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Cape Town Infrastructure Vision 2026: R120 billion industrial boom



Mayor Geordin Hill-Lewis.

By Adrian Ephraim

As Cape Town enters 2026 on the back of record-breaking infrastructure spending in 2025, Mayor Geordin Hill-Lewis is making an audacious pitch: the Mother City is where Africa's next manufacturing boom begins.

Cape Town has set a record for South African municipal infrastructure investment, spending R9.5 billion in the 2024/25 financial year. For Mayor Geordin Hill-Lewis, it's about creating irreversible momentum that positions the Mother City as Africa's premier industrial destination.

"Cape Town has outspent Joburg and Tshwane combined, R25 billion versus R22 billion, in this term of office," Hill-Lewis told Cape Business News. "And we're on track to outspend all three Gauteng metros combined by the end of the current financial year."

The numbers tell a story of deliberate differentiation. While South Africa faces persistent socioeconomic inequality and electricity supply constraints, Cape Town is executing a R120 billion 10-year infrastructure pipeline that reads less like municipal housekeeping and more like industrial policy.

The industrial backbone takes shape

For manufacturers evaluating African expansion, three projects deserve close attention:

The R5.2 billion Potsdam Wastewater Treatment Works upgrade has reached 60% completion, with operational trials beginning in 2026. Beyond environmental remediation, the project doubles sewage treatment capacity from 47 to 100 million litres daily, fundamentally changing what's possible in the Killarney industrial corridor.

"This is a critical project which doubles the sewer treatment capacity in this part of the city, enabling development and economic growth, including in the surrounding industrial and residential areas," Hill-Lewis says.

For food processors in Montague Gardens, the timing couldn't be better. Cape Town's Water and Sanitation directorate spent 95% of its R4 billion capital budget in 2024/25.

The city's R600 million sewer project in Montague Gardens is nearing 2026 completion. This infrastructure transforms manufacturing feasibility in one of South Africa's key industrial nodes.

The power equation

Perhaps most critically for 24/7 manufacturing operations, Cape Town serves approximately 70% of its geographic area with municipal electricity, not Eskom. "There is a legal and bureaucratic process to navigate with the national government, but we will keep pushing for this so that all of our metros can benefit from reliable electricity services," Hill-Lewis says.

The competitive advantage is tangible. Cape Town's electricity price increase is just 2% compared to Eskom's 11.32% nationwide increase. Manufacturers can sell excess power back to the grid and participate in the city's wheeling programme to trade energy, national firsts that materially impact operating economics.

The SEZ strategy

The Atlantis Special Economic Zone has attracted over R3 billion in investments and created over 800 jobs, with four large-scale investors fully operational. For green tech manufacturers, the value proposition is compelling: a 15% corporate tax rate, duty-free imports for renewable energy components, and Cape Town capturing 70% of South Africa's renewable energy component manufacturing.

Hill-Lewis emphasises the broader support infrastructure: "More than R6.4 billion in investments and over 15,000 jobs were directly secured in 2024 via the City's support to 11 Special Purpose Vehicles across sectors such as BPO, technology, clothing and textile manufacturing, and marine manufacturing."

The execution risk question

When pressed on delivery risks for the R40 billion three-year capital investment, Hill-Lewis doesn't sugarcoat it. "Of course, delivery risks abound, most notably construction mafia attempting to interrupt projects, and contractors failing to meet the requisite standard of work."

But the track record provides ballast for confidence. Cape Town achieved 92.3% capi-

**EV Charging stations:
CHARGE's innovative off-grid network**



By Diane Silcock

ZERO Carbon Charge's (CHARGE's) development of a national network of off-grid, solar powered, ultra-fast electric vehicle (EV) charging stations, has reached a milestone with the pioneering company breaking ground for two new stations along the N3 corridor. This follows the successful launch of their pilot site on the N12 between Klerksdorp and Wolmaransstad.

The Free State site is approximately 180km from Johannesburg, and the KwaZulu-Natal site is just over 180km from the Free State site, and around 200km from Durban.

This milestone has been made possible through the R100 million equity investment CHARGE secured from the Development Bank of South Africa (DBSA) in May 2025. With the uptake in EVs likely to speed up due to lower-priced EVs entering the South African market recently, the investment came in the nick of time for CHARGE to step up development of their planned national rollout of South Africa's first network of 120 off-grid EV charging stations.

CHARGE's decision to focus on long distances emanated from determining, through the government's collection of data on South African roads, that the greatest need for EV charging stations for passenger vehicles is outside of cities and towns.

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Cape Town Infrastructure Vision 2026: R120 billion industrial boom

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tal budget spending performance in 2024/25, execution rates that would be noteworthy in developed markets, let alone South Africa's challenging construction environment.

The mayor points to completed projects as proof of concept: the R4 billion Zandvliet Wastewater Works upgrade, quadrupling of

sewer pipe replacement, and phases of the new MyCiTi route expansion across the metro's southeast.

The 60-second pitch

Asked to deliver his closing argument to a multinational manufacturer's CFO evaluating African expansion, Hill-Lewis's response

distils the strategy:

"If you want hands-on investment facilitation to cut red tape and incentivise your move to Cape Town, if you prefer reliable infrastructure in a city that is investing for future economic growth, if you desire peace of mind about good governance and a healthy municipal financial position, then

Cape Town is your destination of choice on the African continent."

The infrastructure investments are creating facts on the ground. The International Finance Corporation committed R2.8 billion to support Cape Town's infrastructure programme, with an 18-year tenor that signals international confidence in the city's

fiscal management.

As Cape Town approaches the 2026 completion milestones for Potsdam, Montague Gardens sewerage, and other critical industrial infrastructure, the question for global manufacturers shifts from whether the city can deliver to whether they can afford to ignore what's being built.

Western Cape investment surge – businesses commit R14,6 billion

By Staff Writer

ACCORDING to Wesgro's latest annual report, businesses have committed to investing R14,6-billion in the Western Cape, a move projected to create over 11 700 jobs in the province during the 2024/25 period.

The investment support agency exceeded its internal targets, having aimed to attract and facilitate R4 billion in committed investment and 2 000 jobs for 2024/25.

Wesgro reported that of the 14 investment declarations in 2024/25, about 42% were in the green economy.

The Western Cape has long worked to establish itself as an attractive investment destination for local and international investors. It managed to attract 0,06% of global investment over the three-year period from 2022 to 2025 and has set a goal of attracting

R200-billion in global investment by 2035.

Wesgro reported that of the 14 investment declarations in 2024/25, about 42% were in the green economy. These investments are in sectors such as green manufacturing, the circular economy, sustainable agriculture, e-mobility, and renewable energy.

A key example is the R4,9-billion investment by renewable energy firm NOA Group, which is expected to create 200 jobs. NOA Group committed to building a 94,5MW wind energy project, the Wind Garden, and secured a 20-year deal to supply renewable electricity to Redfine Properties in June. This investment adds to the R50,33-billion already invested in the region's renewable energy sector.

Another significant investment for the period is the R4,9-billion Devonbosch property development in the Stellenbosch Winelands, which will comprise modern duplexes, apartments, and penthouses.

In addition to Devonbosch, Concor Construction is set



to invest R3-billion in real estate in Cape Town. The group has committed to developing The Signal, a residential block within the Conradi Park mixed-use development next to Pinelands.

The province also attracted a R600-million commitment from the Ivili Group, a textiles manufacturer, which is expected to create about 600 jobs.

The green economy received a further boost with Zimi Charge investing R90-million in electric vehicle charging stations in the Cape Winelands.

In the education sector, the Calling Academy School is

building a R30-million campus in Paarl, and Spark Schools has committed to building a R120-million facility in Cape Town.

Wesgro noted that two-thirds of the investment value flowed into district municipalities, indicating growing geographic diversification.

Leads in districts now constitute about 30% of its pipeline.

The news that Wesgro attracted R14,6-billion in 2024/25, builds on its record of drawing international investment to the region. In its 2023/24 annual report, the agency stated it had secured R139,6-billion in investment from 269 global companies and

created 17 822 jobs between January 2014 and December 2023.

Beyond attracting new investment, Wesgro also stated it played a role in retaining existing businesses in the province, though it did not elaborate.

"Notably, the agency helped retain the largest private sector employer in Saldanha Bay (Sea Harvest) and a vegetable farming business (Green Growers) in Genadendal, in the Overberg."

"Our focus has been on ensuring that Western Cape businesses remain confident about the future of the province and are supported to reinvest wherever possible."

Steel Awards 2025 showcase an industry that refuses to slow down

NEARLY 600 leaders from across South Africa's steel construction value chain gathered at Emperors Palace on 23 October for the 2025 Steel Awards — a red-carpet event that blended black-tie formality with Moulin Rouge flair. But beneath the feathers and top hats was a deeper message: the steel industry is still standing strong, innovating, and proving its resilience in a challenging economic climate.

Hosted by the Southern African Institute for Steel Construction (SAISC), the evening celebrated far more than

individual projects. It highlighted an industry adapting to supply disruptions, policy shifts and global uncertainty — and still delivering world-class engineering.

SAISC CEO Ammanuel Gebremeskal reminded attendees that the impact of the Awards stretches well beyond the room. International audiences track South Africa's steel achievements closely, he said, with global requests pouring in for South African expertise. "As the world moves further into the cloud, we remain one of the few industries grounded to support a

modern society," he noted.

The sentiment was echoed by SAISC board member and Macsteel Engineering Manager Axel Kayoka, who addressed concerns around steel supply. Despite mill closures and shifts in sourcing, he said, the industry has stabilised through new supply channels, strong networks and consistent quality assurance. His focus for 2026: continuity of supply, quality and compliance, and confidence in local capability.

Collaboration emerged as one of the night's strongest themes.

Many of the top projects — spanning architects, engineers, fabricators, cladders, merchants and contractors — showcased teamwork rather than competition. As SAISC Board Chairwoman and Betterect MD Nicolette Skjoldhammar said, the Awards aim to inspire and "showcase to the rest of the world what our industry can achieve."

Category winners offered a snapshot of the sector's depth and innovation, underscoring why South Africa's steel industry remains a cornerstone of infrastructure development across the region.

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Cape Town exports: Navigating US tariffs with new market growth

A sharp, pre-deadline surge in fruit exports and an 85% plunge in vehicle sales to the US highlight how the country is adapting under pressure, buoyed by breakthroughs in China and Europe.



By Staff Writer

CAPE Town's latest export numbers show that the steep hike in trade tariffs by the US is having a marked impact on the city's economy, even before they came into effect.

top export to the US. In contrast, yachts and other pleasure and sport vessels recorded a 31.8% decline to R827-million year-on-year. The report said this was likely due to custom yacht construction not being able to avoid higher tariffs

Lobbying by the Citrus Growers' Association of Southern Africa (CGA) has led to a tariff exemption for oranges. "This is fantastic news for our growers in the Western and Northern Cape - the two provinces that are allowed to export to the US," said CGA CEO Boitshoko Ntshabele.

"The exemption once again makes South African oranges competitive in the US market, a market that holds opportunities for increased exports and local job creation," Ntshabele added.

There was further good news with citrus exports, as there was a record-breaking 22% increase to 203,4 million 15 kg cartons in global exports.

multiple stone fruit types from a single country under one deal.

"The opening of the Chinese market could unlock approximately R400 million for us over the next five years, a figure which is projected to double over the next ten years. We are of the view that the inaugural 2025/26 export season can generate approximately R28 million and R54 million in 2026/27," said Minister of Agriculture, John Steenhuisen.

There was also good news when it came to vehicle exports. Naama's Quarterly Review Of Business Conditions: New Motor Vehicle Manufacturing Industry/Automotive Sector: 3rd Quarter 2025 reported a 15%

"The opening of the Chinese market could unlock approximately R400 million for us over the next five years..."

