGA enables sustainable industry



SOUTH Africa's journey toward a low-carbon, resource-efficient economy is gaining momentum. With the national commitment to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050, industries across mining, manufacturing, water treatment, food production, and energy are under growing pressure to operate more efficiently, reduce waste, and demonstrate measurable sustainability gains. In this context, VEGA's instrumentation can play a deciding role in the success of companies working towards sustainability goals.

Achieving these goals requires more than just policy alignment or a high-level strategy. It demands precise, reliable data - the kind that enables operators to optimise processes and make informed decisions in real time. As a global leader in level, pressure, and point-level measurement, VEGA provides the technological backbone that allows South African industries to translate sustainability ambitions into operational reality.

The truth is, sustainability starts with measurement and the principle is simple: you cannot manage what you cannot measure. Whether your goal is reducing energy consumption, cutting water losses, improving process efficiency, or lowering emissions, accurate measurement is the foundation of every sustainability initiative.

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Electric truck market in South Africa needs government action to grow

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“When they are matched to the right operations, they fit right in with the fleets that are already there,” Parry says. “They are easier to fix, need less maintenance, and have shown that they work

well over time.” Demand is also emerging beyond the major logistics players. The UCL Company in KwaZulu-Natal, which generates its own power from waste at its sugar mill, has purchased two

electric 6x4 tractors for agricultural transport. For an operator with its own renewable energy source, the sustainability and financial cases converge immediately. The commercial logic is in place. The

technology is proven. What is missing is the regulatory coherence to match the ambition. Import duty relief and an electric-specific payload concession are targeted, time-bound adjustments that other

jurisdictions have already implemented. The Department of Transport does not need to start from scratch. It needs to act on the groundwork that Naamsa and the industry have already laid.

Cape Town electricity supply battle with Eskom over control of suburbs

With higher tariffs, endless outages, and frustrated residents, Cape Town wants control of Eskom-supplied suburbs.

By Larry Claasen

THE City of Cape Town is not giving up on taking control of the distribution of electricity away from power utility Eskom that is currently supplying some of its suburbs.

Eskom directly supplies about 1,25 million of Cape Town’s residents, something the city wants to change as it says it can provide better services, reduce infrastructure safety risks and also provide “equitable cost” to the customers.

When the city speaks of equitable cost, it is talking about the high electricity tariff rate Eskom is charging the residents it supplies compared to the rate charged by the City of Cape Town.

Households using less than 450 kWh per month at a rate of R3,43.61 c/kWh would be charged R1 546,24 (VAT inclusive) under Eskom’s Homelight 60A tariff. By comparison, City of Cape Town residents only pay R 1 172,29 at a rate of R2,60.51 c/kWh for

the city’s LIFELINE tariff.

Aside from the difference in electricity rates, the level of service on the part of Eskom in the areas it supplies has also been an issue. Delft residents, for example, drew up a petition in 2024 calling for electricity supply to be handed over to the City of Cape Town because of unscheduled outages for long periods, slow response times and poor communication by Eskom.

Property developers in the region are also not happy as they have to go through the state owned company’s inefficient bureaucracy to arrange for connections to their developments, resulting in expensive delays.

The City of Cape Town and Eskom were in negotiations to transfer supply but in May 2024, Eskom ended the talks. In a letter to City of Cape Town Mayor Geordin Hill-Lewis, Eskom GM Mbulelo Yedwa said the move was not supported by Eskom’s executive team.

“The proposed request regarding the transfer of specific Eskom supply areas to the City of Cape Town was discussed and unfortunately, it was not supported. It was concluded that it is in Eskom’s best interest not to transfer or sell any assets due to the operational requirements of the Eskom business.”

At the time, Hill-Lewis said bringing the Eskom-supplied areas under city control formed part of Cape Town’s Energy Strategy, which charts the long-term path to 2050 as part of a great transition from a centralised supply of unreliable, costly and fossil fuel based Eskom energy, to an increasingly decentralised supply of reliable, cost-effective, carbon neutral energy from a diverse range of



City of Cape Town Mayor Geordin Hill-Lewis giving an update on the Eskom supply issue at the Elsies River Civic Centre in 2024.

suppliers.

Though the city supplies 75% of residents with electricity, a quirk in the merging of several city councils into the City of Cape Town Metro when Apartheid ended in the 1990s saw Eskom continue to supply some areas directly. At the time,

by law from supplying, operating or responding to electricity faults in the Eskom supply area. Aside from getting Eskom to agree to pass on control to the city, the issue can be resolved with power regulator Nersa being asked to mediate or settle disputes arising

areas, however, would mean Eskom would be starting sensitive negotiations on a matter that would affect its revenue just as it is being split into three separate companies. The split will see its generation, transmission and distribution operations become stand-alone state owned companies, which will be responsible for generating their own revenue.

Eskom has about 7 million residential customers, and generated R22,16 billion in revenue from them for the year to end March 2025.

Despite not being able to get control over these areas, the city and Eskom still work closely together when it comes to delivering services.

“The city already provides certain services within Eskom-supplied areas, such as maintaining public lighting infrastructure across its network of 245 000 streetlights across the metro,” said Limberg.

She added: “The city continues to collaborate with Eskom to enhance service delivery, address operational challenges and support infrastructure expansion, with the shared objective of ensuring reliable electricity supply for all so that Cape Town’s residents are well served.”

“The city remains in ongoing engagement with Eskom on a range of electricity-related matters, including the potential transfer of supply areas that currently fall under Eskom’s licensing mandate, where it is feasible and in the public interest.”

the licensed electricity distribution areas existed before the unicity amalgamation, meaning that the city inherited supply areas from the former local councils, while Eskom kept control of its own licensed areas.

All this means is that the Eskom distribution license defines the Eskom supply area within the City of Cape Town metro boundaries and the city’s distribution license defines the city’s supply area. Each licensee has exclusive authority to supply electricity and operate electricity networks in their supply area.

The city is prohibited

under the Electricity Regulation Act.

Eskom has yet to respond to CBN’s questions on the matter.

For its part, Alderman Xanthea Limberg, Mayco Member for Energy, said the city was not giving up on the Eskom-controlled areas.

“The city remains in ongoing engagement with Eskom on a range of electricity-related matters, including the potential transfer of supply areas that currently fall under Eskom’s licensing mandate, where it is feasible and in the public interest.”

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Atlantis SEZ in Western Cape ranked top location for EV battery gigafactory



By Larry Claasen

THE Atlantis Special Economic Zone (SEZ) is the top-ranked location in South Africa suitable for the setting up of a “gigafactory” that will make batteries used to power electric vehicles (EVs).

“The project could contribute materially to the government’s target of creating 25,000 new jobs in the green economy by 2030, with additional multiplier effects across the upstream mineral processing and downstream systems integration value chain.”

The Atlantis SEZ in the Western Cape scored the highest on proximity to South Africa’s densest cluster of battery pack assemblers and integrators, according to a study commissioned by the Localisation Support Fund (LSF) and carried out by Ernst & Young Advisory Services (EY-Parthenon). The study found that its closeness to battery companies like Afri-volt and Balcell could see a gigafactory become an immediate anchor customer to them. It also said the Atlantis SEZ offered unique access to renewable energy projects in the Western Cape, enabling a green-powered manufacturing opera-

tion from the outset. The study also ranked Atlantis the best when it came to offtakers, global talent appeal and safety, and the stability of its power grid connections and water supply. It however pointed out that setting up a manufacturing facility in

South Africa may take about three years, and that upgrading Atlantis’s electricity infrastructure to host the gigafactory might take just as long. Setting up a Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) facility in South Africa would not only support the country’s transition from combustion engines to EVs, but also had the potential to be a battery supplier to the world. A gigafactory of between 5 and 10 GWh annual capacity is both operationally and economically viable. An analysis of South Africa’s manufacturing cost profile demonstrates that, under the scenarios assessed

and with appropriate tariff support set within World Trade Organization (WTO) bound rates, South African-produced lithium iron phosphate (LFP) battery cells can achieve price competitiveness with imported alternatives, including those from lower-cost East Asian producers. The country holds substantial domestic reserves of iron ore, phosphate, and copper — core inputs in LFP cell chemistry — alongside broader strategic mineral wealth, positioning it as a preferred partner in global battery supply chain strategies, the study noted. The establishment of a domestic gigafactory carries significant employment and skills development implications. The study modelled a workforce of over 560 direct employees at the 5 GWh scale, concentrated in equipment operation, maintenance, quality assurance, and engineering roles. The project could contribute materially to the government’s target of creating 25,000 new jobs in the green economy by 2030, with additional multiplier effects across the upstream mineral processing and downstream systems integration value chain. Though the setting

up of a gigafactory seems promising, the study pointed out that it faced several challenges, such as upstream gaps in mineral processing and component manufacturing. The study echoes the National Association of Automobile Manufacturers of South Africa (Naamsa)’s New Energy Vehicle Transitional Roadmap, which said the country has to develop a beneficiation strategy to support the sector. Policy uncertainty is also an issue. Some local battery manufacturers complain that the vehicle industry is supported by an array of incentives, but they are excluded from this kind of support. Clarity is also needed on the specific certifications required for the gigafactory to be a registered supplier with original equipment manufacturers (OEMs). Automotive batteries in South Africa may also need homologation with the National Regulator for Compulsory Specifications (NRCS) for imported parts. South Africa’s lack of standards and testing facilities for storage batteries — requiring NRCS and South African Bureau of Standards (SABS) support for development — is also an issue.

National Rail Master Plan opens rail access but leaves risk with Transnet

By Chris Hattingh

ON 24 April transport minister, Barbara Creecy, launched the National Rail Master Plan (NRMP). The plan sets out a R1.9 trillion, 30-year programme to restore rail as the backbone of South Africa’s logistics system. The plan targets an increase in annual freight volumes from the current 165 million tonnes to 250 million tonnes by 2029/30, with 3,600 kilometres of network expansion and the progressive opening of the network to third-party train operating companies.

For the private sector, the plan contains a central contradiction. The NRMP is explicit: rail infrastructure remains under state ownership. The document’s own rationale is that private investors focus on financial returns, while the government concerns itself with macro-economic impact, and that this difference justifies public retention of the asset base. The logic is coherent in policy terms; the risk it creates for private capital is equally coherent and more immediate.

The plan invites private investment through concessions, rolling stock leasing and outsourcing arrangements. But the document acknowledges that the government will typically retain traffic and revenue risk under these concession structures. Private capital is therefore being asked to commit alongside an infrastructure custodian — Transnet, operating through the Rail Infrastructure Manager (TRIM) — which remains a Transnet subsidiary. It carries R4.2 billion in suspended locomotive procurement payments, and has, by the plan’s own analysis, been consuming more than 75% of its capital budget on basic maintenance rather than network investment. The NRMP does not resolve this. It acknowl-

edges explicitly that following a period in which the railway was run to failure alongside corruption, private investors should be expected to require “exceptional measures” to reduce their risk exposure to tolerable levels. Those measures are not yet defined. The Transport Economic Regulator (TER), which is intended to provide independent regulatory oversight, is not yet operational. TRIM remains inside Transnet’s corporate structure.

The NRMP’s economic case is sound: the cost of inaction is estimated at R276 billion annually in lost exports and logistics inefficiencies. The plan is the most credible rail policy framework South Africa has produced. The question private capital must now answer is whether a commercially structured investment can be secured against infrastructure controlled by an entity whose balance sheet reflects the accumulated damage of state capture, and where the risk allocation framework has yet to be written.

Stakeholder consultations close in Q3 2026, with Cabinet approval targeted in Q4. The detail that matters most, e.g. how investment risk is allocated between the state and the private sector, will be determined in those engagements.

The commodity producers with the most direct stake in rail performance, namely the mining and agricultural export sectors, have demonstrated willingness to invest in logistics infrastructure where contractual protections are credible. Several large mining houses have already committed capital to port and siding upgrades under bilateral arrangements with Transnet. The NRMP creates the policy basis to scale that model. Whether it can deliver the legal and financial architecture that converts policy intent into bankable con-



tracts is the test that the Q3 consultation process must begin to answer.

The plan’s 30-year horizon is both its strength and its vulnerability; it signals long-term commitment. It also means that the credibility of every near-term institutional decision — TRIM’s governance structure, the TER’s resourcing, the first concession agreements — will be read by private capital as a leading indicator of whether the full programme holds.

South Africa has produced rail policy before. What it has not produced is the institutional architecture that converts policy into capital commitment. The NRMP is the most serious attempt yet to bridge that gap, but the bridge is not yet built. Private capital will not wait indefinitely for the regulatory framework to be written, for the TER to become operational, or for TRIM to be structurally separated from the entity whose balance sheet it is meant to oversee. The Q3 consultation process is not a formality; it is the moment at which the government must demonstrate that the political will behind the 30-year plan extends to the decisions that are difficult in the short term. If the first concession agreements are structured to protect Transnet rather than attract capital, the NRMP will join a long list of credible South African policy documents that were never matched by the necessary level of political will nor deeper ideological changes.

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Allmech guide to cooling tower bleed control: Time-based vs conductivity systems explained



A cooling tower bleed system. Allmech recommends proper bleed control to ensure optimal system performance.

COOLING towers age this process:

towers rely on evaporation to remove heat, but this process also concentrates dissolved solids in the system. Left unmanaged, this buildup can lead to scaling, corrosion and fouling, reducing efficiency and increasing maintenance costs. According to Allmech, without proper bleed control, dissolved solids accumulate over time and start to impact system performance.

- A time-based system, which uses a timer to open a valve at set intervals, discharging a portion of water regardless of actual water quality - a simple, reliable approach that doesn't rely on probes or controllers.

- A conductivity-controlled system, which measures the

"Time-based systems are typically suited to smaller installations or sites where water quality is stable and predictable."

Allmech water treatment consultant Anelia Hough says, "That's why maintaining the right water balance is critical." Bleed, or blowdown, is the process of removing a portion of high-TDS (total dissolved solids) water from the system and replacing it with fresh make-up water. This helps keep dissolved solids within acceptable limits and supports the effectiveness of chemical treatment programmes. Hough says there are two main ways to man-

water's conductivity as a proxy for TDS. When levels exceed a set threshold, the system automatically opens the bleed valve. This allows for more precise control, because the system responds to real conditions rather than fixed intervals.

Weighing up the options

Each approach has clear trade-offs in terms of cost, control and complexity. Time-based systems

are easy to install and operate, with lower upfront costs and fewer components. However, because they do not respond to real-time water conditions, they can be less efficient and may result in unnecessary water loss.

Conductivity-controlled systems require a higher initial investment and ongoing probe maintenance, including cleaning and calibration. In return, they offer tighter control over TDS levels, which can reduce water and chemical usage over time if maintained properly.

"The right solution depends on your operating environment," says Hough.

Time-based systems are typically suited to smaller installations or sites where water quality is stable and predictable. They also make sense where simplicity and low maintenance are priorities.

Conductivity-controlled systems are better suited to larger or more complex operations, particularly where water sources vary or tighter control is required.

"In some cases, a more advanced system is essential," says Hough. "But in others, a simpler setup is not only sufficient, it's more practical and cost-effective."

Selecting the right valve for a time-based system

Hough says that valve performance plays a critical role in efficiency and reliability. Most time-based systems use solenoid valves, which offer fast, precise actuation but can be sensitive to fouling and wear, particularly in harsher water conditions. Regular maintenance and seal replacement are often required.

Allmech recommends ceramic ball valves for certain time-based bleed applications which are designed for durability. Their wear-resistant components perform reliably even in abrasive or poor-quality water, with minimal maintenance over time. While actuation may be slower, the trade-off is longer service life, no water hammer and greater resilience.

Avoiding common pitfalls: Over-bleeding and under-bleeding

Incorrect bleed settings can create their own problems.

"Over-bleeding wastes water and chemicals, while under-bleeding allows dissolved solids to build up, increasing the risk of scaling, fouling and corrosion," says Hough. "Even with a simple time-based system, you still need regular monitoring. Routine testing and periodic adjustments are essential to keep the system within safe limits."

Ultimately, there is no one-size-fits-all solution. The choice between time-based and conductivity-controlled bleed systems depends on factors such as system size, water quality variability, budget and maintenance capacity. Hough suggests consulting with an experienced service provider for an objective assessment and recommendations.

"With the right approach, operators can protect their equipment, reduce operating costs and ensure long-term system performance," she concludes.

For more information, visit www.allmech.co.za or contact Lionel Maasdorp, Managing Director, Allmech Tel: 011 849 2731 Email: lionelm@allmech.co.za

Condra: 60 years strong in crane manufacturing, expanding global reach



Condra's founder, Sepp Kleiner, who cycled across Africa to open the company doors.

CONDRA, South Africa's home-grown global crane manufacturer, will turn 60 on June 24.

Opened as a Braamfontein-based drawing office, the company today has factories in three cities on two continents to produce overhead cranes, hoists, end-carriages and components for markets worldwide.

Honouring Sepp Kleiner – Condra's founder

Of all the firms with ties to Germany, how many can trace a history back to a director who cycled across Africa to open the company doors? Probably only one.

Condra owes its origin to Sepp Kleiner, who in 1959 strapped a tent and two changes of clothing onto a bicycle, and set off on a two-wheeled journey to Cape Town, travelling from Reischach, Germany, across France and Spain to North Africa, and from there southward across the continent. It took him two years.

His journey across Africa was epic. Kleiner cycled through warring countries, across deserts and through rainforests, and was even arrested and sentenced to be shot as a spy.

Sepp is retired today, but the company he founded has grown to become a leading local manufacturer of cranes, hoists, end-carriages and crane components for customers worldwide.

Condra's growth and expansion

Condra's growth is the result of a tight focus on quality and reliability. Cranes are manufactured to specification from hoists, drives, end-carriages, brakes, gearboxes and some 250 components produced in-group. Hoists come in a number of standard

models with capacities up to 500 tons.

Condra's expansion from drawing office to global manufacturing group began with limited crane component production in 1971. The company announced its first locally manufactured hoist four years later.

Rapid growth followed, necessitating a move in 1976 to premises in Elsburg, south of Germiston, which remained the company base for more than 30 years. Over that period, the original factory and office space doubled to allow introduction of a new range of hoists in 1985. A second range was launched in 1997.

The need for yet more space became apparent in 2006, when the company began manufacturing two very large cranes, one for Sishen (capacity 150 tons), the other for Tati (capacity 145 tons) along with a plethora of machines of more standard size. Condra bought land with an area of 22000m² in Gosforth Park, Germiston, and built a 9 000m² factory there. The company moved to the new premises in 2008.

There followed transformation into a group. The company won appointment as South Africa's sole distributor of Hitachi electric chain hoists in 2009, followed quickly by the formation of the first overseas subsidiary, Condra OOD of Pazardzhik, Bulgaria.

Today, entities in the Condra group number nine, with two manufacturing companies in South Africa, one in Chile, one in Bulgaria, and five other associated firms. The parent company and main manufacturing facility remains headquartered in Germiston.

Cranes are designed and manufactured up to and including heavy duty Class 4, and to the standards of ISO, GOST and other internationally recognised quality control bodies.

Condra's stated intent is to continue its focus on high product quality, delivering lower overall useful lifetime costs for sustainable competitive advantage.

Condra seeks reputable companies to partner with

Expansion of the global distribution network is to continue, but without targeting growth for its own sake. Group management is actively courting reputable, respectable companies that can help achieve this.

As Condra celebrates its diamond jubilee, its success today bears witness to Sepp Kleiner's vision, and to an attitude summed up by a favourite quote he likes to share:

"To succeed, sometimes you just have to be bolder than the others," he says.

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Enlit Africa 2026 Cape Town: Power, grid constraints and investment shaping Africa's energy future



ENLIT Africa's 2026 programme convenes decision-makers from utilities, private sector, government, industry and finance to tackle the business of delivering power across the continent – at a moment when system constraints, reform and investment urgency are converging.

