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Deep sea trawlers are concerned about the impact of oil and gas exploration on the industry

SADSTIA says it is not opposed to offshore oil and gas exploration but says long-term impacts on established industries must be considered.



By Larry Claasen

SOUTH Africa's deep sea trawlers are concerned about the possible impact of mineral and energy extraction off the country's coast.

The fishers fear that offshore exploration and extraction could harm the sector, which employs 12 400 people and contributes R8,5-billion annually to the economy.

They fear that drilling, sonar bathymetry surveys, oil spills and the possible laying of pipelines across established trawl grounds could negatively affect them.

The South African Deep-Sea Trawling Industry Association (SADSTIA) said in its 2023 annual review that, in principle, it was not opposed to offshore oil and gas exploration.

It understands the potential economic benefits of "non-living marine resources" to the country but said, "such exploration and production should be undertaken responsibly and with due care and consideration of

long-term impacts on established industries such as fishing that support many thousands of jobs."

SADSTIA said it had met with the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and Environment, and the other fisheries associations, about research into the impacts of seismic surveys on plankton and commercially valuable fish species.

It said it and its partners were also in discussion with the Offshore Petroleum Association of South Africa (Opasa) about ways to fund this research.

SADSTIA secretary Johann Augustyn says the sticking point in the negotiation was who would fund the research. "We have recently re-engaged and hope that there will be some buy-in to an approach. But we have not reached an agreement."

TotalEnergies' decision in July to withdraw from the Brulpadda and Luiperd gas projects on the south coast has effectively ended gas exploration activities in that area - for now.

Though laying an undersea pipeline

on the south coast now looks unlikely, Augustyn says there was still a chance of one being laid on the west coast. This was despite TotalEnergies also withdrawing from offshore exploration in Block 5/6/7 on the west coast.

TotalEnergies EP South Africa holds a 45% interest in Block 11B/12B, where the Brulpadda and Luiperd discoveries are, and a 40% interest in Block 5/6/7.

The French company withdrew because it appeared "to be too challenging to economically develop and monetise these gas discoveries for the South African market."

Though TotalEnergies has withdrawn from the south and west coasts, it is still active around the Namibian and South African border. Activities in this area will include sonar bathymetry surveys, drop core sampling and exploration well drilling.

Aside from funding research into the possible impact of seismic surveys, SADSTIA also wants to establish a broader framework with the offshore petroleum industry to ensure that gas and oil exploration do not negatively impact the fishing industry.

The chairperson of Opasa did not respond to CBN's request for comment on SADSTIA's concerns.

High risk/reward

The South African government sees both industries as major economic drivers. However, given the scale of their potential, the oil and gas sectors are seen as potentially transformational.

Then Mineral Resources and Energy minister Gwede Mantashe said at a conference last year that the Petroleum Agency of South Africa (PASA) estimates that South Africa holds 27-billion barrels and 60-trillion cubic feet (tcf) of prospective oil and gas resources on the south, east, and west coasts.

He pointed to Guyana and Namibia as

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Truckers say Transnet is not addressing traffic congestion at Port of Cape Town



Cape Town Terminal. Source: Transnet.

By Larry Claasen

TRANSNET's claim that it is sorting out congestion at the Port of Cape Town rings hollow, says South African Transport Alliance (SATA) CEO Derick Ongansie.

The transport utility says it has made progress in decongesting the port, when it came to reducing waiting times for ships, but Ongansie says Transnet has done little to reduce the waiting time for trucks trying to unload their containers.

He says despite frequent meetings with Transnet and other roleplayers, little has been done to speed up the process, and that it's not unusual to have up to 500 trucks a day waiting to get into the port.

One of the main issues behind the delays has been the booking system for allowing trucks into the port. Though Transnet Port Terminals (TPT) introduced a new pilot booking system at Durban Container Terminal in August, it has not done so for the Port of Cape Town.

The new booking system for Durban saw it shift from having six windows in a 24-hour period where an average of 325 truck booking slots are made available every four hours, to having two windows in a 48-hour period where an average of 2 840 truck booking slots will be made available in one go.

Transnet said at the time that "this would allow smaller transporters with

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Deep sea trawlers are concerned about the impact of oil and gas exploration on the industry

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examples of how developing countries can use energy extraction to drive economic development. “Not only did Guyana’s economy grow by 62,3% in 2022, but its domestic gas production has enabled Guyana’s government to replace heavy fuel oil in electricity generation with indigenous natural gas, and as a result reduced electricity tariffs by 50%.” Gas and oil extraction, however, comes with some risk. The Deepwater Horizon oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico in 2010, for example, led to 4,9-million barrels of oil seeping into the sea. BP, the company responsible, ended up paying over \$65-billion in cleanup costs, charges and penalties. According to research by the University of Western Australia, the Gulf of Mexico commercial fishing industry lost \$247-million due to post-spill fisheries closures. The US’s National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration says marine life was still negatively affected five years after the spill.

Truckers say Transnet is not addressing traffic congestion at Port of Cape Town

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less resources to compete fairly with bigger transporters who had dedicated administrative staff to secure bookings. The new booking system at Durban follows the introduction of a new one for the Port of Richards Bay over a year ago. This new system, along with its efforts to move the transportation of coal from road to rail has reduced congestion at this port. Transnet did not respond to questions on whether a new booking system for haulers will be introduced at the Port of Cape Town. Aside from the booking system, Ongansie says the work schedule for Transnet’s staff at the Port of Cape Town also causes delays. He gives the example of how staff breaks for lunch, they close the gates and the trucks must just wait outside until they come back to work. This issues around traffic congestion at the port are so severe, Ongansie says it was the reason SATA was created, as it would give haulers a platform to voice their concerns. Though Ongansie and SATA say more can be done to reduce congestion, Transnet said in its results for the year to end March 2024 that it was making progress in improving its operational performance. “Through its Port Terminals division, Transnet invested an additional R130-million in procuring seven second-hand rubber-tired gantries (RTGs) for the Port of Cape Town. This investment was made to address the crisis experienced in January 2024 with the import and export of fruit. These gantries have since been delivered and are operational, significantly improving throughput at the port.” Transnet National Ports Authority (TNPA) has also invested over R200-million to replace all 37 capstans at the dry dock facilities of the Durban and Cape Town ports, standardising the ship repair equipment.

What farmers can do to mitigate climate change

By Larry Claasen

The agriculture sector is not powerless when it comes to climate change. Daneel Rossouw, head of sales for agriculture at Nedbank Commercial Banking, explains to us the concept of Conservation Agriculture, and how the agriculture sector can implement it.

CBN - How does Conservation Agriculture (CA) mitigate the impacts of climate change?

The three key elements of conservation agri-



Daneel Rossouw, head of sales for agriculture at Nedbank Commercial Banking

culture are minimum soil disturbance, crop diversification, and permanent soil cover. Because conservation agriculture not only reduces greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere but also makes land more resilient to climate-related events such as long droughts and heavy downpours, it is doubly valuable in a warming world. These practices reduce both the impacts of climate change on agricultural systems and the contribution of agricultural practices to greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions through sustainable land management. CA contributes to protecting the soil from erosion and degradation, improving soil quality and biodiversity and natural biological processes above and below the ground surface, preserving natural resources such as water and nutrients, and increasing their use efficiency, while optimising crop yields.

CBN - How expensive is it to start practising Conservation Agriculture? What adjustments need to be made?

The optimal way to start practising CA is to first correct all deficiencies in your soil and negate all possible compacted layers. Unfortunately, the machinery required for this process is expensive but can be rented and is readily available. This is the only expensive item associated with implementing CA as most conventional

farms already have the other heavy machinery required, such as tractors and harvesters. So, the switch is not capital intensive, but it is management intensive, which means that farmers need to be prepared to be actively involved on the farm. However, it’s important to offset any initial costs, or extra time and effort required to manage the farm against the cost savings this type of farming delivers, such as water, fertilisers, pesticides and machinery, and higher yields, which all help to achieve higher profitability in the long run. Findings also suggest that, compared to 100% conventional tillage wheat production, the adoption of CA systems has led to reductions in environmental damage valued between R269,2-million and R402,5-million in the Western Cape. CBN - Is Conservation Agriculture widely practiced in South Africa?

CBN - Can you give an example of this?

In a study done in conjunction with the Western Cape Department of Agriculture and published in 2023, wheat production at Langgewens and Tygerhoek research farms was studied from 2002 to 2020 to estimate the environmental and economic impacts of switching from conventional wheat production to CA’s zero tillage (zero-till) and no-tillage (no-till) systems. The results indicate that CA is more profitable and has a higher environmental efficiency than conventional tillage wheat production. In Langgewens, zero-till and no-till are respectively 113% and 55% more efficient than conventional tillage when comparing the environmental impact of producing one kg of wheat. According to the latest FAO research (2021), 25% of South Africa’s crop area is being farmed under conservation agriculture principles. Adoption is highest in the Western Cape at 51%, followed by KZN at 38% and North West at 37%. In the Western Cape, wheat in rotation with legumes is the primary winter cropping system found under CA, while in the rest of South Africa, CA’s major field crops range from maize, soybean and sunflowers to pastures. While adoption of CA has been relatively slow in Africa, the area under CA production on the continent increased by 547,8% from 2016 to 2019 and by 366% in South Africa.

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ENGEL: a trusted name in plastics injection moulding



The ENGEL e-speed injection moulding machine can produce thin-wall containers from PET and rPET. The digital assistant "iQ weight control" automatically optimises the use of recycled materials for a high efficiency.

By Diane Silcock

WITH a tradition of almost 80 years in the plastics industry, ENGEL, a world leader in injection moulding machines, remains a reliable partner for its global customers. South African customers are no exception.

In a statement provided to Cape Business News by Engel Austria, the company says: "At a time when economic challenges are posing major problems for many companies, ENGEL and its local partner (Green-Tech) stand out as an example of consistency in South Africa."

"South Africa is characterised by dominant industries such as mining, automotive and food. ENGEL has risen to these challenges and consolidated its position in the automotive and mobility industry, packaging industry, technical applications and logistics."

"ENGEL relies on sustainable production processes and technologies that minimise its ecological footprint. This is particularly important in South Africa, where the unstable energy supply and environmental problems create major challenges. By utilising energy-efficient machines and processes, ENGEL helps its customers to reduce their operating costs and at the same time be more environmentally friendly."

Commenting on its success factors and market strategy, ENGEL says, "Our success in South Africa is based on a strong local presence and close co-operation with a long-standing local partner. Experienced local sales and service teams work hand in hand with the headquarters in Austria and are supported by an ENGEL Regional Manager. This close co-operation ensures that ENGEL is always close to its customers

and can react quickly to market changes."

Digitalisation for the injection moulding industry

At ENGEL's Digital Days event held in Austria in June this year, the company gave a lecture on the importance of digitalisation for the injection moulding industry. It said that ENGEL has evolved from a machine builder to a provider of complete solutions with a high degree of digitalisation possibilities.

ENGEL's digital transformation encompasses process optimisation, sustainability, and addressing the skills shortage. Digital assistance systems and products enhance production efficiency and quality. ENGEL sees the future of injection moulding in the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and digital twins for process optimisation.

The company's "inject 4.0" strategy aims to enable cus-

tomers to develop and produce high-quality, cost-efficient parts. Through the use of digital assistance systems, AI-based analysis tools like the iQ process observer, and shop floor monitoring in the e-connect customer portal, the entire production chain is optimised, from design to sampling, production, and maintenance.

Thanks to its leadership in quality, technologies and solutions and innovation expertise, particularly in the areas of digitalisation, sustainability and the circular economy, ENGEL is ideally positioned to benefit from growing market opportunities.

"While competitive pressure from Asian competitors is increasing, ENGEL remains competitive due to its innovative strength and commitment to the highest quality," the company says.

Learn more at <https://www.engelglobal.com/en/home>

Can South Africa seize its construction opportunity?

By Chris Hattingh

BOTH President Cyril Ramaphosa and Public Works and Infrastructure Minister Dean Macpherson have expressed their desire to 'turn South Africa into a construction site.'

To unlock the level of GDP growth rate the country needs – between 4% - 6% per annum – one of the economic sectors to get right is that of construction.

Policy and legislative reforms and getting the wider economic climate right (and attractive for the substantive levels of capital formation necessary for new construction projects), are crucial for the pro-growth goals of the Government of National Unity.

The challenges ahead – not least of which is the proliferation of so-called 'construction mafias,' are substantial.

The National Development Plan (NDP) sets South Africa's 2030 target of total Gross Fixed Capital Formation (GFCF) as a percentage of GDP at 30%. Public sector GFCF is expected to reach the 10%.

Over the past 15 years discouraging policy signals and choices – not least of which, centred on expropriation without compensation – ensured that substantive capital formation (whether from domestic or international sources) had to clear a substantial bar in terms of confidence and certainty regarding future security (never mind future ROI (return on investment)).

Capital, much like water, flows best along the path of least resistance. When government legislation and policy choices are antagonist towards capital, sectors such as manufacturing and construction tend to suffer more than some others.

In the South African context, an additional barrier to construction activity (at least in the last few years) is the proliferation of construc-



tion mafias – some more concentrated in KwaZulu-Natal, but others also taking root in the country's most important economic province, Gauteng.

According to Macpherson the construction mafia has "disrupted the construction sector and eroded investor confidence."

He added, "The 30% local procurement rule, intended to empower local communities, has unfortunately been hijacked by criminal syndicates. We are committed to policy changes that will protect legitimate construction businesses and ensure that infrastructure projects proceed without interference."

Construction mafias will operate differently in KZN, versus in Gauteng, versus those in the Western Cape.

For national and local governments, one area of focus could be their relationships with local communities; what are their concerns, how can their buy-in and then protection of new, legitimate investments and projects be sought, and where can they be convinced to not fall for the false promises (and know they can push back against outright intimidation and violence) on the part of the mafias?

Confronting mafias – and thereby encouraging investments and activity in the construction space – can only be made easier by a more effective South African Police Service.

The opportunities for new working arrangements between national

and city police forces are many. On 27 August deputy police minister Cassel Mathale announced in the National Council of Provinces that the national police department had entered into an agreement with the Western Cape provincial government – and the Cape Town city council.

The aim of the agreement is to combine crime fighting resources. Police Minister Senzo Mchunu's spokesperson Kamo-gelo Mogotsi said, "The parties will co-operate, among others, in the undertaking of research, development, procurement and commissioning of technological infrastructure, sharing of data, physical resources and skills and in establishing a programme to address sexual offences and related gender based violence and femicide."

This agreement could be replicated across other metros and provinces.

In the week of 26 August Minister Macpherson announced that a national summit – with the aim of abolishing criminal syndicates in the construction sector – will be convened.

Such a summit would provide an incredible opportunity for the GNU, and business and society more broadly, to really tackle construction mafias head on (with broad buy-in by those involved). As has been the case with government plans in South Africa in the past, much hinges on actual implementation.



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Reducing steps with Superflex non-woven abrasives from Grinding Techniques



Grinding Techniques' Superflex rough cleaning disc in use.

NON-WOVEN abrasives are three-dimensional webs of nylon, or synthetic fibres with globules of resin and abrasives embedded into the network of fibres.

Used in various industries, they offer a range of benefits on application due to their unique structure, making

them the preferred product of choice for a number of surface preparation and or finishes.

Grinding Techniques' offerings include an extensive range of non-woven products, including discs, pads, flap wheels and stationary wheels – which are particularly popular within the stainless steel industry

due their ability to blend and polish weld seams rapidly and effectively.

Within the yacht building industry, railings are manufactured using high grades of stainless steel, that require an aesthetically appealing finish.

Often, when welded together, unsightly

rough seams are created. Removing or blending these are normally achieved by using conventional abrasives with a combination of tungsten carbide burrs, fibre or flap discs. However, achieving the desired end result will require a number of steps as blending, or removal of scratch

patterns left by these abrasives will constantly require removal or blending.

Using a metal finishing unitised wheel will drastically reduce these steps, as the weld seam can be removed without any reworking required, allowing the railing to be immediately available for polishing with buffing wheels and polishing compounds. Manufactured from layered non-woven abrasive sheets one on top of the other, then compressed, these wheels are graded by density and hardness, where the denser the wheel, the harder it becomes.

Other non-woven stationary wheels include the convolute or light deburring wheel, which are used within the tank industry.

Manufacturing stainless steel tanks for the petrochemical or food-related markets such as dairy tanks, undergo a number of processes whereby various scuff, scratch and even light gouges can occur.

As these particular tanks are extremely big in diameter, they are mounted on huge roller beds for mechanical rotation as cleaning and processing by hand would take hundreds of hours to finish off.

Depending on the required finish, light deburring or convolute wheels (in various densities and hardnesses) are mounted on machines for surface finishing applications. Providing even pressure along the length of the tank as it moves up and down, any scratches or blemishes on the surface are removed whilst an even consistent finish is provided.

Another industry where great focus is placed on surface finish, is the panel beating market where the finished painted surface is heavily impacted by the correct paint removal and preparation techniques.

Abrasives offer various options for paint removal, like sanding and velcro discs, which again requires a number of additional steps as each step in the application could leave scratch marks on the surface of the panel, which in turn requires a finer sanding for removal.

Grinding Techniques manufactures and supplies a wide range of abrasive products to the global market which includes reinforced cutting and grinding wheels, bonded abrasives, tungsten carbide burrs, coated abrasives, diamond wheels and diamond saws.



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We are proud to announce that **Pirtek Africa (Pty) Ltd** has extended its Franchise network to Cape Town. We welcome Pirtek Western Cape (Pty) Ltd into the Pirtek fold, under the ownership of Andre van Rensburg and Wynand Kellerman. Andre and Wynand have 50 years plus joint experience in the Fluid Power Industry. Their key strengths being Customer focus as well as Product & Technical ability.

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With a world known slogan, “**We'll keep you operating**”, Pirtek Western Cape will service the needs of all industries, offering premium fluid transfer solutions, innovation and a service offering of 24/7, 365 days. Pirtek Western Cape pride themselves in having expertise and qualified people to respond to customers' needs proactively, with the emphasis on fast response and tailor-made solutions.

Pirtek Western Cape is one of the few industrial franchises in the world. Being part of a global network of local businesses, means that Pirtek hose and fittings are available country wide as well as in Africa. They are now part of the Pirtek franchise network of over 450 branches in 23 countries world-wide.

Pirtek Western Cape services industries in the Agriculture, Oil and Gas, Marine, Transport, Earthmoving, Automotive, Civil Engineering, Construction & building, Material handling, and General Industry



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Alstom appoints new managing director for Southern Africa



Tristan le Masne, new MD of Alstom Southern Africa.

ALSTOM, a global leader in smart and sustainable mobility, announces the appointment of Tristan le Masne as MD of Alstom Southern Africa, based in Johannesburg. He succeeds Bernard Peille, who has transitioned to lead Alstom's Latin America cluster.

In this role, Tristan will assume full responsibility for the growth of Alstom's portfolio in Southern Africa and will provide strategic oversight for the company's four entities in South Africa: Gibela Rail joint venture (JV), Alstom Rolling Stock South

Africa JV, Bombela Maintenance JV and Alstom Ubunye.

"I am pleased to announce Tristan's role leading our Southern Africa team. The past ten years have been transformational for Alstom in South Africa. We have focused on integrating cutting-edge train manufacturing processes, advanced operations management, and maintenance technologies while expanding our local workforce. Our commitment to localisation not only drives job creation but also enhances the quality of service we provide to our cus-

tomers. As a key member of our leadership team for five years, Tristan brings invaluable expertise, further strengthened by his involvement as a non-executive director on the Gibela Rail Board. Alstom's vision in the region is all about enhanced collaboration with our customers to address their current and future mobility challenges, ensuring that our solutions meet their needs effectively and sustainably," said Andrew DeLeone, president of the Alstom Africa, Middle East, and Central Asia (AMECA) region.