This rise followed South Africa's signing of an agreement with China that opened up its markets to five types of South African stone fruit, namely apricots, peaches, nectarines, plums, and prunes. It is also the first instance where China has negotiated access for mul-

increase to 115 727 when measured year-on-year.

This is despite US exports dropping 85.7% to 1 002 for the period. Vehicle exports were boosted by a 20.9% rise to 91 951 to Europe and a 77.2% increase to 11 522 for Africa.

Is South Africa turning the corner? Data shows early signs of economic recovery

By Chris Hattingh

IS the South African economy finally turning the corner? Not yet — but early indicators suggest the possibility of a slow, fragile recovery. While the country's economic fundamentals remain under strain, recent data shows signs that South Africa may be entering the first phase of a better growth, investment, and job-creation cycle.

South Africa's GDP growth: encouraging but still insufficient

Between 2012 and 2023, South Africa's GDP growth averaged just 0.8%, while population growth hovered between 1.3% and 1.5%. This means the average South African has grown poorer for more than a decade — and reversing that trend will require more than a few strong quarters of GDP performance.

Still, recent data shows a rare bout of upward momentum:

- Q3 2025 GDP grew 0.5% quarter-on-quarter, marking the fourth consecutive quarter of expansion.
- Q2 growth was revised upward from 0.8% to 0.9%.
- Year-on-year, GDP expanded 2.1%, outperforming expectations of 1.8%.

This is alarming in a country where three million small businesses employ 13.4 million South Africans, out of a total employed workforce of 17 million.

er of long-term growth — also improved, rising 1.6% in Q3, breaking a streak of three consecutive quarterly declines.

But South Africa remains far from the levels needed to drive sustained economic expansion:

- Fixed investment is stuck at roughly 14% of GDP.
- The global average is around 26%.
- Slow reform implementation
- Persistent electricity and water supply issues



The data shows that some capital is returning to the economy, but not enough to signal that private-sector confidence has fully recovered.

Small businesses remain under severe pressure

While macro indicators show modest improvement, the small business sector — responsible for millions of jobs — remains in distress.

According to Absa's Small Business Growth Index:

- Only 38% of small businesses believe they can survive another year under current conditions.
- Just 24% fall into the "confidence" or "growth" categories.

This is alarming in a country where three million small businesses employ 13.4 million South Africans, out of a total employed workforce of 17 million.

GNU stability helps - but structural barriers still block growth

Some aspects of the Government of National Unity (GNU) are beginning to stabilise, which has helped support investor sentiment. Political and institutional stability is typically rewarded by markets.

However, stability alone cannot deliver the 3-5% annual growth needed to reduce unemployment and restore investor confidence. South Africa still faces deep structural problems:

- Weak property rights
- Inefficient trade and logistics systems

Even with improving global sentiment toward emerging markets, South Africa must fix its fundamentals to unlock long-term growth.

Local Government Elections could reshape the economic outlook

The 2026/27 Local Government Elections will refocus national debate on service delivery, infrastructure, governance and cost-of-living pressures. The outcomes could directly influence the stability and policy direction of the GNU.

Johannesburg will be the key battleground — with major implications for Gauteng, the country's economic powerhouse.

A fragile recovery: The pulse is there — but still weak

South Africa has shown notable economic resilience throughout 2025, and the latest data confirms the economy still has a pulse. But it is a weak pulse — not enough to fuel a sustained recovery without deeper reforms.

If current momentum holds and the GNU accelerates structural change, South Africa could enter the second half of the decade in a stronger position than in 2019 or 2020.

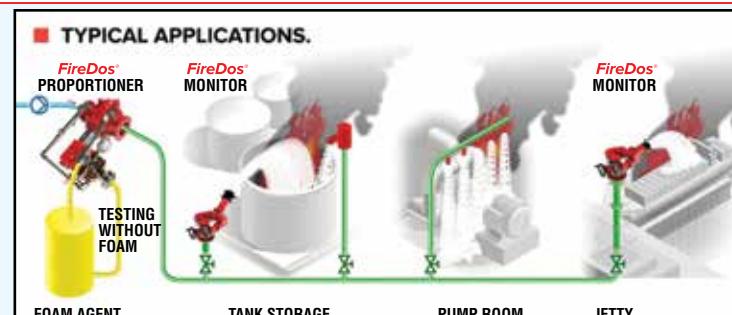
For now, the country stands at a crossroads. Early signs of improvement are emerging, but the real work of rebuilding the economy has only just begun.

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Youth unemployment South Africa demands a rethink



By Adrian Ephraim

WHILE Statistics South Africa's latest quarterly employment figures show unemployment declining to 31.9% with 248,000 jobs added, youth employment specialist Nkosinathi Mahlangu warns against premature celebration. The Momentum Group expert points to a more sobering metric that reveals the true depth of South Africa's jobs crisis: labour underutilisation remains stubbornly high at 44.9%.

"We take every victory, we embrace every victory," Mahlangu acknowledges. "However, looking at the numbers, what I've picked up over the years is that Q3 and Q4 seem to have a certain pattern, with specific sectors that usually pick up during this time of year."

The concerning reality behind the headline figures is that construction and trade sectors, driving recent job growth, aren't creating opportunities for young people. "These jobs require someone with experience," Mahlangu explains. "In most instances, these are individuals over the age of 35. The question becomes: how are we making sure these sectors also create opportunities within the entry-level space for unemployed youth?"

The informal economy: From fallback to foundation

Stats SA's recent revision of how it defines and measures the informal sector marks what Mahlangu calls "the low-hanging fruit that has been missed over the years." The informal economy has been growing rapidly as economically inactive South Africans seek ways to make ends meet, yet it has largely operated beneath the radar of official measurement and policy support.

"The informal sector plays a pivotal role in getting young people economically active and gaining that much-needed experience," Mahlangu argues. But transforming it from a survival

strategy into a genuine engine for youth entrepreneurship requires fundamental shifts in how government and business approach it.

He recalls President Ramaphosa's commitment two years ago to reduce red tape for entrepreneurs. "For the informal sector to play a meaningful role and not be considered as a fallback, we need the government to ensure the environment is conducive for it to thrive. It should not be looked at as a competitor to the formal sector but as having a role to co-exist."

The skills alignment crisis

At the heart of South Africa's youth unemployment challenge lies a critical mismatch between education and economic demand. Young people are "left to figure it out for themselves," making career choices based solely on what they've been exposed to, Mahlangu observes.

"They go to higher institutions of learning and get qualifications only to find that those qualifications do not translate into immediate employment," he notes. The solution requires earlier intervention in career guidance, starting at high school level, combined with better alignment between training institutions and sector demands.

Each sector needs to communicate its three-to-five-year skills requirements clearly, allowing education providers to channel students toward qualifications that match market needs. This applies equally to universities and TVET colleges, where artisan training that includes workplace experience creates work-ready graduates.

Provincial disparities demand localised solutions

The Eastern Cape and North West provinces consistently register the highest unemployment rates, with numbers that haven't shifted significantly quarter-on-quarter.

Rather than perpetuating urban migration patterns that see young people flood into Johannesburg chasing opportunities, Mahlangu advocates for identifying and developing key economic drivers within these provinces.

"We need to have skills audits to say how far or how big the gap is between the skills that have been acquired and what their market is demanding in those respective areas," he explains.

From temporary to permanent: Breaking the cycle

The blueprint for creating sustainable youth employment pathways already exists in internship and learnership programmes, but the value chain breaks down at completion. "We wouldn't need a cycle whereby from an intern you're back into the cycle again, becoming a statistic that says I'm unemployed now, I'm upskilled but I'm unemployed," Mahlangu warns.

He proposes incentivising corporates to convert temporary positions into permanent employment when young people are kept as interns or contract workers beyond a year, demonstrating the ongoing need for their skills.

Momentum Group's own programmes in cybersecurity, software development, and data science demonstrate this model's viability, with interns being absorbed as permanent workforce. "If we have seen that happening in our space, we are optimistic this can be replicated and scaled across sectors," Mahlangu says.

His advice to young South Africans entering the job market today is pragmatic: be focused on long-term goals, use each opportunity as a stepping stone, continuously upskill using internal corporate resources, and leave the door open for those following behind.

"There is a space for young people in our environment," he concludes. "But we cannot do this alone."

JMC re-enters SA Market as Salvador Caetano bets on value- focused bakkie growth

GLOBAL automotive group Salvador Caetano has officially reintroduced the JMC brand to South Africa, marking the brand's return after several years and signalling renewed competition in the country's tightly contested bakkie and light commercial vehicle (LCV) market.

As the newly appointed importer and distributor, Salvador Caetano says it is positioning JMC for a "Built for More" era backed by stronger global partnerships, a broader dealer footprint, and a focus on affordability and durability - key factors in South Africa's workhorse vehicle segment.



South African environments.

Beyond combustion models, the company

five-speed manual gearbox for agricultural, fleet, and rural applications.

- Double Cab: 2.0-litre Puma turbodiesel (104 kW/350 Nm), available in 4x2 and 4x4, mated to an eight-speed automatic transmission.

Both versions offer load capacities close to one ton, a braked towing capacity of 2 000 kg, independent front suspension, and a high-strength chassis for off-road durability. The Double Cab measures 5 305 mm long and features double-wishbone suspension, while interiors include features such as a 9.7-inch touchscreen, reverse camera and modern cabin materials, depending on the model.

Pricing, value and after-sales as competitive edge

Salvador Caetano is positioning the Vigus as one of the most affordable, purpose-built bakkies in its category, backed by a 5-year/100 000 km warranty and 5-year roadside assistance.

Double Cab models include a 3-year/50 000 km service plan, with optional plans for Single Cabs. The group has committed to parts availability through its national JMC distribution network.

Leslie Ramsoomar, Managing Director of Salvador Caetano South

Africa, said the partnership with JMC is part of a long-term growth strategy.

"JMC aligns with our vision of offering reliable, high-quality, future-ready mobility solutions in markets where customers demand both value and dependability," he said. "From a price-positioning point of view, we are targeting becoming one of the most affordable and purpose-built bakkies in South Africa. JMC is back and here to stay."

A renewed bid for market share

With South Africa's LCV segment remaining one of the country's most competitive and high-volume automotive categories, JMC's return comes at a time when affordability, durability and aftersales support are increasingly influencing buyer decisions.

Backed by a global automotive group operating in 37 countries, the refreshed product line-up, dealer expansion strategy, and focus on value per rand signal JMC's ambition to reclaim relevance in the bakkie market.

The Vigus, the company says, has been engineered for "long days, tough conditions, and real-world South African demands" - an essential value proposition as the brand embarks on its renewed growth phase locally.



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Municipalities: What to look for in waste compactors



AS South Africa's urban populations grow and waste volumes rise, municipalities face mounting pressure to manage waste more efficiently, sustainably and cost-effectively. Investing in robust, well-supported refuse compactors is one of the most impactful ways to streamline collection, cut operational costs and improve service delivery.

Sonia Pretorius, National Sales Manager at 600SA, a division of CFAO Equipment, outlines the key questions municipalities should ask when selecting new compactors and partnering with suppliers.

How do high-quality compactors reduce waste collection costs?

According to Pretorius, superior compaction technology maximises the volume of waste collected per trip. Effective compactors compress refuse at a ratio of roughly 6:1 — meaning one compactor truck can carry the equivalent load of two to three non-compacting vehicles.

"This translates directly into fuel and vehicle savings," she says. Fewer trips to landfill reduce diesel consumption, slow the wear-and-tear on municipal fleets and lower labour and landfill gate fees. For municipalities charged per trip or volume, strong compaction performance helps keep these costs in check while improving service reliability.