In South Africa, transmission constraints are limiting new connections and generation evacuation, municipal distribution and tariff reform is reshaping incentives and financial sustainability and the need for digitalisation is accelerating, raising both opportunity and operational risk.

Across Africa, these same pressures show up in different forms: grid expansion and inter-connection readiness, utility performance and collections, bankable project pipelines, procurement design, and the operational capability to deliver reliability at scale.

Anchored by Enlit

Pan-African participation: Where Africa's power business connects

Enlit Africa, part of VUKA Group, is designed as a working platform for the continent's power ecosystem – utilities, regulators, municipalities, developers, financiers and technology providers – to align around delivery: projects that reach financial close, grid access that becomes real connections and operational improvements that translate into performance.

With participation expected from over 30 African countries and international stakeholders, Enlit Africa's role as a continental convening point rather than a single-country conversation is reinforced once again.

Level 2: The executive deal layer (limited access)

A defining feature of Enlit Africa is the Level 2 experience: a curated, executive environment

can stress-test assumptions, clarify bankability requirements and move opportunities forward with the right stakeholders in the room. For delegates attending with investment, partnership, procurement or project-development intent, Level 2 is where the show

"Across Africa, the constraints are compounding: grid access, distribution performance, revenue certainty and the rapid shift to digital operations. Enlit Africa is where the business of power is discussed properly: what gets financed, what gets delivered and what keeps systems performing. The 2026 theme, 'Compounding impact', reflects our focus on the small, targeted changes that unlock outsized outcomes." – Claire Volkwyn, Head of Content, Enlit Africa."

is designed to convert insight into next steps.

Transmission constraints: unlocking grid access and delivery

Enlit Africa 2026 addresses the constraint that increasingly defines feasibility across many markets: grid access. Sessions focus on the bottlenecks blocking evacuation and expansion, the delivery models and coordination required to scale build-out and the investment conditions that determine whether projects move from pipeline to operation – including practical discussions on infrastructure delivery, regional integration and the conditions that make projects bankable.

Municipal distribution and tariffs: making reform workable

As market evolution and procurement models change, municipalities and distribution utilities face a dual challenge: maintaining system per-

formance while keeping tariffs credible, affordable and financially sustainable.

Enlit Africa 2026 brings practitioners into the same room to unpack what distribution readiness looks like in practice, how tariff structures respond to new market signals and what technical and governance interventions help restore service reliability and revenue performance.

Digitalisation: from pilot projects to critical infrastructure

Utilities and large users are moving from digital ambition to operational dependency: smart metering, improved visibility and data-driven forecasting are becoming core to performance. The programme explores deployment realities, data gov-

ernance and security and the operational capabilities required to turn digitisation into measurable outcomes rather than added complexity.

Water Security Africa: a dedicated focus

Alongside Enlit Africa, Water Security Africa runs as a co-located event. Water is a continuity risk for cities and industry and requires its own commercial and delivery logic. The Water Security Africa programme convenes stakeholders around water resilience, utility performance, reuse and recovery, regulatory enabling conditions and investment-ready delivery models.

Enlit Africa 2026 will take place on 19–21 May 2026 at the CTICC in Cape Town, South Africa. The full programme and registration information are available at: www.enlit-africa.com

Contact: Marcel du Toit, Event Director: marcel.dutoit@wearevuka.com

When smart leaders start overthinking

Master your mental energy. Master your life.

By Joni Peddie

WE'RE living in what feels like an age of uncertainty ... or, at times, an age of drowning. Geopolitical tension. Economic volatility. AI disruption. Restructuring. Job insecurity. Constant change.

I work with smart leaders every day, and I often sit in meetings watching brilliant people "swim in circles" without even realising they're overthinking. That's why I've started saying: "Master your mental energy. Master your life." It works.

Personally, it grounds me. Professionally, it lands well. Unlike asking, "Aren't you overthinking this?"—which usually triggers defensiveness.

Let's be honest, the information overload we're all swimming through daily is exhausting. Add endless notifications, opinions, and pressure ... and it becomes overwhelming.

Overthinking can look responsible, strategic and even considered. But somewhere between healthy reflection and mental spiralling lies avoidance and procrastination, and both are expensive.

Under pressure, the brain shifts into protection mode. We narrow our options, catastrophe outcomes, and loop through endless "what if?" scenarios. The result?

- Analysis paralysis
- Delayed decisions
- Missed opportunities
- Avoided conversations
- A loss of momentum

And most dangerously ... a slow erosion of confidence in our own judgement.

Self-trust starts slipping, and our inner dialogue often becomes: "What if I get this wrong?"

What's needed instead is divergent thinking: "What's possible?" (And no—I'm not suggesting you tattoo it on your wrist ... although I've considered it.)

Here are six practical ways to stop overthinking:

1. Notice the Thinking-Feeling Loop

Overthinking is often not a thinking problem. It's a feeling problem disguised as thinking. A thought creates anxiety. The anxiety creates more fearful thoughts. Those thoughts create more anxiety. And the



cycle continues.

Ask yourself: "Am I solving a problem - or feeding a fear?"

Awareness creates choice. Choice creates clarity.

2. Choose Action over Endless Analysis

Humans are wired to think, but we're also wired to act. Small actions interrupt overthinking.

- Make the phone call
- Send the email
- Have the conversation

Sometimes the action should be physical:

- Stand up + do 15 squats at your desk
- Go for a walk around the building/ to the coffee shop

Many leaders live from the neck up. Over time, we become disconnected from our bodies.

Remember: **motion shifts emotion**, and emotion drives thinking.

3. Ask: What's the worst that could happen?

Yes, it's an old question - but it works.

Overthinking magnifies imagined disasters.

Ask yourself: **What's the worst-case scenario? Could I survive it? Could I solve it?**

Usually, the answer is yes. That simple question shrinks fear down to size and helps the rational brain return.

4. Replace Fear with Curiosity

Fear narrows thinking. Curiosity expands it. Instead of asking: What if this goes wrong? Rather ask:

- What could I be curious about here?
- What haven't I considered?
- What could I do differently?

Curiosity shifts the brain from threat mode to growth mode,

and growth mode fuels innovation.

5. Give yourself a Decision Deadline

Perfectionism fuels overthinking. Smart leaders often wait for certainty. It doesn't exist.

- Decide by 3pm
- Decide by Friday
- Decide with 80% of the information

Progress beats perfection ... every time.

6. Limit the Mental Rehearsal

Your brain treats imagined stress like real stress. Replay the conversation enough times, and your body reacts as though it's already happening. As stress rises, confidence often drops.

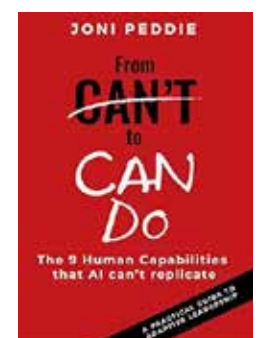
Ask yourself: **Have I thought about this enough to act?**

The goal is not to stop thinking. The goal is to stop spiralling. Because in uncertain times, leaders do not need more noise. They need more **Mental Clarity**.

- Mental Clarity restores confidence
- Confidence creates action
- Action creates momentum

Overthinking steals mental energy. Mental Clarity restores it. And when you master your mental energy ... you master your life.

Joni Peddie, CEO: Resilient People
LinkedIn: Joni Peddie



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

"Delivery improves when finance, regulation and operations are aligned to the same outcomes. Enlit Africa creates the platform for that alignment to move from theory to execution." – Marcel du Toit, Event Director, Enlit Africa."

Africa's year-round platform, the 2026 programme is shaped around the event theme: Compounding impact: small changes, outsized outcomes. The programme is designed to move beyond diagnosis and focus on practical levers that shift outcomes: what unlocks grid capacity, improves distribution performance and tariff credibility and turns data into operational capability at scale.

designed to move beyond conference attendance into decision-grade engagement and deal flow. Level 2 brings together utility leadership, project owners, financiers and delivery partners in formats built for outcomes, not commentary.

Key elements include the Utility CEO Forum (closed-door) and the Projects & Investment Network (P&IN), alongside structured meeting zones and focused discussions where attendees

Net Zero starts with better measurement: How VEGA enables sustainable industry



SOUTH Africa's journey toward a lowcarbon, resource-efficient economy is gaining momentum. With the national commitment to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050, industries across mining, manufacturing, water treatment, food production, and energy are under growing pressure to operate more efficiently, reduce waste, and demonstrate measurable sustainability gains. In this context, VEGA's instrumentation can play a deciding role in the success of companies working towards sustainability goals.

ability starts with measurement and the principle is simple: you cannot manage what you cannot measure. Whether your goal is reducing energy consumption, cutting water losses, improving process efficiency, or lowering emissions, accurate measurement is the foundation of every sustainability initiative.

VEGA's sensors, from radar level instruments to pressure transmitters and IIoT-enabled systems, deliver high-resolution, real-time data that helps plants operate cleaner and smarter. In a South African context, this capability is espe-

pressure to reduce losses, improve treatment efficiency and safeguard supply.

VEGA's radar level sensors, such as the VEGAPULS series, are widely used in reservoirs, treatment works, and distribution systems to ensure accurate monitoring under harsh conditions from high dust loads to extreme temperatures. Their non-contact measurement reduces maintenance requirements and ensures long-term reliability, helping utilities reduce unaccounted-for water and optimise pumping schedules to save energy.

In industrial settings, VEGA instrumentation supports closed-loop water systems, effluent monitoring, and chemical dosing accuracy which are all essential for reducing freshwater intake and ensuring compliance with environmental standards.

compressors, pipelines, and filtration systems, contributing directly to lower energy use and reduced carbon footprints.

Digitalisation: The accelerator of net-zero progress

Digital transformation is a key enabler of South Africa's sustainability transition. VEGA's IIoT-ready instruments and Bluetooth-enabled configuration tools allow operators to access data remotely, streamline maintenance, and integrate measurement insights into plant-wide optimisation platforms.

This digital visibility empowers teams to make proactive decisions, reduce downtime, and extend equipment life, all of which support long-term sustainability and cost savings.

A partner in South Africa's sustainable industrial future

Reaching net zero is not a single action but a continuous journey of improvement. VEGA's commitment to innovation, reliability, and customer support ensures that South African industries have the tools they need to meet rising environmental expectations while remaining competitive.

By delivering precise measurement, enabling digital optimisation, and supporting responsible resource management, VEGA is helping build a more resilient, efficient, and sustainable industrial landscape — one sensor at a time.

For more information, email Miguel.petersen@vega.com. <https://www.vega.com/en-za>

Toyota Material Handling's smart technology meets real-time support to ensure fleet productivity



FLEET uptime is the backbone of success in the supply chain environment. Toyota Material Handling, a division of CFAO Equipment, is meeting this challenge head-on with Rapid Response, a powerful communication and service platform that is transforming the way customers handle maintenance and repairs.

CFAO Equipment's Customer Relationship Manager, Ferial Leech, says Rapid Response bridges the gap between equipment servicing and digital convenience. "In this way, it allows us to deliver a seamless, real-time connection between our customers and our expert service teams.

"When the business logs a breakdown, it gets realtime updates on who has been dispatched, and the team is able to return to work faster."

"In the world of material handling, connectivity and support are important markers for building trust and establishing lasting relationships. This relationship is nurtured through a communication gateway for every maintenance journey undertaken — it is our solution to bridging the gap between human connection and real-time support updates. To understand this, it is essential to unpack what Rapid Response is about and how it can enhance productivity for businesses," she adds.

Real-time, two-way communication

Core to the Rapid Response platform is immediate, two-way communication. Customers no longer need to rely on delayed email responses or long call centre waiting times.

Instead, the platform provides a direct digital channel to Toyota Material Handling specialists.

"Whether reporting a breakdown or requesting technical support, users benefit from transparent, documented and instant communication, ensuring faster response times and improved service efficiency," notes Leech.

Tracking for zero guesswork

The platform introduces tracking capabilities that give customers visibility into the service process. Key features include real-time status updates, technician Estimated Time of Arrival notifications, and service completion alerts.

Truda Foods Logistics Manager, Dawood Mohamed, says when the business logs a breakdown, it gets real-time updates on who has been dispatched, and the team is able to return to work faster — without the need for guessing or paperwork. "It has reduced our downtime significantly and contributes towards our entire operation running more smoothly."

Built for real-world conditions

Designed with user convenience in mind, Rapid Response is accessible across multiple platforms and optimised for challenging environments:

- Mobile availability — downloadable from the app stores.
- QR code access — scanning a QR code on equipment means no app download is required.
- Low data optimisation — engineered to perform reliably in low-connectivity environments.

- Desktop compatibility — office-based teams can manage and monitor all
- service requests through a comprehensive desktop interface.

According to Buildrite's Inayat Cassim, the Rapid Response app has significantly improved how the business reports services and breakdowns, making the process faster and more efficient. "With 22 shops across the country, it helps us bring everything into one place, allowing us to centralise and manage all service and breakdown reports more effectively."

A new standard in service excellence

By combining real-time tracking with an intuitive digital interface, Toyota Material Handling is setting a new benchmark in customer service. Rapid Response is more than a maintenance tool, it is a smarter, faster way to keep businesses moving.

Nestle Warehouse Team Leader, Thomas Vertuin, concurs: "The app is a valuable addition as it streamlines our process for logging calls and reporting issues. The instant accessibility means anyone on our team can use it, which saves us time and makes things more efficient."

"We see ourselves as a trusted partner in maximising efficiency and unlocking potential for our customers. With Rapid Response, we are doing just this. We are not only servicing equipment; we are also redefining how we connect with our customers and support their operational success," concludes Leech.

Learn more at <https://www.cfaoequipment.co.za/technology-solutions/>

"VEGA instrumentation supports closed-loop water systems, effluent monitoring, and chemical dosing accuracy, which are all essential for reducing freshwater intake."

Achieving these goals requires more than just policy alignment or a high-level strategy. It demands precise, reliable data — the kind that enables operators to optimise processes and make informed decisions in real time. As a global leader in level, pressure, and point-level measurement, VEGA provides the technological backbone that allows South African industries to translate sustainability ambitions into operational reality.

The truth is, sustain-

ably valuable. Ageing infrastructure, water scarcity, rising energy costs, and tightening environmental regulations mean that inefficiencies are no longer just operational challenges; they are sustainability risks.

Supporting water security and responsible resource use

Water is one of South Africa's most critical sustainability concerns. Municipalities and industries all across the board face mounting

Enabling energy efficiency and emissions reduction

Energy-intensive sectors such as mining, petrochemicals, and manufacturing are under pressure to cut carbon emissions while maintaining productivity. VEGA's measurement solutions help operators identify inefficiencies, stabilise processes and reduce unnecessary energy consumption.

For example, accurate level control in boilers, separators, and storage tanks prevents overflowing, dry-running, and process interruptions, all of which waste energy and increase emissions. Pressure transmitters like the VEGABAR series support safe, efficient operation of

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Werner Pumps launches its redesigned industrial high-pressure washers for medium- to heavy-duty cleaning

WERNER Pumps has launched its fully redesigned range of industrial high-pressure washers, engineered for medium- to heavy-duty applications and built with a “racing-car” style cart that boosts manoeuvrability, stability and on-site safety.

The expanded line-up includes both electric and petrol variants, with 220V, 380V 3-phase, and petrol engine driven options, delivering 150 to 250 bar of pressure. Every unit now ships standard with a 10 m hose, high-pressure gun, low-water inlet switch, and a thermal-overload trigger stop for operator protection. The new chassis and component layout are designed to be robust and low-maintenance, with a lead time of two weeks from order to delivery.

“Customers told us they wanted a washer that’s seriously tough, easy to move, and effortless to maintain,” says George Jolly, National Sales Manager. “So, we re-engineered the platform from the ground up. The new ‘racing-car’ cart lowers the centre of gravity, protects critical components, and makes hose and gun handling simpler on busy sites.”

Heavy-duty cleaning for industrial plant and equipment

Suitable for cleaning industrial plant and equipment, including the jetting and vacuum trucks Werner Pumps manufactures and supplies, as well as other industrial cleaning applications, the revamped range handles persistent grime, oils and debris with consistent output and operator-first safety features.

“Reliability and safety are non-negotiable in our world,” says Sebastian Werner, Managing Director. “We believe the improved range offers a solid range of options that will meet customer needs, and we also see this as a way to extend our reach into new markets.”

Locally manufactured high-pressure equipment with proven reliability

For over 30 years, Werner South Africa Pumps & Equipment has been designing, manufacturing, supplying and maintaining specialist high-pressure jetting equipment.

The company has built a reputation as a local industry leader through its focus on delivering high-quality,

low-maintenance, 100% South African manufactured products that last, all while considering clients’ budgets.

Aside from its in-house manufacturing capabilities, Werner Pumps specialises in the

supply and maintenance of high-pressure jetting equipment, German high-pressure pumps, high-pressure sewer cleaning hoses, Swiss-engineered Nozzles by ENZ, and high-pressure guns, lances and cleaning equipment.

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



One of Werner Pumps’ redesigned industrial high-pressure washers built with a “racing-car” style cart that boosts manoeuvrability, stability and on-site safety.

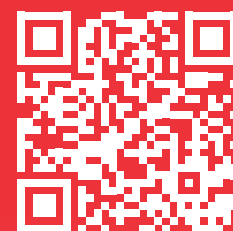
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SEW-EURODRIVE’s service and repair centre’s capabilities includes sandblasting, spray painting, oil recycling, product stripping and load-testing.



We have introduced the in-house manufacturing of baseplates and guards, drop-in solutions, light engineering and 3D scanning.



Our motor repairs division will allow for motor assembly and rewinding, curing burnout ovens and rotor balancing



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Blastrite and Minrite celebrate 45 years of growth and innovation

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

company operates four core processing facilities in South Africa, exporting worldwide via several distribution hubs.

Meeting rigorous



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

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

quality controls, Blastrite Platinum Grit® is the most certified industrial abrasive in the world and is one of the few products approved by the US Navy, the world's largest user of industrial abrasives.

Mineral sands and industrial garnet

Beyond slag, the group processes heavy mineral sands products, including ilmenite, leucoxene, rutile, zircon

ties for staff, including the recent promotion of a plant manager who started as a packer 11 years ago, while each Erakis site provides support to the local schools. Many employees have developed lifelong careers here, contributing to the company's success and the well-being of their communities. "It's a reminder of the opportunities we can provide when we give people a chance," Lashbrooke notes.

Supporting the wider industrial minerals market

While Blastrite and Minrite are the group's

the impact of shack fires in informal settlements.

Values and pride

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

The scale of the operation is significant: Erakis moves in excess of five million tons of raw materials and finished products annually and is the second-largest global provider of mineral sands concentrates into China.



core, Erakis also includes Mandoval Vermiculite, which celebrates 80 years of operation this year. Acquired in 2016,

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

Notably, it is also South Africa's largest producer of passive fire protection solutions, essential for structural steel in high-risk environments like refineries. Using this technology, Mandoval has recently piloted a solution with the City of Cape Town to reduce

Today, the group ranks among South Africa's largest shippers of containerised products.

Lashbrooke emphasises the company's core mission and values. These include low cost, safe tons produced to specification through teamwork, clear communication, ownership and accountability, integrity and innovation. "We are proud of what we have achieved," he says, "but what matters most is the positive impact we have on our people, our customers and the communities we touch."



Wine Tourism Conference returns to Cavalli Estate to design the next chapter for South Africa's wine tourism economy

Two-day programme in Stellenbosch convenes estate owners, investors, service leaders and global partners, closing with curated wine experiences across four of the Cape's flagship regions.

SOUTH Africa's Wine Tourism Conference returns to Cavalli Estate in Stellenbosch on 19 and 20 May 2026, bringing together the people shaping the future of wine tourism under one roof.