Tristan is a highly regarded leader with significant experience, previously holding the position of vice president for Finance in Alstom's AMECA region. Prior to this, he served as vice president of Internal Audit and Internal Control in Paris, France. Tristan joined Alstom in 2009 and holds a Master's in Management along with several leadership qualifications.

"I am genuinely excited by the opportunity to lead our Southern Africa operations during this transformative growth phase. Our strong presence is not merely instrumental; it serves as the driving force behind the modernisation of the railway sector, inspiring meaningful change. I look forward to joining

forces with our talented team in Southern Africa as we build local capabilities together. We are not just creating greener, smarter, and safer mobility solutions; we are forging a powerful legacy that enhances the quality of life for everyone. Together, we will create a lasting impact, forging a path toward a more vibrant and interconnected future for our communities," said Tristan.

With a diverse workforce of more than 2 000 permanent employees in South Africa and over 500 suppliers, Alstom is a dependable local growth partner, actively contributing to the development of an inclusive and sustainable rail industry in Southern Africa through localisation, job creation, and skills development. The Alstom Rolling Stock operations manufacture TraxxTM electric locomotives for Transnet Freight Rail, while the Alstom Ubunye factory produces essential mechanical and electrical components for rolling stock. Bombela Maintenance has been established to maintain the Gautrain, a world-class rapid rail network in Gauteng, South Africa. Additionally, the Gibela Rail consortium is responsible for the delivery of 600 commuter trains for PRASA's new rolling stock programme.

Vesconite Bearings strengthens Western Cape presence with successful Meet and Greet event

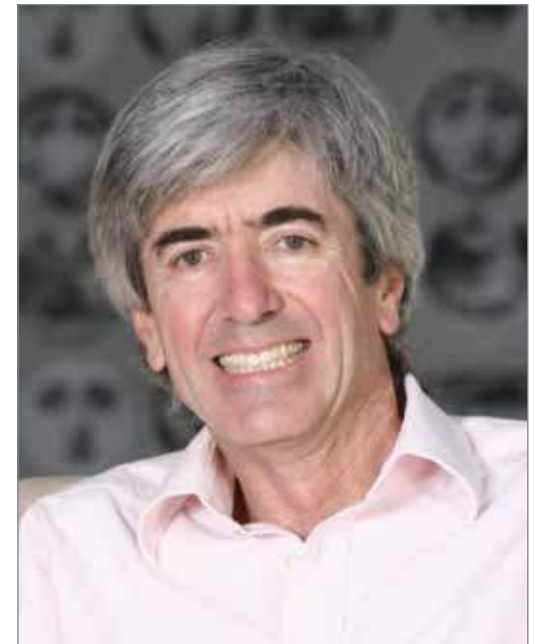
VESCONITE Bearings has firmly added to its presence in the Western Cape by hosting a "Meet and Greet" event for clients in August.

The event attracted 40 attendees and showcased the company's expanding involvement across many industries, including pumps, marine, food-processing, forklifts and mining.

"We had some potential clients who joined us, and I believe we can greatly assist them in reducing costs and maintenance"

The gathering was a unique platform for clients to connect and explore the versatile applications of Vesconite bushings and wear materials in diverse sectors.

Nadia Swart, Vesconite Bearings' dedicated representative for the Western Cape, hailed the event as a significant achievement, noting, "The event was a huge success, allowing our



Dr Jean-Patrick Leger, CEO of Vesconite Bearings, is enthusiastic about the potential for new business in the Western Cape.

customers to see firsthand the extensive range of industries that benefit from Vesconite's innovative solutions."

Dr Jean-Patrick Leger, CEO of Vesconite Bearings delivered a presentation on the company's impact and future prospects. He expressed enthusiasm about the potential for new business opportunities, stating, "We had

some potential clients who joined us, and I believe we can greatly assist them in reducing costs and maintenance."

This event marks a milestone for Vesconite Bearings as it continues to grow its footprint in the Western Cape, building strong relationships with clients and driving innovation across multiple sectors.

KWV acquires Red Heart Rum from Pernod Ricard South Africa

KWV is excited to announce the acquisition of the iconic Red Heart Rum brand from Pernod Ricard South Africa. This strategic addition enhances KWV's portfolio, which is primarily owned by Vasari Beverages, with Masimong Group Holdings (Masimong Group) and Rand Merchant Bank (RMB), through its Family Office Group Solutions Business recently joining as shareholders.

Red Heart Rum has a rich history as one of South Africa's beloved rum brands. Known for

its smooth, distinctive flavour and consistent quality, Red Heart Rum has long been a favourite among consumers and has a strong presence in the South African market. KWV, a leading name in the South African wine and spirits industry, is renowned for its celebrated brands, including KWV Brandy, Roodeberg, Laborie, and KWV Classic Collection. This acquisition marks KWV's entry into the rum category, complementing the rest of its existing spirits range, which includes Cruxland Gin, Wild Africa

Cream, and Ponchos Tequila.

The alignment of Red Heart Rum with KWV's established portfolio underscores KWV's commitment to expanding its high-quality offerings. "We are thrilled about the addition of Red Heart Rum to our portfolio," says KWV CEO John Loomes. "This acquisition strengthens our presence in the South African liquor market and is a key component of our strategic growth journey."

KWV operates three distilleries and a pack-



KWV CEO John Loomes

ing plant, where it distils, matures, blends, and bottles spirits. The company also manages a wine cellar dedicated to

producing high-quality wines and their team of viticulturists oversees vineyard practices across 54 farms in the Western

Cape, covering approximately 1 200 hectares. KWV's products are represented in over 100 markets globally.

Founded in 1918, KWV has been a cornerstone of the South African wine industry, playing a vital role in its evolution. Known for producing one of South Africa's first commercial brandies and pioneering modern wine cellars, KWV has continually advanced its production techniques and maintained its position as a leading brand producer. With a proactive approach to market

opportunities, KWV has also expanded into the ready-to-drink sector. The acquisition of Red Heart Rum highlights KWV's commitment to diversification within its total portfolio and its broader expansion strategy.

The Competition Commission has approved the transaction, which was completed on 22 August 2024.

"This acquisition is a significant step forward for KWV, and we are confident it will drive our continued success," concludes Loomes.



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Conserving water part of De Beers responsible stewardship



School boys drinking running water provided by De Beers at Renaissance Secondary School.

DE BEERS' mining operations have long pursued water conservation as a critical priority, one that also finds expression in the company's broader environmental initiatives and its community engagement.

This multifaceted approach includes applying innovative technologies to significantly reduce the volume of fresh water consumed by diamond mining and processing. Sophisticated filtration systems allow De Beers to purify and reuse water, so that it can be recycled within oper-

ations – while meticulous monitoring of water usage minimises water wastage.

Responsible water management also means considering other stakeholders in the catchment, therefore the company collaborates with local communities and governments to ensure that its water use does not negatively impact local water resources. Through partnerships and educational initiatives, De Beers promotes water conservation awareness and practices beyond its own

operations.

In an initiative last year, the company partnered with EHA Group JV Hlengani Business Enterprise to complete the Alldays Municipality Water Infrastructure Refurbishment Project in Limpopo province. This focused on the repair and upgrading of existing water infrastructure, as well as the construction of a new supporting water storage tank. Collaborating closely with the community and local suppliers, the project has improved water access and reliability

in Alldays, while empowering local stakeholders. The approach aligns with the De Beers Group's commitment to responsible corporate citizenship by addressing essential community needs – giving back as much as possible to communities.

Water conservation is also central to De Beers' environmental restoration projects – a key aspect of which is the enhancement of local water ecosystems. By rehabilitating natural water bodies and improving watershed management, the company contributes to the overall health and sustainability of the region's water resources.

De Beers' comprehensive approach to water conservation reflects its commitment to environmental stewardship and sustainable development. Through continuous innovation, responsible practices and community collaboration, De Beers aims to minimise its water footprint and support the wellbeing of ecosystems and communities where it operates.

The time is now for Private Sector suppliers to step up to economic growth

**By Deon van Zyl,
chairperson of Western
Cape Property
Development Forum
(WCPDF)**

SOUTH Africa's Reserve Bank Governor, Lesetja Kganyago, recently voiced his opinion on whether interest rate cuts really improved economic growth.

To quote: "There is only so much that can be achieved with monetary policy. Changing interest rates is certainly easier than improving education, managing urbanisation or ending load-shedding. What really matters for inequality is economic growth, job creation and productivity growth."

Kganyago has been criticised on many platforms for being too conservative and hawkish in his stance on lowering interest rates.

There is no doubt that lowering interest rates will have a positive impact on the property industry, so we continue to hold our breath for the next Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) meeting in mid-September. Where we do, however, strongly agree with the governor, is that we

need economic growth, job creation and productivity growth. Which leads one to think: where can productivity growth come from if interest rates are not lowered in September?

Our industry is known for pointing the finger at the government for causing red tape, for refusing to optimise policy, for continuing a "business as usual culture", and for the mess caused at state-owned enterprises such as Eskom.

The WCPDF has often taken the role of government agencies to task, not least the lack of performance by the NHBRC and SALGA. And we will continue to call out the Auditor General for not asking why budgets are not being spent; in other words, why is the AG not going after the underspending of capital budgets and bureaucratic-heavy procurement processes?

These topics remain fair game, and we will continue to highlight these inefficiencies for as long as they continue to exist.

But the time has come to look in the mirror and ask some probing questions about the performance of the private

sector. We know, for example, that South African banks continue to be slow in extending credit to developers; banks have very little appetite for what they consider to be risk while at the same time making incredible profits.

But put that aside for now; what about the performance of banks in doing such mundane things as knowing where title deeds, held as security against finance, are kept and delivering them within reasonable time?

Anecdotally, the WCPDF was recently informed of one of the largest banks not being able to find title deeds for more than two months, only to magically produce them when threatened with legal action.

Long gone are the days of personal service with a real bank or account manager, replaced instead with automated emails and AI call centres. Is this the performance that we expect from our internationally-lauded financial sector?

What about the millions lost in interest every year due to lack-luster service? And what about building environment professionals submitting

less-than-professional applications?

What happens when companies challenge the awarding of tenders simply because they themselves did not get the tender? The time has come to dare the government to name and shame poor applications and any such service providers who delay statutory processes, whether these be a land-use application, a development proposal, a building plan or a transfer. We will continue to hold the government to account but we need, as an industry, to seriously take a look at ourselves and ask the very important question: how much of the inflationary impact in the property sector can be ascribed to bad service from private sector role players?

It is crucial for our private sector members to hold each other accountable for the challenges which we create for ourselves, and - just as we call on government and the financial institutions - it is also imperative that we call on the professionals within our industry to not only uphold professional standards, but actively work together to grow and transform the industry.

UK announces new support for southern african rail



THE UK Government announced key initiatives to support regional development, trade, and investment in rail infrastructure at the 2024 conference convened by the Southern African Railway Association (SARA) in Johannesburg.

British High Commissioner to South Africa, Antony Phillipson, announced that new UK funding would support Crossrail International and Transport for London to share their expertise in support of inclusive economic development in Southern Africa.

Crossrail International, formed to share lessons from the £19-billion (R 450-billion) Crossrail project in the UK, will provide technical assistance to SARA, support SARA in implementing regional policies and regulatory reforms,

enabling cohesive network planning and sustainable investment under their long-term masterplan. Crossrail International will also assist in developing the business case for the Railway Centre of Excellence.

This approach will be underpinned by a research project to benchmark the SADC rail industry for capacity enhancement and information policy reform and management.

Transport for London (TfL), which facilitates 3.3-billion journeys annually, will also provide technical advice to South African local governments to enhance passenger rail services in major metros and share TfL's experience of delivering decentralised rail operations to increase public transport access and affordability.

Speaking at the event,

Phillipson said: "We are excited to be part of the effort supporting sustainable development in Southern Africa, fostering collaboration between the UK and SARA to promote regional growth through rail infrastructure development."

Executive director at SARA, Babe Botana, welcomed the progress made through the Joint Steering Committee and acknowledged the flagship projects which are intended to kick start the implementation of the LOI signed SADC Railway Regional Strategic Plan 2023 to 2027.

Botana said: "This relationship demonstrates the power of international partnerships, in strengthening the collective capabilities of our organisations to drive our regional railway agenda."

Ener-G-Africa launches larger solar panels and upgrades manufacturing line

ENER-G-AFRICA (EGA) has expanded its operations by relocating to a new, larger manufacturing hub in Paarl, Western Cape.

This state-of-the-art facility now includes a cutting-edge solar assembly line capable of producing TÜV Certified 550W and 275W solar panels, alongside the existing 20W, 50W, and 360W panels.

These products are designed to serve both the South African market and export needs across Africa.

The 550W and 275W panels will be available for purchase starting in October 2024.

EGA continues to lead in the development of innovative solar energy solutions, offering a comprehensive range of off-grid residential products in the region.

These solutions are tailored for both local and export markets, including countries such as Malawi, Mozambique, Angola, Ghana, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda, Namibia, and Botswana.

Andre Moolman, CEO of EGA, highlights the company's commitment to advancing solar technology in Africa.

"Our investment in state-of-the-art German technology allows us to produce highly advanced and reliable solar panels specifically designed for the African environment. We are equally dedicated to training, upskilling, and employing women and young people from local communities in our solar assembly and manufacturing processes. By integrating

automation in key areas, we ensure superior quality control and cost efficiency," says Moolman.

Dave Lello, chief business development officer at EGA, emphasised the strategic importance of their new panel offerings.

"With our modules being manufactured locally, it means we have been able to adapt our design, specifically for the requirements of the African market, particularly the 275W panels," says Lello.

"No other manufacturer currently makes 275W panels configured quite like this. They have been designed with flexibility in mind while maintaining the voltage output of larger panels in order to integrate with most standard industry inverters," says Lello.

Freeport Saldanha wants to be a player in the marine sector - but needs government to provide policy certainty

By Larry Claasen

THERE is an opportunity for Freeport Saldanha to set itself up as a marine manufacturing and services hub.

This is according to the 2024/25 corporate plan for the Special Economic Zone (SEZ) based at Saldanha Bay.

Freeport Saldanha has long positioned itself as a base for the emerging green hydrogen sector, but according to its latest corporate plan, it also sees opportunities in the maritime sector.

“Marine manufacturing and services sectors include ship and boat building, marine fabrication and component supply, ship and oil rig repairs and maintenance, ship recycling and ‘green’ recycling, ship upgrades and refurbishment and the value chain of supporting services for the sector (including abnormal, project and bulk logistics),” it said in the plan.

When it came to ship and boat building, Free-

port Saldanha said it could service demand for the public and private, commercial boat fabrication market.

It could also offer vessel/rig repair and “green” scrapping services. These types of services could generate R570-million in revenue.

Providing IMO Certification/Registration, ship fuel upgrades & ‘carbon’ fitment could also be one of its offerings.

South Africa already has a well established leisure yacht manufacturing sector. The plan says having Freeport Saldanha be a base for this sector and provided components could support a market that could grow to R4,2-billion.

The SEZ also sees the potential in it servicing large commercial vessels like tankers and transport vessels.

Though the plan looks at opportunities available in the maritime sector for Freeport Saldanha, it cautions that there are factors that can limit its ability

to take its opportunities.

The market assessment investigated global and local trends, market drivers, size and locations of markets, growth rates and various segments, the impact of COVID-19 and the emerging drivers of future trends, including new maritime fuels and carbon abatement.

It adds: “This analysis drew the information to a South African and then Western Cape and Saldanha Bay level, and identified maritime opportunities and their applications, together with indications of the market demand potential, where available.”

Tellingly, it noted that South Africa’s inability to offer policy certainty hung over its ability to fulfill its potential in the sector.

“This market demand assessment was undertaken in the context of the current South African socio-economic policy and political framework which necessitated an evaluation of the potential competi-

tion, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats within the traditional PESTEL and SWOT analysis frameworks, including deliverables to date.

“Policy uncertainty and a lack of critical service delivery, particularly in electricity and state capacity, are highlighted as significant risks that could undermine the efforts of Freeport to attract the international market participants and partners that may be required to approach the potential markets highlighted here.”

Aside from the national government playing its role, the SEZ’s also depends on the Western Cape government’s ability to implement its Growth for Jobs (G4J) strategy.

“In terms of the G4J Strategy, the maritime activities and initiatives are highly dependent on securing iron-clad agreements with the Port Authority on the port and Freeport’s development and planning.”

Navigating disruption: How retailers can prepare for the R100-billion ecommerce market



SOUTH African retail has experienced profound transformation over the past few years, with digital platforms and ecommerce reshaping consumer expectations. However, we are just in the earliest phases of digital transformation and SME retailers will need to be agile to keep up with emerging customer demands and new competitors.

Steven Heilbron, CEO of Capital Connect, a fintech that offers fast and flexible business funding to South African retailers, outlines five trends that are shifting the retail landscape:

Ecommerce giants enter the market

Ecommerce continues to reshape retail in South Africa, with a study from World Wide Worx showing that online retail sales grew 29% to R71-billion in 2023. The sector is expected to break the R100-billion mark by 2026. The study notes especially strong growth for grocery delivery services.

The entrance of international ecommerce giants like Amazon, Temu and Shein into the local market is expected to drive rapid growth in the years to come. SME retailers may need to focus on sharpening their in-store experience, leveraging community connections and investing in their own digital commerce offerings to remain relevant.

Everything on-demand

Last-mile delivery services have set consumer’s expectations for rapid fulfillment of fast-food and grocery orders. Now, we’re seeing logistics providers and ecommerce companies work together to ship nearly any product on-demand. Takealot offers an on-demand, 60-minute delivery ser-

vice in selected Cape Town suburbs.

Shoprite Group’s Checkers Sixty60, meanwhile, now offers same-day delivery of small appliances, homeware, consumer electronics and other goods. The service is currently being piloted in Cape Town. SME retailers will need to collaborate with local delivery services to offer faster delivery options to compete.

Elevating automation

Cloud-based platforms and connected devices like RFID tags and smart shelves enable retailers to automate areas such as inventory management and customer service.

Retailers and merchants are also embracing automated cash handling solutions to streamline processes, reduce errors, reduce risk and enhance security.

These solutions often include cash vaults, ATM recyclers, and integrated Point of Sales (POS) systems that automate tasks such as counting, sorting, and depositing cash. Automated cash handling systems can deliver a saving of up to 40% in time and money. Improved automation can lead to low costs and increased business efficiencies.

Fintech offerings empower SMEs

Fintech leaders are working closely with retailers to address pain points in areas such as business financing and payment acceptance. For example, they offer solutions that enable retailers to manage cash and cashless payments in one ecosystem to support customer choice, as well as offer easier access to lightning-fast opportunity capital to retailers via an app, so

they never miss out on retail growth opportunities.

Embracing the omnichannel reality

Customers today expect a seamless experience across online and offline channels, including consistent pricing, product availability, and customer service. Retailers with an omnichannel presence can drive sales by reaching customers through touchpoints, such as physical stores, e-commerce platforms, social media and mobile apps.

Offering clients options such as click-and-collect and home delivery, in addition to their brick-and-mortar store, is a must. To succeed in an omnichannel world, retailers will need an efficient logistics engine. This might mean partnering with a courier service provider or with a platform like MrDFood or Uber Eats or investing in their own van or website.

Thriving in disruption

Says Heilbron: “Ongoing technological disruption creates a range of threats and opportunities for retailers. They have many viable possible responses, from doubling down on their in-store experience via shoppertainment and promotions, to investing in digital platforms and delivery capabilities.”

“Whichever route they follow, they need access to fast, frictionless opportunity capital to execute their growth strategies. With Capital Connect, retailers can apply for an unsecured short-term loan up to R5-million from our app and the funds will be in their bank account within 24 hours, so that they can capitalise on retail opportunities to outsmart the competition and boost profits.”