What long-term savings do robust compactors deliver?

Municipalities stand to benefit in three major cost areas:

Extended vehicle lifespan: With fewer trips required, the chassis and major components experience less

road stress. This extends the operational life of the truck and reduces the urgency of fleet replacement cycles.

Reduced downtime and repairs: High-quality components, proper assembly and strong after-sales support mean fewer breakdowns and fewer disruptions to weekly collection schedules.

"Effective compactors compress refuse at a ratio of roughly 6:1 — meaning one compactor truck can carry the equivalent load of two to three non-compacting vehicles."

Lower landfill expenses: South Africa's landfill capacity is under strain. By reducing waste volume, compactors help extend the lifespan of existing sites and delay the capital-intensive development of new landfills.

What should municipalities look for when choosing compactors?

Pretorius emphasises the importance of equipment engineered for South Africa's harsh urban conditions. Roads, terrain and municipal waste profiles differ significantly from European or Asian environments.

"For example, our Orakci compactors include metal plating that protects hydraulic systems from uneven road surfaces and low-hanging branches," she explains.

Key features worth prioritising include:

Robust, corrosion-resistant construction: Compactor bodies should use strong, corrosion-resistant steel to withstand varied climates and corrosive wet waste.

Zero-leak design: Fully welded bins prevent wastewater leakage, reduce clean-up costs and improve public hygiene.

Strong safety features: Municipalities should confirm the presence of operator-safety mechanisms, safer bin lifters and improved ergonomics to reduce manual handling risks.

What aftermarket support should municipalities expect?

A compactor purchase should be backed by a comprehensive support plan. Municipal operations often run 24/7, so municipalities should insist on:

- Thorough operator training for efficiency and longevity
- Flexible service contracts, including weekend options
- Mobile technicians for rapid repairs
- Clear response-time commitments to eliminate collection backlog

Robust support structures reduce downtime and keep waste collection consistent.

How do compactors help municipalities achieve landfill reduction goals?

Compactors are central to South Africa's Waste Management Strategy and to achieving Vision 2030 sustainability goals. High compaction ratios reduce the volume of waste going to landfill, thereby extending the operational life of existing sites.

Pretorius adds that compactors are essential to modern waste-separation and wheelie bin programmes. "By improving collection efficiency, municipalities reduce the number of vehicles required on the road, which lowers fuel consumption and carbon emissions. It's a direct contribution to cleaner, greener communities."

ACCA warns Africa faces escalating fraud risks as procurement, bribery and payroll manipulation intensify



REGIONAL analysis shows procurement fraud, bribery and payroll fraud are Africa's most pressing fraud concerns, fuelled by governance gaps, cultural normalisation, and the rapid expansion of mobile banking across the continent.

According to ACCA's new report, *Combatting fraud in a perfect storm*, Africa's fraud landscape is dominated by procurement fraud, bribery and corruption, and payroll fraud — all of which occur at significantly higher levels than global averages. Procurement fraud alone registers a 34% prevalence rate, yet is still widely dismissed as "operational leakage" or simply a cost of doing business, masking the true financial and organisational losses it creates.

The report draws on insights from more than 2,000 professionals and 31 global roundtables, released during International Fraud Awareness Week. It highlights how weak governance, limited oversight and fragmented internal controls continue to leave both public- and private-sector organisations dangerously exposed. Bribery and corruption remain entrenched, while the continent's rapid adoption of mobile banking has created "first-mover vulnerabilities" that sophisticated fraud actors are increasingly exploiting.

Developed in collaboration with ACFE, IIA, CISI, ISC2, Airmic and ACI, the report introduces a new Prevalence vs Materiality matrix to help organisations make more informed decisions on how to allocate resources before fraud erodes value. Through additional Calls to Action and a Thematic Typology, the report outlines practical

steps to evaluate what works — and what does not — while emphasising the importance of behavioural insights in governance. The goal is to shift fraud prevention away from "compliance theatre" and into daily operational reality.

A growing global trend is also emerging in Africa: ESG-related fraud is rising, especially in procurement and sustainability-linked spending.

"Procurement fraud and bribery have become deeply embedded in organisational processes across the continent," said Rachael Johnson, Head of Risk Management and Corporate Governance in ACCA's Policy and Insights team. "Africa's rapid digital adoption presents enormous opportunities but also exposes first-mover vulnerabilities that require enhanced risk governance and more transparent reporting structures."

"Strengthening Africa's resilience means elevating integrity to a board-level priority," added Jamil Ampomah, Director – Africa at ACCA. "We need clearer policies, independent investigations and leadership-driven cultures where speaking up is safe and expected. Only then can fraud be confronted before it erodes value and public trust."

The report calls for a "collective reset" to strengthen fraud defences across Africa. It emphasises the need for proactive detection, consistent accountability and governance systems aligned with global standards. Building resilience will require uniting professions, modernising oversight mechanisms and ensuring consequence management is visible, trusted and consistently applied.

Download the full report: Search for ACCA Combatting Fraud in a Perfect Storm on the ACCA website.



Lake International rebrand accelerates growth across Africa's food & beverage ingredients market

SINCE its recent rebranding, Lake International has swiftly gained traction in the market. Customers and industry experts have responded positively to this recent transition, appreciating the unified brand that

enhances recognition and trust. This strategic move has streamlined communication and fortified brand loyalty, validating the decision as a timely and effective shift.

Although Lake In-

ternational is a recent transition, it is historically equipped with a rich legacy strengthened by several respected brands. This heritage forms a solid foundation for the company's innovative and customer-fo-

cused strategies.

Today, Lake International stands as Africa's premier partner for food and beverage ingredients, additives, and processing aids. Known for its reliability and professionalism, the company is characterised by its innovation, agility, ethical practices, sustainability, and collaborative spirit.

Actively targeting key markets in sub-Saharan and West Africa, Lake International focuses on countries like Nigeria, Ghana, Kenya, Zimbabwe and Zambia, to name a few. These regions offer vast opportunities due to their growing middle class and heightened awareness of health and nutrition. By aligning its strategies with local needs, Lake International is well-positioned to capture significant market share.

Expanding into trending categories such as nutrition and fortified beverages, the company is developing products to address specific health challenges in Africa. Work on vitamin-enriched drinks demonstrates a proactive approach to regional health issues, aiming to combat malnutrition while delivering on taste and regional sensory profiles.

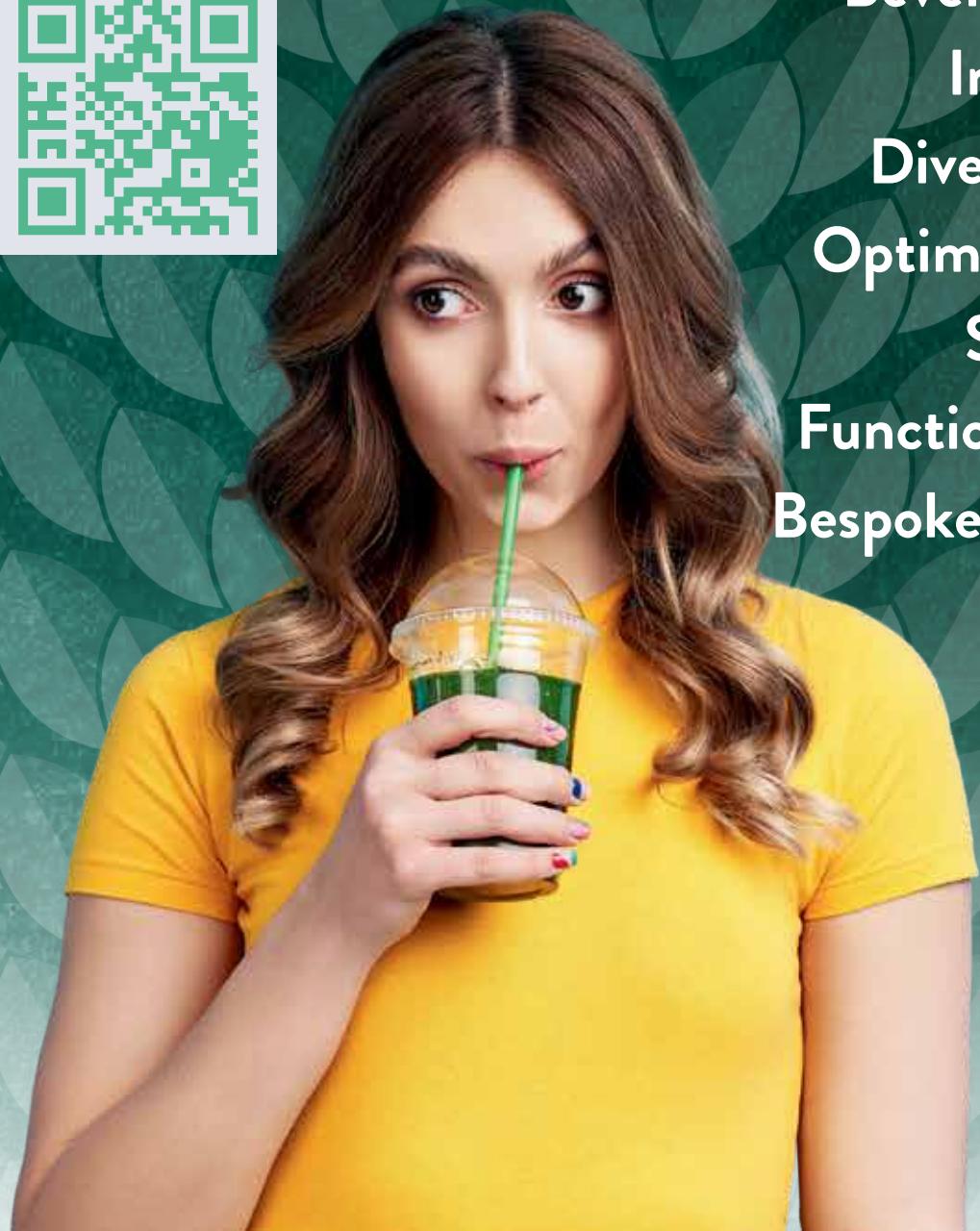
Research and development efforts focus on creating products that resonate with African consumers by blending global food trends with local tastes. Current projects include the introduction of plant-based proteins and functional foods, catering to regional dietary preferences while ensuring cultural relevance.

The recent transition to management ownership has markedly influenced strategic priorities and daily decision-making. This structure empowers teams to innovate and respond swiftly to market changes, fostering an environment where agility and proactive leadership thrive.

Looking ahead to 2026, Lake International aims to expand its footprint across Africa, with objectives to increase market share and diversify its product offerings. The company envisions establishing itself as a top-tier player in the region, recognised for innovative solutions and a strong commitment to consumer wellbeing through sustainable practices. This vision is deeply rooted in the legacy of excellence and innovation from its origins.



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Securing tomorrow's catch: Why SA retailers are investing in sustainable fishing



By Craig Smith, Senior Technical Specialist: Marine, at WWF South Africa

SOUTH Africa's commercial fishing industry is an R8 billion economic engine that supports approximately 28 000 jobs, according to 2021 figures by the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment. Yet, this vital sector is navigating perilous waters. With a third of the world's fisheries pushed beyond their biological limits, compounded by local challenges like illegal fishing and climate change, the long-term viability of the industry is at risk.

World Fisheries Day (21 November) provides an opportunity to examine the proactive steps being taken to counter this threat. Across the sector, key South African retailers are investing in Fishery Improvement Projects (FIPs) to safeguard the future of our marine resources. This is not simply environmentalism; it is a direct business imperative to de-risk volatile supply chains and secure the long-term profitability of a cornerstone of the national economy.