Across two days, the programme examines how the industry designs demand, builds desire and secures the long-term economic and environmental future of one of South Africa's most valuable tourism assets.

The conference is built on a clear conviction: wine tourism is no longer a bolt-on to wine sales, but a strategic growth engine for estates, regions and the country.

The agenda is deliberately structured to move the conversation past visitor numbers and into the harder questions of brand, investment, service, sustainability, and the role of women and communities in the industry's next era.

The programme

Day one, Monday 19 May: Designing demand and desire. The opening day focuses on how estates and regions build brand, desire and long-term customer value. The keynote, *Aligning a Community*, will be delivered by Mike Ratcliff of Stellenbosch Wine Routes and Visit Stellenbosch, on how wine tourism has aligned an entire industry around a shared direction.

Sessions include Damien Joubert-Winn of Delaire Graaff on moving from wine estate to destination brand; Craig McClenaghan on experience architecture and designing for memory; Jeremy Maarschalk of Waterford on storytelling and guest engagement; and Andrew Kamphuis of Commerce 7 on the future of direct-to-consumer wine sales.

A fireside chat between Carolyn Martin of Creation and Lerato Motshologane of Nedbank will explore culture, wellness and the creative palate.

The first day's panels include The Signature El-

ements of a World-Class Wine Destination, moderated by Lerato Motshologane of Nedbank with representatives from Swartland, Franschhoek, Stellenbosch and Durbanville Hills; The New Power of Wine Tourism: Women Leaders, moderated by Lee-Anne Singer of FEDHASA; and Beyond the Bottle: Art, Wine and Wellness Experiences, featuring the Spier Art Trust and leading practitioners.

The day closes with a curated wine tasting and an art and architecture walk across the Cavalli Estate grounds.

Day two, Tuesday 20 May: Designing for endurance, sustainable futures. The second day turns to regeneration, responsible growth and the structural conditions for long-term industry health.

Contributions include Wilhelm Joubert of Hartenberg on regeneration as a business imperative, and Annebelle Schreuders of Spier on luxury with limits, designing responsibility without losing desire.

A headline session asks whether doubling tourism is bold vision or dangerous fantasy, with David Frost of SATSA and Deon Cloete of Cape Winelands Airport, moderated by Xolani Mancotywa. Liesl Ahlism will present the work of the Pebbles Project Trust, a long-standing advocate for the children and communities of the winelands.

A panel on what investors really look for in wine tourism projects will be moderated by Lee-Anne Singer, with Desry Lesele of Nedbank, Andrew Harris of DGB, Michael Bromley of STBB and Wesgro. Commerce 7 and Karrekter will share their direct-to-consumer growth playbook, and American Express will unpack the commercial benefits of Amex in a wine tourism context.

The day closes with a panel on service excellence featuring Lynn Naidoo of IHS, Anne

Scott of One&Only, Heidi Duminy of the Cape Wine Academy and Andrew Shelley of SA Sommeliers, followed by the Wine Tourism Awards, celebrating the best in South African wine tourism.

Strategic partners and host region

The conference is made possible by a committed group of strategic partners: Commerce 7, Nedbank and American Express, each backing a different dimension of the industry's future, from direct-to-consumer growth and investment readiness to premium guest economics. Visit Stellenbosch returns as the Host Region, anchoring the conference in one of the most internationally recognised wine tourism destinations in the world.

"Wine tourism has become a defining growth engine for Stellenbosch and South Africa, not just in attracting visitors, but in shaping investment, enabling job creation and strengthening our global competitiveness," says Annemie Liebenberg, CEO of Visit Stellenbosch. "Hosting this conference reflects our commitment to moving the industry forward with intent: designing experiences that build lasting demand, while ensuring that growth is responsible, inclusive and firmly rooted in place."

Industry on the floor

Beyond the main programme, the conference floor will feature activations and meeting pods from organisations shaping the practical side of wine tourism: Bushtec Tents, Remko, Innstyle, New Cape Railway, Active Ice, Pebbles Project, Nedbank, American Express and Commerce 7.

These pods are designed to create direct conversations between delegates and the companies enabling the infrastructure, technology, hospitality and community work behind the industry.



A safer, smarter approach to blasting

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

Blastrite's products are essential where steel meets heat and moisture, from marine vessels and oil rigs to large refineries. The

and garnet. While Blastrite sells the garnet for high-quality blasting and waterjet cutting, Minrite recovers rutile, ilmenite, zircon and monazite for use in several applications, such as pigments, paints and coatings, ceramics and the globally critical rare earth magnets.

Growth from humble beginnings

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

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ALL INDUSTRIAL, MOBILE, SPRINKLER REQUIREMENTS

ifm mobile IoT: Cloud solution for mobile machine fleets



By ifm

WITH ifm's mobile IoT, the benefits of digitalisation are also becoming a reality for mobile machines. Monitoring the performance status of a machine fleet, needs-based maintenance planning and software updates over the air – mobile IoT does it all.

Getting the most out of your machine fleet

mobile IoT is a fully integrated, scalable end-to-end solution consisting of hardware and software. The hardware maintains the dialogue between the machine and the cloud software where the information from all the networked machines converges centrally. This makes it possible to find out the exact status and location of the machine at any time. Similarly, you can efficiently distribute software updates to your fleet via the mobile IoT cloud.

Regardless of whether you require a solution to permanently analyse and optimise prototypes in real field tests, to plan and prepare your rental fleet management more effectively, or to establish a convincing after-sales service, mobile IoT is the right choice for a wide variety of applications.

A data portal is also provided, allowing you to visualise and keep a perfect overview of all the collected data and use cases.

Five simple steps for more overview and efficiency

mobile IoT is a perfectly matched combination of hardware and software that offers the user a high degree of flexibility. Digitalising mobile machines is a breeze. The first step is selecting the appropriate mobile IoT gateway and connection option. The device is then activated online and a suitable data and/or service contract is selected. As every machine and every use case is different,

various options are offered. The application can then be configured and the benefits of mobile IoT can be harnessed – which are:

Reliably managed: With mobile IoT, individual components, complex machines or even the entire fleet can be managed and individually configured.

Wireless connection: Mobile IoT enables a fast, simple and secure remote connection to the machine.

Tailored: The hardware and cloud solution are perfectly matched and enable simple implementation of the entire system.

Clearly structured – everything in one place: With the mobile IoT DataPortal, all relevant machine data can be collected, analysed and visualised cyclically.

Application examples

Remote access: mobile IoT enables simple, secure remote access to machines, improving maintenance planning, boosting efficiency and reducing costs.

Fleet management: Intelligent fleet management ensures a complete overview of the mobile machinery at all times. Real-time data on location and machine status enable optimum planning and utilisation of resources. The machines can also be configured and access to the machine can be regulated by means of comprehensive rights and role management.

Machine maintenance and updates: The ecolog interface integrated in ecomat-mobile components makes it very easy to



System overview

Whether via mobile network or wifi, mobile IoT offers an optimally matched end-to-end solution for mobile machines. On the hardware side, a mobile IoT gateway tailored to the machine architecture is required. The gateway communicates with the mobile IoT Suite or the DataPortal. For machine-to-machine communication, it is possible to use a CAN-wireless module.

With mobile IoT, needs-based maintenance can be planned and prepared in a targeted manner. Not all maintenance or troubleshooting requires on-site intervention – the mobile IoT solution offers the convenience of remote access for updating or changing software, parameters and configurations. Remote access is not only convenient but also contributes significantly to cost savings.

update the entire machine from a central location in the field. Information on the installed components can also be read. This will form the basis for complete fleet management in the future.

Data management: Recording and evaluating machine data creates the basis for efficient operating processes and for informed decisions regarding operational planning and machine optimisation. With bidirectional communication, individual signals can be transmitted from the machine to the cloud while parameters can be relayed from the cloud to the machine.

Learn more at <http://www.ifm.com> and be sure to visit ifm at *Electra Mining Africa* from 7 to 11 September 2026 at stand A06 in Hall 7, to see mobile IoT in action.
E-mail: info.za@ifm.com

Cape Town 500MW electricity tender opens door to private power traders

By Kris Van Der Bijl

CAPE Town is three weeks from the closing date on a tender that, if it succeeds, will make it the first South African municipality to procure electricity at scale directly from licensed energy traders, bypassing Eskom through a mechanism no metro has attempted before. Bids close on 13 May 2026.

The 500MW procurement, structured through power purchase agreements with licensed traders, opens a direct commercial channel between private energy markets and a major municipal buyer.



Source: Matthew Henry, Unsplash.



Alderman Xanthea Limberg, Mayoral Committee Member for Energy, was constrained by the tender's active status.

"As the process is still so active, we cannot speculate or provide too many details currently," her office said.

A two-stage process and a fallback

The procurement runs in two stages. Stage 1, closing 13 May, does not purchase energy directly. It establishes a panel of compliant traders.

"The panel tender was advertised on 13 February 2026 and closes on 13 May 2026, with evaluation expected to conclude thereafter. Following the panel award, Stage 2 commences," Limberg confirmed.

The questions left unanswered

The City has stated previously that pricing must undercut Eskom's tariff for the tender to proceed.

On whether the market will deliver competitive bids, Limberg's office said the City would evaluate proposals after the closing date and went no further.

On timelines, the response was just as cautious, noting that, "The City has a mul-

ti-pronged approach and is working hard to ensure that we achieve our objectives," Limberg said.

"The City stresses that this is a novel exercise. The compounded effect of delivering on our Energy Strategy

edge-sharing with other municipalities,

"The City actively participates through organised seminars, conferences, forums, workshops, as well as ad hoc collaboration meetings to share our experiences and les-

The 500MW procurement, structured through power purchase agreements with licensed traders, opens a direct commercial channel between private energy markets and a major municipal buyer.

will result in benefit to all our customers in the near future."

For context, those with knowledge of the process suggest that rate-payers is unlikely before 2028, subject to variables and procurement processes playing out as planned.

These are defensible positions for a live procurement. They do, however, leave the market with less visibility on the commercial logic behind a transaction of this scale and novelty.

The replicability question

Limberg was more forthcoming on knowl-

sons learned with other municipalities and various spheres of government," she said.

"We recognise that knowledge sharing is multi-directional and remain open to such dialogue as we navigate this novel space within the South African municipal environment."

What the sector is watching

For Western Cape industrial and commercial ratepayers, among the most exposed to Eskom tariff escalation in the country, a functional trader panel delivering below-Eskom pricing would be of obvious use if properly realised.

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Industrial automation leader Beckhoff reports €1.24 billion global sales in 2025, up 6% year-on-year



Hans Beckhoff, Founder and Managing Director of Beckhoff Automation: “We develop high-tech products because we have a calling to do so; with our automation technology, we enable the global machine and system engineering industry to solve today’s complex control problems and shape the industry of tomorrow.”

BECKHOFF Automation has closed the 2025 financial year successfully and has increased its global sales to €1.24 billion, with 6% growth compared to the 2024 financial year.

“2025 was a solid financial year for Beckhoff,” summarises Hans Beckhoff, Managing Director and Founder of the family-run high-tech company. He continues: “We have left the impact of 2023 and the resulting downturn in 2024 behind us.” Global order intake increased over the course of 2025. Beckhoff currently assumes that the economy will experience a new growth phase two years after the start of the current cyclical crisis in many areas of the world.

PC-based control as a cross-industry automation concept

For 46 years, the family-owned company has won customers

over with the continuous development of its hardware and software portfolio for PC-based automation technology. The holistic product range forms the basis for universal, industry-independent automation solutions that can be flexibly adapted to the requirements of individual industries.

“We are delighted that our software-based automation philosophy continues to gain significance on the market and is being used in more and more applications around the world,” says Hans Beckhoff.

He continues: “It is clear that our newer product lines, such as the MX-System for control cabinet-free automation, are also meeting with high demand from customers and interested parties, thereby contributing to our company’s growth.”

80 million euros for research and development (R&D)

As in previous years, Beckhoff invested around 80 million euros in R&D in 2025 and plans to continue investing at the same rate in 2026. As a financially independent company, Beckhoff thus lays the foundations for driving technological innovations forward in the long term.

“By merging information technology and automation and implementing the latest hardware and software technology in our products, we continue to provide the industry with pioneering and powerful automation solutions,” states Hans Beckhoff. He explains that current developments, particularly in AI, are leading to new features, tool chains, and business models, which Beckhoff will present at this year’s Hannover Messe.

In-house expertise and cultivation of young talent Beckhoff’s stable and highly qualified work force is key to assuring that their products are a success in terms of their development, manufacturing, and sales. Currently, the family company employs 5,450 workers worldwide, of which 2,000 are engineers. Beckhoff is active in over 75 countries, with 23 branches in Germany and 41 international subsidiaries and representative offices.

Beckhoff places

great importance on training and educating their talented employees in order to consistently meet the continuous need for qualified specialists. In the summer of 2025, 61 young people started their careers at Beckhoff. The company currently employs a total of 116 apprentices and 110 students. With its diverse range of nine apprenticeships and four bachelor’s degree courses, Beckhoff is focused on developing young people with a passion for technology and thus investing in the future of the region.

Outlook for the 2026 financial year

Beckhoff expects to see stable development over the 2026 financial year. “Since October 2025, we have noted that the trend has been positive again, with strong progression in the first quarter of 2026,” reports Hans Beckhoff, continuing, “we seem to have gotten past the international economic crisis. However, the current global political situation still harbours uncertainties for the 2026 forecast.” Overall, Beckhoff is nevertheless optimistic about the future and continues to focus on sustainable business development through its powerful PC-based automation technology for international machine and system engineering.

www.beckhoff.com

THE BOTTOM LINE

The world holds its breath when the Strait closes



By Adrian Ephraim

THE crisis in the Middle East is a slow-burning threat to the payment chains that keep African trade going.

The world’s most important waterway basically closed down on the morning of February 28, 2026. When the US and Israel attacked Iran, the Middle Eastern country blocked the Strait of Hormuz and laid sea mines across a corridor that had been quietly carrying about 20% of the world’s oil trade by sea every day. Before the war started, about 3,000 ships went through Hormuz every month. By April, the recorded crossings numbered only 191, representing roughly 5% of the pre-war average.

The tremors have since spread far beyond the Gulf. The price of oil has gone up, inflation is rising again, and it costs a lot more to move almost anything anywhere. For South Africa’s exporters, who sell goods to markets that are already struggling with debt, weak currencies, and high taxes, the question is no longer if this crisis affects them - it’s when and how.

Warren Koen, Manager in the Office of the CEO at the Export Credit Insurance Corporation of South Africa (ECIC), has been thinking about that question. He says that the answer isn’t available right away, but it is coming.

Koen says, “This kind of thing could cause defaults and missed payments. We make sure that there is export credit, like bank loans and other things. In the future, this kind of thing could cause exporters to miss payments, which could then cause the banks to make a claim on the loan.”

The ECIC is a state-owned company that provides political and commercial risk insurance to South African exporters. It does not cover ships or shipping routes. It backs up the money

relationships that make export deals possible, like the chance that a buyer in Angola, Mozambique, or Ghana won’t pay. The Hormuz crisis changes the economic environment for those buyers, and that eventually shows up in ECIC’s risk models.

Koen is careful to keep the current crisis separate from ECIC’s current pipeline growth. He says, “We’ve seen an increase as ECIC, but it’s not necessarily related to this issue yet.” The institution’s current deal pipeline is about \$4 billion under review. It hasn’t been underwritten yet, but it’s a promising sign of where demand is going. ECIC’s own board overview for March 2026 says that there will probably be “more uneven risk profile across markets” as exporters and lenders look for opportunities in sub-Saharan Africa. This will likely lead to “more demand for credit and political risk cover”.

The Middle East crisis is making that unevenness worse. The UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD) said in April 2026 that the disruption is a big supply shock that will raise prices and lower demand. Global growth is expected to slow from 2.9% in 2025 to 2.6% in 2026. Sub-Saharan Africa is already more vulnerable to shocks in fuel, fertiliser, and shipping than in most other areas. This year, it is growing at a rate of 4% to 4.6%. At 1.4%, South Africa is last in line. Koen says that ECIC takes a long-term approach to methodology rather than changing prices for each crisis. One way that global volatility affects underwriting decisions is through country risk ratings, which are updated regularly and posted on the ECIC website. He says, “The global economy affects where we work, which affects our political and economic research and how often we have to do stress scenarios to see what the problems might be.”

The rest is done by the

project-level assessment, which looks at sponsors, bankability, and the sovereign balance sheet.

Koen says that oil, gas, and infrastructure are the sectors that feature prominently in the ECIC pipeline. A big focus is on four Mozambique LNG projects that will be operational soon, as well as border infrastructure in Zimbabwe and Zambia.

Koen says that ECIC’s short-term insurance strategy, which was launched in 2023 and is aimed at transactions that last less than two years, is the easiest way for South African exporters who haven’t yet got coverage to get it. Koen highlighted the US\$100 million Trade Finance Framework Facility with ABSA which provides additional support specifically for SMMEs, BEE businesses, Black industrialists, and businesses owned by women and young people.

The Strait of Hormuz is a major trade route for fertiliser raw materials, and problems with ammonia and nitrogen shipments are starting to limit supply at a crucial time. This affects the costs of agricultural inputs in the African markets where ECIC’s clients are exporting. The Hormuz disruption is said to be the biggest oil supply shock in the history of global markets, even bigger than the oil crises of the 1970s. It is still unclear if it will be over in a few weeks or last until late 2026. What is not in doubt is that its effects on sovereign balance sheets, buyer liquidity, and the cost of doing business across Africa will keep coming long after the strait reopens.

ECIC, on the other hand, says its basics are solid, it has strong solvency cover, and it hasn’t gone over any risk-appetite limits. Koen says, “This is exactly the kind of organisation you want on your side when the world’s bottlenecks start to close.”

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Unity is strength: B.E.D. reinforces NAMPO presence through teamwork, innovation and national reach



B.E.D. outdoor stand and demonstration area at a previous NAMPO Harvest Day.

BOLT and Engineering Distributors Group (B.E.D.) is once again preparing for a strong presence at NAMPO Harvest Day 2026, building on more than three decades of consistent participation in South Africa's flagship agricultural exhibition. Driven by a collaborative NAMPO committee comprising key regional leaders, including Ian Lloyd (Operations Manager Klerksdorp), Carlien Bruce-Smith (National Distribution Centre Manager), Antonie van Zijl (Operations Manager Rustenburg) and André Esterhuizen (Operations Manager Welkom and Bethlehem), B.E.D.'s presence reflects its national footprint and deep-rooted commitment to the agricultural sector.

A legacy of consistency and collaboration

The company's involvement at NAMPO dates back over 30 years, evolving from a modest tent display to a multi-area exhibition space featuring indoor and outdoor stands and an outdoor demonstration area.

"What keeps us as committed and enthusiastic as we are, is the opportunity to engage directly with our valued customers and to demonstrate our solutions in a hands-on environment," says Esterhuizen.

Evolving with a modern agricultural sector

Over the past three decades, the agricultural sector has undergone significant transformation with increasing mechanisation, technological advancement and rising operational expectations.

Van Zijl highlights that this evolution has required B.E.D. to expand both its product offering and technical capabilities: "We have grown from being a fastener-focused business to offering a wide range of solutions, including bearings, welding, power tools and maintenance products," he says.

NAMPO as a platform for engagement and insight

NAMPO continues to play a pivotal role in the company's engagement with the agricultural sector, providing a unique opportunity for face-to-face interaction, product demonstration and opinion sharing.

"For me, NAMPO is where you get honest feedback," says Bruce-Smith. "Loyal customers come back every year, and they tell us what works and what does not."

The exhibition has also grown significantly, attracting around 100 000 visitors annually and showcasing the latest developments across

the agricultural value chain.

"Technology is constantly changing," says Esterhuizen. "That is why it remains so important for farmers to attend, to experience new technology which will increase their productivity."