Atlantis SEZ Zone 1 is 65% complete



DEPUTY Minister of Trade, Industry and Competition Andrew Whitfield visited the Atlantis Special Economic Zone (SEZ) reviewing operations, infrastructure, and community initiatives on 30 August 2024.

He toured Zone 1 of the zone where construction is currently underway and met with Everflo, a manufacturer of industrial refrigeration and off-grid containerised refrigeration units deployed in rural parts of Africa. Everflo exports 90% of their manufactured products from Atlantis.

The Department of Trade, Industry and Competition (DTIC)’s

SEZ Fund has so far approved R115-million in funding for the Atlantis SEZ, to help finance the civil work, as well as the development of a new facility to accommodate Quantum V3 Holdings, an Acetylene gas producer.

As part of the DTIC’s contribution, funding was secured for the refurbishment of a property owned by the ASEZCo, accommodating Mint & Honey, a manufacturer of Super Cereal, destined for the World Food Programme.

The civil infrastructure development that started in Zone 1 in May last year is now

65% complete. The construction work has so far created 225 direct jobs. Thirteen Atlantis-based SMEs have contributed to development of Zone 1.

The Atlantis SEZ was established as a green technology manufacturing hub in response to the government’s renewable energy programme. The development of the South African Renewable Energy Masterplan has further reinforced the role of a green technology focused SEZ.

One of the goals of the Atlantis SEZ is driving exports and job creation through supporting targeted indus-

tries in the renewable energy value-chain. Given long-term food security needs and Western Cape economic potential, it is also aligned with agri-business and processing.

The government’s SEZ Programme is meant to accelerate the country’s industrial development by boosting manufacturing, promoting economic growth and increasing exports by attracting foreign and domestic investments.

To date, there are 193 operational investors with an investment of almost R30-billion and 27 000 jobs created in the SEZs spread across the country.

In his speech at the National Council of Provinces (NCOP) Budget Vote in July, Minister of Trade, Industry and Competition, Parks Tau said the department would accelerate the roll-out of the SEZ Programme in order to achieve better spatial equity, promote industrialisation and create jobs.



THE ATLANTIS SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONE: A VISION FOR GREEN ECONOMIC GROWTH AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The Atlantis Special Economic Zone (ASEZ) stands at the forefront of South Africa's transition towards a sustainable, low-carbon economy. Located on the West Coast of the Western Cape, this SEZ is dedicated to promoting the green technology sector, attracting investment in renewable energy, resource efficiency, and cleaner production. The vision for the ASEZ is to create a vibrant, innovative industrial hub that not only drives economic growth but also contributes significantly to the decarbonisation of the regional and national economy.

CURRENT STATUS OF THE CIVILS PROJECT

The civil construction phase of the ASEZ is progressing steadily, marking crucial milestones that pave the way for the development of this green technology hub. The recent initiation of the guardhouse and pumproom on the zone is a significant achievement, laying the groundwork for Practical Completion, which establishes a good basis for starting our factories. This phase will include the construction of seven commercial manufacturing factories, which is expected to begin by October 2024 and is crucial for the ASEZCo to deliver on its mandate.



These developments are more than just construction achievements; they represent the physical progress of a project that aims to change the region's industrial landscape. The commitment to sustainable practices is evident throughout the construction process, with a strong emphasis on using eco-friendly materials and techniques.

JOB CREATION, SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AND LOCAL SMME INVOLVEMENT

The ASEZ project has made a significant impact on local job creation and the empowerment of small, medium, and micro-enterprises



We envision the ASEZ as a catalyst for positive change, driving sustainable development not only in the Western Cape but across South Africa," says ASEZ CEO, Matthew Cullinan.



(SMMEs). Since the commencement of the civils project, 293 jobs have been created, offering vital employment opportunities for the local community. By prioritizing local hiring, the ASEZ has not only helped reduce unemployment but has also contributed to building a skilled workforce capable of sustaining the region's economic growth. The involvement of local SMMEs has been equally transformative. Through various support programs run through our Enterprise Development unit, these enterprises have been integrated into the project's supply chain, providing services ranging from construction to logistics. This focus on local SMMEs not only boosts the local economy but also lays the foundation for a resilient and diversified business environment in the region, underscoring the ASEZ's commitment to fostering local enterprise.

Another key component of the ASEZ strategy is the skills development workstream, which aims to equip Atlantis residents, particularly the youth, with the skills needed to enhance their employment and self-employment opportunities. Emphasising technical skills in greentech aligns with ASEZ's goal of fostering local talent and creating jobs across various roles such as artisans, operators, assemblers, administrative staff, and digitally skilled workers. The program prioritizes local employment, focusing on enhancing the capabilities of semi-skilled and unskilled labour. Key objectives include preparing the community for greentech employment, implementing short-term training through public-private partnerships, increasing networks for capacity building, and achieving Skills Development Accreditation.



PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATIONS

A cornerstone of the ASEZ's success is its strategic partnerships and collaborations, which have been instrumental in driving the project forward. One notable example is the recent Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed with ABSA, one of South Africa's leading financial institutions. This partnership is aimed at providing financial support to businesses operating within the SEZ, particularly SMMEs, enabling them to access the capital needed to scale their operations and contribute to the green economy. Another fruitful collaboration is one between the National Business Initiative (NBI) and the ASEZ. This partnership empowers local SMMEs by integrating them into sustainable development and green technology projects.

Both partnerships are just two of many that the ASEZ has cultivated to ensure the long-term sustainability and success. Collaborations with the local community, vocational and learning institutions, industry leaders, and government agencies have also been pivotal in aligning the ASEZ's objectives with broader national and regional development goals. These partnerships have facilitated knowledge transfer, innovation, and the adoption of best practices in green technology and sustainable industrial development.

"Partnerships are an essential part of the ASEZ," says Selwyn Willoughby, ASEZ Executive for Integrated Eco-Systems. "Our collaboration with ABSA and other stakeholders is a testament to our commitment to creating a supportive ecosystem for businesses that are driving the green economy. These relationships not only provide financial and technical support but also help us to align our efforts with national and global sustainability goals."



EXPECTED IMPACT ON THE WESTERN CAPE ECONOMY AND LONG-TERM GOALS

The ASEZ is poised to make a substantial impact on the Western Cape economy. By attracting investment in green technology and fostering the development of a skilled workforce, the ASEZ is expected to contribute significantly to the region's GDP. The creation of direct and indirect jobs, coupled with the growth of local businesses, will have a multiplier effect, stimulating economic activity across various sectors.

Moreover, the ASEZ's focus on green technology aligns with the Western Cape's broader economic strategy, which emphasises sustainability and innovation. The ASEZ is expected to become a hub for renewable energy projects, contributing to the region's energy security and reducing its carbon footprint. This will not only attract further investment but also position the Western Cape as a leader in the green economy, both nationally and internationally.

Looking ahead, the long-term goals for the ASEZ include expanding its infrastructure to accommodate more businesses and further integrating green technology into its operations. Discussions are underway to develop Zone 2 and Zone 3, which will enhance the ASEZ's capacity to attract new industries and drive innovation. Additionally, the ASEZ aims to continue its focus on social inclusion by investing in community development programs and ensuring that the benefits of the project are widely shared.

In conclusion, the Atlantis Special Economic Zone is more than just an industrial project; it is a beacon of hope for a sustainable future. Through its focus on green technology, job creation, and strategic partnerships, the ASEZ is an environmental pioneer and is laying the groundwork for long-term economic growth. As the project continues to evolve, it will undoubtedly play a crucial role in shaping the future of the Western Cape and beyond.

"Our long-term goal is to support investors and create jobs in a self-sustaining, innovative industrial hub that sets new standards for eco-industrial development and contributes to the global fight against climate change."


atlantis
special economic zone

+27 021 495 4400
info@atlantiszez.co.za
www.atlantiszez.com

Condra's "smaller" crane is best



HIGH-capacity overhead cranes often make headline news because of impressive size and technical complexity. Their smaller and simpler cousins – workhorses of the factory and general engineering workshop – should not be overlooked.

This is according to Marc Kleiner, MD of crane and hoist manufacturer Condra. He was commenting on a slew of recent orders taken for Platreef Mine, ranging from a giant 40/5-ton double-girder headgear crane, through smaller single- and double-girder cranes, hoists and crawls, to no fewer than nineteen chain blocks, including a 2-ton explosion-proof chain hoist.

All are for installation at Platreef Mine's Number Two Shaft, part of the Platreef PGM project near Mokopane, Limpopo Province, South Africa.

Often the go-to company for buyers seeking proven ability at the more complex end of the technical design spectrum, these orders highlight Condra's capabilities in

smaller and more standard lifting equipment. Nevertheless, the stand-out machine for Platreef remains the very large headgear crane: a 40/5-ton double-girder electric overhead travelling giant spanning 17 metres, which will itself weigh almost as much as its 40-ton maximum load.

Murray & Roberts Cementation supplied the procurement recommendation for this machine, which will install and maintain the shaft's headgear-mounted winders and sheave wheels, raising and lowering component parts over a lifting height of 94 metres. The order was placed by Ivanplats itself.

Switching to a long list of other overhead cranes and hoists ordered from Condra for Platreef by consulting engineers Dowding Reynard and Associates, Kleiner emphasised their importance.

"These are all workhorses," he said. "Even the smallest 2-ton explosion-proof chain hoist will play an important role."

Condra's first deliveries to Platreef took place in late 2023, comprising a short-headroom hoist for the mine's tailings filter, and a K-Series hoist for the mill feed conveyor. Both are being used for maintenance work.

A 5-ton single-girder overhead crane for the mine's filter building followed soon afterwards, with a 10-ton double-girder overhead crane for the plant workshop. One of these machines was dust-ignition-proof rated to ATEX Zone 21/22 standard. Control of both is by radio remote with manual pendant back-up.

"Compared with the headgear crane, these are simpler, more straightforward machines, but each one meets an important requirement," Kleiner said.

Elaborating on the headgear crane itself, Kleiner explained that design challenges had included the delivery of above average lifting speeds over the very high lifting height of 94 metres. The 40-ton main hoist will travel at up to 8,4 metres per minute, and the 5-ton auxiliary hoist at up to 12,2 metres per minute. Both speeds are variable.

Kleiner explained that the modularity of Condra's hoist range had made it possible to accommodate the Platreef specifications, with careful design of the crane's end-carriages facilitating installation

at lowest possible cost to the customer.

"We replaced the normal one-piece end-carriage with a double-bogey design," he explained.

"This will allow a 35-ton tower crane to lift the headgear crane into position one girder at a time. Without the double-bogey arrangement the entire crane would have had to be lifted into position as an assembled unit, a more difficult operation."

Other features of the headgear crane include an automatic storm brake to counter wind loading, a full-length work platform, and radio control with mobile pendant back-up.

Platreef has been under development since 2020 by Ivanplats (Canada-based Ivanhoe Mines' South African subsidiary), and comprises three vertical production shafts, two ventilation shafts, a concentrator and associated supporting infrastructure.

Beginning this year, mine production will tap a 26-metre-thick flat ore body extending over several kilometres to deliver 12 megatons per annum over a lifespan of three decades, positioning Platreef among the largest platinum group metals (PGM) mines in the world. Annual yield is expected to exceed one million troy ounces of palladium, platinum, rhodium and gold, plus useful quantities of nickel and copper.

Lifting and rigging solutions for offshore projects



BMG's dedicated Tools & Equipment Lifting and Rigging division provides solutions for lifting and rigging challenges in all industries, including automotive and tyre manufacturing, paper and pulp, sugar, forestry and agriculture, as well as marine and mining.

"BMG's dedicated Lifting and Rigging team, supplies and supports a broad range of quality branded equipment, that is enhanced by a technical advisory and support service, designed for simplified, efficient and safe procedures in every application," explains Tanita Rousel-Brett, Tools & Equipment Lifting and Rigging, BMG. "An important sector of our service is in offshore projects, which demand specialist solutions for safe and effective lifting and rigging in arduous conditions."

"BMG's Kito Crosby product portfolio, which is perfectly suited for dependable use in offshore projects includes wide body and bolt type shackles for heavy and critical offshore lifts, cold Tuff Bolt type shackles for lifts conducted in extreme weather conditions and Crosby SP load monitoring solu-

tions. ROV shackles and hooks are manufactured to withstand the toughest conditions and are suitable for use with a variety of remotely operated underwater vehicles."

BMG is a sub-distributor in Southern Africa of the Kito Crosby brands and product portfolio, which includes Crosby, Gunnebo Industries, Crosby StraightPoint and Crosby IP clamps. Included in BMG's extensive range of tools, lifting and rigging equipment are electric, chain and lever hoists, geared and plain crawls, chain, wire and webbing slings and hydraulic, pneumatic hoists and winches, as well as manual Tirfor winches and ropes. The range also comprises high-pressure hydraulic tools, mechanical ratchet jacks, jib cranes and eye bolts.

BMG complies fully with the requirements of the lifting machine

and lifting tackle regulations of the Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA) Act 85 of 1993. The company's Lifting Machinery Inspector (LMI) is certified in terms of the Engineering Profession Act 2000 (Act no46 of 2000) and is a registered member of the Engineering Council of South Africa (ECSA).

BMG has approval from The Department of Labour in terms of the driven machinery regulations 18 (5) of the occupational and safety Act 1993, for examining and testing of lifting machines and lifting tackle.

BMG specialists consider the safe operation of lifting and rigging equipment, as one of the most critical aspects in materials handling and recommends that customers' equipment is independently load tested annually, or as per urgent requirements and inspected every three months. The company has a fully equipped trailer and is able to offer an onsite load testing service for customer convenience and peace of mind.

BMG – which celebrates 50 years of business this year – offers complete process solutions to all sectors of industry, which means customers can access essential quality branded engineering components, technical services and support from one well-established, reliable supplier.

The company's specialist divisions - Bearings, Seals and Gaskets, Power Transmission, Drives and Motors, Materials Handling, Agriculture, Tools & Fasteners, Hydraulics, Filtration, Lubrication and Field Services – offers an integrated approach to engineering, that guarantees lower production costs and higher efficiencies.

For further information
Tanita Rousel-Brett,
Tools & Equipment
Lifting and Rigging
Specialist, BMG - Tel:
+27 11 620 7467
Mobile: +27 72 322
0826 Email: tanitar@
bmgworld.net Website:
www.bmgworld.net



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GET IN TOUCH WITH US:

Steinmüller Africa (Pty) Ltd.
The Grid, 45 De La Rey Road
Rivonia 2191, South Africa
Phone +27 11 806 3000
info@powerafrica.bilfinger.com

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Bell to showcase versatile solutions at NAMPO Cape



Bell Equipment South Africa can be found at stand 22 at NAMPO Cape.

CELEBRATING 70 years in business, Bell Equipment South Africa is proud of its roots in the agriculture and forestry industries and will showcase three machines at NAMPO Cape that are designed to make life easier for their discerning farming customers.

Bell OEM product manager, Emile van Wyk, said: "First up we'll have the Bell Forklift, designed to make easy work of lifting heavy loads on smooth and rough terrain. It has the same frame and hydrostatic drivetrain as our current F-series Tri-wheelers and is tried and tested to deliver reliability and high performance."

According to Emile, the Bell Forklift has governed power of 45kW and is capable of lifting loads of up to 3 500 kg. "The Bell Forklift has earned a reputation in the local brickmaking industry due to its reliability and versatility. It's designed to provide exceptional manoeuvrability and stability while delivering solid performance, making them ideal for various material handling applications in agriculture too."

The other machines on display, from Bell Equipment's partnership with JCB Agriculture, include the latest JCB 3CX Backhoe Loader and the entry-level JCB 530-70 Loadall.

Bell Equipment's dealer development manager, Petrie du Toit, said: "Traditionally Backhoe Loaders have been a versatile tool for farming operations in South Africa and we believe the new JCB 3CX range will cement the popularity of the machine and the brand locally."

"The range has undergone a complete cab makeover with all models now coming standard with ROPS/FOPS certified cabs

and incorporating other new features designed to provide improved comfort, versatility, and productivity, and ultimately reduce costs and increase on-farm efficiency.

"There is a huge focus on ease of operation, for example, the 3CX range now has a single lever loader control incorporating a F-N-R directional switch so an operator can control the loader and transmission with one hand. There's also a proportional switch on the side of the lever to operate the 6-in-1 bucket, which further reduces the effort needed to operate the machine."

In terms of efficiency and operating costs, the JCB 3CX range benefits from improved hydraulics thanks to new variable displacement piston pumps that are standard across all models. The larger pump provides 150lpm, a 39% increase over the previous model.

This allows the engine speed to be reduced whilst maintaining productivity effectively reducing fuel consumption. Furthermore, the variable flow pump only provides flow on demand and backs-off the flow when not required to reduce load on the engine and improve fuel consumption.

Meanwhile, JCB Agriculture's Loadall concept has been well accepted by the agriculture sector due largely to the entry-level JCB 530-70. "Although we have larger machines for more precision work, the JCB 530-70 with its three-ton lifting capacity and seven-metre reach has brought owning a telehandler within reach of farmers needing a versatile and capable multi-tool that can handle almost any on-farm task," said Petrie.

Your crane needs the best service provider support - Konecranes and Demag

CRANES and their associated components are complex pieces of machinery, they will only perform as good as the technical support from their service provider. Compromising on maintenance leads to reduced safety, increased customer downtime and your equipment possibly, literally falling off the rails.

Ian Grobler, sales manager for Konecranes and Demag South Africa, commented that companies who invest in lifting equipment and associated accessories, are well within their rights to expect an after-sale comprehensive offering from their service provider.

"In order to ensure that fault lines in crane performance are addressed correctly, there are three key indicators that will identify a good crane service provider: a record of significant safety culture, a provider that offers long-term stability and reliability and finally, a track record of comprehensive and transparent methodology," said Grobler.

"At Konecranes we are aware that every hour of lost production makes a huge impact upon a business. It is not acceptable to us that a customer must wait for spare parts, that safety is compromised at site or that a technician's performance is wanting due to lack of experience. Our technicians undergo intensive training with the latest in lifting equipment technology, maintenance and service procedures in order to become fully qualified and competent. Nothing should be off the table for the customer as far as we are concerned" he said.

Safety culture record

The most significant safety risks are related to factory work, crane and equipment installations, and to the service business where technicians working conditions may vary from job to job. Technicians must be properly trained and Konecranes invests heavily in training programmes. Grobler said, "The provision of safe products and solutions ensures that no job so important and no service so urgent impacts upon the time it takes to perform our work safely and correctly."

Stability and reliability

Konecranes has a global presence which offers its customers peace of mind and reliability when it comes to equipment and component sourcing. Many service providers do not have the resources available to replace wearing parts timeously.

This results in increased downtime, and delayed corrective maintenance or servicing. All of which impact upon the budget and loss of productivity.

Grobler said, "It is important that customers medium- and long-term needs are met. Our sales teams and technicians are always available to discuss suitable solutions for challenges that may arise in the performance of cranes and components. It is the personal relationships that we develop that enables us to ensure that the relationship between the



customer and ourselves remains stable and satisfactory – we are in it for the long haul."

Comprehensive transparent methodology

Grobler commented that Konecranes is known for its comprehensive planning and documentation pro-

cesses which work in tandem with their customer portals such as yourKONECRANES.com.

"All of our customer information is available via our quick and easy online customer portals that deliver specific data that is required for maintenance and servicing. Insights from data can also identify anomalies,

patterns and trends that enable both parties to make informed and fact-based decisions."

"I believe Konecranes offers a superior crane service support. We have the knowledge, the technicians, the technology and the global reputation. When you partner with us, it is just that, a partnership," concluded Grobler.