A roadmap to resilience

FIPs are multi-stakeholder projects aimed at improving the sustainability of a fishery by addressing its four key aspects: the status of the targeted species, its wider environmental impact, its social dimension, and its overall management. Stakeholders, including government, NGOs, researchers, and retailers, are united by this common goal of shifting operations toward more sustainable models that consider the health and resilience of our marine ecosystems.

By leveraging the influence of the private sector, FIPs create market-driven incentives that deliver tangible benefits, including

access to global markets, enhanced fishing-related livelihoods, greater consumer confidence in supply chain sustainability, strengthened fishery reputations, and improved seafood security. This momentum not only encourages immediate improvements but also lays the groundwork for lasting change.

South Africa now has eight active FIPs, supported by WWF-SASSI Retailer Supplier Participation Scheme members, who, through their individual commitments, are dedicated to sustainable seafood procurement and uplifting small-scale fishers and fisheries. Projects include the Harders/Southern Mullet FIP, the Large Pelagics Longline FIP, and the Hake Trawl FIP driven by the South African Deep-Sea Trawling Industry Association (SADSTIA).

These collaborations are yielding demonstrable results. This year, the SADSTIA FIP entered re-assessment, putting it in a strong position for re-certification thanks to the improved management of bycatches and the use of AI for species identification. Similarly, the Harders/Southern Mullet FIP is reversing a critical data deficit, paving the way for an informed stock re-assessment. Momentum isn't limited to mature projects; the Large Pelagics Longline FIP is now undergoing a crucial pre-assessment that will shape its entire improvement roadmap.

The path forward

Over the next two to five years, we aim to deepen FIP impact by integrating them into broader ocean conservation and governance objectives. This includes using FIP governance structures to identify and manage Other Effective area-based Conservation Measures (OECMs), particularly within

small-scale fisheries, moving FIPs from solely improving fishing practices to actively contributing to marine spatial protection.

We're also systematically embedding comprehensive Social Risk Assessments into all FIPs, elevating the social pillar from a checklist item to a central focus that addresses fisher safety, fair labour practices, and effective grievance mechanisms. This holistic approach is supported by advanced monitoring technologies to reduce bycatch and supplement traditional observer coverage.

The 10-year vision is more ambitious: transforming FIPs into continental mechanisms for sustainable seafood by connecting fisheries across Africa, fostering collaborative networks that share best practices and create unified policy demands. For small-scale fisheries, this provides a viable, legal, and sustainable economic alternative that directly addresses the systemic drivers of Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) fishing.

The reality check

FIPs are not quick fixes. They typically run for three to five years because genuine transformation takes time. But delay compounds risk. The longer the industry waits to invest in sustainability, the more expensive and potentially impossible restoration becomes.

The bottom line

Sustainability is not a cost centre; it is a long-term investment. FIPs are the most effective, collaborative mechanism for de-risking the future of the fishing industry. Embracing FIPs today ensures a license to operate tomorrow, translating directly into resilient fish stocks, improved market access, and the business continuity required to ensure that future generations can continue to benefit from this vital, shared resource.

South Africa's leading retailers have already made that calculation. The question for the rest of the industry is, will you invest in your business' future, or gamble that someone else will do it for you?

Purpose & Foresight: Why modern leaders need more than annual goals

EVERY January, leaders sharpen their pencils and open fresh notebooks for the familiar ritual: "This year I will... our business will..." Get fit. Have more fun. Improve sleep. Diversify products. Grow revenue. Build Team culture.

It's remarkable that a single calendar page can create such a powerful sense of renewal. We feel energised, hopeful, and ready for a "new beginning."

But research paints a far less romantic picture.

Most resolutions collapse before the end of February. Not because people are lazy or undisciplined, but because resolutions - and even traditional annual goals - are incomplete systems. Humans are not purely rational; we are emotional beings who rationalise. Even global stock markets are influenced by sentiment.

Goals tell us **what** to pursue. But unless the **what** connects to a deeper **why**, it becomes flimsy scaffolding that collapses under pressure.

And then there's the biggest factor of all: **context**.

We all operate inside a "soup" of forces that include AI acceleration, geopolitical tensions, tariff wars, automation, supply chain instability, mental-health strain, and economic uncertainty. In such a turbulent landscape, goals alone simply cannot carry the weight of modern leadership.

As I share in my latest book, *From CAN'T to CAN DO: 9 Human Capabilities AI Can't Replicate*, modern leaders need to strengthen two distinctly human capabilities: **Purpose and Foresight**. These aren't slogans. They are both strategic leadership AND life tools.

Purpose: The lighthouse

A lighthouse stands firm, regardless of storms, waves, or shifting tides. Purpose functions in exactly the same way.

This is the emotional engine behind your goals - the reason you get up early, keep going when discouraged, and stay committed when life gets messy.

Purpose also illuminates the 'context' - revealing rocky outcrops:

the 'distractions' that can derail your strategy.

Leaders grounded in purpose tend to:

- make better long-term decisions
- resist short-term panic
- inspire trust
- remain steady in uncertainty

Foresight: The radar of leadership

If purpose is the lighthouse, foresight is the radar.

It scans the horizon for emerging risks, shifting customer expectations, new patterns, innovations, and industry disruptions.

Most leaders set goals assuming tomorrow will look similar to today. But the world no longer works like that.

Foresight helps you see:

- which trends are noise
- which trends are meaningful
- when to pivot
- where to invest
- and what to watch out for

Your radar shows **what** matters on your leadership dashboard. Your purpose explains **why** each dial matters.

When leaders understand both, they become adaptive rather than reactive — a vital capability in 2026 and beyond.

Goals are helpful - but only within a bigger frame

Let's be clear: goals absolutely matter.

Goals sharpen intent, create focus, and help leaders define success. When set well — realistic, time-bound, and vividly visualised — they act as a compass.

But they work best when supported by purpose and guided by foresight.

Each year, I set various goals in the key 'dimensions' of my life:

Business:

- Launch a global podcast
- Build a new CAN DO™ Team Assessment
- Form one global partnership
- Work in five new countries

Physical vitality:

- Strength train consistently
- Maintain a stable



sleep schedule

- 80% "real food" nourishment

Learning:

- One neuroscience course
- Learn isiZulu on Duolingo

Family:

- Four long weekends
- One big family adventure trip

Experience and fun:

- One small "new adventure" each week (a mosaic class, cinema outing, a new walking route)

Long term:

- Design the home where I'd like to retire in ten years

These goals energise me, help me to prioritise, and make my life more intentional.

But after working with executives across Africa, the Middle East, Europe, the USA and LATAM, I've seen one truth repeatedly:

Goals collapse quickly when the world shifts - and the world shifts often.

That's why leaders need something sturdier.

Purpose + Foresight = Leadership that thrives

The leaders I see succeeding across sectors share one pattern: they combine purpose and foresight deliberately.

Purpose anchors you. Foresight guides you. Goals become helpful milestones - not the steering wheel.

Together they strengthen what I call CAN DO™ Adaptive Leadership:

- Clarity (knowing your why)
- Agility (adapting to what's emerging)

- **Nexus** (integrating all dimensions of your life and leadership)

This is how leaders stay grounded and adaptable — a uniquely human combination that AI can't replicate.

The January takeaway

Resolutions? Too fragile. Goals? Useful but incomplete.

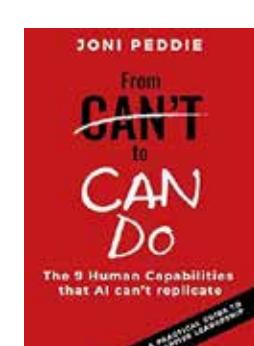
If you want 2026 to be different: Set your PURPOSE. Sharpen your FORESIGHT. Then let your GOALS support both. It's a far more robust - and far more human - way to lead.

About the Author

Joni Peddie is a Behavioural Strategist and CEO of Resilient People (#Bounce-Forward™). A globally recognised keynote speaker and facilitator, she helps leaders and teams build clarity, agility, and vitality to

thrive in an AI-driven world.

Her latest book, 'From CAN'T to CAN DO: 9 Human Capabilities that AI Can't Replicate', was released in 2025 and is available via Amazon, Exclusive Books and the website - <https://www.resilientpeople.co.za/books>



Propak Cape 2026 to provide support for Western Cape export-led growth strategy



THE Western Cape is pursuing export-led economic growth and job creation strategies. Growing exports in the province are a cornerstone of economic growth and job creation, and drive competitiveness, stimulate innovation and open doors to global markets. Leading export destinations include the Netherlands, the United States, the United Kingdom, France, and Italy. To support and expand export-led growth, the Western Cape Government is implementing several catalytic initiatives aimed at tripling the value of Western Cape exports by 2035 and positioning the province as a leading global export region. A large portion of Western Cape exports are from the agricultural, agro-processing and food and beverage sectors, with citrus, wine, vegetables, flowers and deciduous fruits leading the way.

In support of these growth ventures, Propak Cape will once again bring together industry leaders across the Western Cape export market to collaborate, innovate and do business. The Propak Cape 2026 trade exhibition provides an unmatched opportunity for suppliers of machinery, packaging, food processing, plastics, print, labelling and related industries to connect with thousands of prospective buyers and business leaders in the Western Cape to drive growth and innovation.

With more than 20 years of success, Propak Cape is the biggest trade exhibition of its kind in the Western Cape. As technology advances at an ever-increasing rate, new packaging trends are emerging and ground-breaking innovations are being developed across the industry.

Leading trends affecting the packaging, printing, plastics, labelling and food processing markets will be explored and displayed at Propak Cape 2026. Sustainability of packaging, including packaging for recycling and lightweighting, is an important trend affecting the packaging market. The growth of e-commerce and exports is increasing demand for protective transit and cold-chain packaging. Regulatory pressures to increase recycling and producer responsibility are leading to investment in partnerships and recycling initiatives. Export-led growth is resulting in growing investment in facilities, expansions and value-added packaging. These trends, and others affecting the local packaging industry, will be highlighted at Propak Cape 2026.

"The previous edition of Propak Cape was held in 2023 with 200 exhibitors showcasing innovative new products and services, and over 7,300 visitors attending the 3 days," says Mark Anderson, Portfolio Director at Montgomery Group Africa. "The show is recognised for its ability to link together people and products, build quality business connections, and facilitate sales. Exhibitors at the 2023 event reported a high number of onsite sales and hundreds of quality sales leads generated, cementing the show's reputation as an invaluable networking opportunity for businesses in the sector."

Divon van Zyl, Marketing Manager at Filmatic Packaging Systems, said, "It was a very busy show with high-quality visitors. The networking opportunities were fantastic - both with returning customers and new customers." Lars Frohlich, MD at USS Pactech, had "an excel-

lent expo," and said that "the calibre of people was very good, and the combination of new leads and existing clients was a nice mix. We have already booked our spot for the next expo". To date over 90% of the exhibition space for Propak Cape 2026 has been sold.

Visitors to the show are on the lookout for the latest industry trends and developments, as well as sourcing products and solutions for their business. 83% of visitors to the 2023 show had purchasing decision authority or strongly influenced purchasing decisions. The show attracts quality visitors of the highest calibre, with 43% being directors, CEOs or business owners and an additional 12% management staff.

"We are introducing some new initiatives for the 2026 event, which will be announced early in the new year, and content-rich seminars will again be part of the show's attraction, with industry experts sharing their expertise and knowledge. We are looking forward to another exceptional show," concludes Anderson.

Propak Cape 2026 will take place at the Cape Town International Conference Centre (CTICC) from 27-29 October 2026, incorporating Pro-Plas Expo, Print Expo, Pro-Label Expo, FoodPro Expo, and the Wine & Olive Oil Production Expo. The event is supported by the Institute of Packaging SA (IPSA), Packaging SA, Plastics SA, Printing SA, and the Aerosol Manufacturers Association (AMA). Propak Cape 2026 is organised by Montgomery Group Africa.