National footprint supporting year-round engagement

While NAMPO is a key annual engagement platform for the company, B.E.D.'s strength also lies in its ability to



B.E.D. Fronius welding demonstration area at a previous NAMPO Harvest Day.

extend this throughout the year via its national branch network and external sales team.

"With more than 45 external sales representatives and a strong branch network, we are able to support customers across the country, wherever they are," explains van Zijl.

Bruce-Smith notes that the B.E.D. NAMPO committee also plays a critical role as

a link, connecting customers to their nearest regional branches.

What to expect at NAMPO 2026

Visitors to the company's stand can expect an expanded and diverse product offering, supported by live demonstrations and expert advice from their product specialists in areas such as welding, agri (and other) bearings, personal protective equipment (PPE), power tools and more.

A key highlight will be their outdoor demonstration area, where visitors can see equipment in action and gain a better understanding of how these solutions perform in real-world conditions.

A practical partner to the agricultural sector

B.E.D. remains focused on strengthening its role as a practical solutions partner to farmers, supporting productivity, reliability and operational efficiency.

NAMPO, as a platform for building lasting cus-

tomers relationships, embodies B.E.D.'s core values of teamwork, service excellence, and long-term support for South Africa's agricultural sector — true to the company's ethos: "it's our business to know your business". Visit B.E.D.'s stand at Grain SA's NAMPO Harvest Day from 12 to 15 May 2026 in Bothaville in the Free State.

Smart or analogue tractors? How FUCHS Lubricants help farmers make the right mechanisation choice

TODAY, many farmers are grappling with a key mechanisation decision: invest in smart, subscription-based tractors with telematics and advanced diagnostics, or rely on proven analogue machines that are simpler to maintain and repair. At the heart of this debate is machine reliability, operational uptime, and the total cost of ownership. Areas where FUCHS LUBRICANTS SOUTH AFRICA has a tangible, measurable role.

In South African agriculture, every planting and harvest season brings high stakes: unpredictable weather, tight margins, long days in the field, and machinery that must perform without fail. For decades, FUCHS has supplied engineered lubricants for engines, transmissions, hydraulics, and wet-brake systems, helping farmers keep machinery running efficiently under these challenging conditions.

"Farmers don't run machines for fun — they run them to deliver outcomes, and every litre of fuel turned must be protected by the right lubricant," says Greg Tarr, Application Engineers Manager at FUCHS LUBRICANTS SOUTH AFRICA. "From the base oils we choose to the additive technology in each product, our lubricants are designed to reduce wear, manage heat, and keep tractors and harvesters performing across long seasons."

FUCHS is more than a leading lubricants supplier — it's a partner in farm productivity and machinery economics.

Their AGRIFARM range includes multi-function oils like AGRIFARM UTTO MP, AGRIFARM UTTO FLEX and AGRIFARM STOU SAE 15W-40 that meet many OEM specifications and support mixed fleets, al-



FUCHS is more than a leading lubricants supplier — it's a partner in farm productivity and machinery economics.

lowing farmers to simplify lubrication routines without compromising performance.

Local investment enhances support and reach

The expansion of FUCHS' Isando plant in Johannesburg, with over R650 million invested in increased production, blending, and quality control capabilities, enables faster supply across South Africa and tailored solutions for diverse farm operations. "This expansion ensures that our products are available reliably and on time, backed by technical support for farmers from Limpopo to the Western Cape," explains Tarr.

FUCHS also integrates condition monitoring and oil analysis into its support services. Trend analysis from spectrometric tests allows farmers and workshops to detect contamination or wear metals before they cause failures, helping predict service intervals and reduce downtime. "Condition-based servicing is one of the most effective ways to improve uptime and manage maintenance costs, whether your fleet is smart, subscription-enabled, or purely analogue," adds

Tarr. Even as digital telematics and subscription models reshape mechanisation, the physical realities of friction, wear, and fluid performance remain the deciding factors in reliability and costs.

FUCHS lubricants protect engines, transmissions, and hydraulics, keeping machines operational through long harvests, dusty fields, and hot South African summers. A strong lubrication strategy supports both smart tractors with advanced analytics and analogue machines restored for reliability, helping farmers manage downtime and total operating costs effectively.

As South African farmers make critical mechanisation choices, lubrication should be part of the conversation. FUCHS' expertise, locally produced and supported products, and advisory services ensure that whether a tractor is connected to the cloud or fully mechanical, it runs longer, safer, and more cost-effectively.

For more information visit www.fuchs.com/za/en or connect with a FUCHS LUBRICANTS SOUTH AFRICA expert at ZA-contact-za@fuchs.com for support

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Water saving in food processing achieves 80% reduction with simple spray nozzle change



Spraying Systems Co. VeeJet flat spray nozzles are ideal for applications such as cleaning, rinsing, cooling, pressure washing and surface preparation.

FOOD processing is one of the most water-intensive industries. Water is used as an ingredient, during processing and for cleaning and sanitation. A leading US snack food producer with a strong commitment to sustainability turned to Spraying Systems Co. to help uncover saving opportunities.

from changing nozzles was impressive, it seemed like a very small change in a very large operation. The snack food producer was concerned that changing nozzles wouldn't have a big impact on its sustainability initiative. Therefore, Spraying Systems Co. ran some calculations to estimate the potential savings if

"The investment in the new nozzles was recouped in less than five days"

During an initial water audit at one plant, Spraying Systems Co. determined the nozzles being used to clean corn chip lines were oversized for the operation. The nozzles were very effective, but the flow output was more than what was required for cleaning. The team was confident the same style nozzle operating at lower flow rates could achieve the same level of cleaning and dramatically reduce water use.

Simple spray nozzle change delivers 80% water reduction

Testing at the producer verified there was no difference in the cleaning effectiveness of the two nozzles and the lower-capacity nozzle reduced water use by 80%.

While the reduction in water use resulting

the change was made in all the producer's plants in North America. The total decrease in water use was substantial – more than 500 million gallons.

Scaling the solution across multiple plants

Spraying Systems Co. dispatched their local spray experts to more than 30 plants to identify and document the location, flow rate and operating pressure of all the nozzles being used to clean chip lines. Each plant was using more than 400 nozzles, operating at 20 bar and spraying just over 26 l/min.

Each nozzle was in use 5,200 hours per year. By making the change to the lower capacity nozzles, each plant reduced water use from 24 million litres to just 4.5 million litres per year.

Massive water, energy and cost savings from spray nozzle optimisation

By replacing 10,000 nozzles, the snack food producer:

- reduced water use by 500 million gallons per year;
- saved more than \$3 million on water and wastewater treatment;
- saved \$7 million by heating less water prior to cleaning.

The investment in the new nozzles was recouped in less than five days, providing the snack food producer with a substantial economic benefit in addition to operating more efficiently.

Replacing nozzles on the chip line turned out to be just the starting point. During plant visits, the teams identified similar water-saving opportunities during cleaning of other lines and mixing tanks. The next phase of changes is expected to save the snack food producer an additional 500 million gallons annually.

Local expertise helps unlock further water savings across Southern Africa

Spraying Systems Co., represented in Southern Africa by Monitor Engineering for over 75 years, offers no-cost sustainability assessments to identify water and chemical savings within a plant. According to Grant Orsmond, Managing Director of Monitor Engineering: "In many cases, significant savings come down to simple changes — such as selecting the correct spray nozzle size for the application or replacing worn nozzles more frequently."

Contact grant@monitorspray.co.za
<https://www.spraying-nozzles.co.za/>

Why dairy powders are key to modern food production and global supply chains

Reliable nutrition.
Consistent quality.
Global convenience.



Dairy powders deliver the nutrition and functionality of milk in a form that is easier to store, safer to transport, and more consistent to use.

AS global food systems expanded, liquid milk alone could no longer meet the requirements of long-distance transport, extended shelf life, and consistent quality. Dairy powders were developed to address these challenges by carefully removing water from milk, creating a stable and lightweight ingredient that preserves nutrition while significantly reducing spoilage, transport costs, and reliance on refrigeration.

Why dairy powders matter in modern food systems

Dairy powders deliver the nutrition and functionality of milk in a form that is easier to store, safer to transport, and more consistent to use. For manufacturers, food service operators, and large-scale nutrition programmes, they offer reliability that liquid milk cannot always guarantee—particularly in warm climates and long supply chains.

confectionery, and nutrition

- Cost-effective due to lower storage, transport, and waste
- Widely used for nutritional enrichment in elderly and clinical foods

high protein, suitable for bakery, processed cheese, infant food, yoghurt, ice cream, and feed.

- Buttermilk Powder (BMP) enhances

volume by up to 90% compared to liquid milk.

- Whey powder was once considered waste—today it is one of the most

A trusted innovation partner to the food and beverage industry

Lake International provides a range of milk powder ingredients to support recombined products, fortification and consistent quality.

"Today, dairy powders are essential to modern food production, nutrition, and global food security."

"Dairy powders deliver the nutrition and functionality of milk in a form that is easier to store, safer to transport, and more consistent to us."

Today, dairy powders are essential to modern food production, nutrition, and global food security. Key benefits are:

- Extended shelf life of up to 36 months without refrigeration
- High nutritional value, rich in protein, calcium, and minerals
- Consistent formulation with precise control of fat and protein
- Versatile use across beverages, bakery,
- Instant Fat Filled Milk Powder (IFFMP) is a cost-efficient alternative to full cream milk, offering stability and performance in bakery, confectionery, beverages, yoghurt, ice cream, soups, and dressings.
- Full Cream Milk Powder (FCMP) provides the taste and nutrition of fresh milk with longer shelf life for bakery, beverages, chocolate, ice cream, and coffee.
- Skim Milk Powder (SMP) is low fat and

texture and flavour in bakery, sports nutrition, soups, sauces, and ready meals.

- Sweet Whey Powder (SWP) adds mild sweetness and functionality in bakery, confectionery, ice cream, sauces, and meat products.
- Lactose, Casein & Caseinates, and WPC, WPI & MPC support controlled sweetness, stability, and high-protein applications in nutrition, functional foods, beverages, bakery, and processed foods.

Quick facts: The power of dairy powders in food production

- 1 kg of milk powder reduces transport

valuable dairy ingredients globally.

- Lactose is critical in infant formula because it closely mirrors the carbohydrate profile of human milk.

- Casein digests slowly, making it ideal for sustained protein release in nutrition products.
- Milk protein concentrates closely replicate the natural protein balance found in fresh milk.
- Dairy powders are widely used in humanitarian food aid due to their safety, nutrition, and shelf life.

For more information on Lake International's dairy powders, visit www.lakeinternational.com



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Why Stainless Steel components matter in F&B processing - BMG



BMG specialists advise food and beverage plants to invest in fasteners that are manufactured in food-compliant materials, like Stainless Steel, for highly-specialised and safety-critical applications in food manufacturing and preparation.

BMG's team of fasteners specialists advises food and beverage plants to invest in components that are manufactured in food-compliant materials, like Stainless Steel, for highly-specialised and safety-critical applications in food manufacturing and preparation. "The BMG team is

ner. "BMG's solutions for the food and beverage sector extend from processing, where raw ingredients are transformed, to packaging, where products are enclosed and protected for safe distribution.

"Advantages of using Stainless Steel components like fasteners, include corro-

- which is also available in Stainless Steel - is based on advanced wedge-locking technology, designed to safely secure bolted joints that are exposed to severe vibration and dynamic loads in extreme conditions. This advanced system improves personal safety and reduces the risk of lost production or material damage due to bolt failure. This system enables bolts to be easily removed during maintenance procedures, but resists the loosening effects of vibrations and dynamic loads.

The Nord-Lock range of securing washers is the only brand on the market that currently displays the CE quality mark of approval from leading global authorities. The prestigious CE marking is certification that these wedge-locking washers adhere to stringent safety and quality regulations required in many industries.

BMG's engineering solutions ensure customers deliver on food safety and environmental and energy-efficient initiatives, through the supply and support of components for light materials handling, belting products, gearboxes, motors and variable speed drives (VSDs), bearings, seals and gaskets, power transmission components, valves, tools and equipment, as well as fasteners, food-grade lubricants and maintenance chemicals.

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Email: marynaw@bmgworld.net
Website: www.bmgworld.net*

committed to making sure industry operates safely and efficiently at all times. Care is taken by companies to maintain pristine hygiene standards during food and beverage manufacture, storage, packaging and transportation," says Maryna Werner, BMG's Fasteners Sales Manager.

"Through BMG's assistance with careful and accurate product selection, correct installation methods and appropriate care of equipment, substantial savings can be made in reduced maintenance costs and minimal downtime."

Apart from the supply of necessary engineering consumables and components, industry requires ongoing maintenance and refurbishment services, to ensure efficient productivity in all industries, including food and beverage production.

"We work closely with our customers to ensure that each plant is well-prepared to maintain full production," continues Wer-

sion and thermal shock resistance, durability, resistance to powerful cleaning detergents and the ability to withstand a wide temperature range - from cooking to freezing. Added to this, food is untainted by non-toxic Stainless Steel components." Most manufacturing equipment is held together by critical bolted joints. According to BMG specialists, the reasons why bolted joints normally fail, are spontaneous bolt loosening and slackening. Bolted joints in food processing, are constantly subjected to external forces, which results in spontaneous loosening, due to vibration and dynamic loads.

The BMG team recommends the use of the Nord-Lock bolt-securing system which ensures a safe and reliable bolting solution that also saves time and money due to less maintenance and reduced downtime.

BMG's Nord-Lock bolt securing system

Dry bulk solids handling: DMN-WESTINGHOUSE multiport tube diverters offer significant ROI

DIVERTER valves are essential for transporting raw materials, yet they are often viewed as a necessary evil due to their potential to degrade product quality and consume excessive floor space. However, modern solutions like the M-TDV Multiport Tube Diverter from DMN-WESTINGHOUSE prove that these challenges are avoidable, offering a significant return on investment through smarter design.

Preserving material integrity

For industries handling fragile materials—such as pharmaceuticals, infant formula, or high-value polymers—mechanical degradation is a silent thief. Traditional diverters with sharp bends cause high-speed collisions, turning valuable product into dust. This degradation leads to:

- **Reduced yield:** Effective designs can increase usable raw material from 87% up to 99%.
- **Safety hazards:** Dust (fines) increases the risk of fires and explosions.
- **Inefficiency:** Dust build-up creates backpressure and inconsistent bulk density, complicating downstream dosing.

The solution lies in smooth geometry. The M-TDV utilises a curved swan neck internal pipe that aligns with outlets, replacing hard collisions with sliding transitions.

Maximising factory real estate

Diverters are traditionally bulky. A series of five standard diverters might occupy 4.31 m², whereas a single M-TDV replacing them requires only 1.24 m². This 70% reduction

in footprint is a game-changer, particularly in expensive environments like cleanrooms, freeing up space for innovation or expansion.

Superior hygiene and compliance

Modern food safety protocols demand the elimination of dead zones where material can ferment or cross-contaminate. The M-TDV's tube-to-tube design eliminates these pockets.

It is engineered for the future, meeting EC 1935/2004, FDA, and USDA standards, while also being ATEX-certified.

The business case: Total cost of ownership

Beyond initial costs, a multiport diverter improves the bottom line through:

- **Increased up-time:** Fewer components mean fewer

failures and faster product changeovers.

- **Simplified maintenance:** Replacing multiple valves with one unit reduces spare parts inventory and labour costs.
- **Energy savings:** Smoother product flow reduces transport resistance, lowering kWh consumption.

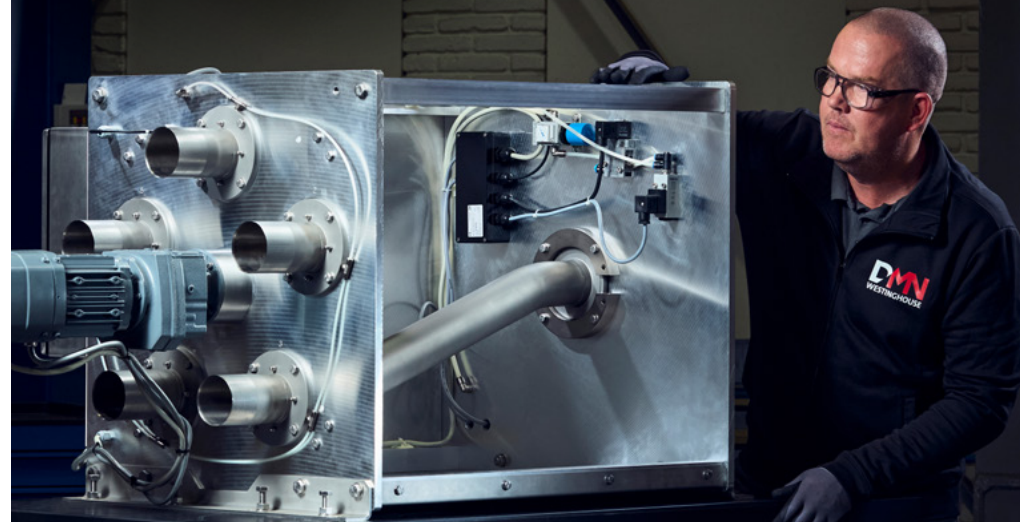
Protecting quality, efficiency and brand reputation

As materials become more complex and regulations stricter, equipment must evolve. The multiport tube diverter ensures that the product leaving a facility maintains the same high quality as when it entered—protecting both production efficiency and brand reputation.

Learn more at <https://dmnwestinghouse.com/en/>

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Learn more at dmnwestinghouse.com





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Fodder relief package will provide one month of cover to livestock farmers, yet five months are needed. For meat and dairy processors, the consequences of significant herd contraction are concerning.

Western Cape R22m fodder relief package raises pressure on meat and dairy processors

By Kris Van Der Bijl

The Western Cape Department of Agriculture has approved R22 million in risk reduction relief to provide fodder support to livestock farmers across the province.

The announcement,

made on 8 April, was framed as a means by the provincial government to aid farmers.

But the current dry conditions are not a new problem. The Western Cape endured a prolonged drought between 2015 and 2022 and the veld never fully recovered.

As Meyer's office told Cape Business News: "The natural veld remained in poor condition and would require at least three consecutive years of above-average rainfall to recover."

Those years have not arrived. "Average and below-average rainfall has resulted in many areas of the province not having recovered, leaving the natural veld in poor condition."

This season's stress is landing on a system that was already depleted before it began.

Qualifying areas are determined by veld condition classifications from Department plant scientists, and the timing gap is where the real risk lies.

"The natural veld remained in poor condition and would require at least three consecutive years of above-average rainfall to recover."

The Department does not sidestep it. "As with any hazard affecting the agricultural sector, there is an inherent risk that not all farmers may be reached timeously," Meyer's office said.

The downstream consequences

For meat and dairy processors, the consequences of significant herd contraction are blatant to even those outside this field.

The Department sets them out directly. "Abattoirs and dairy plants are capital-intensive and rely on consistent volumes to stay efficient. If there is a shortage of raw material, processors may run below capacity, which pushes up per-unit processing costs and erodes margins."

Supply competition adds further pressure.

"With fewer animals or lower milk output,

processors compete more aggressively for raw supply. That can drive up farmgate prices, which is positive for producers in the short term but squeezes processors, especially those locked into fixed-price retail or export contracts."

The Department is transparent about where costs will ultimately land. "The downside of all this is the costs that are ultimately borne by a consumer already squeezed from multiple angles. In the longer term, this can lead to factory and plant closures, which would further lead to more complex problems beyond unemployment."

In coordination with the processing sector, the Department says engagement with industry bodies and commodity organisations is standard practice when herd contraction signals emerge.

Whether that engagement is currently active at the scale the conditions warrant was not confirmed.

One month of cover, five months needed

The arithmetic is straightforward. R22 million buys approximately one month. The Department has asked Pretoria for five more.