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African Maritime Services helps owners of fishing trawlers drive down fuel costs with lighter trawls



AFRICAN Maritime Services (AMS) identified the need 26 years ago for a focused, professional trawl building, trawl manufacturing and trawl repair facility in South Africa

"We work closely with skippers to determine their needs and establish where their problems lie"

and Namibia, and has not looked back. The company which operates from Cape Town and Mossel Bay in South Africa and Walvis Bay and Luderitz in Namibia, has been instrumental in introducing innovative, new trawl equipment and materials into these regions.

At the time, AMS

entered into exclusive stockist and distribution agreements with internationally-respected manufacturers of trawling gear, Euronete in Portugal being one such example. "Euronete is one of the biggest trawl netting manufacturers in the world," says AMS director Robert Whitehead. "We are their exclusive distributor in South Africa and Namibia and working with them has enabled us to import advanced materials to build lighter, stronger and better wearing trawls that are easier to tow."

The higher cost of such a trawl is offset by the savings in fuel, as large trawlers can use anything from between eight to ten tons of fuel a day. That's approximately 8 000 to 10 000 litres of fuel per day. "If you can knock that

down by 10%, your payback is a few days on the higher cost of the gear that we are building," says Whitehead.

AMS also has agreements in place with other major international trawl gear companies including Bridon-Bekaert, a leading UK manufacturer of Marblue and Dyform trawl warp and Markussens, the Danish manufacturer of the "Blue Line" range of trawl hardware.

Through links with these international players, AMS has access to their technology, visiting them regularly to keep up to date with latest developments.

Whitehead explains that their business is capital intensive and that they have learned over the years the stock profile that they need to carry both in South Africa and Namibia, to meet industry demands. He says, "Ships come in and they need the gear straight away. Our import lead times are anything from between two to six months for ordering from manufacturers in Europe, therefore we have to anticipate the local industry's needs at least three to six months before they need it."

Whitehead explains that in South Africa, the trawling industry is very well regulated and considered one of the success stories of the world in terms of fish management.

The industry is dominated by a few large groups, unlike Namibia which is a slightly bigger industry with a more diverse customer base. "We work closely with skippers to determine their needs and establish where their problems lie. The type of fish being targeted will determine the net design so we offer in the region of 50 variations of trawl netting which we carry in stock," says Whitehead.

Customers outside of South Africa

Due to a few New Zealand companies fishing in the Indian ocean using Mauritius as a base, AMS has built relationships with these companies where they are supplying trawl gear to them directly which is shipped out from Cape Town to Mauritius in containers, and sometimes direct from their European manufacturers. AMS has also picked up business in Angola where the fishing industry is fairly new, undertaking trawl repairs at their Walvis Bay operation, and trucking it back to southern Angola.

"AMS prides itself in its friendly approach to its clients and focuses on developing relationships that are built to last. Our friendly team of professionals carry many years of experience on both the strategic as well as the operational front," concludes Whitehead.

South African pole and line tuna fishery becomes first to achieve MSC certification

IN recognition of its sustainable fishing practices, a component of the South African albacore tuna pole and line fishery, represented by tuna trading company ICV Africa, has become the first fishery to successfully achieve MSC certification, after taking part in the In-Transition to MSC (ITM) program since 2020.

A second client group from the same fishery, represented by the South African Sustainable Tuna Association (SAS-TUNA) is currently in assessment against the MSC Fisheries Standard.

The MSC initially engaged with the fishery in 2018, through the four-year Fish for Good project, funded by the Dutch Postcode Lottery, which aimed to guide fisheries in South Africa, Indonesia and Mexico towards more sustainable fishing practices.

In 2020, the fishery entered the ITM program, a pilot project designed to help fisheries improve their practices within a five-year period in order to become certified against the MSC's exacting Fisheries Standard. After passing the ITM entry requirements, the fishery then applied for, and received, funding from the MSC's Ocean Stewardship Fund in 2020 to support the costs associated with making improvements to their practices.

Around 2 500 people

work in the fishery, which operates largely out of the harbours at Cape Town and Hout Bay.

The total catch under assessment for ICV Africa's certificate is 2 500 metric tons – representing nearly half of the total catch volume for the fishery. Most of the albacore are sold to processors for canning and destined for supermarkets in the US and Europe.

While there is very little bycatch from the pole and line method, the fishery needed to improve data collection on what species were being encountered.

A fishery observer team was appointed at the end of 2020, which enabled the fishery to have a clear monitoring system in place to collect catch information at-sea.

A review of endangered, threatened and protected (ETP) species that may interact with the fishery was also completed, and the fishery implemented training on the safe handling of ETPs, particularly seabirds, to ensure they avoid harming such species.

Michelle Bellinger, CEO at ICV Africa, said: "Sustainability is integral to our business. Fishing sustainably is not only about ensuring that tuna stocks remain healthy; it is also about protecting the ocean ecosystem and the other species that our vessels interact with. Our

clients, and increasingly the end consumers, expect it of us. We have always believed in MSC certification and the benefits that the recognition could bring to our fishery and the work that we do."

Clyde Bodenham, president of the South African Tuna Association, said: "We recognise the many years of work undertaken, the outcomes of which has created an enabling environment for the fishery to confidently proceed with the [MSC] certification process. The Fish for Good project coupled with the MSC's Ocean Stewardship Fund grant awarded to address the actions identified in the fishery improvement project, succeeded in creating a favourable platform where a number of risks were minimised."

Michael Marriot, program director: Africa, of MSC, added: "Congratulations are due to ICV Africa for becoming only the second fishery, and first tuna fishery, in South Africa to achieve MSC certification. At the same time, we are also celebrating the success of the MSC's ITM program."

After five years running the ITM program as a pilot, the MSC is planning to launch a permanent version of the program, called the MSC Improvement Program, later in 2024.



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Parliament portfolio committee not happy with how fishing rights are allocated



By Larry Claasen

PARLIAMENT’S portfolio committee on forestry, fisheries and the environment is not happy with the way fishing rights are allocated.

In a report on its activities for the 6th Parliament, the committee said the “fishing rights allocation process needs to be audited and monitored and transgressors penalised and brought to book.”

The committee made this recommendation following public hearings and correspondence it had with small-scale fishers, who told it they were not happy with the allocation process.

The report said small-scale fishers had told the committee that they were not benefitting from the fishing rights allocation process, as it favoured the commercial fishery.

“Where rights were allocated to small-scale fishers, they were minimal and were not accompanied by sup-

“There was sufficient evidence of irregularities to warrant the setting aside and restart of the Western Cape small-scale fishing rights process”

tion Process (FRAP) for 2020.

The report, however, pointed out that all was not above board when it came to the allocation process.

“There was sufficient evidence of irregularities to warrant the setting aside and restart of the Western Cape small-scale fishing rights process,” it said.

The report said small-scale fishers had told the committee that fronting was a problem. This was where black people, were reportedly used by commercial companies to gain rights without

providing any benefits to those black people.

Some commercial fishers, however, were also not happy with FRAP. Greenfish Traders was one of about a dozen companies that took the

Greenfish Traders owner Ryan Nienaber said the review application was heard on 8 May 2024, he was currently awaiting judgement.

For Nienaber, the FRAP is clearly flawed.

“The fact that tuna fishing rights have been granted by the tens to entities that can’t fish tuna is evidence of the flawed nature of the fishing rights allocation process.”

He asked how a business like Greenfish, with all the expertise of being able to harvest, process, value-add to tuna and sell them, does not qualify for fishing rights but other entities which were now selling their rights for R1/kg of tuna were given rights first.

“Of the 130 rights allocated, we estimate that only 40-50 rights have been activated because the rest don’t have vessels or the skills to catch tuna.”

One remedy for preventing misuse of the FRAP is to limit or outright stop the transferring of fishing rights, something Nienaber would not mind seeing happen.

“Fishing rights are currently transferable. The policy governing the transfer of rights, however, requires urgent review as it is antiquated and fails to have any regard to the business of fishing.”

The DFFE did not respond to CBN’s request for comment on the matter.

“The fact that tuna fishing rights have been granted by the tens to entities that can’t fish tuna is evidence of the flawed nature of the fishing rights allocation process.”

port programmes to ensure that the fishers derive livelihoods and economic benefits from such rights.”

The Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE) had told the committee that audits have been carried out that have cleared the Fishing Rights Alloca-

DFFE to court over not getting fishing rights allocated to it.

In court papers Greenfish Traders said it had to rent out rights from Paper Quota Holders; a company that had no vessels or factories, whereas Greenfish Traders had its own boat and facilities.

Sea Harvest buys two trawlers and makes strategic acquisition

By Larry Claasen

SEA Harvest is looking to “maximize” its fishing operations in the second half of 2024.

The group said in its results for the six month to end June 2024, that 50% of the hake deep-sea trawl and Horse Mackerel quota still had to be caught and that it was aiming to do this with the assistance of two trawlers, the Harvest Cap Nord and Isabella Marine, it recently bought

The acquisition of a freezer trawler and a fresh fish trawler come as its total allowable catch has increased by 5%.

The group said its Pelagic division was on sound footing as costs were under control and was buoyed by strong demand both locally and internationally. In May, Sea Harvest completed its acquisi-

“Though its Pelagic operation is doing well, it faces challenges within its Aquaculture division, as a result of slowing economies in China and Hong Kong”

tion of Aquion and Saldanha/Westpoint Fishing from Terrasan Group.

It bought a 100% of Terrasan’s pelagic business and 63,07% of Aquion - its abalone business - for an initial cash and share-settled consideration of R965-million.

Though its Pelagic operation is doing well, it faces challenges within its Aquaculture division, as a result of slowing economies in China and Hong Kong, coupled with fierce competition. The group’s management is now focused on diversifying its Aquaculture division’s market, customer base, and product offerings to miti-

gate these pressures.

It said the successful integration of Viking Aquaculture - an abalone, oysters and mussels producer - and Aquion was seen as crucial for unlocking the full potential of these acquisitions.

In the dairy sector, increased milk production and lower input cost inflation at Ladismith have been offset by a constrained consumer market and declining international powder prices. The group’s management was also working to address the impacts of the Foot-and-Mouth Disease outbreak in the Eastern Cape. Looking ahead, the commissioning of a solar PV

plant and a new roller dryer powder plant in the second half of the year is expected to support the company’s sustainability and growth objectives.

In Australia, the delayed start of the 2024 Shark Bay and Exmouth prawn fishing seasons meant that most of the sales from the new season’s catch will occur later in the year. This would be bolstered by an increased quota for scallops and crabs in Shark Bay. The company is also focusing on diversifying its product and market mix to counteract the effects of weak global prawn prices.

Following the acquisition of Aquion and Saldanha/Westpoint Fishing, the group said it remained committed to cost control, working capital management, cash generation, and debt reduction.



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Thor Medical signs MOU with Steenkampskraal for feedstock supply and technology cooperation

THOR Medical and Steenkampskraal Holdings Limited (SHL) in South Africa have signed a Memorandum of Understanding for feedstock supply and technology cooperation.

The ambition is to enter into a long-term partnership agreement for supply of feedstock as part of Thor Medical's strategy of developing multiple feedstock suppliers.

The Steenkampskraal Monazite Mine (SMM) in the Western Cape is considered to have among the highest concentration of rare earth elements and thorium globally. The mine's abundant resources of natural thorium are sufficient to meet the global demand for medical isotopes from its decay for the foreseeable future.

The plan is to leverage Thor Medical's expertise to efficiently produce valuable alpha-emitters for use in next generation cancer treatment from feedstock from Steenkampskraal's mineral resources.

"The cooperation



Left to Right: Enock Mathebula, Executive Chairperson SHL; Graham Soden, Executive Director SHL; Astrid Liland, VP Thor Medical; and Sindre Hassfjell, CTO Thor Medical.

with Steenkampskraal can support Thor Medical's ambitions for the planned industrial-scale production to meet the growing demand for medical isotopes globally. We look forward to devel-

oping partnership agreements with Steenkampskraal as we build our network of suppliers," says Alf Bjørseth, CEO of Thor Medical. The Steenkampskraal Monazite Mine is a fully licensed to

operate mining project and is compliant with all necessary regulatory requirements from, inter-alia the Department of Mineral Resources and Energy, the National Nuclear Regulator, and the Department of Water and Sanitation.

The mine has already commenced refurbishment and the start-up of the construction is targeted by the end of 2024. Production of thorium is targeted by the end of 2025.

"The board of Steenkampskraal is very excited about and look forward to entering into the cooperation agreement with Thor Medical as it highlights even more, the intrinsic value of our monazite ore, not just financially and in the critical minerals space, but also in the critical medical treatment space," says Enock Mathebula, Executive Chairperson of Steenkampskraal.

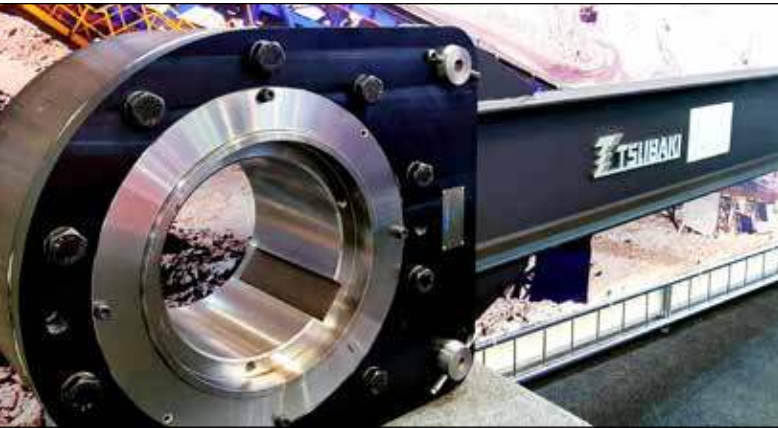
About Thor Medical

Thor Medical is an emerging supplier of radionuclides, primarily alpha particle emitters, from naturally occurring thorium. Its proprietary production process requires no irradiation or use of nuclear reactors, and provides reliable, environmentally friendly, cost-efficient supply of alpha-emitters for the radiopharmaceutical industry. Thor Medical is headquartered in Oslo, Norway and listed on the Oslo Stock Exchange under the ticker symbol 'TRMED'.

About Steenkampskraal

Steenkampskraal Monazite Mine (SMM) aims to become a leading producer of rare earth elements (REEs) and thorium, specifically focusing on monazite extraction. Located in South Africa, the mine boasts significant deposits of monazite, mineral rich in REEs essential for various industries such as electronics, renewable energy, and defense. Steenkampskraal's business strategy emphasises sustainable mining practices, technological innovation, and strategic partnerships to ensure long-term success.

BMG Tsubaki backstop cam clutches enhance safety to all sectors



BMG's Tsubaki backstop cam clutches are designed to prevent reverse rotation of drive shafts, offering a simple and cost-effective means to protect capital equipment and enhance safety in many sectors.

BMG, which is committed to ensuring optimum safety standards in all sectors, encourages and assists customers to adhere to stringent safety legislation during bulk handling.

This initiative ensures that appropriate measures are taken to prevent roll back incidents, which might cause injury to workers during conveying operations.

BMG technical experts advise on the selection of the correct cam clutch for each application and assists with proper installation methods to ensure optimum performance and improved safety standards.

"Tsubaki backstops and cam clutches - which have been developed and manufactured in Japan for high efficiency and optimum safety in high or low speed applications - meet the requirements of current legislation," explains Carlo Beukes, business unit manager, BMG's Power Transmission division.

"Local safety regulations require that the installation of incline conveyor belts must include the fitting and use of one or more devices to prevent run-back or run-on, to prevent injury by materials falling from a conveyor belt.

"Tsubaki backstop cam clutches are designed to prevent reverse rotation of drive shafts, offering a simple and cost-effective means to protect capital equipment and enhance safety. Apart from the mining sector, BMG's cam clutches are used for belt conveyors for materials handling, metals, timber, pulp and wood chip, as well as for bucket elevators for cement and grain. These units are also in-

stalled to enhance performance of large drift conveyors and screw pumps."

Tsubaki cam clutches are available from BMG in different capacities and styles designed to provide the best functional characteristics for three basic modes of operation - overrunning, indexing and backstopping.

The outer and inner races of these cam clutches are manufactured from high quality alloy steel, with high surface hardness and core toughness, to withstand operation in arduous conditions.

These races are precision ground, providing excellent concentricity and a special surface finish to obtain accurate cam rotation. Cams are manufactured from special selected high alloy steel, with a hardness option up to 2 500 Hv.

A key range in BMG's portfolio of Tsubaki cam clutches, is the BS-F series, which is suitable for high-speed inclined and long overland belt conveyors and bucket elevators used in the mining and bulk handling sectors.

The high-torque, high-speed Tsubaki

BS-F series, with a narrow width I-beam torque arm, is a drop-in replacement to conventional "roller ramp" devices. This allows for quick and easy on-site installation and enables effortless replacement of an old backstop with the new BS-F design, without the need for modification to the existing layout. Although this series has a narrower width than other models, the downsized unit exceeds the requirements of high-speed inclined belt conveyors, with the benefits of space-saving and reduced installation time.

Important features of this series include a non-rollover cam and roller design, which offers higher backstop torque capacities and lower running temperatures than conventional anti rollback devices.

Added to this, a flexible labyrinth seal mechanism prevents the ingress of dust and water in abrasive conditions and a double-lip oil seal and multi-temperature grease enable safe operation at a wide ambient temperature range, from -55°C to +150°C.

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Xylem’s Godwin Rig Pump launches in Africa to tackle dewatering challenges

DEWATERING is one of the most hazardous tasks when mining, quarrying, or tunnelling. Personnel such as drill operators are exposed to risk as they enter drilling and blasting areas to prime or move dewatering pumps, avoid trailing electrical cables in wet and obscured conditions, and navigate other hazards.

Dewatering pumps also need frequent attention. They must move often to avoid damage from rock falls or blast zones, and they incur heavy wear from ingesting large objects and shotcrete residue. All these factors add to frequent maintenance, component replacement, and manual interventions—especially for priming and snoring.

Xylem has developed the Godwin Rig Pump to tackle these specific dewatering challenges. This self-priming

pump system solves the toughest dewatering challenges in mining by seamlessly integrating with drilling rigs and using state-of-the-art technology.

The pump sits at the back of a drilling rig and can be controlled directly from the rig’s cabin. The suction section and front pipe sit near the drilling face, removing the need for a submersible pump. The electric cables remain with the rig and away from the active drilling area or trailing behind the rig.

The pump can operate in intermittent flows, avoiding the high wear caused by snoring. It has the unique ability to run dry indefinitely, thanks to its liquid oil bath mechanical seal, solid silicon carbide rotating and stationary elements, and high-abrasion resistant faces.

Equipped with a hard-iron Flygt NC non-

clog impeller, it handles troublesome shotcrete fibres, and the pipeline uses a pan strainer to manage large objects and other clogging hazards. It incorporates a non-return valve to protect the pump’s prime and avoid problems such as water hammer pressure surges.

Having proven its strength in several major mining markets, it is now available to African operators. Mines, quarries, and anyone with extreme dewatering requirements can integrate these new, easy-to-move compact pump systems that improve performance and reduce site risks.

Chetan Mistry, strategy and marketing manager at Xylem Africa, says the Godwin Rig Pump is superior in every way to previous options, improving safety, performance, efficiency, and lifetime value.

Cloud over Tormin Mineral Sands’ future as oil spill drives its holding company into business rescue

By Larry Claasen

TORMIN Mineral Sands’ future is uncertain. The west coast based mining operation, which is owned by Mineral Sands Resources (MSR), has entered “business rescue” because of an oil spill near its operations.

The problems at the mining operation has had a global knock on effect, as it led to its Australian holding company request to have its shares suspended.

Mining group, Mineral Commodities (MRC) which holds 50% of MSR, asked the Australian Securities Exchange to suspend the trading of its shares on 31 July 2024.

The remaining 50% of MSR is held by its empowerment partner, Blue Bantry Investments 255.