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

South Africa's wind energy boom faces major skills shortage as 44GW target looms

By Staff Reporter

SOUTH Africa's renewable energy transition is gaining momentum, but a critical challenge is emerging: whether the country can develop enough skilled workers to build, operate and maintain the next wave of large-scale wind projects.

At last year's Windaba conference, industry leaders warned that skills development must move in parallel with procurement if South Africa hopes to meet the Draft IRP 2025 renewable energy targets. These targets are key to unlocking project finance and attracting local and global investment - capital the country risks losing to more agile markets.

Recurring delays in REIPPPP Bid Windows, particularly BW5 and BW6, have slowed financial closes and created uncertainty among developers. Meanwhile, countries like Morocco, Egypt and Kenya are drawing increased investor interest thanks to clearer procurement frameworks and policy consistency. Although South Africa leads the continent in installed wind capacity, it continues to lag in stable procurement timelines and long-term policy certainty.



specialists and operations staff at a scale the country has never previously attempted.

While Windaba discussions centred on procurement certainty, grid reform and offshore wind, the skills gap remains a growing concern for developers preparing for the next round of projects.

Saretec: Building skills, but capacity is still too small

The South African Renewable Energy Technology Centre (SARETEC) remains the leading institution for renewable energy skills development and is widely seen as essential to closing South Africa's widening skills gap.

In a 2016 report, SARETEC announced the selection

of their partnership with SARETEC is the kind of collaboration required to strengthen the sector.

though the official Offshore Wind Roadmap is still awaited.

Offshore wind demands highly special-

"One of the strongest talking points at Windaba was offshore wind, a sector that brings both massive potential and complex skills requirements."

The programme equips graduates with accredited, industry-aligned qualifications and valuable real-world experience, making them immediately employable.

As demand rises for wind turbine technicians, such partnerships will be critical. Industry experts argue that scaling similar programmes, with stronger coordination between government, Eskom, developers, financiers and training centres, is vital to avoid capacity shortages and to support increasing procurement activity. Expanded training initiatives could also help address South Africa's high graduate unemployment rate, providing broader socio-economic benefits.

Skills must be at the centre of the energy transition

... "energy transition isn't only about technology and megawatts but about people." The sector will need technicians, engineers, grid specialists and operations staff at a scale the country has never previously attempted."

Ambitious targets, limited workforce

The Draft IRP 2025 outlines an ambitious goal of adding 44.7GW of new wind capacity by 2042. But turning this ambition into operational projects requires a large and highly trained workforce.

Deputy Minister of Energy and Electricity, Samantha Graham-Maré, reminded delegates that the "energy transition isn't only about technology and megawatts but about people." The sector will need technicians, engineers, grid

of the first 11 candidates for its Wind Turbine Service Technician (WTST) programme - an important milestone in specialised skills development for the sector.

SARETEC's model, combining hands-on technical training with classroom learning, continues to produce work-ready graduates with the industry exposure, networks and competencies needed in modern wind energy operations.

According to Willie van Niekerk, General Manager of GlobeEq South Africa Management Services,

One of the strongest talking points at Windaba was offshore wind, a sector that brings both massive potential and complex skills requirements.

Siyabonga Zondi, project manager of renewable energy at the Department of Electricity and Energy, reaffirmed the government's commitment to developing an offshore wind industry, even

Windaba concluded on a note of optimism, but the core message was unmistakable: South Africa's wind energy future depends on urgent, large-scale investment in skills development.

Institutions like SARETEC are well-positioned to anchor this expansion, but industry-wide coordination will be essential. If South Africa hopes to realise its onshore and offshore wind ambitions under the Draft IRP 2025, building a capable, future-ready workforce must become a national priority.

Industrial air compressor market eyes \$30bn by 2035

THE global industrial air compressor sector is positioned for consistent growth through 2035, driven by manufacturers' increasing focus on operational efficiency and smart factory adoption across key industrial markets.

Industry analysts project the market will expand from \$20.1 billion in 2025 to \$30.2 billion by 2035, representing a compound annual growth rate of 4.2%. This growth reflects compressed air systems' critical role in modern manufacturing, where they account for approximately 10% of total industrial electricity consumption globally.

Rotary and screw compressors maintain their position as the dominant technology, capturing 47.1% of market share in 2025. Manufacturing facilities favour these systems for continuous high-pressure airflow while requiring minimal downtime, typically op-

erating 8,000 to 10,000 hours between major service intervals.

However, centrifugal compressors are emerging as the fastest-growing segment at 4.5% CAGR through 2035. Large-scale operations in oil and gas processing increasingly turn to centrifugal systems for their superior efficiency at high volumes.

Energy savings drive investment decisions

Modern variable-speed drive compressor systems deliver documented energy cost reductions of 20-35% compared to fixed-speed alternatives, creating compelling return-on-investment scenarios even where energy costs remain modest.

Oil-filled compressors continue to dominate with 61.5% market share, but oil-free systems are gaining ground rapidly at 4.7% CAGR, particularly in food and beverage

processing, pharmaceutical manufacturing, and electronics production, where contamination concerns are paramount.

Asia-Pacific leads global growth

Regional dynamics reveal Asia-Pacific maintaining market leadership with 43% share in 2025. India demonstrates the strongest growth potential globally at 5.0% CAGR, driven by Make in India programmes and substantial automotive sector investments exceeding \$10 billion annually.

China follows at 4.6% CAGR, supported by Made in China 2025 initiatives. Atlas Copco maintains market leadership with 15.8% global share, followed by Ingersoll Rand at 12.4% and Hitachi at 9.7%. Competition increasingly centres on the total cost of ownership rather than equipment price alone.

MATTEI Group, a leading company in the production of rotary vane compressors will present the RSD Rotary Screw Direct Drive, its first screw compressor, a game-in-the market, at Autopromotec in Bologna, the main international trade fair for the automotive aftermarket.

The Vimodrone-based group is therefore expanding its portfolio with a new screw compressor.

"This is an important strategic evolution aimed at gaining new market share by offering a high-performance and versatile solution, explained Attilio Lamedica, Mattei's Industrial Division Manager for the EMEA Area.

The new compressor is designed for the industrial segment, in particular for applications that require high power and operation continuity, for manu-

Mattei Group presents the first screw compressor designed by Mattei

facturing companies, production plants and sectors that need a constant, high-performance air flow.

The machine presented at Autopromotec is a preview of a new Mattei range, from 2 to 75 kW, which will be launched in the coming months.

Technical features include high energy efficiency, superior performance and reduced operating costs. In this connection, the compressor features an optimised airflow and an innovative cooling system, as well as smart power management.

It has been developed in collaboration with key business partners, leveraging industrial synergies and advanced technical expertise, integrating the best available technologies to ensure it meets market needs as a state-of-the-art product.

Mattei's entry into



the screw compressor segment completes its offering and increases the Company's competitiveness by expanding the range of available solutions.

upholding the high quality and reliability standards that define Mattei's products.

"A choice that reflects our role as a true industry leader, enabling us to anticipate, recognise and meet market needs," concluded Lamedica



MATTEI GROUP PRESENTS THE FIRST SCREW COMPRESSOR DESIGNED BY MATTEI

RSD ROTARY SCREW DIRECT DRIVE, A HIGH-POWER SOLUTION AND A GAME-CHANGER IN THE MARKET

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From grain to greatness: Reinventing grain silo management with VEGA

THE journey from barley to beer begins long before fermentation. It starts in the silo, where barley storage directly affects efficiency, quality, and safety. As South Africa's craft and industrial brewing sectors grow, reliable

level measurement and point-level detection have become essential.

The silo challenge

South Africa's beer market, valued at around USD 3.5 billion, could reach USD

6 billion by 2030. Beer production contributes roughly R71 billion to the economy and supports close to 249,000 jobs, underscoring the importance of efficient grain handling across the value chain.

Breweries face sev-

eral challenges when storing malted or raw barley in tall silos. Fine dust generated during filling interferes with sensors and creates safety hazards. The barley forms an uneven "cone" shape as it loads and discharges, making

precise measurement difficult. Complex silo geometry further complicates accurate monitoring.

Without reliable feedback, breweries risk overfilling, causing spillage, dust, and potential structural pres-

sure, or underfilling, which leads to wasted capacity and interruptions.

Tools for better brewing performance

The combination of continuous radar measurement and vibrating point-level detection has proven highly effective in overcoming these issues.

The VEGAPULS 6X radar sensor provides continuous, non-contact level measurement unaffected by dust. Its tightly focused antenna delivers accuracy in tall, narrow, or internally structured silos. With no wear or clogging, it offers maintenance-free operation and can be used across different materials without hardware adjustments.

For maximum-level detection, the VEGA-VIB 63 vibrating rod switch prevents overfill and spillage. Its smooth design avoids clogging even when barley has low bulk density or becomes aerated during filling.

At the base, the VEGAVIB 61 ensures low-level detection, preventing empty-run scenarios and supporting continuous processing. Its consistent switching point requires no recalibration between barley types or batches.

Barley, beer and better data

Advanced level measurement enhances both operational efficiency and financial performance. By improving filling and discharge accuracy, breweries can maximise silo capacity, increase throughput, and maintain stable production. Automated systems also reduce safety risks, unplanned downtime, and the need for manual checks.

These instruments are simple to configure, robust in varying conditions, and deliver reliable data for better planning and smoother operations.

Measure what matters most

For breweries of all sizes, investing in modern level instrumentation is a practical step toward safer, more predictable, and more profitable operations. By pairing VEGAPULS 6X with VEGA-VIB switches, brewers can confidently manage dusty, tall silos, strengthening performance across the entire value chain.

The most important ingredient for your process?

A pinch of perfection.



VEGAPULS 6X

The perfect radar transmitter for non-contact level measurement in hygienically demanding production facilities.

Everything is possible. With VEGA.

- Precise level data, even with buildup and internal vessel installations
- Hygienic, easy-to-clean process fitting, resistant to CIP processes
- Tightly focused for maximum measurement certainty

A unified solution for energy-efficient pumping and motor control in irrigation



BMG and Agrico have collaborated to enhance compatibility between BMG Synergy PI500 variable speed drives (VSDs) and Agrico's Web Control platform, giving farmers and industrial users across Africa new options for efficient, intelligent pumping and motor control

BMG and Agrico have collaborated to enhance compatibility between BMG Synergy PI500 variable speed drives (VSDs) and Agrico's Web Control platform, giving farmers and industrial users across Africa new options for efficient, intelligent pumping and motor control.

"Through close collaboration and extensive on-site testing, teams from BMG and Agrico have verified the seamless operation of Synergy PI500 VSDs within the Agrico Pump Controller ecosystem," explains Mike Williams, BMG's Product Specialist for BMG Synergy VSD's in the Cape Region, as well as Namibia.

"This compatibility enables operators to integrate Synergy drives into Agrico's Web Control environment for convenient access to performance data and energy-saving tools.

"This development benefits irrigation schemes and agro-industrial plants, where pumping systems represent a significant share of total energy use. When used together, Synergy VSDs and Agrico's remote monitoring platform help users reduce energy consumption, simplify management and improve system reliability.

"Remote access to real-time operating data enhances decision-making, while integrated protection and automation functions reduce downtime. In one installation, an irrigation customer achieved energy cost savings of nearly 20% and eliminated unnecessary pump stop-

pages during peak season."

Advanced control and connectivity

BMG's Synergy PI500 inverter range is designed for high-performance motor applications, offering vector-control capability for synchronous, asynchronous and permanent-magnet motors. Through automatic tuning and precise

algorithms, the system maintains stable torque and accurate speed regulation across a wide operating range.