Until that request is resolved, the Western Cape's livestock producers and the processors who depend on them are operating without the cover the season requires.

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How South African meat processors are cutting energy costs and controlling moisture

Meat processing facilities in South Africa face a relentless combination of heat, humidity and moisture conditions that drive up energy costs, compromise food safety, and accelerate structural corrosion. As Eskom tariffs continue to climb, climate control has become a strategic production cost, not a maintenance line item. Specialised Climate Engineering® (SCE®) designs solutions built for exactly these conditions, two of which, FREECOOL® and DrySPACE®, are delivering measurable results across South African processing operations.

FREECOOL®

South African Patent No: 2015/10158

Processing floors, defeathering areas, and packing halls generate intense heat and humidity that conventional HVAC systems cannot adequately manage. FREECOOL® is SCE®'s advanced air handling range for large-volume controlled spaces. It independently manages temperature, humidity, and fresh air supply, a uniquely capable combination. Crucially, FREECOOL® is engineered to harness a facility's available waste heat to condition indoor spaces, dramatically reducing grid energy consumption using up to 90% less energy. The result is a cooler, drier, more productive working environment, with the consistent conditions required for OHS and HACCP compliance and operating costs that are structurally lower than conventional alternatives.



FREECOOL® Unit



DrySPACE® FREECOOL® Unit



Comprehensive management of all aspects of climate control

DRYSPACE®

At chilled temperatures between 2°C and 10°C, warm humid air meeting cold surfaces produces persistent condensation, a direct food safety risk and the environment in which cold-tolerant pathogens like *Listeria monocytogenes* thrive. DrySPACE® actively manages humidity across processing zones, packaging areas, and storage spaces, maintaining the dry conditions necessary to protect products, comply with HACCP environmental requirements, and reduce the corrosion potential that shortens the lifespan of processing infrastructure.

THE SCE® DIFFERENCE

Most climate systems simply consume energy. FREECOOL® and DrySPACE® harness the waste heat a facility already generates and put it to work, delivering a smaller energy footprint without sacrificing performance. In an environment of rising tariffs, turning waste energy into a climate control asset is a direct competitive advantage.

CONTACT SCE®



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Moisture control in meat processing: The hidden cost driving energy losses and food safety risks in South Africa - SCE



SCE's FREECOOL® air handling systems are engineered to utilise a facility's available waste heat sources as part of its conditioning process, dramatically reducing energy by up to 90%.

By Specialised Climate Engineering® (SCE)

WALK into the cold production space of almost any South African meat processing facility and the evidence is immediately visible: condensation streaking down cold walls, moisture pooling on floors at doorways, ceiling drip points above production lines.

These are not house-keeping failures. They are the predictable result of warm, humid air meeting cold infrastructure, and in facilities where *Listeria monocytogenes* can survive and replicate at refrigeration temperatures, they represent a food safety risk that no amount of cleaning schedule can fully mitigate.

South Africa's meat processing sector operates under layered regulatory pressure. Ready-to-eat producers must hold HACCP certification under Regulation R908. Abattoirs and processing facilities are governed by Regulation R638. Processors targeting export markets, particularly the EU, UK, and Middle East, face additional environmental traceability requirements that are becoming more stringent, not less.

The ability to demon-

strate consistent, measurable environmental control is no longer a compliance exercise. It is a commercial differentiator.

At the same time, the energy cost of managing these environments has never been higher. Eskom tariffs for direct customers rose 8.76% in 2026, with a further 9.01% municipal bulk purchaser increase effective from July. For energy-intensive operations like cold processing, where refrigeration and HVAC systems must work significantly harder in high-humidity environments, these increases are not abstract line items. They translate directly into the cost per kilogram of finished product.

Addressing the problem at source

The conventional approach to humidity in cold processing environments is reactive: run the refrigeration harder, defrost more frequently, clean more often, and accept the corrosion and condensation as unavoidable overheads.

Specialised Climate Engineering® (SCE®) takes a fundamentally different view that moisture should be managed at source before it ever

reaches the cold surface.

SCE's FREECOOL® air handling systems are designed for exactly this operating context. Rather than simply cooling incoming air, FREECOOL® independently manages temperature, humidity, and fresh air supply, giving facility operators control over the climate in processing floors, defeathering areas, and packing halls.

Critically, FREECOOL® is engineered to utilise a facility's available waste heat sources as part of its conditioning process, dramatically reducing energy by up to 90%. For facilities running continuous operations, it is a structural reduction in the energy footprint of climate control. In chilled processing and storage environments, SCE's DrySPACE® system takes a complementary approach. Rather than allowing warm humid air to enter cold zones and condense on surfaces, DrySPACE® actively manages humidity across processing areas, packaging zones, and cold stores, maintaining the consistently dry conditions that protect product integrity, limit pathogen risk, and reduce the accelerated corrosion that shortens the opera-

tional lifespan of processing infrastructure.

The business case is compounding

The return on investment case for active climate management in meat processing is not complicated. Lower humidity means refrigeration systems work less hard, consuming less electricity and wearing more slowly. Dry conditions mean fewer defrost cycles, longer production runs, and faster turnaround after cleaning. Consistent environmental control means auditable conditions for HACCP compliance and the documented traceability increasingly demanded by major retail supply chains and export buyers.

SCE® holds six registered patents and 14 registered trademarks across its climate engineering portfolio. These are not imported, off-the-shelf systems adapted for local conditions. They are proprietary technologies developed specifically for the thermodynamic realities of South African industrial environments.

The moisture problem in South Africa's meat processing sector is real, measurable, and growing in consequence as energy costs rise and compliance requirements tighten. The engineering solutions exist. The question for facility operators is how long the cost of inaction remains acceptable.

For more information on SCE's climate engineering solutions for meat processing and cold storage environments, contact Specialised Climate Engineering® on +27 11 568 4440, info@sc-engineering.co.za or visit www.sc-engineering.co.za.

R22 Refrigerant phase-out hits SA food sector as supply and compliance pressures rise

By Adrian Ephraim

South Africa's food manufacturers, cold storage operators, and refrigeration contractors are facing a regulatory cliff edge that has been years in the making and can no longer be deferred.

From 2026, South Africa's R22 refrigerant import quota has been cut to just 2.5% of current consumption levels, meaning only 80 to 100 tons of these hydrochlorofluorocarbons will be entering the market. For an industry that has relied on R22 as its refrigerant of choice for decades, the implications are immediate.

SARACCA Executive Director David Botha warns that the reduced quota will have a direct impact on the market, compounded by the fact that the industry is not recovering sufficient quantities of R22 to meaningfully supplement dwindling imports. The National Department of Forestry, Fisheries and Environment has been blunt: within two years, operators still reliant on R22 may not have any refrigerant to work with at all.

The regulatory pressure does not stop there. South Africa ratified the Kigali Amendment to the Montreal Protocol, committing to reducing HFC consumption by 80% over 30 years, with the first mandatory reduction slated for 2029. Operators who simply switch from R22 to HFC alternatives like R404A or R507 are making a short-term decision they will need to revisit within the decade, as these refrigerants are among the first targeted for phase-out under the Kigali agreement.

A-Gas, the global refrigerant lifecycle management company active in South Africa,



has outlined three viable pathways for operators. The first is to maintain and retrofit existing R22 systems with drop-in replacements. The second is to invest in flexible equipment capable of handling a wide range of synthetic refrigerants as phase-down milestones progress. The third, and most future-proof, is to adopt natural refrigerants such as hydrocarbons, CO₂, or ammonia, bypassing interim HFC steps entirely.

Each pathway carries trade-offs. Drop-in replacements offer compliance benefits but come with performance impacts, retrofit costs, and the need for specialised training. On the skills front, natural refrigerants are abundant and energy-efficient, but their flammability and toxicity make urgent investment in workforce training essential. SARACCA is intensifying efforts to address this, focusing on refrigerant recovery programmes and technician upskilling across its membership.

This regulatory crunch is arriving at a moment of significant commercial momentum in the cold chain sector. The Africa cold chain market was valued at approximately \$12.87 billion in 2025 and is projected to reach \$18.29 billion by 2032, growing at a CAGR of 5.1%. South Africa remains the continent's most developed cold chain economy, but only if its refrigeration infrastructure keeps pace with both regulation and demand.

The most visible signal of investor confidence

is Maersk's Belcon Cold Store in Cape Town, inaugurated in October 2025. The facility represents more than R1.72 billion in investment and delivers 6.8 MW of cooling capacity using advanced CO₂ refrigeration systems, achieving around 20% greater efficiency than originally projected. Belcon is built around CO₂, precisely the natural refrigerant technology that the broader sector is being urged to adopt.

The commercial case for investment is clear. South Africa's table grape sector alone has suffered annual losses of up to R1.5 billion due to logistical delays and temperature disruptions. New 2025 regulations now mandate real-time temperature monitoring and PPECB certification for all perishable exports, adding further compliance urgency for food manufacturers and cold storage operators.

For the sector, the message is consistent: the window to act on refrigerant transition is narrowing, and the cost of inaction, in compliance penalties, equipment failure, and lost export competitiveness, is rising. Operators who treat the R22 phase-out as an opportunity to upgrade to efficient, future-proof refrigeration systems will be best placed to serve South Africa's growing agricultural export economy. The cold chain is not a back-office function. For a country whose export sector depends on temperature integrity from farm to port, it is infrastructure in every meaningful sense.

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SPAR strengthens leadership capability to power next phase of growth



Reeza Isaacs, CEO at The SPAR Group.

THE SPAR Group is strengthening its leadership as part of a deliberate move to accelerate operational execution across its Southern African footprint.

These leadership appointments signal a more focused, execution-led SPAR - one that is working harder to deliver consistently for its retailers while enhancing its market competitiveness and strengthening overall performance.

Over the past two years, the Group has simplified its portfolio

we back them - from how well their stores are stocked, to how reliably deliveries arrive, to how we support them in running a competitive, sustainable business at a local level. We are focused on making sure the right support shows up in practical ways, from distribution to pricing to in-store execution."

To do this, SPAR is reinforcing leadership and in-depth capabilities in the areas that matter most.

Jerome Jacobs has been appointed Managing Director: Grocery

and Liquor. With more than 30 years in the business, Jacobs brings deep experience across the full SPAR system - from distribution centre to store operations.

His mandate includes strengthening the customer value proposition while ensuring SPAR retailers have all the insights and tools needed to continue to attract today's shopper. Central to this is a clear understanding of the specific shopping missions that bring customers into store and equipping retailers with support to meet those needs more effectively, every time - while also

strengthened its financial position. This next phase is about translating that progress into stronger day-to-day performance in stores, across distribution and in how retailers are supported.

"We know where we need to be better, and we're acting on it," says Reeza Isaacs, CEO of The SPAR Group, with two decades in the retail industry. "That starts with the everyday experience of our retailers."

"In a tough trading environment, where store owners are navigating cost pressures and changing customer behaviour, our success depends on how well

retailer trust, build loyalty and encourage repeat shopping behaviour.

For retailers, this translates into a more cohesive and responsive operating environment, where supply, pricing and promotions work in greater sync. The aim is to reduce friction in the system and deliver a more consistent and predictable platform that better supports retailers in building sustainable, profitable businesses.

Simultaneously, John Bradshaw has

keeping SPAR's 18 million weekly customers coming back.

This more focused approach is intended to drive footfall, grow basket size and maintain strong competitiveness in a market where consumers are increasingly under pressure and more deliberate in how and where they spend.

Megan Pydigadu, previously Chief Operating Officer at The SPAR Group, has been appointed Group CFO and will continue to oversee SA Online, SPAR



John Bradshaw has been appointed Chief Marketing Officer of The SPAR Group.

been appointed Chief Marketing Officer of The SPAR Group. He brings 20 years of retail experience to the role, including over 10 years at Pick n Pay, and most recently at Pepkor.

His mandate includes strengthening the customer value proposition while ensuring SPAR retailers have all the insights and tools needed to continue to attract today's shopper. Central to this is a clear understanding of the specific shopping missions that bring customers into store and equipping retailers with support to meet those needs more effectively, every time - while also

Health, Pet Storey and Technology Services.

"These leadership changes are not about adding roles, but about building the capability required to deliver on our commitment to our retailers. The right leaders in the right roles. SPAR's independent retailer model remains our greatest strength. The focus now is to make that model work better in practice giving our retailers the confidence, tools and backing they need to succeed in their communities," concludes Isaacs.

<https://thespargroup.com/>



Megan Pydigadu has been appointed Group CFO.

Cape Union Mart local sourcing drives job creation in Western Cape retail sector



Cape Union Mart International employs 900 people working across manufacturing facilities and the distribution centres.

CAPE Town-based Cape Union Mart International (CUMI), one of South Africa's leading retail groups with roots dating back to 1933, is strengthening local industry through its sourcing and manufacturing model, driving job creation in the Western Cape and contributing to the wider economy.

CUMI purchases R265 million of locally-produced goods annually from Western Cape facilities, operating two manufacturing centres - Green Thread, which produces garments for Poetry and Old Khaki, and K-Way - alongside two associated design centres. A partnership with a 100% black-owned cut, make and trim (CMT) operation guarantees a set number of production minutes yearly, providing its 150 employees with job security.

The group employs 900 people working across manufacturing facilities and the distribution centres, orchestrated by a philosophy that prioritises collective intelligence. At the helm of this complex operation is Andy Thorvaldsen, CUMI's Supply Chain Executive.

"I'm particularly proud of the employment impact of our growth," Thorvaldsen reflects. "With an economic multiplier of five in the Cape Town Metro area, the jobs created at CUMI's facilities support approximately 4 500 people in the broader economy. We are providing centres of excellence for people to become the best versions of themselves and access all the opportunities that come with improved earning power. The Group has a real passion to improve lives, and it's hugely gratifying to be a part of that."

Local manufacturing, real impact

In an industry where many South African retailers source exclusively from overseas, CUMI's domestic production allows rapid response to demand shifts, ensuring products reach customers when needed rather than when shipping schedules permit. It's a competitive edge built on proximity and flexibility.

The physical infrastructure supporting this operation includes multiple distribution centres, one servicing 285 retail stores and another dedicated to online customers. The retail DC maintains maximum stockholding of 1.3 million units, averaging 400 000 units through most of the year, while the online DC holds an average of 250 000 units.

Positioned as neighbours, the two facilities enable fluid stock transfers to match demand fluctuations. From there, products move to a third-party logistics provider operating a network of regional distribution centres for final delivery to stores and online shoppers.

But infrastructure and data systems mean little without the human intelligence to interpret and improve them. At CUMI, continuous improvement is the result of a collective endeavour drawing on insights from every level of operation.

"Continuous improvement in our environment is made possible by leveraging the collective intelligence of the entire team," Thorvaldsen explains. "We are one, responsive entity. We need to know what the person off-loading cartons, picking and packing individual units, or applying labels thinks about their role

and possible efficiencies. When you elevate everyone's feedback, you get a multiplier effect. The system starts improving."

Sustainability that scales

Alongside efficiency, sustainability has emerged as a defining priority. When CUMI began rigorously examining its environmental impact, the team identified a significant opportunity in cardboard usage. A reuse campaign now sees cartons recirculated annually, each taped and reused three times before disposal.

"We now reuse 300 000 cartons a year," Thorvaldsen notes. "That allows us to save the equivalent of 600 million litres of water, 3 300 trees, and one megawatt of electricity every year. We avoid sending 720 cubic metres of waste to landfill, and we significantly reduce costs at the same time. Win, win, win."

A different kind of retail model

In an industry often characterised by off-shore production, cost-cutting pressures and transactional employment relationships, CUMI's model offers a different proposition. Local manufacturing supports local communities, data-driven efficiency coexists with environmental responsibility, and hierarchies flatten to gather insights for further improvement. The result is a steady commercial heartbeat, its rhythm kept steadily pulsing by the energy, ideas and commitment of hundreds of CUMI staff.

<https://www.capeunionmart.co.za/page/about-us>

Why prepared water is becoming a strategic retail category



MANZI prepared water refill station for the retail environment.

FOR decades, water has occupied a predictable place in retail. It has been treated as a low-margin, high-volume product, often positioned as a convenience item rather than a strategic driver of performance. In many stores, it competes primarily on price, shelf space, and brand recognition, with limited consideration given to its broader operational role.

This perspective is beginning to shift.

As retailers navigate increasing pressure on margins, logistics, and customer retention, categories once viewed as commoditised are being reassessed through a more strategic lens. Water, particularly in the form of prepared drinking water, is emerging as one such category.

Prepared water refers to water that has been treated and purified to meet stringent safety and quality standards, typically at a local level and within regulated frameworks. While the end product may appear similar to traditional bottled offerings, the underlying supply and distribution model introduces a different set of advantages for retail environments.

The first of these is demand stability. Unlike many discretionary beverage categories, water is a non-negotiable, high-frequency purchase. It serves a broad consumer base, with demand that remains consistently present and, in times of supply disruption

or water insecurity, becomes even more critical. For retailers, this translates into predictable turnover and steady foot traffic, both of which are essential to maintaining overall store performance.

Secondly, water functions as an entry-level price point within the beverage category. It attracts a wide customer segment and often serves as a complementary purchase alongside higher-margin items. In this way, it plays a supporting role in basket building, increasing average transaction value without requiring aggressive promotional strategies.

However, the true shift from commodity to category lies in the operational dimension.

Traditional bottled water supply chains are often characterised by long distribution routes, centralised production, and significant storage requirements. These factors place pressure on logistics, increase transport costs, and can lead to inefficiencies at store level, particularly where space is constrained.

Prepared water systems, by contrast, are increasingly supported by decentralised production and localised distribution networks, a model that is already proving effective in practice across parts of the South African retail landscape. This enables shorter supply cycles, more responsive replenishment, and re-

duced dependency on long-haul logistics. For retailers, the result is improved stock availability, lower transport complexity, and greater flexibility in how water is integrated into their offering.

Additionally, integrating water refill solutions alongside packaged formats introduces a hybrid model that aligns with evolving consumer preferences. Water refill solutions reduce packaging reliance and encourage repeat visits, while still allowing retailers to maintain a packaged product range for convenience. This dual approach strengthens customer engagement while supporting operational efficiency.

For retailers, the implication is clear: water is no longer just a passive product occupying shelf space. When approached strategically, it becomes a category that can drive foot traffic, support basket growth, and improve supply chain performance.

MANZI Water operates within this evolving landscape through a distributed network of independently operated outlets, each embedded within its local market. This model reflects a deliberate shift away from purely centralised supply, demonstrating how decentralised infrastructure can support consistent availability, high-frequency replenishment, and responsive, localised demand fulfilment at scale.

As the retail sector continues to evolve, competitive advantage will increasingly be found in how effectively essential categories are managed, rather than simply how they are priced. Prepared water, when viewed through this lens, represents an opportunity to rethink both product and process.

Retailers who move beyond treating water as a standalone product, and instead integrate packaged and water refill solutions within a responsive, locally supported supply model, are better positioned to unlock consistent demand, improve operational efficiency, and strengthen customer engagement. The shift is not about choosing between formats, but about structuring the category in a way that delivers both reliability and performance.

Massmart's renewable energy generating capacity now exceeds 11 million kWh per year

MASSMART, which is owned by US based Walmart, celebrates having grown its renewable generation capacity by over 1000%.

Since starting the roll-out of onsite solar plants in 2016 at two Makro sites, Massmart has grown its annual generating capacity from approximately 580 000 kWh of renewable energy per annum to over 11 million kWh per annum over the last ten years.

In the past year, Massmart has built a further five onsite solar plants bringing its solar portfolio to a total of 23 sites.

Makro and Builders stores as well as Massmart distribution centres are carefully selected for on-site solar installation, where the daytime energy requirements of the site determine the appropriate size of the plant.

This means that each site's generating capacity differs based on its size and energy requirements and can produce between approximately 200 000 kWh and 1 500



Massmart's renewable energy generating capacity now exceeds 11 million kWh per year.