MRC said it had advised MSR to no longer provide funding to Tormin Mineral Sands following the interruption to its operations and revenue stream caused by the storms, which led to the MV Ultra Galaxy, ship carrying bulk ammonia, to run aground near its operations in early July.

MV Ultra Galaxy, which carried about 500 tons of fuel and oil, was later broken up by further bad weather, resulting in an oil spill halting mining operations.

The cloud over Tormin Mineral Sands future comes just months after MRC

said it was in negotiation with another Australian mining company GMA Group to take ownership of the west coast mining operation.

On 10 May 2024, MRC announced it was in negotiation with GMA. The proposed deal would include a “standstill” in respect of the \$10-million loan provided by GMA under a loan agreement executed in May 2023.

The key terms of the agreement would create a three month exclusivity period during which MRC will negotiate exclusively with GMA regarding a potential transaction for the sale of the Tormin mineral Sands Operation.

Under the then pro-

posed agreement with GMS, Tormin would continue to operate as normal and generate revenue during this period. Discussions were also underway with GMA regarding a shortfall in a stockpile of garnet concentrate that GMA purchased in 2021.

In its statement on continuation of its share suspension on 19 August, MRC did not say whether it was still in negotiations with GMA, only saying it was in “discussions with various parties regarding the proposed funding of the company are ongoing and incomplete.”

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African Rainbow Capital gives Kropz Elandsfontein R140-million loan

KROPZ Plc, an emerging African phosphate producer and developer got a bridge loan facility of R140-million from its major shareholder, the African Rainbow Capital (ARC) Fund, to meet the immediate cash requirements at Kropz Elandsfontein. Elandsfontein, which has South Africa's second-largest phosphate deposit, is based on

the west coast in the Western Cape and was bought by Kropz in 2010. Kropz has since developed an open-pit mining operation and on-site processing facility with a production capacity of 1-million tons per year on the site.

In a statement, Kropz said a second draw down on the loan for an amount of R60-million had been made, following it drawing R80-million from the facility. The loan is now fully drawn.

Interest on the loan will be the South African prime overdraft interest rate plus 6%, nominal per annum and compounded monthly.

In the event that any amounts outstanding under the loan, together with interest on it, is not repaid within six months from the first utilisation date, the interest rate will be increased by an additional 2%.

"Interest on the loan will be the South African prime overdraft interest rate plus 6%, nominal per annum and compounded monthly"

The loan is repayable on the earlier of a fund raising by Kropz or on demand from ARC, on no less than two business days' notice. There is no fixed term.

The loan from the ARC Fund replaces the BNP loan facility, which had an outstanding amount of \$3,75-million. The group announced on 3 April 2024 that BNP had extended its waiver period to 30 June 2024. BNP extended the waiver to 30 September 2024.

Elandsfontein achieved production of 88 319 tons of phosphate concentrate and sales of 71 948 tons of phosphate concentrate during the second quarter of 2024. This brings production to 162 308 and sales to 152 685 tons for the first half of 2024.

Aside from Elandsfontein, Kropz also has phosphate mining projects in the Republic of Congo. "The vision of the group is to become a leading independent phosphate rock producer and to develop into an integrated, mine-to-market plant nutrient company focusing on sub-Saharan Africa," Kropz said in the statement.



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New kid on the block Astron Energy celebrates 300th site



ASTRON Energy has marked the rebrand of its 300th service station forecourt with the official opening of the Astron Energy Mageza Sweetwaters retail site in Sweetwater Mpumzuza in Pietermaritzburg.

The company celebrated the milestone with a day of festivities in the local community, including prize giveaways.

Astron Energy Mageza Sweetwaters is a 100% black-owned and managed enterprise, situated in Kwa Mpumzuza, a peri-urban settlement in the Msunduzi Municipality.

Co-retailer Zibusile Mbambo said: "To operate a site featuring the vibrant new Astron Energy brand is a perfect fit for us as a forward-thinking business and we are delighted to be the 300th site to be rebranded to Astron Energy."

Astron Energy has set its sights on rebranding 400 sites before the end of 2024. This will almost mark the halfway point in the mammoth task of rebranding the Caltex network to Astron Energy.

Astron Energy manages a retail network

of over 800 sites across South Africa, making it the second largest network in the country.

Astron Energy GM: retail sales and marketing, Farouk Farista said: "We have now hit the 300-site mark as Astron Energy and this takes us ahead of several other fuel brands which have been around for much longer."

"We are the new kid on the block in terms of our brand but our heritage in South Africa stretches back over a century," he added. "We are the new brand that people can trust for service excellence, quality and innovation in the retail space."

According to Farista, the Astron Energy brand has been well received and has sparked interest from the community and retailers alike with its bold new look and offering.

"We now see significant discussion and quick brand recognition and recall as our network and visibility continues to expand. Customers are enthusiastic about the bolder appearance in what is typically a 'conservative' market."

He added that a num-

ber of competitor retailers have approached Astron Energy since the launch of the first rebranded site in August 2022.

"Our new business pipeline is growing rapidly, so much so that we need to pace ourselves in order to balance the rebranding needs of our existing network with new site opportunities."

Astron Energy launched its distinctive new brand alongside its Quartech 4-in-1 fuel and the company's Astron Energy rewards programme which gives customers the chance to win instant rewards instead of having to accumulate rewards points over a lengthy period of time.

Co-retailer Nompumelelo Mbambo concluded: "As Astron Energy Mageza Sweetwaters we look forward to welcoming visitors to our site to experience our exceptional service and high quality products under the distinctive Astron Energy brand."

"We are an integral part of this local community which supports us and we look forward to working hand-in-hand with our community to see where we can add value."

AMS Lifting & Towing Systems in Namibia gears up for anticipated offshore oil and gas boom in the region

By Diane Silcock

AMS Lifting & Towing Systems (AMS), a Namibian company based in Walvis Bay and Luderitz, and provider of services and supplies to the local and international oil and gas, general marine and mining industries, is proactively gearing up its operation to take advantage of the anticipated offshore oil and gas development in the region.

The company has moved to larger premises with extensive overhead gantries, and has invested heavily in equipment. This includes: large hydraulic 600t and 1 000t presses for sling manufacture; wire rope spooling equipment that enables it to take 60 tonne wire rope coils on and off of vessels and rigs; and Magnetic Resonance Testing (MRT) machines which use strong magnetic fields to detect internal defects in wire rope. Added to this has been the upskilling of staff to internationally-certified technicians and inspectors.

AMS director Robert Whitehead says, "As members of the internationally-recognised Lifting Equipment & Towing Systems Association (LEEAA), we have invested significant amounts into training and certifying staff with LEEA qualifications, which enables us to undertake inde-



pendent third-party inspections of lifting equipment and offshore containers. We can now provide these services to offshore international operators that were not previously available in South Africa or Namibia."

"We do a lot of inspections," says Whitehead. "Companies call us in to conduct routine inspection of their lifting slings, for instance. They might have 200 slings to be inspected which will require us to spend a couple of days checking them, as every sling has to be properly marked and matched to a certificate."

"Everything that goes onto an oil rig offshore, goes on to an offshore container, which is half the size of a 20ft container (a mini container) and those also require certification. Not only the container, but the bridle that's required to lift it onto the rig and onto the rig tender. That also needs certi-

fication and needs to be done regularly."

Inspecting steel wire ropes has become a lot more sophisticated with the INTRON MRT machines. AMS runs the new steel wire through the machine which builds an internal structural profile of the complete length of the wire – which could be 2 000 metres. This is stored on computer and at various stages in the life of the wire, it can be run through the machine again, to compare it to its original status visually. The graphic representation shows if there are broken wires, corrosion, compression or any deviation. Moreover, with the machine being portable, AMS can go on board the vessels to do the inspections.

"Having undergone training by INTRON, we are skilled with calibration and occasionally are requested by customers to calibrate their machines that cater for wire up to 150mm in diameter,"

says Whitehead.

AMS manufactures to the northern European DNV standard – the highest international standard for the offshore industry which sets standards for ships and offshore structures. With a DNV 9001 quality control system in place, the company's DNV 2.71 and 2.73 certifications allow it to manufacture equipment that complies with the DNV standard. Currently, AMS is the only DNV-certified rigging outfit in Namibia.

All offshore lifting equipment is required to be certified, with traceability back to the original equipment manufacturer, and is required to be inspected on a regular basis within 6 months or 12 months, depending on the product.

AMS Lifting & Towing Systems' proactive approach is commendable in preparing the company and staff for the much-anticipated Namibian oil and gas boom.



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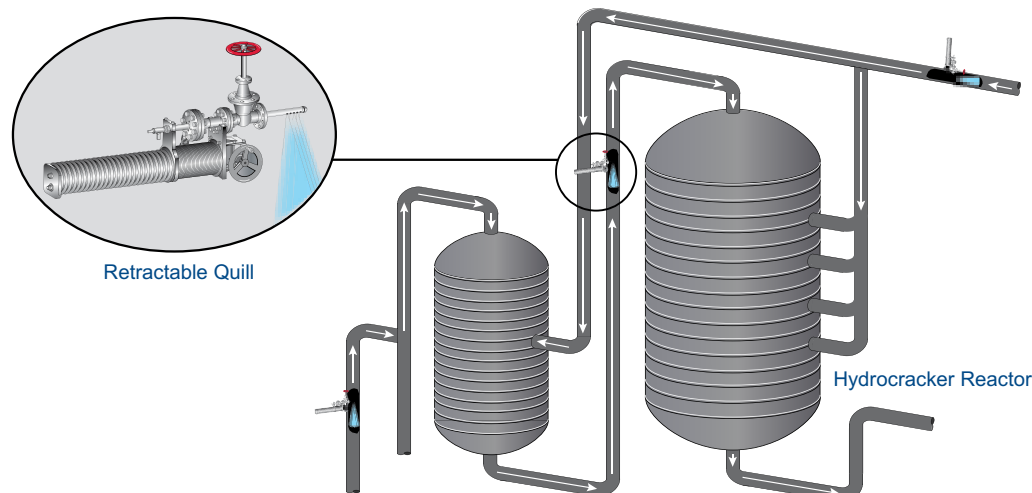
Design and manufacture of chain and SWR slings; socketing and mechanical splicing of SWR; manufacture and supply of towing bridles and stretchers; stockists of Crosby lifting components, webbing slings and fibre & steel wire rope; in situ MRT inspection of SWR; inspection and certification of lifting equipment and off-shore containers; large diameter steel wire rope handling; DNV 2.7-1 & DNV2.7-3 Type Approved & DNV ISO9001:2015; LEEA certified.

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Optimising spray technology from Monitor Engineering for petrochemical processing



SPRAY nozzles in petrochemical applications are crucial components in various processes within the industry, including cooling, quenching, and catalyst activation. These nozzles are designed to deliver precise and efficient liquid or gas sprays to optimise performance and ensure safety in petrochemical plants.

"Customers are assured of Monitor Engineering's expert assistance to model their spray operations"

Given the harsh environments in petrochemical facilities, spray nozzles must be made from materials resistant to corrosion and high temperatures. Stainless steel, nickel alloys, and various carbides are commonly used to ensure durability and longevity.

Monitor Engineering, sole agents in Southern Africa for Spraying Systems Co., supply various types of spray nozzles to the petrochemical industry. They are:

- **Full cone nozzles:** These produce a wide, circular spray pattern, ideal for applications that require uniform coverage. In petrochemical operations, they are often used for cooling hot

surfaces or providing uniform quenching in reactors.

- **Flat fan nozzles:** Generating a fan-shaped spray, these nozzles are employed where a broad, flat spray is needed. They are useful for applications such as coating, where a uniform layer of liquid needs to be applied.
- **Hollow cone nozzles:** These nozzles create a cone-shaped spray with a hollow centre and are particularly effective in processes like catalyst activation and air pollution control, where controlled droplet distribution is critical.
- **Atomising nozzles:** These break the liquid into very fine droplets, enhancing mixing and combustion efficiency. Atomising nozzles are commonly used in processes like inhibitor injection and steam generation, where fine atomisation improves the reaction rates and efficiency.
- **Injectors and quills:** These built-to-order injectors optimise process performance and are instrumental in achieving the

desired cooling, mixing, quenching, washing and chemical reaction.

Key factors for spray nozzle selection are:

- **Flow rate and pressure:** The nozzle must be selected based on the desired flow rate and pressure requirements of the application. This ensures that the spray pattern and coverage meet process specifications.
- **Droplet size:** The size of the droplets produced by the nozzle affects the efficiency of the process. Smaller droplets improve mixing and reaction rates, while larger droplets might be used for cooling and washing.
- **Chemical compatibility:** The materials of construction must be compatible with the chemicals being handled to prevent degradation and ensure safe operation.

Applications in the petrochemical industry include:

- **Cooling and quenching:** Nozzles are used to cool hot gases and liquids rapidly. For instance, after catalytic reactions,

products are often cooled using spray nozzles to bring them to a manageable temperature.

- **Catalyst activation:** In processes such as hydrocracking, spray nozzles are employed to activate catalysts by evenly distributing reactants over catalyst surfaces.
- **Air pollution control:** Spray nozzles help in scrubbing systems to remove pollutants from exhaust gases, ensuring environmental compliance and reducing emissions.
- **Water wash:** Crude overhead water wash in distillation columns, and fin fan water wash.

Customers are assured of Monitor Engineering's expert assistance to model their spray operations and provide new insight into areas that could be improved. They also help them to select better nozzles, optimise injector placement within a vessel, or design and fabricate an injector to deliver the performance required, complete with testing and documentation.

For more information contact grant@monitorspray.co.za

Sasol wins Petrol Stations: Forecourt Industry Award for third consecutive year in the 2024 Ask Afrika Orange Index



SOUTH African fuel brand Sasol has been named the customer experience winner in the Petrol Stations: Forecourt Industry for the third consecutive year, as measured in the 2024/2025 Ask Afrika Orange Index benchmark.

The Ask Afrika Orange Index was founded in 2001 and is the longest standing customer experience benchmark in South Africa, celebrating and awarding customer experience excellence.

This year, Ask Afrika conducted more than 48 000 public interviews to understand consumers' recent service experience with brands. The database tracks 2 000 brands and 26 industries to systematically benchmark brands' customer experience performance against industry standards.

Zanele Hadebe, vice-president strategic marketing for Sasol Energy Marketing & Sales said: "We are proud to be recognised for the outstanding customer service that our forecourt staff continue to deliver with every customer interaction. Our customer-centric approach is driven through our comprehensive customer service excel-

lence programme, that is embedded in our culture and serves as proof of our commitment to continue delivering excellent

network.

Sasol Rewards launched in 2022 and has become one of the country's favourite rewards programmes

"Our forecourt experience resonates with customers; from the best-in-class fuel offered to our Sasol Delight convenience stores that are a destination for food, coffee, snacks and so much more"

customer service 24/7. "Our forecourt experience resonates with customers; from the best-in-class fuel offered to our Sasol Delight convenience stores that are a destination for food, coffee, snacks and so much more. Our award-winning Sasol Rewards programme and the refreshed look and feel of our forecourt design, all ensure that Sasol stays at the cutting edge of customer experience."

Launched earlier this year, the first of our new forecourt design referred to as Mark-V is located in Secunda. This forecourt design reflects Sasol's status as a proudly South African fuel brand, with an eco-conscious build approach to its

with just over 1,8-million members. Voted "Best Newcomer Loyalty Programme" at the South African Loyalty Awards in 2023, Sasol Rewards pays you back for your spending on fuel and in store.

"This award is a testament to Sasol's commitment to delivering service excellence to the public throughout its network," says Hadebe.

"We thank the public that continues to rate Sasol as the best customer experience forecourt and congratulate our retail employees, forecourt staff and franchise owners for helping us to secure this win. The award reflects our forward-thinking mindset and dedication to continuous improvement."



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African Petroleum Producers’ Organization call on its members to fund Africa Energy Bank



OMAR Farouk Ibrahim, secretary general of the African Petroleum Producers’ Organization (APPO) is urging its 18 members, which includes South Africa, to contribute their \$83-million subscription fees to facilitate the establishment of the \$5-billion Africa Energy Bank (AEB). APPO in collaboration with the African Export-Import Bank, established the AEB to provide private sector financing for oil, gas, and energy development projects across Africa.

The AEB aims to partner with over 700 African banks to create a profitable pathway for the continent’s energy sector.

The new bank is set to be launched in Nigeria in September 2024. Ibrahim will also be a key speaker at the MSGBC Oil, Gas & Power 2024 conference and exhibition in Dakar, which is scheduled for December 3-4.

At the MSGBC Oil, Gas & Power 2024 event, Ibrahim will discuss how the AEB can ensure high returns on investment while boosting economic growth through increased energy access in West Africa.

Traditionally, African energy projects rely on development finance institutions and multilateral development banks, which have recently restricted fossil fuel financing due to climate change concerns.

The AEB’s primary objective is to fill the imminent void that the withdrawal of funding

for oil and gas projects in Africa by the traditional financiers could cause to the industry. With over 125-billion barrels of proven crude oil reserves, over 600-trillion cubic feet of proven gas reserves.

While the AEB’s focus shall be funding oil and gas projects, it shall not close its doors to renewable energy projects.

By channeling pension funds into African projects rather than relying on international banks, the AEB can leverage the region’s natural resources, including oil, gas, and green hydrogen projects.

Ibrahim will share his expertise on the latest energy advancements in the region and strategies to advance ongoing projects. In July 2024, Woodside’s Sangomar project achieved its first oil production in Senegal, with plans to increase output to 100,000 barrels per day. On the gas front, Senegal and Mauritania’s Grande Tortue Ahmeyim project, developed by bp and Kosmos Energy, is expected to produce its first gas by the end of 2024. Looking ahead to 2035, Mauritania aims to produce 12.5-million tons of green hydrogen,

supported by large-scale projects such as CWP’s 35 MW Aman and Chariot and TotalEnergies’ 10 MW Project Nour.

“APPO has always been at the forefront of championing energy initiatives in Africa by ensuring access to necessary financing and providing its business expertise. Ibrahim’s presence reaffirms the organisation’s commitment to making the MSGBC region the new frontier for oil and gas developments,” said Sandra Jeque, event and project director at Energy Capital & Power.

Maintaining an 800 km pipeline through two countries is no mean feat

ENSURING uninterrupted gas supply to customers over an 865 km pipeline that runs through two countries is no mean feat. This

is the responsibility of technical manager Luis Gudo, who oversees an expansive preventative maintenance programme for the Republic of Mozambique Pipeline Investments Company (ROMPCO).

Such has been the success of ROMPCO’s preventative maintenance strategy that it has significantly reduced its overall breakdown percentage, reveals Gudo.

“Our team follows what is happening in the market and keeps up to date with the latest technology,” he says.

ROMPCO conducts a variety of preventative maintenance activities to ensure the safety and efficiency of its Mozambique-Secunda Pipeline (MSP). This includes regular inspections, monitoring, and maintenance of the pipeline and associated infrastructure.

The Komatipoort Compressor Station plays a crucial role to maintain the necessary pressure for the gas transported through the pipeline, ensuring consistent supply and operational efficiency. Regular visual, technical and statutory inspections are carried out along the pipeline to detect and address any potential issues before they escalate.

ROMPCO employs advanced integrity management programmes that use technology to monitor the pipeline’s condition continuously, allowing for early detection of any anomalies.

Cathodic protection prevents corrosion in the pipeline, which is critical to ensure its longevity and safety.

In terms of emergency response preparedness, ROMPCO has a robust emergency response plan in place to handle any incidents quickly and effectively, minimising potential impacts on the environment and local communities.

“These measures are part of our commitment to safe, reliable, and environmentally responsible gas transportation, contributing to the economic growth and energy security of



ROMPCO Technical Manager Luis Gudo.

both Mozambique and South Africa,” comments Gudo.