With Agrico's Web Control integration, users can manage Synergy VSD installations remotely via GSM or Ethernet, accessing real-time data, fault notifications and scheduling features from any location.

Agrico's Web Control platform extends traditional starter and drive systems with cloud-based operation, monitoring and protection - supporting a wide range of compatible VSD brands, including the Synergy PI500 series.

Flexible pump control and energy optimisation

The Agrico Pump Controller manages up to nine pumps on a single manifold when connected to a VSD as master.

Functions, including dynamic energy optimisation, section control and multi-pump coordination, are enhanced when paired with a Synergy drive, ensuring precise pressure control and efficient power use. Users can configure automated triggers, receive an SMS or call alerts for critical events and perform remote

firmware updates.

The Synergy PI500 inverter features robust hardware with wide input-voltage tolerance, a protective coating against dust and moisture and advanced cooling for extended service life. Safety and reliability are reinforced through EMC compliance, with built-in protection against over-voltage, under-voltage, over-current and overheating.

Peripheral options include braking units, reactors and PLC function cards, while communication is handled via RS485 and Modbus RTU for smooth integration with Agrico controllers. The Synergy PI500 VSD series also supports full Hybrid AC and DC voltage supply (Solar and Eskom), when installed within a BMG hybrid enclosure.

This enclosure boasts advanced cooling functions and DC to AC interference mitigation.

BMG's nationwide technical support and a large stockholding up to 400 KW, as well as training and repair services, ensure optimal installation and maintenance of the Synergy PI500 range. Agrico complements this through its dedicated Web Control help desk, assisting clients with connectivity and configuration.

Compact, user-friendly low dew point compressed air dryers

THE Sahara Series of compressed air dryers from Artic Driers International is designed to deliver reliable low dew point performance in a compact, robust package. The SA Series heatless twin-tower adsorption dryers combine durability, efficiency and intelligent control.

Designed with a small footprint and heavy-duty construction, the SA Series features patented free-floating shuttle valves that control both inlet and outlet air on all units. Changeover between desorption and online drying is handled by two rugged angle-seat valves, actuated by pneumatic valves and managed through the user-friendly HCD1 timer control system.

This configuration ensures consistent operation and long service life with minimal maintenance.

Larger Sahara units are mounted on a "Low Ride" heavy-duty frame equipped with forklift slots and lifting shackles, simplifying logistics and installation. All dryers are engineered to comply with local SANS 347 directives, with alternative pressure codes available on request.



Advanced control features

All Sahara dryers are fitted with the HCD1 control box, which allows trained personnel to adjust drying and re-pressurisation times when required. A countdown display on the fascia provides clear visibility of the dryer's status within each cycle. The controller can also be integrated with a compressor stop/start sequence, ensuring coordinated system operation.

A 4–20 mA output enables plant control systems to monitor dew point status and initiate corrective action if required.

The controller also includes an optional dew point control function, using a SUTO iTEC™ dew point probe to trigger tower changeover only when the target dew point is reached, significantly reducing purge air losses.

For more information, visit www.articdriers.co.za

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Spray nozzles in agri-processing: Precision, efficiency and food safety



SPRAY nozzles from Spraying Systems Co., a leading manufacturer of spray technology, play a pivotal role in agri-processing, which involves transforming raw agricultural products into finished goods like dairy, bakery items, meat, beverages, and pet food.

These nozzles are engineered for precision, efficiency, and compliance with food safety standards, enabling operations such as coating, cleaning, sanitising, lubricating, humidification, and spray drying. By producing controlled droplet sizes and spray patterns—ranging from fine mist spray to full cone nozzles—they minimise waste, reduce chemical usage, and enhance product quality in processing plants.

In coating applications, spray nozzles ensure uniform application of ingredients to agricultural products. For instance, in bakery processing derived from grains, nozzles apply release agents and mould inhibitors to prevent sticking and extend shelf life, using Precision Spray Control technology for consistent coverage even on viscous substances like glazes or oils.

In pet food production from agricultural byproducts, they precisely dispense flavourings and antioxidants,

improving palatability and consistency while cutting costs. For meat and poultry from livestock, antimicrobial agents are sprayed to inhibit bacterial growth, maintaining safety and freshness during processing.

Nozzles like the Pulsajet automatic spray guns adjust to line speeds, ensuring even coating of glazing liquids or chocolate enrobing on nuts and fruits, reducing over-application and waste.



Cleaning and sanitising are critical in agri-processing to prevent contamination. TankJet nozzles, for example, are used in dairy plants for thorough tank washing, removing residues from milk processing tanks while conserving water and chemicals. In breweries and wineries, automated systems sanitise hard-to-reach areas, shortening cleaning cycles and enhancing hygiene. The AutoJet Food Safety System has achieved up to 75% reduction in antimicrobial use in meat processing

by optimising spray patterns for effective pathogen control. For fruits and vegetables, nozzles facilitate rinsing and washing lines, removing dirt and pesticides post-harvest on product, conveyors and crates.

Spray drying, a key process for powdered products from agri-sources, relies on SprayDry nozzles to atomize liquids into fine droplets for rapid evaporation.

These are essential for producing milk powder, whey, infant formula, coffee, spices, and yeast, handling high-viscosity feeds while maximising yield and particle uniformity.

In beverage processing, nozzles lubricate conveyors for smooth transport of bottles or cans filled with juices or beers from fruits and grains.

Humidification applications maintain optimal moisture levels in storage facilities for grains, fruits, and vegetables, preventing spoilage. Overall, these nozzles use

AutoJet spray controller for real-time adjustments, promoting sustainability by lowering water and energy consumption—critical in resource-intensive agri-processing.

The benefits include improved efficiency, cost savings, and adherence to food safety regulations like FDA standards, making Spraying Systems Co.'s products indispensable for modern agri-processing operations.

For more information visit www.spray.co.za or contact grant@monitorspray.co.za

Beyond G20: Can South Africa's food producers lead in sustainable innovation?

NOW that the G20 Summit has come and gone, and global leaders have prioritised economic and financial stability, tackling the critical issues needed to accelerate sustainable and inclusive growth and food systems, the transition toward climate-smart, locally rooted production is central to the discussions.

Morne Botes, Commercial Director at Southern Oil (SOILL), says the timing is significant: "As the chairing country, South Africa has driven the Ubuntu Declaration, which places dignity, solidarity, and equitable food systems at the heart of this year's G20 focus."

Despite being classified as a food-secure nation with a robust agricultural base, South Africa continues to struggle with food insecurity at the household level. Recent data from the South African Food Security Index shows notable progress - rising from 44.9 in 2024 to 56.5 in 2025 - but the sector remains vulnerable to climate pressures, rising input costs and youth disengagement from agriculture.

Botes believes this is where local producers can lead: "South Africa is already a continental leader in agri-exports and policy innovation. Food producers have a real opportunity to accelerate sustainable innovation - from local sourcing and regenerative farming to reducing import reliance - key measures for strengthening and growing South Africa's agricultural sector. Our commitment to supporting local canola farmers at SOILL is a practical example of this in action."

Local food producers for sustainable impact

Agricultural contributes about 2.8% to GDP and 4% to national employment, a modest share on paper, but



one that feeds millions and carries significant potential. With the local food market set to grow from USD 17.3 billion in 2025 to USD 25 billion by 2030, the real opportunity lies in shifting toward climate-smart, inclusive and innovation-driven growth.

"By sourcing canola, for example, directly from South African farmers, we not only build a resilient supply chain but also cut transport emissions linked to long-distance logistics and ensure full traceability. It's a practical response that aligns well with the G20's call for resilient, locally anchored food systems," says Botes.

This localised mode keeps economic value rooted in the regions and communities that need it most. For geographically dispersed communities - often the earliest to absorb global price pressures - consistent demand, skills development and secure employment can be transformative. Transparent and ethical sourcing can drive sustainability while still delivering strong commercial outcomes.

"For South Africa's food producers to lead in sustainable innovation rather than simply keep up, the sector needs expanded access to technology, financing and skills development. Opening the doors for the children of farmworkers and nurturing the next gen-

eration of agricultural talent is also becoming equally important," adds Botes.

Tech in farming drives innovation

Technology is reshaping farming faster than many realise. Tools like drones, soil sensors and GPS mapping have already become part of the everyday operations.

According to the Department of Science and Innovation, 67% of South African agribusinesses are experimenting with these technologies. It's not about chasing the latest gadget; it's the farmers looking for ways to stay ahead of tougher seasons and tighter margins.

"We've seen how small data points can transform an entire approach," says Botes. "They make it easier to make informed decisions on planting, irrigation and in-field adjustments. Working closely with our farmers, we've promoted regenerative practices - farming that restores soil health rather than depleting nutrients.

Healthier soil retains more water, stores more carbon and helps farmers recover more quickly when weather conditions fluctuate unexpectedly."

The outcome is a food system that's more resilient, environmentally sustainable and better equipped to face future challenges.

Sustainability as a competitive advantage

For South Africa's food producers, sustainable innovation is not just an ethical imperative - it is fast becoming a commercial one. Transparent sourcing, ethical supply chains, and traceable products are increasingly demanded by both global buyers and domestic

South Africa brought strong credentials to the table: adaptable farming communities, a growing appetite for innovation and a shared commitment to fairness and long-term security.

"The next step is deeper collaboration," emphasises Botes. "Farmers, industry, government, and academia must work more closely together to advance regenerative practices and open up supply chains. If we get this right, South Africa won't just follow global sustainability trends - it can help shape them."

He adds that the impact is already visible in the fields, factories and partnerships that are quietly transforming the landscape. What is needed now is scale: more investment, more cross-sector partnerships, and broader sharing of what works.

"As global leaders look for practical examples, South Africa can demonstrate that building a resilient, equitable, and sustainable food system is not a distant aspiration - it is happening here, steadily, tangibly and ready to be accelerated," concludes Botes.



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Kal Group posts strong recovery with 10% earnings growth



SOUTH African agri-fuel retailer delivers on promised turnaround as debt hits 15-year low

KAL Group has delivered on its mid-year promises of recovery, posting headline earnings growth of 9.5% for the year ended 30 September 2025, bouncing back from what CEO Sean Walsh described as a challenging first half.

The JSE-listed agri-fuel and convenience retailer reported recurring headline earnings per share of 624.47 cents, up 11.2% – a sharp reversal from the 3.6% decline reported at mid-year.

“At mid-year, we spoke about the momentum building in our business and the uplift we expected in the second half – and we have delivered exactly that,” Walsh said.

Financial turnaround driven by debt reduction

The company’s improved performance was underpinned by aggressive debt management, with net interest-bearing debt reduced by R436.3 million during the year. The group settled R268.2 million in term debt alone, pushing its debt-to-equity ratio down to 38.1% – the lowest level in more than a decade.

This debt reduction, combined with what Walsh described as “excellent margin management,” helped lift gross profit by 3.9% despite what he characterised as a challenging economic environment.

Return on invested capital – a key metric for the group given fuel price volatility – increased from 12.6% to 13.2%, while EBITDA grew 13.8%.

The board declared a total dividend of 210

cents per share, up 16.7% year-on-year.

Agricultural strength offsets retail fuel headwinds

Agricultural performance drove much of the recovery, with the agri-input channel pushing trading profit up 8.1%. Walsh pointed to strong farmer activity, noting that recent interest rate cuts are providing significant relief on South Africa’s R250 billion farm debt.

The company handled 18% more wheat into its silos than the previous year, while the broader agricultural sector saw record citrus exports exceeding 200 million cartons in 2025. Wine production was described as excellent, with stone fruit and table grape harvests showing improvement.

“Conditions are

favourable for an above-average 2025/26 grain harvest,” Walsh said, noting the company has invested in additional grain storage capacity coming online in 2026.