000 kWh of renewable energy per annum.

Nicole Atcheson, sustainability manager at Massmart explains, "The continued roll-out of onsite solar at Massmart has been key to driving down our annual Greenhouse Gas Emissions. To date, Massmart has generated ~52 million kWh of renewable energy and since inception, the group has avoided the release of ~55 000

tonnes of CO2 Equivalent Gases. The continued expansion of our solar footprint puts us on the right path towards becoming less carbon intensive in our business."

Commenting on the continuation of the expansion plan, Salosh Gounder, Real Estate Vice President at Massmart said, "Based on the continuously improving performance of our solar programme, we in-

tend to roll out further solar plants across our portfolio and we remain committed not only to increasing the number of sites with solar but also increasing the capacity of our existing plants, where possible."

Massmart remains committed to becoming a low carbon retailer and reducing pressure on the national grid.

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

Supply Chain industry body SAPICS celebrates 60th anniversary at not-to-be missed milestone conference in July

THIS year's 48th annual SAPICS Conference, which takes place from 19 to 22 July 2026 at the Century City Conference Centre in Cape Town, marks a significant milestone: 60 years since the founding of leading supply chain industry body SAPICS.

This not-to-be missed event is more than just a conference and everyone involved in the supply chain profession in any way is urged to attend, SAPICS says.

The conference theme this year is "Legacy to Leadership: 60 Years of Connection, Collaboration and Transformation".

The rich history of SAPICS and the African supply chain community will be celebrated while the 2026 conference's packed, powerful, future-looking agenda will define the next era of supply chain management excellence across the continent.

"For six decades, SAPICS has connected



and developed generations of supply chain professionals," comments SAPICS president Thato Moloi. "In 2026, we're not just remembering the past, we are shaping the future."

Founded in 1966, SAPICS has played a pivotal role in advancing supply chain management across South Africa and the continent. From its origins as the South African Production and Inventory Control Society, it has evolved into a leading industry body

dedicated to education, skills development, collaboration and professional excellence.

The first SAPICS Conference was held in Johannesburg and 35 delegates attended. Since then, the event has gone from strength to strength, with the venue moving from Sun City to Cape Town.

The conference's attendance record is 1,250 delegates, but this gathering is not about numbers. It is about quality, community and connection.

The annual SAPICS Conference has earned its recognition as Africa's premier learning, knowledge sharing and networking event for all supply chain professionals.

This year, it will be better and more impactful than ever, and the timing could not be more relevant. Moloi expands: "Supply chains are under intense pressure as organisations transition from pandemic-era crisis management to building long-term resilience."

SARS E-Invoicing system to enable real-time VAT assessments for businesses - EY



By Larry Claasen

THE move by the South African Revenue Service (SARS) to adopt e-invoicing will have a marked impact on businesses when it comes to accounting for VAT, as it moves them from managing it like a periodic to a daily operation, says accounting firm EY.

This follows the tax authority saying in its Modernisation 3.0 white paper released late last year that it wanted to introduce an intelligent digital VAT system that was embedded with data science and artificial intelligence, enabling it to monitor compliance in close to real time.

According to the paper, the current VAT system imposed a "substantial burden on vendors," making

experience" by offering automated tax-data submissions, and also eventually assessing VAT liabilities by drawing on trusted data sources across the value chain, as well as harmonised cross-border trade.

For businesses, however, it means their VAT operations go from a process that is managed retrospectively to one that provides near real-time VAT validation, according to EY's report, E-invoicing in South Africa: what CFOs and COOs need to do now.

As stated in the report, e-invoicing would not only become mandatory, but would also force business leaders to put in place finance, data and systems to operate reliably in a near real-time compliance environment.

Those businesses

strengthen their data quality, process discipline and systems integration will be well positioned.

"Organisations that address these fundamentals early will be better equipped to manage VAT risk pro-

investment could work out for them, as it will automate a bureaucratic process.

"At the core is an intelligent case management system that supports voluntary compliance through automating routine tasks, harnessing big data, deploying Agent AI, and improving taxpayer service and productivity. This includes shifting from declaration-based to real-time risk profiling and case selection, embedded in an entity-based compliance model within the digital platform."

SARS said it will roll out the system in the first half of 2028 and

"At the core is an intelligent case management system that supports voluntary compliance through automating routine tasks, harnessing big data, deploying Agent AI, and improving taxpayer service and productivity."

actively, rather than reacting once compliance pressure intensifies," said EY Africa indirect tax leader, Redge De Swardt.

"For executives, the priority is not tracking regulatory timelines, but strengthening the foundations that support reliable transaction data. Organisations that address these fundamentals early will be better equipped to manage VAT risk proactively, rather than reacting once compliance pressure intensifies."

Though adopting a new VAT system could turn out to be an onerous exercise for many businesses, SARS said in the white paper the

that it will mirror the automated tax assessment system it has already implemented for income tax.

"This modernisation phase focuses on modernising VAT administration, connecting SARS across the value chain to every point of sale — with the goal of eventual auto-assessment, similar to Personal Income Tax (PIT). It will also include minor taxes. SARS will also partner with the Border Management Authority to modernise Customs & Excise, upgrading both physical and technological infrastructure toward a 'no-stop' experience at Ports of Entry."

"For businesses, however, it means their VAT operations go from a process that is managed retrospectively to one that provides near real-time VAT validation."

it susceptible to fraud and non-compliance.

By adopting a best-practice model, SARS hopes to "enhance the taxpayer ex-

perience" by offering automated tax-data submissions, and also eventually assessing VAT liabilities by drawing on trusted data sources across the value chain, as well as harmonised cross-border trade.

SME business funding expands as Ozow and Lula partner to support South African businesses

By Larry Claasen

OZOW, a payments provider has partnered with financial services firm Lula to create a business funding offering specifically for SMEs.

The new initiative will enable business loan applications to be assessed by Lula and Ozow through their platform, and enables them to get up to R5 million in funding.

The launch of the new offering came soon after a research report by think tank TIPS found that there was a significant financial gap in SME financing, with both private banks and public lending institutions, including development finance institutions, unable to meet the demand.

The report said bank lending to SMEs was notably lower than lending to large enterprises and consumer bank clients. It also noted that funding from the Industrial Development Corporation has decreased by 61%, from approximately R3 billion (constant rands) in 2016 to around R1 billion (constant rands) in 2023.

For its part, the Small Enterprise Finance Agency (SEFA) has seen a decline in SME funding since reaching its peak in 2022, noted the TIPS report.

The arrangement between Ozow and Lula, however, showed that there were players in the space looking to change this dynamic. Co-branded as the Ozow-Lula digital interface, the collaboration reflects a broader trend in the fintech sector, where payments platforms are increasingly extending their role to support the operational and financial needs of businesses.

Cape Town-based Lula specialises in providing digital business funding and banking solutions to SMEs by leveraging its proprietary credit-scoring algorithms and alternative data sources.

For its part, Ozow provides secure payment solutions and



Ozow interim CEO Rachel Cowan.

links businesses with 47 million bank account holders in South Africa. Ozow's deal with Lula now sees it expand its offering beyond providing payment services for merchants, says Ozow interim CEO Rachel Cowan.

This means that Lula will have an existing channel that will be able to deliver qualified businesses to their platform.

David Winter, SVP: business development at Lula, said the partnership aligns with the lender's approach

"The integration is designed to make it easier to access funding, and also to improve the visibility of relevant funding options for businesses already active within Ozow's ecosystem."

"Our focus has always been on empowering businesses and giving them the tools to thrive in the digital economy. Through this partnership with Lula, we are extending that role by improving access to funding for our merchants through a channel they already use and trust."

Through the partnership, Ozow merchants will be able to access Lula's funding services directly, without needing to go through multiple platforms or application processes.

The integration is designed to make it easier to access funding, and also to improve the visibility of relevant funding options for businesses already active within Ozow's ecosystem.

Because the merchants already have a transacting history with Ozow, they will be able to see how much funding they could qualify for on their Ozow Merchant Portal, before even completing their ap-

to expanding access to funding through embedded distribution channels.

"Lula's approach has always been to meet businesses where they are. "By partnering with Ozow, we are able to extend our reach to a large and active base of SMEs that are already participating in the digital economy."

He added: "This collaboration enables us to provide funding solutions in a way that is both accessible and aligned with how these businesses operate on a day-to-day basis."

The announcement comes as fintech partnerships increasingly focus on ecosystem expansion, with companies embedding complementary financial services into existing platforms to create more seamless user experiences and ultimately deliver more value.

For Ozow, the partnership builds on a series of recent collaborations aimed at strengthening its broader merchant value proposition.

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THOUGHT LEADERSHIP



AFRICA'S RISING RELEVANCE AMID GLOBAL SHIFTS: BANKS ARE KEY CATALYSTS

By Refilwe Mokate, Head of African Banks Client Coverage and Zoya Sisulu, Head of Financial Institutions Group Client Coverage at Standard Bank Corporate & Investment Banking

The first quarter of the year has passed, yet the number of significant events and shocks during these three months has equalled what one might expect over several years.

We, like many around the globe, have watched global developments unfold with a mixture of concern and apprehension. Even though many of these events are occurring far from our shores, Africa has not remained untouched by their repercussions.

Global Pressures and African Connectivity

The ongoing geopolitical tensions have reshaped trade routes and disrupted supply chains across the world.

They have also restricted external financing and changing perceptions of risk have influenced capital flows into emerging markets, including those in Africa. These dynamics have a direct impact on liquidity, funding costs, commodity prices and the performance of African currencies, underscoring how closely Africa's economies are linked to the wider global economic cycle.

Resilience and Economic Outlook

Despite these challenges, Africa's economic prospects remain comparatively robust. The continent's real GDP is projected to grow by more than 4% in 2026 and 2027, outpacing the anticipated global growth rate of about 3%.



Refilwe Mokate.



Zoya Sisulu.

This positive outlook is supported by the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), which, with over 48 ratifying states, is expected to boost collective income by US\$450 billion by 2035 and increase intra-African trade by more than 80%. Such developments will benefit a rapidly expanding population of 1.4 billion people and provide Africa with a valuable buffer against ongoing global volatility.

African nations are reinforcing their fiscal frameworks and developing deeper capital markets. Investments in energy, spanning both substantial gas projects and renewable resources, are enhancing long-term energy security. Infrastructure investment is accelerating across the continent, modernising ports, improving logistics corridors, and upgrading transport networks.

The notion of "Africa direct investment" has become particularly relevant, emphasising the importance of regional integration now more than ever.

This blend of global challenge and African resilience framed discussions at Standard Bank's 29th African International Banking Seminar (AIBS) recently held in Johannesburg. The conference highlighted the opportunities that arise from strategic collaboration between African banks and the competitive edge gained by institutions that manage risk proactively, invest in technology, and adapt global trends for local benefit.

Capital mobilisation and Innovation

Mobilising capital remains crucial for achieving Africa's development ambitions. As global financial conditions shift, the need for deeper domestic markets becomes more pressing. This involves creating robust interbank mechanisms, diversifying sources of funding, establishing regional capital platforms, and promoting sustainable finance.

Innovation is a key driver of optimism. As global supply chains are reconfigured, Africa has a unique opportunity to enhance regional manufacturing and trade. Achieving this, however, depends on financial systems that facilitate seamless cross-border flows. Africa is rapidly upgrading its payments ecosystem, improving real-time interoperability, exploring digital assets, and adopting Artificial Intelligence (AI) and big data for improved fraud detection, customer service, and strategic decision-making. The African Development Bank estimates that AI could contribute up to US\$1 trillion in GDP growth for the continent by 2035.

Africa's demographic profile strengthens its outlook. Over 60% of the population is under the age of 25, making it the youngest region globally. By 2050, the working-age population is projected to increase by more than 620 million people.

To harness these demographic strengths, Africa requires a financial ecosystem that fosters inclusive growth, which is reflected in the evolving relationship between banks and fintechs: A shift from competition to collaboration.

Africa's bioenergy sector takes centre stage at BIO360 Africa 2026 in Johannesburg

Johannesburg, South Africa | 17-18 June 2026 | The Gallagher Convention Centre

AFRICA's bioenergy sector is set for significant growth as Bio360 Africa 2026 launches at the Gallagher Convention Centre, bringing together international investors, policymakers, industry leaders and innovators to accelerate the development of sustainable energy solutions across the continent. The inaugural event positions Africa at the forefront of the global transition towards cleaner, circular energy systems.

regional cooperation, and showcase scalable bioenergy innovations tailored to Africa's diverse energy landscape. Local partner, SABIA (Southern African Biogas Industry Association), provides vital regional insight and networks, ensuring Bio360 Africa addresses the unique Southern African bioenergy landscape. The two-day event will serve as a major platform for knowledge exchange, business de-

velopment and policy engagement across the bioenergy value chain. More than 60 exhibitors are expected to participate across a 2,500m² exhibition space, alongside over 1,000 delegates representing agriculture, energy, finance, research and government sectors. Bio360 Africa 2026 will feature two parallel conference streams, including keynote addresses, technical presentations and expert panel discussions. The programme is designed to facilitate practical collaboration between stakeholders and to accelerate the deployment of viable bioenergy solutions across

Key focus areas include biogas, biomethane, biohydrogen, biofuels, biochar and solid biomass applications across off-grid and grid-connected systems. The event will also explore broader themes within the circular bioeconomy, carbon management, sustainable transport, and the integration of biomass within agricultural systems. Policy development, access to finance and capacity building will form a central part of the discussions, reflecting the need for enabling environments to support long-term sector growth. Dedicated sessions will also examine carbon markets, carbon removal technologies and emerging investment frameworks supporting low-carbon development.

A series of study tours scheduled for 19 June 2026 will provide delegates with practical exposure to operational bioenergy projects, offering insights into implementation models, technologies and local applications across the region. Youth participation and skills development will also be prioritised through targeted engagement initiatives aimed at connecting emerging professionals with established industry leaders. These initiatives are designed to support knowledge transfer and build capacity within the next generation of bioenergy specialists. With Africa increasingly recognised as

a key contributor to global energy transition efforts, Bio360 Africa 2026 arrives at a pivotal moment. The continent's abundant biomass resources, combined with rising energy demand and growing investment interest, present a significant opportunity for scalable and sustainable bioenergy development.

Bio360 Africa 2026 is positioned as more than an industry showcase; it is a strategic platform designed to foster long-term partnerships, unlock investment, and accelerate the adoption of sustainable energy solutions across Africa.

<https://www.bio360-africa.com/lang/en>

"Bio360 Africa 2026 will feature two parallel conference streams, including keynote addresses, technical presentations and expertpanel discussions."

Johannesburg is the strategic destination of choice to launch Bio360 Africa, situated at the heart of South Africa's agro-industrial hub, internationally accessible and providing easy access to neighbouring African markets.

Organised by BEES (Bioenergy Events and Services), Bio360 Africa builds on the established success of Bio360 Europe in Nantes, extending its reach into a high-growth region where demand for renewable energy solutions continues to rise. Hosted in Johannesburg, the event is strategically positioned to unlock investment opportunities, strengthen

development and policy engagement across the bioenergy value chain. More than 60 exhibitors are expected to participate across a 2,500m² exhibition space, alongside over 1,000 delegates representing agriculture, energy, finance, research and government sectors.

Bio360 Africa 2026 will feature two parallel conference streams, including keynote addresses, technical presentations and expert panel discussions. The programme is designed to facilitate practical collaboration between stakeholders and to accelerate the deployment of viable bioenergy solutions across



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Solar PV fault detection: Diagnosing hardware failures with Fluke I-V curve tracing - Comtest



PV systems are subject to various hardware issues that can significantly impact their performance. Diagnosing these issues accurately is crucial for maintaining system efficiency and longevity. I-V curve tracing is a powerful tool that helps technicians identify specific hardware failures in PV systems.

PHOTOVOLTAIC (PV) systems are built for long-term performance, but even minor hardware faults can reduce output and lead to significant energy losses if left undetected. Effective troubleshooting is essential to maintain efficiency, minimise downtime, and protect long-term return on investment.

One of the most powerful and accurate diagnostic methods available today is I-V curve tracing. The Fluke I-V curve tracer, supplied by Comtest, analyses the current-voltage relationship of a PV module or string, enabling technicians to quickly identify underlying faults and take corrective action.

Key PV system faults that impact performance and energy yield

PV systems can experience several module-related problems that affect their performance. Some of the most common issues are shorted bypass diodes, microcracks in PV cells, connec-

tor failures, Potential Induced Degradation (PID), and hotspots.

Shorted bypass diodes

Bypass diodes are integrated into PV modules to protect cells from overheating and damage due to partial shading or issues within the module. A shorted bypass diode can cause significant performance issues, leading to a reduced voltage output.

In a commercial PV installation, technicians noticed a drop in system performance. I-V curve tracing revealed a low Voc in one string. Testing the bypass diodes confirmed a shorted diode. Replacing the affected module restored the system's performance.

Microcracks in PV cells

Microcracks are small cracks in PV cells that can occur during

manufacturing, transportation, and installation and due to weather events like high wind or hail. These cracks can grow over time, leading to reduced performance and potential failure.

A utility-scale PV farm experienced a gradual decline in performance. I-V curve tracing and IR imaging identified microcracks in several modules. Replacing these modules improved the system's overall output.

Connector failures

Connectors are critical components in PV systems. Failures can result from corrosion, poor installation, or physical damage, leading to increased resistance and system underperformance.

A solar carport installation experienced inconsistent output. I-V curve tracing revealed irregular I-V curves, with inspection confirm-

ing corroded connectors. Replacing the connectors restored normal system operation.

Potential Induced Degradation (PID)

PID is a phenomenon that occurs when voltage differences between the PV system and the ground lead to leakage currents, causing module degradation.

A PV farm in a high-humidity area experienced significant PID. I-V curve tracing and IR imaging confirmed the issue. Installing PID mitigation equipment and replacing severely affected modules restored optimal operation.