Future security of supply is also of major concern to ROMPCO. The Pande and Temane gas fields operated by Sasol in Mozambique have an anticipated 25-year lifespan. Production commenced in 2004, making Pande the first gas production field in Mozambique, followed by Temane in 2009.

However, gas supply from these fields is expected to decline from 2026, with Sasol anticipated to cease supplying gas to third parties by the end of June 2026 due to depleting gas reserves. Other gas discoveries in Mozambique are still in early stages of development and not viable alternatives at present.

The Matola LNG storage facility in Mozambique, a major infrastructure project still in the financial viability stage, has the potential to guarantee uninterrupted natural gas supply to over 30 industries in the Matola area and facilitate exports to other countries in the Southern African Development Community region.

It will utilise the existing ROMPCO gas pipeline network to

meet growing demand for natural gas in Southern Africa.

The project will comprise a permanent floating storage regasification unit (FSRU), onshore infrastructure, and a new gas pipeline. An onshore LNG Truck Loading Facility (TLF) will provide gas supply to outlying areas, even those not near existing natural gas infrastructure.

In addition, adopting advanced recovery technologies such as Enhanced Oil Recovery (EOR) in Pande and Temane could extend their productive life. Integrating renewable energy sources such as solar or wind power can also supplement gas supplies and reduce overall demand, balancing the energy mix and ensuring a steady energy supply even as gas reserves diminish.

Gudo adds that a major focus at present is upgrading existing infrastructure and expanding pipeline capacity to improve the efficiency and reliability of gas transportation.

“This ensures that gas from alternative sources can be integrated seamlessly into the existing supply network,” he explains.



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AEC visits China to tap into private investment for African energy and infrastructure

CHINESE foreign direct investment in Africa has increased significantly in recent years as Beijing strengthens its global trade and credit lines.

Programs such as the Belt and Road Initiative – a China-led global infrastructure initiative – have seen up to \$21.7-billion invested in Africa in 2023 alone while together, state-owned China National Offshore Oil Corporation (CNOOC), China National Petroleum Corporation and China Petroleum & Chemical Corporation represent the fourth-largest energy investors on the continent.

As new opportunities in upstream hydrocarbon development, regional infrastructure and downstream processing unfold, China's project portfolio in Africa is expected to substantially grow.

Given emerging opportunities for Chinese investors in Africa, the African Energy Chamber (AEC) – serving as the voice of the African energy sector – will conduct a working visit to China under efforts to promote new investment and global partnerships.

A delegation led by AEC executive chairman NJ Ayuk will hold bilateral meetings with Chinese government officials and the private sector, with discussions centering around investment opportunities, bankable projects and China's emerging role in Africa's upstream, midstream and downstream sectors.

China's Growing Energy Presence in Africa

Already boasting a strong presence in Africa's mineral and renewable energy sectors, Chinese state-owned and private companies are turning their attention to developing African oil and gas resources. Wing Wah, a Chinese oil and gas company, is pioneering a comprehensive project in the Republic of Congo, designed to optimise resource monetisation and promote the use of natural gas.

The Bango Kayo project features an innovative development model for the Bango Kayo oilfield, extending production beyond the initial block lifecycles and harnessing previously flared gas.

Through three phases, Wing Wah will incrementally enhance gas processing and valorization capabilities to produce LNG, butane, and propane. The primary focus is on meeting

domestic demand, with surplus gas exported globally, positioning the project as a key contributor to the country's energy landscape.

In Angola, China has invested just shy of \$14-billion in the past decade, the majority of which in energy. At

present, Chinese companies are advancing the development of refining projects while seeking new opportunities in upstream oil and gas. Earlier this year, a group of executives from CNOOC travelled to Angola to discuss investment opportuni-

ties in oil exploration.

CNOOC is assessing an investment in Angola's Block 24, a deepwater concession with promising potential. Construction firm China National Chemical Engineering also signed an MoU with Angola's national oil company Sonangol in

2023 for the development of the 200 000 barrel per day Lobito Refinery – poised to be the country's biggest. In East Africa, CNOOC is developing the East African Crude Oil Pipeline in partnership with energy major TotalEnergies and the respective national oil

companies of Uganda and Tanzania. Designed to transport crude from the Kingfisher and Tilenga oil fields in Uganda to Tanzania's Port of Tanga, the 1,443-km pipeline is estimated to cost \$5 billion.

Of this, the project partners have already

raised \$2-billion and the Ugandan and Tanzanian governments are seeking an additional \$3-billion in debt financing – primarily from Chinese lenders such as the Export-Import Bank of China and the China Export & Credit Insurance Corporation.

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Exciting milestone achieved by Concor at Conradie Park development



CONCOR's landmark R5-billion Conradie Park development has successfully completed over 1 000 new homes, an exciting milestone in this ambitious project set to deliver approximately 4 000 homes upon completion.

Mark Schonrock, property development executive at Concor, says the achievement fuels the creation of a sustainable community within the development, a critical part of the Conradie Park vision.

The development, which began in January 2020, completed its first phase with the occupa-

tion of the Greenmarket complex comprising 432 units by January 2022.

The following buildings, named after key Western Cape landmarks, Paarl Rock and Boulders, were occupied in September and December 2022, respectively.

The next two buildings called Silvermine and Kings Blockhouse were completed and occupied at the end of 2023 bringing the total units completed to the 1 000 unit milestone.

Construction on the next 659 units in four new blocks started in September 2023 and first com-

pletion and handover is expected to start in January 2025.

The next key exciting milestone for the project is the start of Conradie Park's new convenience retail centre, as key asset and attribute for the development and its residents.

This comprises 10 000 m² convenience retail with some key anchor tenants and food offerings, over 320 rooftop parking bays, a gym, co-working space and kids play park. Combined in this node is the construction of a further three tower blocks, totalling over 400 additional

residential units.

Civils works for the large mixed use retail centre started in August 2024 with the piling rigs set to establish in September with over 490 piles due to be installed.

Upon completion of these upcoming developments, Conradie Park will house over 2 000 living units, marking the halfway point towards its goal of providing 4 000 new homes to the Cape Town community.

The project has demonstrated innovation in building technology, incorporating city regulations such as constructing outside the 1-in-100-year flood line.

This led to the creation of an engineered berm alongside Elsiekraal canal, blending functionality and aesthetics, creating a grandeur linear park for the Precinct.

The buildings' platforms were also raised to ensure safety against potential flooding.

Affordable Social Housing milestone reached

THE City of Cape Town's Human Settlements Directorate held an open day to discuss plans for a new social housing project in the Lansdowne area that will add value to the area.

The mayoral committee member for human settlements, councillor Carl Pophaim, and human settlements teams provided the community with the information and updates about the planned project.

"We were pleased to share the important updates and feedback about the proposed development concept, the property disposal processes currently in progress and all the required statutory applications that are to be undertaken in the following months," said Pophaim.

"Our teams will keep residents informed as we make more progress. We also emphasised how important these developments are to provide access to more affordable rental opportuni-

ties in all urban centres in the metro for those earning between R1 850 and R22 000 per month as well as the great benefit it holds to invigorate and improve neighbourhoods," he added.

"The proposed affordable housing development will yield approximately 308 social housing opportunities for qualifying beneficiaries. We are excited to get the ball rolling so that we can assist more beneficiaries in future."

He said, "Social Housing plays a critical role in addressing housing affordability and provides safe, decent and affordable housing opportunities for families in the city. A lot of the City's actions seek to make affordable housing projects more feasible for private sector partners by offering development packaging, land discounts and leveraging municipal land to make projects more viable for private sector partners."

Pophaim said over

the past year, through the Accelerated Land Release Programme, which is a Mayoral Priority, the city has been making significant interventions in the market.

It is yielding results with an estimated affordable housing pipeline on well-located land in and near urban centres of up to 10 000 units under way.

"This is besides Breaking New Ground housing, informal settlement and backyarder upgrades and land reform through title deeds and upgrading of the public housing units that we are focused on."

Pophaim said the city was making steady progress around the metro and it was glad to have already assisted thousands of families at the various developments in the city, including Maitland Mews, the Anchorage in Glenhaven, Bothasig Gardens, Goodwood Station, and the Western Cape Government's Conradie Park development in Pine-lands.

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Green office refit for Ninety One

Growthpoint Properties has commenced construction on a green office refurbishment of its 36 Hans Strijdom Building, the Cape Town headquarters of Ninety One, in a move that reinforces both companies' commitment to the Cape Town CBD and to sustainability.



NINETY One, a global investment manager with South African roots, has been based at the Growthpoint-owned building in the Cape Town Foreshore for over two decades.

Ninety One evaluated a number of options for its offices, including new construction, as its co-tenant in the building prepared to move to new premises. Its decision to remain at 36 Hans Strijdom was strongly driven by its net-zero carbon aspirations.

Growthpoint welcomed the move, committing to an extensive green revamp of the property as Ninety One signed a 15-year lease for the building's entire 12 800sqm of lettable area. Growthpoint has been at the forefront of environmental innovation in the property sector in South Africa, establishing green building as an accepted practice in the local commercial property sector and now driving the adoption of renewable energy in this space. Its own net-zero goal is to be carbon neutral by 2050.

This has seen it adopt the process of wheeling, which is the process of buying and selling electricity between private parties, using the existing grid to transport power.

Paul Kollenberg, Growthpoint head of asset management: offices, comments, "At Growthpoint, we are thrilled to continue our longstanding partnership with Ninety One. Remodelling this landmark building to the highest environmental standards is a testament to our mutual vision for a more sustainable future."

Growthpoint's refurbishment of 36 Hans Strijdom is being guided by sustainability goals rather than appearances, so while it will essentially deliver a new, lower-carbon building, the changes will mostly be visible from inside the building.

To begin with, a significant amount of embodied carbon is being salvaged by re-using of the entire building structure. Among the environmentally friendly building improvements are an on-site solar plant, energy-efficient displacement air conditioning and high-performance glazing. Energy-hungry escalators will be replaced by circulation stairs in the new layout to reduce power consumption.

36 Hans Strijdom was the first building in Cape Town to receive clean, green energy wheeled via the city's energy grid, as part of a wheeling pilot project. This is possible thanks to Growthpoint's partnership with licensed electricity trader Etana Energy, which is a selected pilot participant.

Solar energy generated at Growthpoint's The Constantia Village shopping centre is already being exported for use at the long-term home of Ninety One.

Through wheeling, the customer won't get the exact green electrons produced, but the customer can still claim that at least 70% of its electricity is from green sources.

Growthpoint's investment in this green refit demonstrates its continued belief in the value of the Cape Town CBD and in the power of projects such as this to sup-

port sustainable built environments. Growthpoint owns 360 000sqm of offices in the Western Cape.

"Choosing to refurbish rather than relocate cements our commitment to a vibrant Cape Town CBD," says Thabo Khojane, MD of Ninety One. "At the same time, it was imperative for us to ensure we inhabit a more energy-efficient environment in line with our drive to achieve net zero by 2050."

Ninety One has relocated to temporary offices for the construction period and will return upon completion, which is scheduled for July 2025.

Tile trend report: four styles for you in 2024/25

THOUGH tastes are personal, trends capture the zeitgeist and reflect some of the conditions and ideas common to many of us.

For a manufacturer like South African-based Ceramic Industries, trend forecasting is essential for answering the needs of their clientele. And for the rest of us, they're a useful guideline to open our minds to new ideas and new technologies.

With the help of Ceramic Industries, we've identified four global trends in design for 2024/2025. As you'll see, these trends cut across all aspects of décor and design, but with a special focus on how they're showing up in tile design.

Luxury mansion

This is a trend that's all about expressing a very individual sense of style, often using

objects with a personal meaning to the homeowner. Close attention to detail sets it apart, and it can take inspiration from other high-design categories like fine jewellery. One only needs to imagine the effect of a tile like Borealis Gloss on a guest to get an idea of what this trend is all about. It's a brand new conception of luxury that aims to create a sense of wonder.

Restorative Haven

Many of us are placing greater emphasis on wellness in all aspects of our lives, whether it's our diet, mental health, physical fitness or work-life balance. Interior design is no exception, and the Restorative Haven uses conscious design decisions to create wellness, comfort and peace at home. Simplicity, minimalism

and functionality are the order of the day, perfectly represented by a tiles like Caesar Travertine and Colosseum.

Biophilic Home

Perhaps it's a reflection of the moment we live in, but the biophilia trend is set to be with us for some time yet. It's all about bringing elements of nature indoors, embracing earthy tones, and organic materials and shapes. Of course, you're permitted to be playful! For instance, mixing and matching Faenza Bone and Botanical gives you the muted stone tones and the vibrant tropical foliage in an arresting, contemporary take on biophilia.

Creative Hub

Forget the restraint of minimalism – the Cre-

ative Hub is a space that embraces maximalism. Creativity and personal expression are let loose. Eclecticism rules.

It's a design approach that puts emotional satisfaction first – although a practised eye helps keep it all in balance. Strong geometric, ethnic-inspired motifs fit right into this style, like the bold, playful Jabu. Or more subtle textures and in-vogue tones like Maestro Blue.

Thanks to innovations in printing technology and new glaze materials for innovative effects employed by Ceramic Industries, an enormous variety of tile designs is available today. These trends show some of the design possibilities available today, and – hopefully – help you home in on some choices for your next design project.

CERAMIC INDUSTRIES - TRENDS

Creators of style

Inspiration from the natural world, reinterpreted for the modern world

The natural world is endlessly inspirational. The **Sycamore Panelling** and **Botanical** ceramic wall tiles takes the delicate, pale colouring of a wood treasured by furniture makers, and combines it with soothing foliage motifs. The effect is bright and contemporary, with all the warmth and familiarity of nature. **A design inspired by nature** – designed to reinspire you.

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Big drop in building plans passed could lead to higher property prices

By Larry Claasen

THE value in building plans passed in the Western Cape dropped a massive 19,2% to R13,99-billion in the six month period to end June 2024, according to

Statistics South Africa . This drop off was part of a broader trend that saw a 13,4% fall to R46,91-billion for building plans passed by larger municipalities across the country for the period. The biggest drivers of

the construction sector, the Western Cape and Gauteng, which collectively account for 67,7% of building activity, both saw sizable falls in value of plans passed. The fall came at a difficult time for the construction sector. The

emergence of extortion rackets, persistently high interest rates, and concern over the outcome of national elections has weighed on the economy and the sector. The fall off in the Western Cape, however, goes against the

trend which has seen the region outpace the construction sector in other parts of the country. The Rainmaker Marketing April 2024 Property Market Report said that the value in building plans passed in the Western Cape in 2023

exceeded that of the Eastern Cape, Northern Cape, Free State, North West, Mpumalanga and Limpopo combined. The Western Cape even eclipse Gauteng in the value of building completed in 2023, with the cape completing

R25-billion compared to the country's economic heartland's R20-billion. "Statistics South Africa shares insights into the building activities in the Western Cape, revealing that the building plans passed far exceed the country's average, and that the buildings completed are the highest in South Africa. For every five buildings completed in South Africa between 2022 and 2023, two of these are within the Western Cape," the report said.

The Rainmaker Marketing report noted that the province had benefited from semigration and has seen consistent increase over the years from 31% in 2020 to completed in South Africa 46% by 2023.

Though the report was positive about the outlook for the sector, there were signs a slowdown was on the way, as building plans passed had dropped from R35-billion in 2022 to R30-billion in 2023.

The Year-on-Year (YOY) drop off in plans passed and completions spells trouble ahead for the supply-side of the residential property market, warned BetterBond in its August 2024, Property Brief.

"Once interest rates start to decline, which could happen quite soon, a shortage of properties is bound to develop, which is highly likely to translate into significant price increases from the fourth quarter of 2024 onwards."

Higher property prices will be just another difficulty South Africans will have to deal with. BetterBond pointed out that high interest rates were taking its toll on consumers.

"During July, the Reserve Bank's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) dashed the hopes of millions of indebted South African households and businesses by maintaining the highest lending rate in 14 years. In the process of the refusal to depart from an overly restrictive monetary policy stance, the ratio of debt costs to disposable income has now reached a level of 9,2% – the highest in 15 years."

It added: "It is no surprise, therefore, that an array of key indicators of economic activity (in real terms) remain in a declining mode. These include the Afrimat Construction Index, retail trade sales, the Altron Fintech Household Resilience Index and the YOY value of new building plans passed."



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The growing threat of electricity meter tampering in South Africa: a call for smart solutions

AS South Africa's energy demands have surged, so too has the incidence of electricity meter tampering. This illegal practice, which involves bypassing or manipulating meters to reduce electricity bills, has become a serious concern for municipalities and utility providers.

The consequences of tampering are severe, leading to significant revenue losses, power outages, and safety hazards that endanger both utility workers and the public.

"One of the most critical dangers of tampering is the risk it poses during maintenance or repairs"

Meter tampering has been on the rise, driven in part by the high cost of electricity and the country's ongoing economic challenges. The methods used vary, from simple tricks like inserting foreign objects to more sophisticated techniques involving magnetic fields or electronic devices.

The impact, however, is always damaging—both financially and in terms of safety.

One of the most critical dangers of tampering is the risk it poses during maintenance or repairs. Utility workers may unknowingly work on live wires, believing the power is disconnected, which can result in severe injuries or even fatalities.

Furthermore, tampered meters often fail to cut off electricity during power surges or faults, leading to equipment damage and increased fire risks.

In response to this growing problem, municipalities like Madibeng have taken proactive measures. The Madibeng Municipality, for example, has begun the replacement of old prepaid meters with advanced split meters as part of their effort to combat tampering and ensure reliable service.

This move is crucial, as older meters are not only easier to tamper with but are also nearing the end of their operational lifespan.

This is where Hexing's smart meters come into play.

Hexing meters are designed with robust anti-tampering features that make it extremely difficult for

unauthorised individuals to manipulate the system. These meters can detect tampering attempts and immediately notify the utility provider, allowing for swift action.

Additionally, they

offer real-time data monitoring and remote management capabilities, enabling utilities to maintain accurate billing and ensure that power is delivered safely and efficiently.

The implementa-

tion of Hexing smart meters is not just a technological upgrade; it is a comprehensive solution to a pervasive problem. By adopting these advanced meters, municipalities can significantly

reduce the incidence of tampering, protect their revenue streams, and enhance the safety of their operations.

For the residents of Madibeng and other municipalities across South Africa, this

means more reliable electricity service and a safer environment.

As South African Metros continue to modernise its electricity infrastructure, the adoption of smart metering solutions like

those offered by Hexing is crucial.

It is a step towards a more secure, efficient, and tamper-proof energy future, ensuring that all citizens have access to safe and reliable power.

The advertisement for Hexing South Africa features a background image of a city skyline at night with glowing blue lines representing data or energy flow. In the center, the text "UP TO 6 ANTI-TAMPER SOLUTIONS" is prominently displayed in large, bold, white letters. Below this, the phrase "THE FUTURE IS NOW" is written in a similar style. Four different models of Hexing smart meters are showcased: a black meter (top left), a white meter (top right), a large white meter with a digital display (bottom left), and another large white meter with a digital display (bottom right). The Hexing logo, a stylized blue and green sphere, is positioned at the top left. The text "HEXING South Africa" is at the top right. At the bottom, the contact information "info@hexingsa.co.za | www.hexingsa.co.za" is provided.

Cape Aqua favours PET due to infinite recyclability and lightweight which helps reduce carbon footprint



Cape Aqua's bottling plant in the Ceres Valley where they have their own water source.

By Diane Silcock

CAPE AQUA is a water bottling company located on a farm in the Ceres Valley at the foot of the Hugo Mountain range, with a proud Cape heritage of 20 years.

Sustainability is important to the company. They use polyethylene terephthalate (PET) bottles which comprise recycled material. Whitehead says PET is infinitely recyclable and the bottle's light weight also helps reduce carbon footprint when it comes to transportation.