Fuel volumes presented a mixed picture: Agrimark fuel (focused on the agricultural channel) grew 3.7%, while overall group fuel volumes increased just 0.8%.

The only concern flagged was ongoing Foot-and-Mouth Disease outbreaks affecting the livestock sub-sector, though Walsh noted the group’s exposure remains low.

Expansion plans accelerate after manufacturing exit

KAL Group now operates 268 sites across South Africa and Namibia, including retail stores, fuel service stations, convenience shops and quick-service restaurants. Dur-

SOUTH Africa’s wine sector reached a significant milestone this week with the official opening of Klein Goederust Wine Cellar in Franschhoek – the country’s first Black-owned wine cellar.

Western Cape MEC for Agriculture, Economic Development and Tourism, Dr Ivan Meyer, joined industry leaders and local stakeholders to celebrate what he described as “a triumph for real transformation and inclusive growth in one of South Africa’s most iconic sectors.”

From neglected farm to thriving wine estate

Klein Goederust’s journey began in 2019 when entrepreneur Paul Siguqa acquired the rundown farm once worked by his mother. Over six years, Siguqa invested in

rebuilding it into a boutique winery and tourism destination, supported by funding from the Western Cape Department of Agriculture through programmes such as the Comprehensive Agricultural Support Programme (CASP).

Support covered vineyard establishment, equipment, and production inputs – all aimed at helping new entrants access markets and scale sustainably.

Meyer said the story reflects the long-term vision and perseverance of families who spent generations in farm labour. “This is the classic case of farm workers who gave their children a vision of the future. They did not only dream – they worked hard, invested their own resources, and partnered with industry to turn that vision into reality.”

A sector with major economic weight

South Africa’s wine industry contributes more than R56 billion to GDP and supports over 290,000 jobs. With 98% of the country’s wine cellars based in the Western Cape, the province has made agricultural development and market access central to its economic strategy.

Meyer said the opening of Klein Goederust aligns with the province’s Growth for Jobs (G4J) plan, which targets 4–6% economic growth by leveraging sectors such as agriculture and agri-processing. “Growing the economy and creating jobs are the Western Cape Government’s top priorities,” he said. “Klein Goederust will contribute to both.”

The business blends wine production with

tourism and hospitality, tapping into Franschhoek’s strong visitor economy and creating new employment opportunities in the valley.

A symbol of transformation

Siguqa and winemaker Rodney Zimba – both children of farm workers – represent what Meyer calls “a breakthrough moment” for the industry’s transformation ambitions. “Klein Goederust is a beacon of hope and excellence,” he said. “It shows that genuine transformation is not only necessary – it is achievable and sustainable.”

For Siguqa, the cellar’s opening marks more than a commercial achievement; it is a legacy project rooted in family history and a broader vision for inclusive growth in South Africa’s wine landscape.

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Tiger Brands advances manufacturing capabilities with refurbished Paarl facility reopening



TIGER Brands, South Africa's leading food manufacturer, has announced plans to commission its refurbished Paarl production facility by April 2026, reinforcing its commit-

ment to domestic manufacturing and supply chain resilience.

The modernisation project, with an estimated investment of R120 million, transforms the historic 1903

site into a multi-plant operation comprising dedicated lines for jam, vinegar and chutney production. The enhanced facility will manufacture a portfolio of iconic brands, including Mrs Ball's Chutney, All Gold Jam and Mustard, Colman's Worcestershire Sauce and Cross & Blackwell Kasi Sauces.

Workforce and local sourcing priorities

Employment remains a priority for Tiger Brands as it finalises the operational profile of the upgraded site. While specific staffing figures — both temporary construction roles and permanent positions — are yet to be confirmed, the company has commit-

"The Paarl site's redevelopment underscores Tiger Brands' long-term investment in South African production infrastructure, positioning the company to better meet local demand and reinforce its leadership across key food categories."

Tiger Brands emphasises that the upgrade is a refurbishment rather than a complete rebuild, aimed at bolstering efficiency and local output while leveraging existing infrastructure.

In alignment with its broader local economic development strategy, Tiger Brands intends to source raw materi-

als from qualified local suppliers capable of meeting the facility's quality and commodity specifications, reinforcing upstream value-chain participation.

Capital investment outlook

At the Johannesburg Stock Exchange (JSE), Tiger Brands CEO Tjaart Kruger reaffirmed the company's commitment to extending its manufacturing footprint. The organisation plans to allocate roughly R1.5 billion annually in capital ex-



penditures over the coming years to support capacity expansions and new site commissioning, with a focus on cost efficiency and operational excellence.

The Paarl site's re-development under-

scores Tiger Brands' long-term investment in South African production infrastructure, positioning the company to better meet local demand and reinforce its leadership across key food categories.



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Removing food and beverage wastewater risks with DAF

SOUTH Africa is rich with excellent food and beverages, produced by a local industry worth over US\$20 billion. Water is a crucial part of its success, from preparation to cleaning. But wastewater is also a major challenge for the food and beverage sector, creating additional costs, environmental responsibilities, and stringent regulatory requirements.

Food and beverage (F&B) companies need a flexible and high-value water treatment solution that is also exceptionally effective at capturing organic and oily contaminants. A modern and

modular solution called dissolved water floatation (DAF) provides the answer.

"Water touches every part of food and beverage production, and wastewater is one of the biggest operational risks the sector faces," says Chetan Mistry, Strategy and Marketing Manager, WSS (AMETI). "Effluent from food and beverage plants carries high levels of organic contaminants, which puts processors under pressure to meet compliance standards and limits their ability to reuse water. Removing this organic load is a constant challenge,

and that's why DAF is gaining so much traction as a reliable, fast-acting treatment step, easy to deploy in existing systems."

Organic load: An environmental and compliance concern

Organic matter in water poses unique environmental, regulatory, and food safety risks. Wastewater from F&B operations contains high levels of biodegradable material and suspended solids. As microbes break down this organic load, they consume dissolved oxygen which can degrade

receiving environments, suffocating fish and other aquatic organisms.

To manage the impact, manufacturers monitor key indicators such as biological oxygen demand (BOD), chemical oxygen demand (COD), suspended solids (TSS), and fats, oils and grease (FOG). These parameters guide how water must be treated for reuse, irrigation, or safe discharge under national regulations.

"Organic effluent poses unique challenges to other types of contaminants, and organic material is ever-present across F&B processes. It's a constant challenge for companies that want to reuse water, recycle organic material from waste streams for byproducts, or meet their environmental responsibilities," says Mistry.

The F&B sector manages multiple distinct waste streams, from ingredient-contact water to washdown and utility water, each requiring different treatment processes. This complexity is one of the reasons technologies such as DAF are increasingly used to remove sol-

ids and fats at the front end of treatment.

Managing organic matter with DAF

DAF systems are compact and modular making them easier to install and operate, and they can be permanent or temporary, even rented—ideal for targeting specific wastewater streams inside F&B operations.

The DAF floatation technique is also particularly effective at removing fats, oil, and grease (FOG), and fine solids and colloids. A DAF system dissolves air into water under pressure, then exposes the water to atmospheric pressure, creating microscopic bubbles that surface small and hydrophobic particles to be skimmed away.

This technique has several advantages:

- Contains few moving parts, resulting in relatively low maintenance requirements.
- Enables recovery of valuable solids or byproducts where applicable.



Chetan Mistry, Strategy and Marketing Manager.

paper applications, and today are used across many industries that manage high-strength wastewater. Industries that manage wastewater for reasons such as cost, efficiency, and regulations are adding DAF systems because they are versatile, target a wide range of contaminants, and are very effective."

Those industries include F&B companies, where DAF is changing the value that they produce from their water streams.

To learn more, visit <https://www.xylem.com/en-za/info/daf-rentals-food-beverage/>



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South Africa's beer industry showcases economic impact through quality and innovation



SOUTH Africa's brewing sector reinforced its economic significance at the 2025 Beer Trophy Awards held at Cape Town's Cullinan Hotel, where industry leaders emphasised the value chain's extensive employment impact spanning agricultural production through to retail and hospitality channels.

The sector supports job creation across multiple touchpoints, from barley farmers supplying raw materials to production facilities, distribution networks, and entertainment venues that drive beer consumption.

According to Charlene Louw, CEO of the Beer Association of South Africa (BASA), brewers are responding to market shifts with innovation in product development.

"This shows the industry is listening to what people want today: flavour-forward

beers that are fresh, fun, and more accessible," Louw stated, referencing the awards' entries showing increased focus on fruity and lighter beer profiles targeting younger demographics.

Product innovation addresses responsible consumption

The competition revealed significant movement toward low-alcohol and non-alcoholic beer variants, aligning with both regulatory pressures and consumer preferences for moderation. Louw characterised this trend as addressing Basa's harm-reduction objectives while meeting global consumption patterns.

The awards also recognised improvements in ingredient sourcing and brewing consistency, particularly among smaller producers competing against

established players. Judges evaluated entries using the Beer Judge Certification Program (BJCP) style guide, assessing aroma, taste, appearance, and mouthfeel across categories.

Market leaders demonstrate technical excellence

Newlands Spring Brewing Co. (as pictured) secured multiple accolades, including Beer of the Year 2025 and Best Hoppy Beer for Jacob's Pale Ale, plus a silver medal for Tribute Lager. Warren Wiese, brewing area manager, attributed the wins to quality standards maintained since parent company SAB's founding in 1895.

"As we celebrate SAB's 130 years of brewing excellence, we remain deeply committed to upholding the quality standards that have defined our legacy since 1895," Wiese explained.

The winning Jacob's Pale Ale draws from archival recipes dating back 155 years, named after Jacob Letterstedt, identified as one of South Africa's earliest commercial brewers. Wiese indicated the

brewery will continue knowledge-sharing with craft producers to strengthen the domestic beer sector.

Traditional umqombophi gains commercial recognition

United National Breweries won the Umqombophi Trophy for Chibuku Super Banana, representing growing commercial acceptance of traditional African beer styles. Victor Chimbiro, financial director, positioned umqombophi as cultural preservation through modern production methods.

"By refining and commercialising umqombophi in a way that respects these roots, our products are helping preserve a cultural practice that might otherwise fade in urban and modern contexts," Chimbiro explained.

The company's strategy introduces flavour variants, including banana and pineapple to expand trial among consumers unfamiliar with traditional sorghum-based brewing, while maintaining authentic production fundamentals.

Craft sector secures category recognition

A fro-Caribbean Brewing Company captured Best Specialty Beer for Coconut Bourbon Darkness and the Basa Low Alcohol Beer Trophy for Session 157. Founder Greg Casey emphasised consistency as the foundation for market expansion beyond the company's Cape Town base.

"We want to make an easy-drinking, low-alcohol beer with a big, punchy hop flavour. You can still have light beer and big flavour," Casey stated, outlining the product development approach targeting flavour-conscious consumers seeking lower-alcohol options.

The awards underscore how South African brewers are adapting product portfolios to address demographic shifts, regulatory environments, and international best practices while maintaining employment across agricultural and industrial value chains.

Industry observers will monitor whether these innovation trends translate to market share gains and sustained job creation in the coming quarters.

Vinimark vaults to top of SA wine distribution rankings



SOUTH Africa's independent wine distributor Vinimark has clinched the country's number one wine distributor position and third place overall among alcohol distributors at the 2025 Advantage Awards, marking a dramatic three-year ascent in the competitive liquor trade.

The recognition, announced at the Consumer Goods Council Summit 2025 at VodaWorld, Midrand on 8 October, positions the wine specialist alongside industry giants South African Breweries and spirits distributor Edward Snell in the overall top three.

Vinimark's achievement is noteworthy given its focused portfolio strategy. While

SAB dominates beer and cider segments and Edward Snell operates across major spirits categories, Vinimark concentrates exclusively on wine and select champagne brands including Champagne Bollinger and La Maison Pommery.