Hotspots

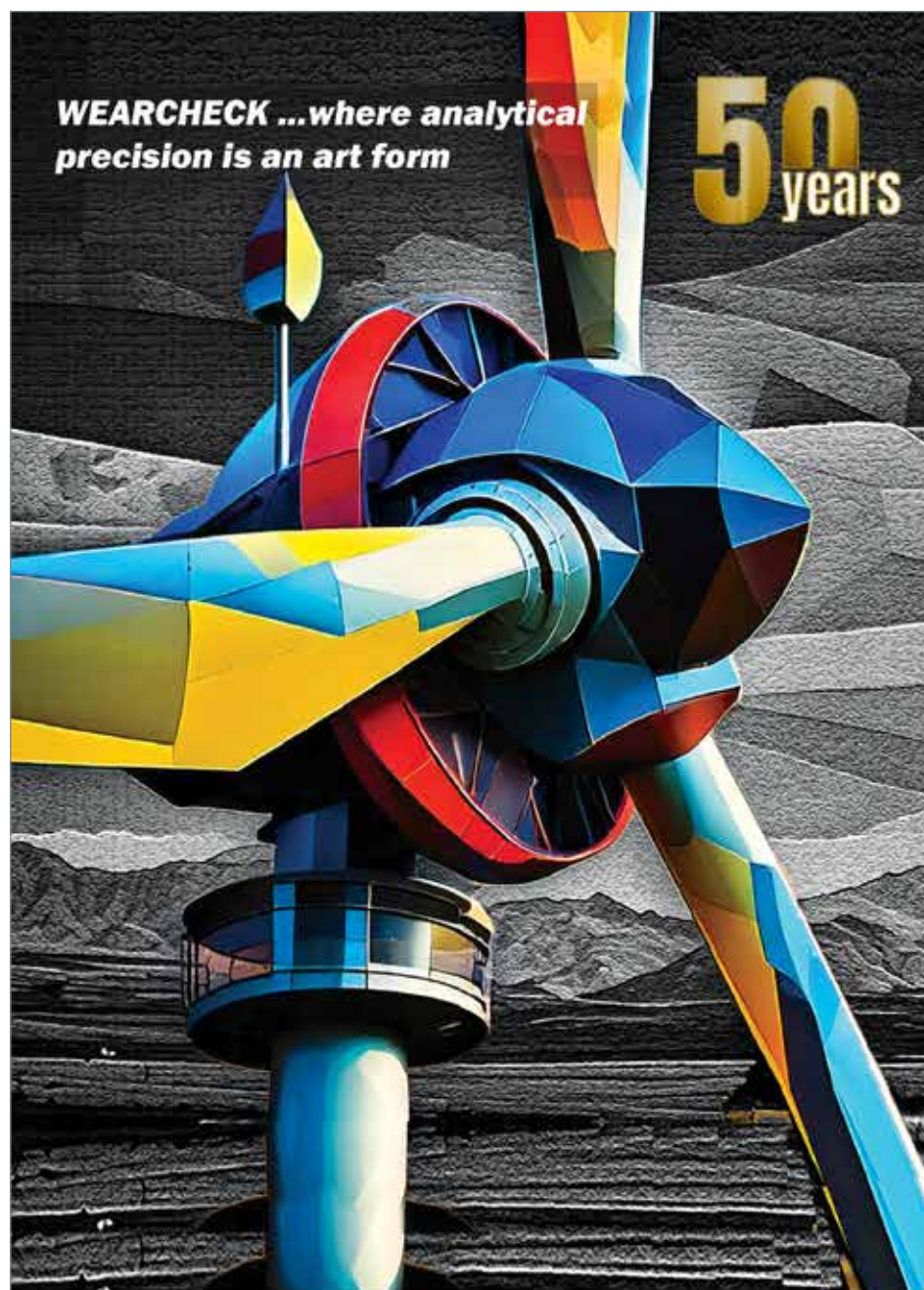
Hotspots occur when a part of a PV module becomes significantly hotter than its surroundings, often due to shading, soiling, or cell damage, leading to reduced performance and possible damage.

A residential PV system had reduced output. I-V curve tracing and IR imaging identified hotspots caused by bird droppings and a cracked cell. Cleaning the array and replacing the affected module resolved the issue.

Protecting solar assets with precision fault detection

Regular use of I-V curve tracing, combined with thorough inspections and targeted corrective actions, enables technicians to quickly identify faults, reduce downtime, and maximise energy yield—ensuring PV systems operate at optimal performance over their lifespan.

For more information, demonstrations, or locating your nearest authorised Comtest Channel Partner, contact COMTEST on + 010 595 1821, sales@comtest.co.za or visit www.comtest.co.za



Wind energy runs on precision and reliability

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Western Cape energy transition attracts billions in renewable investment



By Adrian Ephraim

A few years ago, the conversation in most South African boardrooms was about survival. Load-shedding was costing businesses billions in lost productivity, and the scramble for diesel generators and rooftop solar was driven by one question: how do we keep the lights on?

That question has been replaced by a more sophisticated one: how do we turn energy into a competitive advantage?

The shift is more than semantic. South Africa's largest solar PV project reached financial close in March 2026. The first RE+ South Africa event, the global renewables industry's flagship conference, lands in June 2026. Bid Window 7 opened with 5 200 MW of available capacity. Solar projects in the commercial and industrial segment are yielding internal rates of return of 10 to 12%, with battery energy storage systems targeting 13 to 15%. These are not emergency infrastructure numbers. These are investment-grade returns attracting institutional capital, and the businesses that understand this earliest are the ones that will carry a structural cost advantage into the next decade.

For the Western Cape, the stakes are particularly high. GreenCape's Renewable Energy Market Intelligence Report 2026 puts the province's investable renewable energy opportunity at R37.4 billion to 2030, across approximately 2.35 GW of new capacity. The dominant segment, large-scale wind and solar PV for private off-take through Eskom's wheeling framework, accounts for R34.1 billion of that figure. The behind-the-meter (BTM) market, which is where most mid-sized businesses will enter, represents a further R3.3 billion.

The deal structure has changed

The most consequential shift in the market is not technological. It is financial.

Three years ago, the standard commercial solar installation was self-funded — a capital outlay justified by load-shedding fear and a rough payback calculation. That model is giving way to developer-funded Power Purchase Agreements, where a third party finances, installs, and operates the energy system on the business's behalf. The customer simply purchases the electricity generated, at a rate negotiated below the Eskom or municipal tariff, with inflation-linked escalation locked in over 10 to 20 years.

The business case writes itself. No upfront capital. No operational risk. Immediate energy cost savings. And with Eskom's MYPD6 tariff increases confirmed at 12.2% for 2025/26, followed by further above-inflation increases through 2028 — against an inflation rate of 3.2% in 2025 — the gap between grid tariffs and PPA-based renewable pricing is widening every year.

For a manufacturer in the Boland, a cold storage operator in Bellville, or an agri-processor in the Hex River Valley, this is a meaningful structural change. An energy cost that was a balance sheet vulnerability can be restructured as a predictable operating expense, with built-in protection against the tariff trajectory that has seen Eskom rates increase roughly tenfold against CPI since 2007.

Wheeling: the larger play

For larger energy users, wheeling adds another dimension. Rather than generating power on-site, a business can access renewable en-

ergy from a wind farm in the Overberg or a solar cluster in the Karoo, delivered through Eskom's transmission network.

There are currently 1 267 MW of large-scale privately developed renewable projects under construction or operational in the Western Cape, almost entirely enabled by this mechanism.

The constraint is grid capacity. Eskom's 2025 Generation Connection Capacity Assessment reported effectively zero available firm capacity for new large-scale connections in the province. NERSA's landmark approval of 4% congestion curtailment — the first time such a mechanism has been recognised in South Africa — unlocks approximately 1 180 MW of new wind generation connections through to March 2028. That window is finite, and developers are moving to fill it. For businesses seeking wheeling arrangements, the pipeline of projects to partner with is active now. It may not be by 2029.

The decarbonisation imperative

Load-shedding may have started the conversation, but decarbonisation is sustaining it — and hardening it into commercial necessity.

South Africa draws over 82% of its electricity from fossil fuel sources. For Western Cape businesses with European customers, that is a supply chain liability. The EU's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism imposes duties on carbon-intensive imports. The Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive is already prompting European companies to request emissions disclosures from their South African suppliers. Carbon tax in South Africa is escalating toward \$30 per tonne by 2030.

King V, the updated corporate governance

code in effect from January 2026, extends ESG disclosure expectations to JSE-listed entities. The Climate Change Act, which commenced in March 2025, mandates greenhouse gas reporting and sectoral emissions targets. The regulatory direction is unambiguous.

For an energy-intensive business in the Western Cape, the calculus is becoming straightforward: transition now, and the investment pays for itself in tariff savings while addressing the decarbonisation pressure from trading partners. Delay, and both costs rise.

Where to start

The practical entry point for most mid-sized businesses is a PPA. The market has matured to the point where a well-structured, developer-funded solar PV system can be operational within 12 to 18 months, at a tariff below current grid rates, with no capital requirement. Regulatory simplification in October 2025 removed the professional engineer sign-off requirement for systems connected to the Eskom grid, cutting compliance costs by approximately R9 000 per installation.

Once a business understands its own energy economics, the path to wheeling, BESS, and longer-term energy strategy becomes considerably clearer.

SA's accession to Afreximbank, which unlocks an \$8 billion country programme with energy infrastructure at its core, and National Treasury's R9 billion Credit Guarantee facility for independent transmission projects, signal that the capital ecosystem supporting the energy transition is deepening at every level — from continental finance down to commercial rooftop solar.

The curtailment window closes in March 2028. The Cape Corridor transmission upgrades that follow, scheduled for 2028 to 2031, will open the next investment wave.

The opportunity is real, the structures are available, and the entry point has never been more accessible for businesses willing to move from reactive to strategic.

Renewable Energy market matures as grid and cost pressures rise in 2026



Eskom erecting transmission pylon.

By Larry Claasen

THE renewable energy market is entering a new phase in 2026 says Discovery Green.

Aside from electricity reforms that will see state owned power utility Eskom being split into three companies that will take over its generation, transmission and distribution functions, efforts to bring in the private sector are also gaining momentum.

Discovery Green said evolving wheeling models, grid constraints and changing cost dynamics are influencing how large energy users source renewable power, said a 2026 industry outlook.

Though the South African Wholesale Electricity Market (SAWEM) is still being developed, maturing wheeling frameworks are already providing large energy users with participation rules, standardised processes across utilities. The rise of trader-led, portfolio-based models for example has simplified contracting and balance risk are also solidifying wheeling frameworks.

"These developments are expanding access to supply and enabling companies to act now, without relying on future market structures," says Andre Nepgen, CEO of Discovery Green.

Discovery Green said Trader-led wheel-

ing has become the default model. Under this model, licensed traders sit between independent power producers (IPPs) and end-users, coordinating supply and demand across portfolios.

"Trader-led wheeling is what allows renewable energy to function as a scalable market rather than a collection of independent, bespoke transactions," Nepgen explains. "Aggregation is what turns renewable energy from a risk into a predictable system that works for business. This evolution marks a critical step in the sector's maturation, enabling flexibility, resilience and scale that were previously difficult to achieve."

Though the development of wheeling is a good development for the industry, rising renewable energy equipment cost is something the industry will have to cope with in 2026.

China is doing away with VAT rebate, so most contracts now include "policy adjustment clauses" that automatically hike prices the moment the rebate disappears. The sheer volume of global installations has also strained the supply of the physical materials needed to build solar panels.

Aside from these issues, grid capacity has become the most significant constraint on South Africa's renewable energy expansion.

With 75% of all private renewable applications in either the Eastern, Western or Northern Cape, these areas are grid-saturated as there is nowhere for the power to go.

Though the National Transmission Company South Africa (NTC-SA) is introducing congestion curtailment as an interim capacity-unlock mechanism, allowing controlled output reductions of around 4%, this is a partial solution to a much larger challenge.

Curtailment could enable additional projects to connect, potentially unlocking about 1,580 MW of wind capacity by 2028, but demand for new grid connections continues to outpace the system's ability to accommodate them.

South Africa needs to build 14,500 km of new high-voltage lines by 2034, said Discovery Green. The NTC-SA has secured R112 billion for the next five years, but the bottleneck isn't just money, it's the speed of execution. To reach this target, we will need to increase construction speed five-fold.

"Grid progress is now as important as price," Nepgen notes. "A strong resource site alone is no longer sufficient. What matters is whether there is a credible path to connection and a realistic delivery timeline, grid access is fast becoming a competitive differentiator."

Optimising the future of Africa's data centre operations - ACTOM



Improving energy efficiency strengthens the overarching business model governing data centres.

AFRICA's digital economy is expanding rapidly. From mobile banking and cloud computing to the expansion of e-commerce and enterprise systems, nearly every online service now relies on the data centres that drive the continent's digital infrastructure. Yet, these facilities are highly energy-intensive, and across much of Africa, electricity is expensive and often unreliable.

For operators, energy efficiency has become a strategic priority. Herman Mare, General Manager: Protection

and Control at ACTOM, says the conversation has shifted well beyond technical performance. "Energy efficiency is no longer only an engineering concern. It plays a direct role in maintaining uptime, managing operating costs and ensuring long-term sustainability."

The growing stakes of digital demand

Clinton Vieira, Business Development: Data Centres for Sub-Saharan Africa at ACTOM, notes the stakes are growing as Africa's digi-

tal demand accelerates. Data centres form the backbone of the modern economy. If operators want to support the next wave of digital services across the continent, they need energy strategies that strengthen resilience while keeping operations cost-effective.

Electricity remains the single largest operating cost for most data centres. In many African markets, power infrastructure is ageing or inconsistent, forcing operators to rely on backup generation to keep facilities online. "Power instability adds complexity to data centre operations," Vieira explains. Every disruption or inefficiency has a direct impact on costs and the reliability customers expect.

Turning energy challenges into opportunities

Despite these challenges, Mare believes the situation also presents an

opportunity. Operators who address energy efficiency strategically can reduce energy losses, improve reliability and operate far more efficiently.

One of the most effective ways to improve efficiency begins with electrical infrastructure. Medium-Voltage (MV) systems deliver power more efficiently than traditional low-voltage connections and reduce energy losses across the facility. "Medium-voltage infrastructure allows power to be distributed far more effectively," says Mare. It also enables redundancy by allowing multiple feeds from different substations so that if one power source fails, the facility can continue operating.

Infrastructure as a foundation for growth

Mare says this type of investment also prepares facilities for future innovation. Medium-voltage systems create the founda-

tion for integrating intelligent monitoring and renewable energy solutions, helping data centres scale alongside the digital economy.

Visibility into energy usage is equally important. Modern monitoring systems allow operators to track energy consumption across their facilities in real time allowing them to identify inefficiencies, anticipate problems, and optimise performance.

Building resilience with hybrid energy

Renewable and hybrid energy solutions are also becoming an important part of the energy mix for African data centres.

Solar, wind and battery storage can provide stability where the grid supply is inconsistent.

Hybrid energy models can also reduce dependence on diesel generators while lowering operating costs and carbon emissions.

Efficiency as a competitive advantage

Improving energy efficiency strengthens the overarching business model governing data centres. Lower operating costs, better reliability and stronger infrastructure make facilities more attractive to global investors and digital service providers.

Mare believes the

decisions operators make today will define the industry's future. The demand for digital infrastructure will only increase, and operators who invest in efficient electrical systems, intelligent monitoring and integrated energy strategies will lead the market.

As Africa's digital economy grows, the infrastructure supporting it must evolve as well. When energy systems are designed intelligently, from medium-voltage infrastructure to monitoring and renewables, data centres become stronger and better prepared for the future.

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

Legrand track busway technology provides critical power distribution for modern infrastructure

LEGRAND has expanded its critical power portfolio with integrated solutions designed for reliable, efficient, safe and flexible power distribution in many applications, including commercial buildings, healthcare facilities, data centres and industrial sites.

As demand for dependable electrical infrastructure increases, Legrand's approach focuses on delivering stable power distribution, while addressing space constraints, operational continuity and energy efficiency.

The company's critical power solutions combine modular distribution design with high-efficiency upstream equipment, enabling designers and operators to adapt systems efficiently as operational requirements change.

A central system in critical power is the latest generation Legrand Data Center Track Busway technology, which addresses the operational pressures facing today's high-density, AI-intensive computing environments. Engineered for reliability, safety and long-term efficiency, the system comprises modular, monitored power distribution infrastructure that supports scalable, fault-resilient data centre operations.

Stand-out features compared to conventional busway systems include the combination of advanced safety features, rapid tool-free installation, integrated intelligent monitoring and cost-efficiency.

This system has been designed to replace traditional cabling with a compact, expandable power



Legrand's new generation Data Center Track Busway technology offers data centre operators who face growing energy demands of AI-generated content and high-throughput networking, a streamlined, intelligent approach to delivering uninterrupted power within compact, dynamic rack environments.

rail that enables rapid configuration changes and branch expansion without interrupting supply. The flat profile design and compact installation clearances optimise overhead space, while supporting A and B busway configurations.

The track busway, with current ratings from 160 A to 800 A, incorporates hot-swappable power meters at end feeds and tap-off boxes, allowing real-time monitoring of voltage, current, power, energy and joint temperatures. These meters support standard communication protocols, enabling integration into data centre infrastructure management platforms, to provide operators with detailed visibility of rack-level power consumption.

Legrand's transformers have been designed to reduce energy losses and minimise environmental impact and their distribution boards form the backbone of every building.

Support services

The local operation works with strategic

partners, enabling the team to offer direct installation and after-sales services. They work together to provide in-house designs, specifications and critical power solutions, ensuring that suitable products are selected for every installation.

The Legrand team - which comprises highly skilled engineers and technicians in Cape Town, Johannesburg and Durban - also offers services in Botswana, Namibia and Zambia. A dependable after-sales service, with a dedicated service support line, includes Tier 3 level support to data centres.

Legrand's environmentally responsible approach to constantly changing project requirements, is enhanced through the company's support services and solutions plan. This initiative enhances ongoing technological developments of the company's product portfolio, in terms of energy efficiency, quality power supply, safety and aesthetics.



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Why your “power-saving” appliances might not be lowering your bill

SOUTH African households are bracing for another wave of electricity cost increases, with NERSA approving hikes of 18.36% over the next two years. It's tempting to think that swapping to energy-efficient appliances will automatically reduce your bill, but the savings may not be as high as expected. Drawing on his extensive industry experience, Dr Andrew Dickson, Engineering Executive at CBI-electric: low voltage, says that while replacing old appliances with A++ rated alternatives should logically reduce bills, the expected drop in monthly costs frequently fails to materialise.

To illustrate, he points to lighting in a typical home. “Where a room once relied on a single 60W globe, a modern setup might feature 20 downlights. Even with efficient 5W globes, the total load rises to 100W. Efficiency gains are real, but increased usage often outpaces them.”

The paradox of efficiency

This is the “Jevons Paradox” - when efficiency makes something cheaper or easier to use, people often end up using more of it, cancelling out the expected savings. And it is not unique to South Africa. Dr Dickson points to data from the UK spanning a 200-year period: as lighting technologies evolved and have become 3,000 times cheaper per lumen, consumption didn't drop. Instead, it skyrocketed, with people using 6,000 times more light.

From passive saving to active management

Dr Dickson says the key is shifting from passive saving (simply buying a better appliance) to active management (monitoring and controlling how electricity is used). “Efficiency alone isn't enough. Households can reclaim real savings by paying attention to behaviour. Simple actions like switching off appliances on standby, avoiding running devices longer than necessary, or using timers to manage peak usage can make a big difference.”

He adds that technology can support these habits. “Wi-Fi-enabled meters and apps can provide real-time insight into electricity

consumption, helping households spot spikes and understand exactly where energy is being lost.”

Active management also exposes hidden costs that efficient appliances alone can't

fix, such as ‘phantom loads’ - devices drawing power even when switched off. These devices are always connected and “ON”, so effectively draw power 24/7. These invisible drains can account for

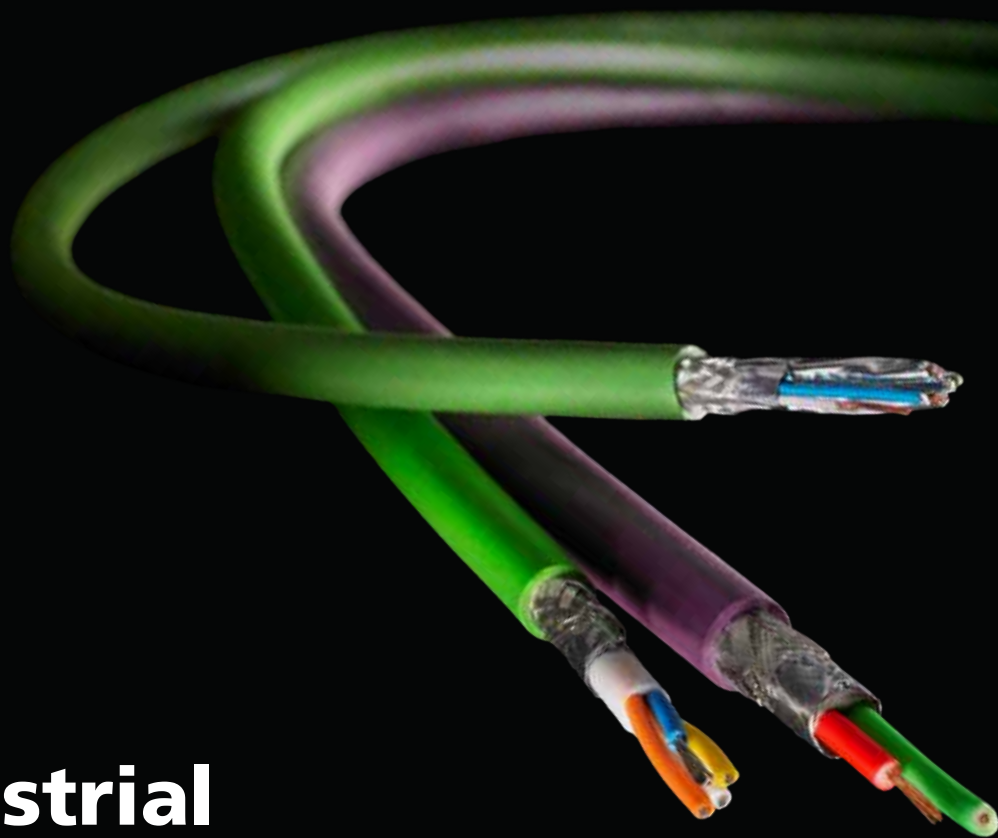
up to 5–10% of home energy usage, or up to R1,800 a year on electricity that isn't actually being used.