They will also be adopting a cap that's tethered to the tamper band of the bottle thereby ensuring that it remains attached to the bottle after use; an EU requirement. Following a recent trip to Europe, Whitehead says that across the UK and Europe the majority of plastic caps are now tethered to containers.

Cape Aqua's spring water is bottled at its source and rated one of the purest on the market with a very low Total Dissolved Solids (TDS) level of 19, giving the water its crisp, refined taste. Whitehead explains that taste varies from company to company as each source will have a different mineral content based on the

geography of the region.

The company's factory complies with world-class standards for the bottling of natural source water, meeting food safety as well as quality control standards. Monitoring and auditing are undertaken daily. "From the time that our water comes into the factory, our processes are completely free of human intervention. It goes directly to the filling lines and into an air-secure filling environment and on to being automatically capped."

Whitehead warns that some water stores are selling water that is unverified and unaudited and therefore may not be safe. He points out that many restaurants are selling their own brands of water without doing the necessary checks to determine the legitimacy of the company providing the water and the processes utilised.

Cape Aqua undertakes contract packaging for certain retailers and customers, as well as produces private labels for some customers. They also supply to certain foreign airlines. Their two brands are Cape Aqua for retail, and Hydr8 is their general cash and carry brand.

In addition to source water, Cape Aqua has



An inside view of Cape Aqua's bottling plant.

a range of sparkling flavoured waters which they produce at their factory in Strand. Their own brand water is distributed via their factory shops in Strand, Stellenbosch, Kuilsrivier, Kenilworth, Mailand, Fish Hoek, Durbanville and Ceres.

Whitehead estimates the bottled water market in South Africa to be in the region of R5-R6-billion with two major companies holding the majority of the share of the market. He says, that Cape Aqua's brand strategy is to become a dominant regional brand rather than being a national brand.

Cape Aqua owner Richard Whitehead, says, "As a company we would like to leverage our export opportunities based on our

fortunate geographical position in the world, that being the famous Cape of Good Hope and Cape Town and the world-renowned Ceres Valley from where our water is sourced. A new bottle has been developed for this purpose and we expect to have the new packaging ready within a month or two."

With the opportunity to now export, they intend to capitalise on their Ceres Valley location. "The Ceres connotation is world famous due to its Cape location, quality wine and fruit juices. We can capitalise on those qualities and recognisable trademarks. Our aim is that our water will become synonymous with the Cape," concludes Whitehead.

Mondi to showcase sustainable packaging innovations at FACHPACK 2024

MONDI, a global leader in sustainable packaging and paper, will have its portfolio of innovative and flexible packaging solutions on display at this year's FACHPACK, one of the main events in Europe for companies that produce and use packaging in September.

Mondi's approach of designing packaging and paper solutions that are sustainable by design and fit-for-purpose allows the company to collaborate closely with customers across a variety of industries.

Mondi maps out the individual path to sustainability for each customer, helping them find packaging solutions that protect their goods while meeting their sustainability goals.

Mondi will display several innovations made from paper, plastic or a combination of both materials, all of which came out of its R&D efforts and close cooperation with customers and partners.

Some of the show-

pet food industry.

- The world's first mono-material vacuum-packaging solution for coffee, which Mondi developed with Finnish coffee producer Paulig.
- Mondi's broad and innovative FunctionalBarrier Paper range of fibre-based

well-protected during transport, while being designed for recycling

"To achieve our ambitious MAP2030 sustainability targets, we are fully committed to taking concrete actions to drive progress and foster innovation by investing

"At this year's booth, Mondi will also be hosting CELAB Europe, a collaborative initiative dedicated to fostering a sustainable self-adhesive labelling industry"

packaging works across many industrial and FMCG end markets and can be recycled in existing European paper waste streams.

- Mondi's new smooth-finished, brown kraft paper grade, Advantage Smooth Brown Semi Extensible. It boasts high puncture resistance and can be coated for heat-sealing applications, ideal for form fill and seal

in the research and development of circular products. We look forward to sharing our successes firsthand at FACHPACK and seeing multiple collaborations with our packaging machine partners come to life," says Paulus Goess, Growth and sustainability director flexible packaging at Mondi

At this year's booth, Mondi will also be hosting CELAB Europe, a collaborative initiative dedicated to fostering a sustainable self-adhesive labelling industry.

The joint goal is to enhance the circularity of release liners across Europe, building a more sustainable future through innovative recycling solutions and collaborative efforts.

Interested parties can visit Mondi at Stand 204 in Hall 4 at FACHPACK 2024, taking place in Nuremberg from 24 to 26 September. The booth is next to the PACK-BOX stage, which will be offering engaging discussions with packaging experts.

"Mondi maps out the individual path to sustainability for each customer, helping them find packaging solutions that protect their goods while meeting their sustainability goals"

cased highlights visitors can experience at FACHPACK include:

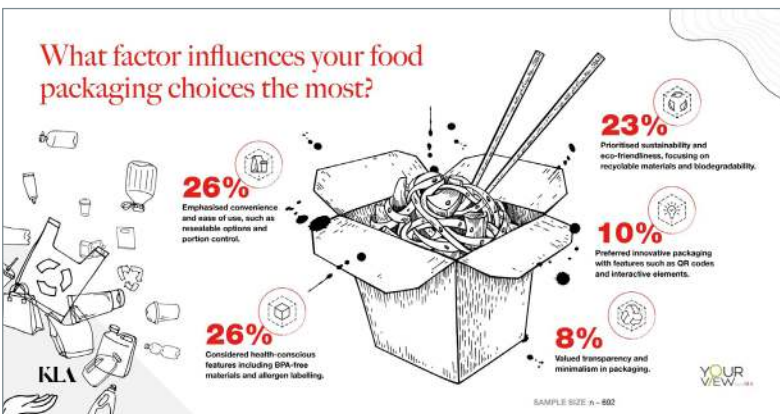
- The newly launched recyclable Flexi-Bag Reinforced - a cost-effective PE-based mono-material packaging with improved mechanical properties. It can accommodate a customised percentage of post-consumer recycled PE and is ideal for the
- EcoWicketBag - Mondi's award-winning, paper-based packaging solution made of extremely durable kraft paper. The innovative solution stays strong during the filling process and ensures that the contents are



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How consumer demand is driving change in food packaging



CONSUMER demand for sustainable food packaging has become a major catalyst for change in the industry. With a growing awareness of environmental impacts, consumers are now choosing products with reduced packaging waste and materials that are recyclable and as a result, companies are being compelled to innovate and develop eco-friendly packaging solutions.

According to a KLA YourView poll of 692 South African consumers, 34% indicated that sustainability and eco-friendliness are a priority when making packaging choices. This heightened awareness among consumers has led to significant changes in the industry, as companies are now more willing to explore environmentally responsible packaging options in order to meet the expectations of consumers, thereby impacting purchasing decisions and brand loyalty.

Respondents from the KLA YourView poll indicated the following leading factors that influenced their food packaging choices:

- 26% emphasised convenience and ease of use, such as resealable options and portion control.
- 26% considered health-conscious features including BPA-free materials and allergen labelling.
- 23% prioritised sustainability and eco-friendliness, focusing on recyclable materials and biodegradability.
- 10% preferred innovative packaging with features such as QR codes and interactive elements.
- 8% valued transparency and minimalism in packaging.

The food packaging industry is experiencing a remarkable shift towards eco-friendly innovations, which includes the use of bio-

degradable and compostable materials, recyclable packaging solutions, and reusable packaging systems. Some of the key innovations include:

- Plant-based plastics derived from renewable sources that decompose more quickly than traditional plastics.
- Mushroom packaging made from agricultural waste and mycelium, providing sustainable and protective packaging.
- Seaweed packaging that is both edible and compostable.
- Biodegradable films made from natural polymers.

Recyclable packaging solutions play a pivotal role in the shift towards more sustainable food packaging practices. Companies like Unilever and Nestlé have invested heavily in creating easily recyclable packaging, with innovations such as clear PET bottles, which are easily sorted and recycled, and bio-based plastics, which offer a lower carbon footprint, gaining traction.

Reusable packaging systems are also emerging as a key innovation in eco-friendly food packaging solutions - durable materials designed for multiple uses help reduce waste volume - examples include:

- Returnable containers.
- Deposit schemes whereby consumers pay a deposit on packaging, which is then refunded upon return.
- Refill stations where consumers can refill containers.
- Subscription services where businesses provide reusable packaging through subscription models.

Leading companies have set powerful examples in sustainable packaging.

For example, Unilever's commitment to sustainability is exem-

plified through initiatives in eco-friendly packaging - the company aims to halve its environmental footprint by 2030 through strategies including:

- Pledging that 100% of its plastic packaging will be reusable, recyclable, or compostable by 2025.
- Investing in biodegradable materials that break down naturally.
- Exploring innovative solutions like paper-based soap wrappers and aluminium shampoo bottles, with the aim of reducing plastic usage.
- Educating consumers on proper waste disposal and recycling practices.

Another example is Nestlé's extensive investment in research and development which positions it at the forefront of sustainable packaging innovation. The Nestlé Institute of Packaging Sciences focuses on biodegradable, compostable, and recyclable materials.

Then there is McDonald's transition to paper straws which is a reflection of the significant shift towards sustainable practices. This move reduces plastic waste and highlights the influence of consumers on corporate policies.

Effective food packaging also plays a pivotal role in minimising food waste by extending product shelf life and preserving freshness. Innovations like vacuum sealing and modified atmosphere packaging (MAP) enhance the longevity of perishable items, and portion-controlled packaging helps reduce waste by providing the right amount of food needed for single servings. Smart packaging technologies offer real-time information about food conditions, empowering consumers to make informed decisions.

Mpact Plastic Containers invests over R350-million in new Castlevue Injection Moulding Facility

By Larry Claasen

MPACT Plastic Containers is investing a substantial R354-million to expand its capabilities with a new injection moulding factory in Castlevue.

This investment will enhance the company's ability to meet increasing customer demands and broaden its innovative product offerings, including a cutting-edge food-grade production facility and an automated warehouse.

The project is being rolled out in several phases, starting with the acquisition of property and the establishment of the manufacturing facility and warehouse.

An initial R178-million was allocated to phases 1 and 2, which include the setup of the factory and the installation of nine machines.

An additional R96-million has been committed to phase 2A, which involves constructing a 10 800-pallet automated warehouse.

Phase 3 of the project, which focuses on



acquiring, refurbishing, and installing second-hand machines and equipment, saw an additional R80-million invested.

As of June 2024, Mpact said it had made significant progress. All 14 machines planned for phases 1, 2, and 3 are now operational, surpassing the original plan for nine machines.

The site has reached its full installed machine capacity ahead of the initial 2027 target, though it is not yet fully utilised.

The capacity for the automated warehouse in phase 2A has been revised to 9 600 pallets, with completion now expected by the end of

December 2024.

The project's scope has also been expanded to include a tool room, two new beverage crate printing lines, a 1,1 MWp solar power installation, and standby generators, further boosting the facility's capabilities and sustainability.

Following a strategic review in 2021, Mpact's board decided to sell its Plastic Trays & Films business, Versapak, as a going concern. Versapak currently forms part of the Plastics Division of Mpact Operations.

On 31 July 2024, Mpact entered into a sale of business agreement with Greenpath

Recycling (Pty) Ltd - a wholly owned subsidiary of Sinica Manufacturing - whereby Mpact will dispose of Versapak as a going concern for a purchase price of R268-million.

The purchase price will be adjusted based on the actual amount of stock on hand and the value of certain employee liabilities as at the effective date of the disposal.

Mpact is the largest paper and plastics packaging and recycling business in southern Africa, employing 5 095 people, and generating revenue of R14-billion from total operations in the 2023 financial year.

ALPLA and zerooo create reusable PET bottle for cosmetic products

ZEROOO is producing reusable PET packaging for bathroom and kitchen: packaging and recycling specialist ALPLA and zerooo initiator SEA ME GmbH have developed a standardised solution for cosmetics and care products.

From September, the first brands will be presenting shampoo, shower gel, detergent, body lotion and dental care products in 300-millilitre PET bottles.

This reusable and fully recyclable plastic packaging is available in three colours and is suitable for all caps. A laser-engraved 2D data matrix code provides information on the contents of each bottle and its circulation.

zerooo stands for reusable packaging that fosters the circular economy in the cos-

metics industry.

The system offered by start-up SEA ME GmbH offers brand manufacturers safe, affordable and sustainable PET bottles, in addition to glass bottles, for the first time. Together with ten brand partners and packaging and recycling specialist ALPLA, the company has developed a fully recyclable solution.

The reusable PET bottle, with a volume of 300-millilitres, is available in clear, milky white and brown versions. It is suitable for all caps and can also be used as a shatter-proof alternative for toiletries in the shower. Further formats are planned.

As a globally active packaging manufacturer and recycling specialist, ALPLA is promoting closed 'bottle-to-bottle' cycles



with its own plants. The company contributes its expertise as a system supplier and also supports customers with design.

The zerooo reusable PET bottle was developed in tandem with the SEA ME GmbH team at ALPLA's in-house STUDIOa design centre at the company's headquarters in Hard.

"With 'Design for

Recycling', we are setting the course early on for optimum recycling and the longest possible service life. Every detail counts when it comes to shape, colour and material. The reusable system extends the life cycle of the plastic bottle, saves material and reduces its carbon footprint," emphasises Alexander Tränkle, industrial designer at ALPLA.



Esme Gombault,
EnviroServ's technical
director.

Ensuring compliance and safety at EnviroServ through global and local regulations

OPERATING an environmentally responsible and legally compliant waste management facility means ensuring all regulatory frameworks are followed and safety mechanisms are in place. EnviroServ, a SUEZ

company, has more than 45 years of experience managing both simple and complex waste streams across a broad range of industries and in the past decade has helped clients divert waste from landfill through

creative and often ingenious alternative solutions. Adhering to safety protocols and legislative requirements helps manage the environmental impact of waste management facilities and ensures the protection

of public health and safety.

Key regulations governing waste management in South Africa

Landfills in South Africa are governed

by the National Environmental Management: Waste Act 59 of 2008 which provides a legislative framework that promotes sustainable waste management practices, reduces waste generation, and protects both the envi-

ronment and human health from the adverse effects of waste. EnviroServ conducts its business in line with NEM:WA's waste management hierarchy, which advocates waste prevention, minimisation, reuse, and recycling, with treatment and safe disposal as a last resort.

Esme Gombault, EnviroServ's technical director, said the company's dedicated compliance team together with other internal stakeholders ensured all licences and permits were in place and that regulatory conditions were strictly adhered to.

"Monitoring is conducted and reporting takes place as required. We also assess compliance through various internal, external, and third-party audits. Our integrated quality management system and our ISO 14001 certification give our customers peace of mind that proper systems are in place to ensure continual improvement," she said.

"For the protection of our water resources, a Water Use Licence may also be required in line with Section 21 of the National Water Act."

Waste management facilities have air quality monitoring stations positioned around each site to monitor fugitive emissions and ensure that health risks are curbed.

Following the waste hierarchy

The world is generating more and more waste every year, and along with this, so has the amount of waste by manufacturers increased as consumer shopping habits and technology change.

The World Bank estimates that waste generation will increase from 2,01-billion tons in 2016 to 3,40-billion tons in 2025, with at least 33% not managed in an environmentally safe manner.

Separation of waste at source is a trend that has grown exponentially in South Africa in the past decade.

"Encouraging our customers to buy into the idea of waste stream separation has entailed a mindset change; businesses in the early 2000s didn't care much about where their waste went, as long as it was safely disposed of. Our onsite division had to work hard to sell the idea of waste minimisation and reduction," Gombault said.



From unwanted to wanted

With over 45 years of experience in the waste management industry, collaboration with customers is how we drive the circular economy. We implement agile and innovative waste solutions, proudly ensuring environmental peace of mind through our commitment to industry standards.



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More collaboration is needed to end plastic waste in South Africa

By Patricia Pillay,
CEO Polyco

AS a registered Producer Responsibility Organisation (PRO) under national government's Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) legislation, Polyco is working with its over 650 members to ensure there is accountability for the end-of-life plastic packaging, through various collection and recycling initiatives. So far, these initiatives have supported the development of over 300 000 tons of additional recycling capacity in the sector.

However, this would not have been possible without partnerships with key stakeholders. Over the past few months, in collaboration with the Buffalo City Metro Municipality (BCMM), the Border-Kei Chamber of Business (BKCOB) and the Buffalo City Metropolitan Development Agency (BCMDA), we officially handed over new static Packa-Ching buy-back recycling centres in Amalinda, Mdantsane and Qonce to the communities, with more to come by the end of the year.

Our Packa-Ching programme operates in under-resourced communities without separation-at-source infrastructure. Community members (waste reclaimers in particular) are paid for the recyclable packaging material (such as plastics, glass, metal and board) they collect and drop off at the Packa-Ching centres. In doing so, they are provided with crucial revenue streams while reducing the amount of recyclable plastic in landfills.

Our collaborations have also stretched to the private sector to encourage recycling on a consumer level. In March, we launched state-of-the-art reverse recycling vending machines in partnership with Pick 'n Pay. The machines, which collect plastic packaging in return for vouchers, provided shoppers a brief snapshot of the waste-reclaiming process that happens every day in communities across the country.

However, in reality, waste reclaimers endure harsh environments and travel vast distances to acquire and transport their recyclable goods. In a country that has limited separation at source infrastructure, waste reclaimers play a key role in collecting recyclables and bolstering the circular economy.

With many Packa-Ching units nationwide, the initiative has achieved a 20-million

kilogram collection and recycling milestone, with over R20-million paid to local communities to support individuals, families and local businesses in the area.

Considering the benefit that our partnership with the Buffalo City Municipality has yielded so far, it is imperative that municipalities do more to promote local

separation at source efforts through partnerships with the industry and other stakeholders. Our partnership with Buffalo City is just the first step in building our network of partner municipalities to increase the collection of recyclables. If we are to achieve our goal of eliminating plastic waste in South Africa, this part-

nership model will need to be replicated across the country. In short, we need more partnerships with our municipalities.

At a national level, more needs to be done to invest in recycling infrastructure, provide tax incentives and educate the general populace on the importance of recycling to the environment and the value

of their waste.

Polyco will continue collaborating with its members, government and other stakeholders to develop the country's recycling capacity through innovation, education and financial support. We are looking forward to working with the new Minister for Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment, Dion

George, to end plastic waste while supporting SA's economy and creating jobs. In the meantime, we celebrate all the recycling heroes of South Africa. Most importantly, the waste-reclaimers, working in our communities to recycle valuable plastic, and in doing so, reclaiming waste from our lands, rivers and oceans.



CLEAN-UP & RECYCLE 2024

Why do I have to clean-up?! It's not my litter!

Huh? What does that mean?

Yes maybe it's not, but it is your planet.

Reducing litter protects our environment and the creatures that live in it!

The earth's natural system and resources are being destroyed.

So ... what can I do?

You need to take responsibility ...

REDUCE
Reduce the amount of waste you generate

REUSE
items, and

RECYCLE
as much as possible.

Recycle? But why?

If you recycle, it conserves our natural resources, prevents pollution, reduces waste and saves landfill space!!

Look at this beach! It's really dirty! Where does it all come from?

People litter everywhere! This litter finds its way to the ocean, from streets and fields, via drains, streams and rivers. This way it all ends up in the ocean!

Where can I start? I want to take responsibility!

You need to recycle, participate in a beach or river clean-up, and tell your friends about it!

DO YOUR PART
16-21 September

Let's clean our planet!