“Efficient appliances are still important,” concludes Dr Dickson. “But the most effec-

tive way to cut costs is by actively managing how and when electricity is used. By combining simple behavioural changes with tools like smart meters, households can finally see the savings they expect.”



Dr Andrew Dickson, Engineering Executive at CBI-electric: low voltage.



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Smart Metering is a practical response to rising electricity tariffs - CBI



A 76% electricity tariff increase took effect on 1 April 2025 for Eskom-supplied customers, with a further 8.83% to follow from April 2027. The municipal increase of 9% will be implemented in July 2026.

With the growing concern around increased electricity costs, CBI-electric: low voltage has launched its Intuitive Range of Wi-Fi Meters. The range includes three meters suited to homes, businesses, and industrial sites, all connected via Wi-Fi and managed through the free CBI Home App or web portal at astute.cbi.co.za.

The new Astute Portal enables users to access their consumption data via PC, with added functionality including the ability to assign Rand values to kWh, monitor live statistics, and copy energy usage into any document with a single click for easy tracking of spend and consumption.

The meters are also compatible with the company's existing Astute smart home automation range, allowing users to integrate energy monitoring into a broader connected ecosystem.

"In this environment, understanding exactly where and when electricity is being consumed is a

critical first step toward meaningful cost reduction," says Dr Andrew Dickson, engineering executive at CBI-electric: low voltage.

The key product benefit is visibility. Users can view their electricity consumption in real-time from a phone, tablet, or computer. The CBI Home app provides daily consumption data for the last 31 days and monthly data for the past 12 months. Making it easy to spot patterns, identify high-consumption appliances or equipment, and take action to reduce usage.

The meters measure with Class 1 accuracy and support multi-tariff tracking, allowing users to view consumption across different tariffs for different properties.

All data is password-protected, and the meters feature clear LCD screens with backlighting for easy on-site reading. All three meters operate across a wide temperature range of -25°C to +55°C, making them suitable for a variety of installation environments.

The three meters in the CBI Intuitive Range include:

- Single-phase multi-function Wi-Fi meter

(ISR2121) - dual mount (DIN and mini rail) meter, 80 A rated, suited to residential installations.

- Three-phase multi-function Wi-Fi meter (ISR4321) - DIN rail meter, 100 A rated, for commercial and industrial use.
- Three-phase multi-function CT Wi-Fi meter (ISR4321CT) - DIN rail meter compatible with 5A/1A external current transformers and external voltage transformers (minimum 30V). The CT meter supports multiple wiring configurations, including 3P4W, 3P3W, 2P3W, and 1P2W, offering flexibility for varied installation requirements. It also features current transformer reverse connection correction, which simplifies installation and reduces the risk of wiring errors.

All three operate on a 2.4 GHz Wi-Fi connection and are certified to IEC 61010-1. They must be installed by a qualified electrician. The meters are available from authorised distributors nationwide.

CBI-electric was established in 1949, and is a manufacturer and supplier of low voltage electrical distribution, protection, and control equipment. Previously known as Circuit Breaker Industries or CBI, the company specialises in the design, development, and manufacturing of circuit breakers, residential current devices, surge protection, wiring accessories, and metering products.

Schneider Electric and Technoserve MV power Elgin Orchards in the Western Cape with pure-air switchgear technology

SCHNEIDER Electric, a global energy technology leader, together with trusted partner Technoserve Medium Voltage (MV), has implemented its RM AirSeT SF₆-free medium voltage (MV) switchgear at Elgin Orchards, one of South Africa's leading fruit producers, situated in Grabouw in the Western Cape.

The Elgin Orchards project marks another important step in the continued adoption of the globally recognised RM AirSeT and its pure-air switchgear technology in the South African marketplace.

The successful installation of the switchgear forms part of Elgin Orchard's journey to establish sustainable and resilient operations. The equipment replaces an existing Schneider Electric RM6 unit which has been moved to a new cold storage plant. This underscores the fruit producer's commitment to resource efficiency.

"At Elgin Orchards, sustainability is at the heart of everything we do," says Neil Reid at Elgin Orchards. "Together with Schneider Electric and Technoserve Medium Voltage we've made a change that aligns to reliable, safe, and low-carbon energy."

Brighton Mwarehwa, Offer and Marketing Director for Power Systems at Schneider Electric explains: "The RM AirSeT installation at Elgin Orchards delivers 100% elimination of SF₆, improved reliability, and cost savings of up to 20% over the system's lifecycle. It's more than equipment; it's a step toward re-



Installation of the Schneider Electric RM AirSeT SF₆-free medium-voltage switchgear by Technoserve Medium Voltage at Elgin Orchards, Grabouw, Western Cape.

sponsible growth and energy resilience."

The future of greener operations

The RM AirSeT represents the next generation of sustainable switchgear, using pure air insulation and vacuum technology instead of sulphur hexafluoride (SF₆), a greenhouse gas (GHG) with 24,300 times the global warming potential of CO₂.

By removing SF₆ entirely, Elgin Orchards has achieved measurable carbon footprint reduction and eliminated associated regulatory risks, while ensuring uninterrupted operations for its cold chain and processing facilities.

Evans Coetzee, General Manager at Technoserve MV comments: "The RM AirSeT offers not just reliability but future-proof flexibility. It's compact, robust, and digital-ready, providing Elgin Orchards with a durable and sustainable medium-voltage solution that's simple to install and maintain. The swap from RM6 to RM AirSeT was seamless and completed in a single day, minimising downtime.

"The RM AirSeT

delivers up to 10,000 switching cycles and offers integrated digital capabilities for real-time monitoring and diagnostics through Schneider's Easergy T300 platform. This makes it ideally suited for hybrid energy systems, frequent operations, and future smart grid integration," he adds.

The switchgear also offers the following important features:

- Voltage range – suitable for underground secondary distribution applications up to 24kV.
- High reliability – built on Schneider Electric's legacy of over 1.8 million MV functions deployed globally, ensuring robust performance.
- Compact – the switchgear design enables space-saving installations.
- Native digital connectivity – seamlessly integrates with modern SCADA systems like Schneider Electric's ETAP offering enabling real-time monitoring and control.
- Smart grid compatibility – enhances grid automation

and operational efficiency for utilities and industrial users.

Mwarehwa adds: "The Elgin Orchards project is a clear example of how sustainability and performance can co-exist. By replacing SF₆ with pure air, we are helping our customers transition towards cleaner, more resilient energy systems without compromising reliability or safety.

"It demonstrates how innovation in electrical distribution can make a tangible impact on climate goals while supporting South Africa's all-important agricultural sector."

The RM AirSeT recently earned global recognition for its environmental innovation, honoured by the World Economic Forum Alliance of CEO Climate Leaders as a Champion of the Scope 3 Downstream Solutions Challenge in the Sustainable Design category.

This accolade underscores AirSeT's role in decarbonising electrical distribution systems and advancing net-zero ambitions worldwide.

For more information, visit: <https://www.se.com/za/en/>

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THE NEXT GENERATION

Internships, Skills & Development Programmes

Universities South Africa and Services SETA launch R520m bursary scheme for 5,200 students

AN ambitious R520 million new university bursary scheme will help 5,200 South African university students achieve their tertiary ambitions.

The scheme is open to first-time entering South African citizens enrolled at a public university. The amount is capped at R100 000 per student per year and will support students over three years, provided they maintain satisfactory academic progress and meet their field-of-study requirements.

The venture is the result of a partnership between Universities South Africa (USAf) – the representative body of all 26 public universities of South Africa – and the Services Sector Education and Training Authority (Services SETA).

New funding model aims to eliminate last-minute financial uncertainty

To date, all 26 public universities have already received R20 million, allowing 200 student beneficiaries at each institution to focus on their studies without the stress of financial uncertainty. Those behind the initiative believe that early fund distribution is critical for administrative efficiencies, timely and proper verification and reducing reliance on emergency, last-minute funding.

Speaking at the project's recently held inception workshop, Dr Phethiwe Matutu, CEO of USAf, said: "This announcement marks a day of both jubilation and

immense responsibility on our part as partners of the Services SETA Bursary Project."

Dr Matutu said that USAf, along with the Services SETA, would appoint external auditors and ensure that auditing was well underway before the end of the financial year, enabling universities to receive the next tranche of funding on time for returning students in 2027.

Strategic partnership sets benchmark for other sectors

Mr Sibusiso Dhladhla, Acting CEO of Services SETA, referenced issues previously encountered by his organisation, currently under administration due to governance failures.

"Our goal is to affirm this kind of programme so it can serve as a benchmark for other sectors to adopt. This is the legacy we would like to leave behind."

Mr Makhaya Blaai, Acting Executive Manager: Office of the CEO, Services SETA, explained the rationale behind the early release of funds to the universities.

"We have changed our bursary model because we realised it didn't help the beneficiaries we sought to help. We needed an immediate and long-lasting solution, hence this decision."

He said the Services SETA had appointed USAf as a strategic partner to minimise problems associated with the



Dr Phethiwe Matutu (USAf) (left) and Mr Sibusiso Dhladhla (Services SETA).

awarding of bursaries: "I can safely say it's a panacea for the problems faced by students in the past. We have taken a leap of faith with responsible people, whom we trust to meet deadlines and timeously supply all audit-related matters for this academic year. By the end of the 2026 academic year, we should have results from this year's cohort, to pay in advance for their studies in 2027. Students need to return to attend classes, and not to an administrative nightmare. We have the chance to touch lives for the better."

Master's bursary programme: PAMSA invests in future engineers to drive South Africa's circular bioeconomy

R320,000 Master's bursary programme targets final-year chemical engineering students to boost skills and industry innovation | Applications close 12 June 2026



Qiniso Ngiba, a process engineer and graduate of PAMSA's 2020-2021 Master's in Engineering Bursary Programme at Stellenbosch University, researched the conversion of lignin from waste pulping liquors into slow-release nitrogen fertilisers and soil conditioning materials, supporting more sustainable use of forestry resources.

THE Paper and Allied Manufacturers of South Africa (PAMSA) is investing in the next generation of chemical engineers through its 2027-2028 Master's in Engineering Bursary Programme, aimed at strengthening South Africa's skills

pipeline and advancing innovation in the circular bioeconomy.

This initiative has been equipping young chemical engineering students for more than a decade with their industry-relevant research helping the South African pulp and paper sector to further contribute to the circular bioeconomy and develop more resource-efficient processes.

"Students on this programme work at the forefront of innovation in an industry that transforms renewable wood fibre and recycled materials into everyday essentials such as printing paper, packaging, tissue and wood fibre-based materials," says Jane Molony, Executive Director of PAMSA.

Funding the next generation of engineers

Open to final-year students studying a BSc or BEng in Chemical Engineering, the programme offers a two-year bursary valued at R320,000, covering tuition, accommodation, study materials and living expenses. Successful candidates would undertake full-time Master's study at leading South African institutions, including North-West University, Stellenbosch University, the University of Pretoria and the University of the Witwatersrand.

"Over the course of two years, students will engage in research projects that align closely with industry priorities, covering areas such as process optimisation, energy and water efficiency, waste-to-



value innovation, and the development of bio-based materials and fuels," explains Molony.

She adds that many of the programme's graduates go on to become engineers-in-training at PAMSA's member companies, gaining valuable practical experience and career opportunities.

Who should apply

The programme is only open to final-year students and recent graduates with a BSc or BEng in Chemical Engineering.

The students are required to demonstrate strong academic performance, with a minimum 60% average in their final year, and must have completed, or be on track to complete, their studies within five years. In addition, candidates should be committed to pursuing full-time Master's study and be motivated to contribute to research that supports industry needs and advances the circular bioeconomy.

Applications close on 12 June 2026.

Apply here: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2LQ8QYX>

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When hustle culture meets shame: The psychology behind performance

By Chantelle Botha



BUSINESS in South Africa and beyond are increasingly exhausted by hustle culture. Let's just say it plainly – we are tired. And it's only May.

The real problem isn't necessarily the increasing workload. It's the misalignment of internalised expectations and socialised pressures that create cognitive dissonance within us.

In business language, desire is usually sanitised and renamed ambition. It's the energy that drives our search for meaning – the reason we choose careers where we hope to make an impact and leave a legacy.

Most of us begin our professional journeys with that desire intact. But as workloads increase and expectations multiply, the edges start to fray.

When your plate is so full that sixteen-hour days become the norm just to keep the basics in place, something begins to shift internally.

You start questioning yourself: Is this actually making a difference? Is it even worth it?

This is where shame makes its appearance. In the corporate context, shame is simply the weight of feeling unable to meet an impossible standard.

Men and women carry this pressure differently, but the outcome is remarkably similar. We strive externally to meet the socialised expectation that hustle is good and busyness is honourable, while internally we begin second-guessing ourselves.

The masculine experience of shame often centres around provision and status. The pressure is to prove competence and success through visible achievement.

The feminine experience of shame tends to centre around likeability and acceptance. The pressure becomes a constant calibration – not too much, not too little, always carefully adjusting to the expectations of others.

Different masks, but the exhaustion is the same. Many of us are bearing these roles daily, often unconsciously. And the longer we wear them, the further we drift from the desires that originally drove us into our careers.

The solution is surprisingly simple – but it asks a great deal from us: vulnerability.

When men drop the invincibility mask, and women drop the likeability mask, something powerful happens. We become honest about what we actually want, and stop paying lip service to the hustle culture.

Because the real danger in organisations is uninspired leadership.

When leaders trade authentic desire for professional veneer, energy disappears from

the system, contributors stop speaking up and burnout slowly takes root.

The answer isn't another strategy meeting; it's the courage to acknowledge the shadow. Individually and collectively.

When leaders become honest about their own uncertainty, pressure and limitations, they create psychological safety for others to do the same. Research consistently shows that psychological safety remains one of the strongest predictors of high-performing teams.

Desire is the fuel for motivation. When it is suppressed by shame, people slowly lose their edge, and apathy creeps in.

This is why vulnerable leadership is not weakness. It is a strategic advantage.

In your next one-on-one conversation, instead of asking only for a status update, try asking a different question: "What is one thing you're genuinely excited about right now – and one thing you're worried might be overlooked?"

That single question reveals both desire and shame. And where those two forces are acknowledged openly, we become powerful in our vulnerability.

We have spent decades optimising our systems. Perhaps it's time we started paying attention to the human engines that power them. Because authentic desire is the only source of motivation that doesn't eventually run out of fuel.

The real leadership question for you today is this:

How will you create space for authentic desire to emerge in your team?



Chantelle Botha, known globally as *The Catalyst*, is an Identity Architect who partners with leadership and talent teams to unlock confidence and performance in business. Using her proprietary Phoenix Blueprint, she helps companies build cultures of curiosity and courage that translate into confident decision-making. Through her current research exploring the relationship between desire and shame in women, Chantelle explores the internal psychological dynamics that influence performance and confidence.

Ready to drive meaningful, results-driven change?

Connect with Chantelle to strengthen psychological safety and unlock authentic motivation — within your teams or yourself. It starts with you.

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THE BUSINESS TRAVELLER THE EXECUTIVE GUIDE TO STRATEGIC TRAVEL

Middle East airline disruption exposes business travel risk for South African companies

By Adrian Ephraim

ON Saturday 28 February 2026, airspace over the Middle East effectively shut down for South African travellers. Emirates, Etihad and Qatar Airways, the three carriers that together form the primary aviation corridor linking South Africa to Europe, Asia and beyond, suspended operations almost simultaneously. Thousands of business travellers were left stranded in Dubai, Abu Dhabi and Doha, or marooned at their destinations with no clear path home.

Three weeks later, services have partially resumed, but the situation remains fluid. The episode has exposed how underprepared many South African businesses are when it comes to managed travel risk. Herman Heunes, GM of Corporate Traveller (a division of the Flight Centre Travel Group), unpacks what companies need to know.

The cost of disruption goes beyond cancelled flights

When a major aviation corridor disappears overnight, the ripple effect on pricing is immediate. Supply shrinks while demand holds firm, and fares spike accordingly. But Heunes warns against reducing the cost conversation to simple supply and demand.

"Fares are climbing for several reasons. Yes, supply and demand is a factor, but so are rising oil prices, longer flight paths and associated operational costs as airlines avoid restricted airspace, and increased insurance premiums, which are often passed on to travellers."

Alternative hubs, including Addis Ababa, Singapore and various European gateways, filled up rapidly as travellers sought non-Gulf routings. Corporate Traveller's booking data reflects the shift: Ethiopian Airlines saw a 100% sales spike, Virgin Atlantic 303%, Air China 225%, Singapore Airlines 109% and KLM 114%.

For companies whose employees book travel independently, the implication is significant. They are competing for constrained seats without the priority access, supplier relationships and expertise that a managed travel programme provides.

What travel insurance does and doesn't cover

War is a universal exclusion across all travel insurance products globally, and South Africa is no exception. Jason Veitch, Business Head for Accident and Health at Santam Travel Insurance (formerly TIC), addressed the issue during an ASATA industry webinar.

"War exclusions exist because the scale of conflict can affect hundreds of thousands of travellers simultaneously, and no insurance

pool can absorb that," he explained. "But while war exclusions apply to trip cancellation and curtailment, other benefits including medical remain in place."

That distinction matters more than most corporate travel managers realise. "The main reason for travel insurance is actually medical, and that's what sometimes gets lost in these conversations. We have had policyholders in hospitals in the region being cared for under their travel insurance. That's exactly what a policy is there for."

Heunes adds an important caveat: policies differ substantially in how they define war exclusions, known events and government travel advisories. "Understanding what your team is covered for, including medical evacuations and territorial limitations, is critical to managing risk."

Knowing your rights when an airline cancels

If a flight is cancelled before departure, travellers are entitled to an alternative flight or a full refund with no penalties. If a passenger is already mid-journey, the airline's responsibility expands: it must rebook, reroute through partner carriers if necessary, and accommodate the traveller until they reach their final destination. If a traveller cancels a booking on a flight that is still operating, standard fare conditions apply.

One reassurance worth noting: fares are locked at the time of booking, so no fuel surcharge increases will be applied to existing trips.

Duty of care: do you know where your people are?

For Heunes, the most fundamental lesson from the crisis is also the most uncomfortable: too many South African companies do not have adequate visibility over where their travelling employees are at any given moment.

Any company operating a travel programme, regardless of size, has an obligation to its staff that includes a clear travel policy, access to pre-trip risk intelligence, the ability to locate travellers rapidly in an emergency, and a documented crisis management plan.

"When a crisis hits, visibility is everything," says Heunes. "A centralised booking system, 24/7 emergency support, strong airline relationships and crisis management plans are all part of a managed travel programme. This is where a travel management company proves its worth."

The Middle East crisis will not be the last event to ground international travel without warning. The question for South African business leaders is whether their travel programmes are built for disruption, or merely for fair-weather conditions.



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