Clean-up and Recycle Week SA
16 - 18 September

National River Clean-up Day
18 September

National Recycling Day
20 September

World Clean-up Day
20 September

International Coastal Clean-up Day
21 September

Bio-fertiliser has the potential to reshape South African agriculture



By Larry Claasen

SOUTHERN African Biogas Industry Association (SABIA) secretary Gordon Ayres is almost annoyed by the assumption that Biogas is assumed to be gas. Though the word gas is in its name, Ayres says a more accurate description is to call it a bio-fertiliser or organic fertiliser, which is derived from waste. Given the confu-

sion, Ayres says there is a need to educate the people on what bio-fertilisers are. "I feel there is a massive misunderstanding about the role of biogas and how the public understands it." Though the broader public might not know much about bio-fertilisers, they felt their impact when the war in Ukraine — a significant fertiliser producer — impacted supply and pushed up prices. Ayres says the con-

flict "multiplied the cost of putting fertiliser into the field by a factor of 300." Aside from the war, the structure of global fertiliser markets put South Africa in a weak negotiating position. For example, a blog by the Africa Policy Research Institute underlined Africa's vulnerability to being dependent on a handful of countries that produce nutrient-rich fertiliser.

"Even before the outbreak of war in Ukraine, fertiliser prices across Africa were higher in comparison to other regions of the world. In South Africa, for instance, the prices of ammonium nitrate, urea and phosphate fertilisers were 79% higher in 2022 than their international equivalents in 2019 and 2020," said the institute. The price hike resulting from the war forced local farmers to look to alternative sources of fertilisers, which resulted in them turning to bio-fertilisers. Ayres says this has seen a notable increase in demand for bio-fertilisers. "Before the Ukrainian war, it wasn't that big, but people are incentivised to use our products now. It has been a big driver for growth." How significant an

impact it has had is not clear, as bio-fertiliser producers are not sharing that information with SABIA. Though the scale of the growth is unclear, those looking to resell it have to register it. "As a standard, we use a B-grade fertiliser, so it's the organic. And that's set up by the Department of Agriculture. You've got to register your product if you want to resell it." Those farms producing bio-fertiliser for their own need, however, do not have to register. Ayres says bio-fertilisers are gaining trac-

tion in South Africa because they offer security of supply and are more environmentally friendly. "It's better for the environment because it's a probiotic fertiliser. It's going to help with the background microorganisms in the soil and so on to allow natural bacteria to take place. You're going to get things like earthworms in farming soils." Notably, bio-fertilisers also do not contain sodium. "In the Bible, it says that if you want to destroy your enemies, you would plant your

land with salt. We've been doing that to ourselves without anybody having to do it to us at all. We've been very carefully planting our own land with salt by using chemical fertilisers that carry a certain amount of sodium in them." Aside from benefiting the agriculture sector, bio-fertilisers are also well set to boost the overall economy. If the sector is supported, it can create over 30 000 permanent jobs and 141 000 construction jobs, and reduce carbon emissions by 9,88 tons/year within five years.



Fibre Circle Pioneers Development of a Localised Recyclability Standard for South African Paper Products

In a groundbreaking move, **Fibre Circle**, the producer responsibility organization for paper and paper packaging in South Africa, has initiated a multi-stakeholder engagement initiative focused on developing a recyclability standard and labelling system tailored specifically for the local paper and paper packaging industry.

The current recyclability standards applied in South Africa are mostly based on European methodologies, which do not adequately account for the unique social and physical infrastructure challenges faced by the local recycling industry. The South African EPR (Extended producer responsibility) regulations require environmental labelling to be implemented, however, this labelling must be based on a sound definition of the recyclability of paper and paper packaging locally. This Fibre Circle-led initiative, therefore, aims to establish a more relevant, contextual framework that will enhance the sustainability and efficiency of recycling efforts within the industry.

The resulting standard will define the minimum criteria for the recyclability of paper and paper packaging in South Africa, allowing the establishment of an environmental labelling system to inform the public about paper recycling and ultimately the creation of a design for recyclability guidelines to assist the development of new packaging solutions. Fibre Circle has kicked off the first cycle of stakeholder engagements, providing a comprehensive overview of the cumulative process, the formation of different working groups, and the specific roles that stakeholders can play at various levels throughout the engagements.

"As the paper and paper packaging industry in South Africa continues to evolve, ensuring the recyclability of our products is paramount," said Edith Leeuta, CEO of Fibre Circle. "In line with our commitment to meeting the obligations of the Extended Producer Responsibility Regulations, we are initiating the development of a comprehensive recyclability standard that will set benchmarks and guidelines for the industry."

- establishing clear criteria for assessing the recyclability of paper and paper packaging products for the South African context.
- Incorporating Industry Perspectives: Integrating diverse stakeholder perspectives across the value chain to ensure a comprehensive and inclusive standard.
 - Aligning with Global Best Practices: Using the 4evergreen CEPI (Confederation of European Paper Industries) Harmonised methodology, benchmarking our infrastructure realities against the method to ensure alignment with international sustainability goals.
 - Facilitating Information Exchange: Fostering a platform for exchanging knowledge, research findings, and insights relevant to recyclability in the paper industry.

Fibre Circle has created methodologies to guide the process and ensure all aspects are taken into consideration during the defining of the standard. These methodologies will be addressed by the relevant working groups proposed. As part of the process and to facilitate the testing of products, Fibre Circle has already completed setting up the CEPI Harmonised testing facility for low consistency repulping which included PTS (Papiertechnische Stiftung) benchmarking at Mpact Springs Mill. The Kadant-sourced pilot scale hydra pulper has been made available for structured research on difficult-to-recycle materials, offering recyclability testing as a service from Fibre Circle.

These initiatives mark a significant step forward in the South African paper and paper packaging industry's commitment to sustainable recycling practices. By establishing a contextual recyclability standard and labelling system, Fibre Circle aims to drive innovation, enhance recycling efficiency, and ultimately contribute to a greener future for our nation.

Fibre Circle
PRODUCER RESPONSIBILITY ORGANISATION

E: info@fibrecircle.co.za
T: 011 593 3144
W: www.fibrecircle.co.za

THE KEY OBJECTIVES OF THIS INITIATIVE INCLUDE:

- Defining Recyclability and the Recyclability Criteria: Collaboratively

THE NEXT GENERATION
Internships, Skills & Development Programmes

Neurodiversity: Unlocking the potential behind every mind

International Performance Coach and Public Speaker, Alvin Govender, speaks frankly in this open letter about Neurodivergence and its benefits in the workplace.

A ‘buzzword’ over the past few years, neurodivergence or the term neurodivergent, used when referring to individuals, has gained a lot of traction and while it’s positive that most people know what it means, there are still a lot of gaps in understanding. My introduction to neurodivergence came a few years ago when I was working closely with high-performing teams that couldn’t seem to get along. It dawned on me that the ‘old’ workplace model where people are expected to look and act the same has disappeared but not everyone has been given a ‘toolkit’ that allows for harmony and unity amongst team members who think differently from one another.

Whilst neurodiversity is defined as individual differences in brain functioning or thinking that isn’t neurotypical, the truth is that neurodiversity has existed as long as humanity itself. Neurodiversity refers to the fact that every person’s brain processes information differently, and the brain connections that we are ‘pre-wired’ with vary from individual to individual.

The power of diversity

As a professional coach, I have witnessed the transformation many workplaces have undergone over the last decade. Whilst having cohesion helps when creating a sense of belonging, a team’s greatest strength is often found when exploring their differences.

A strong proponent for the inclusivity of neurodivergence in the workplace, I am confident that diverse talents help strengthen workplaces, and I speak from experience about how hard it is when you are an individual whose thinking differs.

I consider myself Neurodivergent - as a schoolteacher, my thinking was ‘out of the box’ and I wanted to use fun storytelling to engage the learners in the process of learning. Although taking lessons outdoors and engaging in technology worked for many of the children, my methods were always under question by my managers.

Eventually, I left the classroom, with a desire to build my brand and share what I felt was needed to succeed. Fast forward fifteen years and my teaching style has been widely adopted and is being used by other trainers and coaches; helping an entire industry to become more impactful.

According to an article published by Deloitte, organisations that aim to recruit

and nurture neurodivergent employees gain the upside by becoming 30% more productive. Extending the diversity of a team to include neurodivergent members also boosts team morale, but it requires work.

As with any inclusivity efforts, it is not enough to simply follow the tick-box method and recruit neurodivergent people to fill a quota. Organisations need to gain a better understanding of their employees, their team, and most importantly, how they can guide them to get the best results.

The coaching approach: Maximising potential

Having the ability to suspend judgement and extend understanding during conflict is key to gaining a better understanding of team members who think differently. Putting the bigger picture ahead of your personal needs or feelings will be a contributor to your success.

People that break moulds and make room for future change – disruptors - are much needed everywhere in life. Doing things differently is how we learn.

As a manager, place your focus on the gifts that your team members possess, and learn how to manage their weaknesses without breaking their spirit. What’s evident to me as a professional coach is that there must be a growth and development plan for everyone in line with the company’s goals.

Ensuring that employees possess the skills they need to perform their core duties is crucial. Protecting and managing these skills place a spotlight on the strengths and abilities that make them stand apart. Having a diverse team for the sake of it is not the end goal; allowing the best-skilled person to do the job is. Self-awareness from management is critical in this area.

The truth is that if you don’t have a diverse team, it’s a blatant sign that there is unconscious bias within that organisation.

Strategies that encourage innovation

If the end goal is to own or work in the type of organisation that includes and commends neurodivergent individuals, there needs to be a conscious drive to change the work culture to one of respect above all else. The goal is not to change individuals to think in a certain way but to create self-awareness.

These are my top tips when assessing how to manage neurodiversity in the workplace:



- Crucial understanding is important. Place yourself in someone else’s shoes and gain empathy.
- If listening doesn’t become a priority within your team, there will be ongoing trust issues.
- Egos can be obstructive. Respect for the organisation is as important as respect for individuals, so coach the team to align and embrace the organisation’s core values.
- Be open to learning from your team. I often hear the frustration of a neuro-divergent employee who feels the need to stick to the script and do things as they have always been done. Innovation, creativity, and growth require a shift in thinking, and refusing to see the potential within your team is a risk. Knowing when to show respect and when to shift gears is important.
- Emotional intelligence is key. Facilitate sessions where everyone on the team can work on improving their EQ through workshops.

Whilst I advocate for change-makers like Jeff Bezos, Steve Jobs or Bill Gates, keep in mind that true disruptors are not perfect people, but have instead created the perfect space for change that benefits the generations that follow.

It’s hard to believe that once upon a time computers and phones were simply abstract ideas... I challenge you to embrace new ideas and learn from those around you. A leader who embraces neuro-diverse thinking is a leader who sees the bigger picture.

FNB Xero Accounting Programme launches third cohort

IN 2021, FNB collaborated with Xero and Edge Growth to deliver a first-of-its-kind developmental initiative aimed at supporting and empowering black-owned accounting practices that support the SME market.

Accountants who begin their own practices are typically well versed in the technical knowledge that the industry requires but may not have built a firm foundation in all the disciplines necessary for running a sustainable business: sales and marketing, pricing, and packaging of services, digital transformation and the like.

Following the success of the pilot programme, with participating accounting practices experiencing a collective 34% rise in revenue and 700% growth in profit, FNB and Xero launched the second cohort of the programme in 2023.

Heather Lowe, SME development head at FNB, said, “This programme is evolving into one which effectively correlates with the

FNB enterprise and supplier development philosophy, which seeks to transform enterprises or SMEs in untransformed industries in a meaningful way. Key to this success has been the depth and effectiveness of ecosystem collaboration at an industry level.”

Cohort 2 success

The second cohort proudly welcomed fourteen ambitious participants and recorded commendable successes in achieving its objectives, which were to support the digital transformation of accounting practices to support operational efficiency; to capacitate SMEs with practice building skills, leadership, and planning principles training to help businesses deliver high-quality accounting advisory and compliance services to SME clients; and to provide practice-management skills essential for ensuring the operational continuity and scalability of firms.

Cohort 3 launched to bolster industry transformation.

Given the success of the first two cohorts, FNB, Xero and Edge have chosen to open a third cohort for applications.

Colin Timmis, Xero’s South African country manager, explains: “We saw a huge benefit in the first two rounds of the programme in connecting participants with experienced accountants and business owners. New accountants don’t typically have established industry networks and access to older accountants with industry experience.

“By establishing these connections we’re building a community of knowledge and experience that has been transformational and very rewarding. It’s been a valuable first step in creating an environment which operates as a long-term support and capacity-building network.”

IN THE NEXT ISSUE:

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- Boilers, Burners & Combustion Technology
- Business Processing & Outsourcing | Consulting & Advisory Services
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- Compressors | Gensets | Plant Equipment
- Fire Technology & Solutions
- Materials Handling Logistics & Supply Chain
- Occupational Health & Safety | PPE
- Power Generation | Power Solutions
- Pumps | Valves | Fluid Technology & Filtration
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CAPE Business News

Chairman:
Rudi Leitner
rudi.leitner@hypenica.com

Publisher:
Robin Dunbar
robin.dunbar@cbn.co.za

Editor:
Larry Claasen

Production Manager:
Elise Jacobs
elise.jacobs@cbn.co.za

Sales & Marketing Director:
Robin Dunbar
robin.dunbar@cbn.co.za

Sales Team:
Heather Ferreira
heather.ferreira@cbn.co.za
Shaun Austin
shaun.austin@cbn.co.za

Client Liaison Officer:
nyameka@cbn.co.za
Cape Business News Enquiries
sales@cbn.co.za

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Opinion piece: How HR outsourcing transforms talent acquisition in remote mining and renewable energy projects



Pierre Bekker, director at Quyn International Recruitment & Staffing Solutions

SOUTH Africa’s mining and renewable energy sectors face significant challenges recruiting and retaining staff for remote projects. Shortages of skilled, semi-skilled, and unskilled workers, particularly in isolated areas, hinder project progress and drive-up costs. Many skilled professionals prefer urban areas, leading to labour gaps in remote projects.

To address these issues, workforce outsourcing has emerged. Specialised companies offer comprehensive temporary employment services to ensure projects have the right staff at the right time, improving efficiency and cost-effectiveness.

The challenges of remote workforce acquisition

The isolation and lack of urban infrastructure at remote project sites pose substantial challenges to workforce acquisition. Skilled professionals, such as engineers and electricians, are often reluctant to relocate to these areas, even temporarily, due to lifestyle and financial considerations. Moreover, securing a consistent supply of semi-skilled and unskilled labour from local communities can be problematic, as these regions may lack the necessary population density or workforce skills to support large-scale projects. As a result, companies frequently need to recruit from more populated areas, incurring additional costs for relocation, accommodation, and living allowances. This reliance on external labour pools can also strain local resources and infrastructure.

Tailored workforce solutions for remote projects

Resource placement firms have developed specialised strategies to address the challenges of recruiting and retaining talent for remote projects, with these companies employing a comprehensive approach to deliver skilled workforces to these isolated locations. By leveraging extensive networks and advanced recruitment technologies, these firms identify and attract suitable candidates from metropolitan areas. They emphasise the project’s significance and create compelling opportunities to entice talent to remote sites. Thorough onboarding is crucial to prepare new hires for the unique demands of remote work. Manpower outsourcing companies implement comprehensive orientation programmes covering safety protocols, cultural awareness, and project-specific requirements, ensuring a smooth transition into the project. To optimise project efficiency, outsourcing firms conduct rigorous skill assessments to match candidates precisely with specific project needs. This meticulous approach guarantees that the workforce possesses the necessary competencies to deliver optimal results. Beyond talent acquisition, labour outsourcing providers offer a full suite of human resource management services, including payroll, ben-

efits administration, and industrial relations. Recognising the challenges of remote work, HR outsourcing firms often incorporate flexible work arrangements to enhance worker satisfaction and retention. This includes options such as shift work or rotational assignments, granting employees greater control over their work-life balance.

The benefits of outsourcing for mining and renewable energy projects

By partnering with a workforce outsourcing firm, mining and renewable energy companies can reap numerous benefits. Outsourcing firms have the expertise and resources to attract and secure the required talent, even in challenging remote locations. Streamlined HR processes and a dedicated workforce enable companies to optimise project timelines and avoid contractual penalties associated with manpower shortages. Outsourcing the manpower component of remote mining and renewable energy projects leads to significant cost savings, as companies avoid the expense of establishing their own HR, industrial relations, and payroll departments. By focusing on core operations and strategic goals, while outsourcing workforce management, these companies can improve project outcomes and achieve timely and budget-conscious completion.

Opinion piece: Revolutionising SEZs and powering sustainable growth with 4IR and digital transformation

Nwabisani Duma, from the Coega Development Corporation (Coega), says the transformation of Special Economic Zones (SEZs) in the context of the 4th Industrial Revolution (4IR) and Digital Transformation.

NWABISANI Duma, the project co-ordinator for ICT, research and strategy, notes that traditionally, SEZs have concentrated on implementing smart infrastructure to boost operational efficiency and attract investments. However, he argues by writing that the paradigm of smart infrastructure now needs to transition towards cognitive infrastructure, where Artificial Intelligence (AI) permeates buildings, transportation systems, and utilities to function autonomously and intelligently. Envision an SEZ that dynamically adjusts to economic fluctuations, demographic shifts, and environmental dynamics through AI-driven urban planning. By harnessing the sophisticated Internet of Things (IoT) devices, sensors, and data analytics, SEZs can predict and adapt to changing circumstances, optimising resource allocation, energy efficiency, and urban planning methodologies. This metamorphosis propels economic progress by positioning SEZs as flexible and resilient centres of economic vitality, establishing novel standards for sustainable urban evolution. Furthermore, Duma introduces the concept of Exponential Organisations, suggesting that SEZs can transform into Decentralised Autonomous Organisations (DAOs) empowered by AI and blockchain technology. This innovation could streamline governance mechanisms, enhance transparency, and reduce bureaucratic bottlenecks, creating a more agile and responsive business ecosystem. Within Coega’s context, the SEZ can play a crucial role in fostering continental integration and economic development across

Africa through strategic technology-driven initiatives. By establishing robust pan-African digital infrastructures and leveraging 4IR and Digital Transformation technologies, SEZs can facilitate seamless collaboration and innovation across borders, promoting economic growth, job creation, and industrial diversification. ICT departments function as a central nervous system that harmonises and optimises all aspects of SEZ operations, leveraging cutting-edge technologies like cloud computing, quantum computing, and digital twin simulations. These technological advancements empower SEZs to achieve unprecedented levels of efficiency, agility, and innovation, propelling them into the vanguard of economic progress in the digital era. By harnessing big data analytics and AI, SEZs can optimise resource allocation, policy-making, and strategic decision-making with precision and foresight, navigating uncertainty and capitalising on emerging opportunities. Operational excellence demands a transformational shift towards autonomous and adaptive supply chain management systems, integrating robotics, AI, and IoT technologies to minimise human intervention and optimises logistics operations. Moreover, SEZs must integrate sustainability into their core operations, driven by global environmental imperatives like the Paris Agreement. By adopting renewable energy sources and sustainable practices, such as the Coega SEZ Hive Hydrogen Green



Nwabisani Duma, Coega, project co-ordinator for ICT, research and strategy

Ammonia Project, SEZs can demonstrate leadership in environmental stewardship while driving economic growth and competitiveness. By piloting and scaling innovative green technologies and practices, SEZs can contribute to a circular economy and enhance their reputation as responsible corporate citizens and sustainable development leaders in the global marketplace. SEZs in South Africa have a unique opportunity to lead in the 4th Industrial Revolution by reimagining their operating models, embracing cognitive infrastructure, exponen-

tial organisations, and sustainable innovation. By prioritising collaboration, innovation, and sustainability, SEZs can drive economic growth, foster innovation, and enhance regional integration across Africa, unlocking their full potential as catalysts of industrial transformation and global competitiveness. As we navigate the complexities of the 4IR, it is imperative that SEZs evolve into adaptive, resilient, and sustainable hubs of economic activity, setting a new standard for urban development and industrial transformation in the global marketplace.



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