"Vinimark's achievement is noteworthy given its focused portfolio strategy."

The company's trajectory reveals sustained momentum in retailer relationships. From 12th position in 2023, Vinimark climbed to 6th place in 2024 before securing this year's third-overall ranking. The awards are determined through the annual Voice of Retail programme, where retailers rate suppliers on market leadership, operational excellence and partnership quality.

"Our rise demonstrates the dedication of our team and the strong, trusted relationships we have built with retailers nationwide," says Vinimark Sales Director Riaan Rautenbach.

The distributor represents over 60 brand partners across its wine portfolio. Its performance suggests wine remains a strategic category for South African retailers despite broader economic pressures affecting the alcohol sector.

The Consumer Goods Council Summit brings together South Africa's retail and consumer goods leadership annually to discuss sector trends and strategic direction. Hosting the Advantage Awards at this flagship event underscores the critical role of supplier-retailer collaboration in the country's FMCG landscape.

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Major R1.2bn fund launched to combat SME financial distress

ABSA and HEINEKEN Beverages unveil comprehensive financing initiative as business closures mount



SOUTH Africa's small business sector is receiving a significant lifeline as economic pressures intensify across the country. Absa, in partnership with HEINEKEN Beverages, has launched a R1.2 billion funding programme specifically targeting Black-owned SMEs – a move that comes as over 620 businesses have already shuttered in 2025 and court-enforced liquidations continue to rise.

The timing is critical. With GDP growth downgraded to below 1% and SMEs accounting for 34% of national GDP and 60% of employment, the sector's struggles threaten broader economic stability. The new initiative aims to address persistent barriers that Black-owned enterprises face in accessing mainstream finance.

How the funding works

The programme combines two financing streams. HEINEKEN Beverages is contributing R600 million through its Enterprise and Supplier Development (ESD) fund, which Absa will administer. Absa is matching this with an additional R600 million in co-lending for qualifying businesses.

More than 100 Black-owned SMEs are expected to benefit from the initiative, which forms part of HEINEKEN's broader Ukuhula Fund. This umbrella fund comprises two strategic investment vehicles: a R400 million Supplier Development Fund allocated over five years, and a R200 million Growth and Localisation Fund focused on import replacement and building local manufacturing capacity.

Absa is contributing R1.5 million annually to HEINEKEN's business development budget and R100,000 toward financial education initiatives – recognition that capital alone rarely solves the challenges facing emerging enterprises.

"This transaction reflects our commitment to redefining transformation finance, not merely through capital deployment, but by embedding governance, transparency, and measurable outcomes into every layer of the solution," explains Stephen Seaka, Managing Executive for Public Sector and Growth Capital Solutions at Absa Corporate and Investment Banking.

Targeting the full value chain

The ESD Fund focuses specifically on historically disadvantaged suppliers across the alcoholic bever-

"This fund is a large-scale demonstration of our commitment to South Africa's growth and to creating shared value across the country," says Millicent Maroga, Corporate Affairs Director at HEINEKEN Beverages. The company is investing R775 million total over five years when including its Tavern Transformation project.

Beyond capital deployment

The programme distinguishes itself through comprehensive support beyond simple loan provision. Participating SMEs will access business development services, financial literacy training, and integration into supply chains through Absa's national ESD platforms and agricultural sector networks.

Absa is contributing R1.5 million annually to HEINEKEN's business development budget and R100,000 toward financial education initiatives – recognition that capital alone rarely solves the challenges facing emerging enterprises.

Context matters

The initiative launches amid mounting financial stress in South Africa's business sector.

The sharp increase in liquidations signals that many SMEs lack the financial buffers to weather current economic conditions. At the same time, traditional lending criteria often exclude Black-owned enterprises from accessing growth capital.

By combining structured funding with governance support and market access, the programme attempts to address multiple constraints simultaneously – an approach that recognises capital scarcity is rarely the only barrier facing emerging businesses in South Africa's economy.

Closed-loop water systems in agri-processing boost Western Cape resilience



By Adrian Ephraim

FOUR years after Cape Town's Day Zero crisis brought the Western Cape to the brink of becoming the first major city to run out of water, agri-processors across the province have fundamentally transformed their relationship with this critical resource. What began as emergency conservation has evolved into permanent infrastructure investment, with operations from wine estates to fruit processors implementing closed-loop water systems that slash municipal consumption by 50-80%.

The wine industry, concentrated in the Stellenbosch, Paarl, and Franschhoek valleys, has led this transformation. Winemaking is inherently water-intensive – traditional operations consume 4-7 litres of water for every litre of wine produced, with barrel washing, bottling line sanitation, and cellar cleaning accounting for the bulk of usage.

VinPro, representing 2,500 South African wine producers, reports that member estates have reduced average water consumption from 6 litres per litre of wine in 2017 to 3.2 litres in 2024. The most advanced operations now achieve ratios below 2:1 through comprehensive recycling systems.

A prominent Stellenbosch wine estate invested R4.5 million in 2022 to install a multi-stage water treatment system handling barrel wash water, bottling line rinse water, and general cellar wastewater. The system uses set-

ting tanks, biofilters, and reverse osmosis to recover water suitable for irrigation and non-potable cellar uses.

The technology varies by contamination level. Lightly soiled water from initial rinses passes through sand filters and UV treatment for reuse in subsequent wash cycles. More heavily contaminated water undergoes biological treatment to break down organic matter before advanced filtration. The cleanest output can be used for irrigation, while mid-grade recycled water handles floor washing and equipment rinsing.

annual savings, a four-year payback period.

Beyond treatment technology, processors are rethinking water use entirely. Dry cleaning methods using compressed air and mechanical brushes have replaced water-intensive pre-rinse procedures in many facilities.

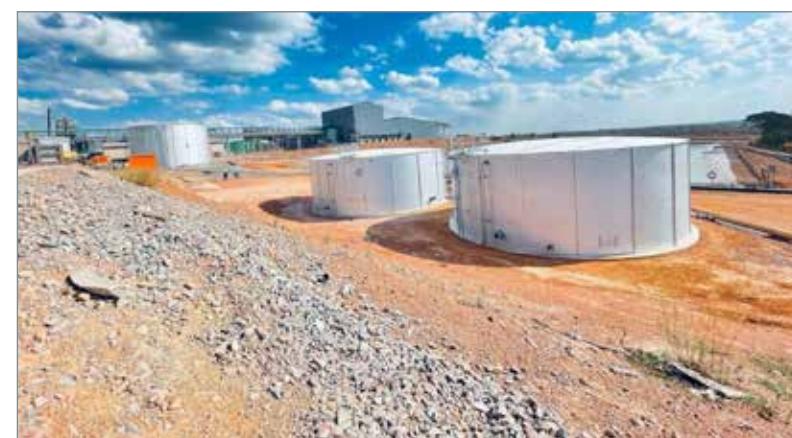
Automated dosing systems ensure cleaning chemicals are used at optimal concentrations, reducing rinse water requirements. Flow restrictors and spray nozzles cut consumption during manual cleaning operations.

The City of Cape Town's water resilience programme has

cessing facilities between 2020-2024 found that operations implementing closed-loop systems achieved average water consumption reductions of 58%.

The initial capital investment remains a barrier for smaller processors and co-operatives. Systems range from R800,000 for basic recycling to R8 million for comprehensive treatment facilities at large operations.

However, with industrial water tariffs rising 10-12% annually and water restrictions becoming the new normal rather than exceptional circum-



Fruit processing facilities face similar imperatives. Pack houses washing and cooling deciduous fruit during peak summer harvest periods can consume 500,000-800,000 litres daily.

Several operations in the Ceres and Graafwater regions have implemented closed-loop systems that recirculate cooling water and treat wash water for agricultural use.

A stone fruit pack house near Wolseley reports that its R2.8 million water recycling investment in 2023 reduced municipal water purchases by 72% and generated R680,000 in

stances, the return on investment calculation increasingly favours permanent water independence.

What the Day Zero crisis crystallised was a fundamental reality: in the Western Cape, water security is business continuity. The processors investing in closed-loop systems today aren't just managing costs – they're ensuring they can operate regardless of rainfall, dam levels, or municipal supply constraints.

In an increasingly water-scarce region, operational resilience has become as valuable as the water itself.

ASP Fire stresses fire safety for above-ground petroleum storage facilities



Michael van Niekerk,
ASP Fire CEO.

ABOVE-ground storage tanks (ASTs) play a critical role in the handling of petroleum products, particularly in refineries, fuel depots, and bulk distribution hubs. However, their very design and function mean that they present some of the highest fire risks in the energy and petrochemical sectors. ASP Fire, a leader in fire-risk management and

safety engineering, is emphasising the importance of specialised fire protection strategies to safeguard facilities, communities, and the environment.

"Unlike underground systems, above-ground tanks are directly exposed to environmental conditions, mechanical damage, and operational hazards," explains ASP Fire CEO Michael van

Niekerk. "This exposure, combined with the inherent volatility of fuels, makes them highly vulnerable to ignition sources. Once ignited, petroleum products stored in bulk have the potential to escalate a small incident into a large-scale fire or explosion."

Effective protection of AST facilities requires a combination of compliant engineer-

ing design, specialised suppression systems, and strict operational controls. South African standards such as SANS 10131, together with international codes from the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), provide detailed guidelines on tank spacing, bund wall construction, emergency venting, foam application rates, and fixed versus mobile suppression options.

Fire scenarios at AST sites often involve complex interactions between heat, vapour release, and structural integrity.

"If the tank shell is exposed to prolonged radiant heat, there is a risk of boil-over or structural collapse, which can spread burning fuel over a wide area. That is why a properly engineered fire protection system must be in place, not only to detect and suppress flames, but also to prevent escalation," notes van Niekerk.

ASP Fire's approach integrates risk assess-



"Every above-ground storage facility has unique risks depending on its layout and operating conditions," van Niekerk concludes. "Our role is to combine technical expertise with practical solutions that deliver real protection. Fire safety in petroleum storage is non-negotiable. It is the foundation of operational continuity and community safety."

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Ignis Fire Testing serves insurers with robust sprinkler testing

INSURERS require reliable, independently verified data on fire-suppression systems to assess and manage risk and claims correctly. Recognising this, Ignis Fire Testing – based in Blackheath, Cape Town – now offers specialised sprinkler head testing in accordance with the international standard ISO 6182-1 as well as sprinkler pipe testing. By providing efficient, high-volume verification of sprinkler system performance, they are a strategic partner for South African and global insurers, as well as building developers and owners.

Supporting insurers in underwriting and claims

For underwriters, accurate sprinkler performance data means better risk modelling, enhanced confidence in fire-suppression capability, and improved decision-making on policy terms and premiums. In claims situations, verified test results can support root-cause investigations, knowledge of system integrity, and performance at the time of event.

With testing available locally in Cape Town, insurers and industry partners no longer face the delays and costs associated with shipping products overseas for testing.

Ignis Fire Testing's rigorous sprinkler tests

Ignis Fire Testing performs ISO 6182-1-compliant sprinkler testing that meets recognised international protocols, with rapid turnaround times and traceable, verifiable data suitable for underwriting and technical assessment.

They can test up to ten sprinkler heads simultaneously, which is mostly the number required to evaluate whether a sprinkler system is sufficiently functional. Tests can be conducted across the full range of temperature ratings (from 57 °C to 182 °C) applicable to different sprinkler heads, as required for various building types and risk classifications.

The test methodology uses either glycerine or water as the fluid medium in the testing bath. The bath's temperature is controlled



via a Proportional-Integral-Derivative (PID) controller in accordance with code requirements. The activation of each sprinkler head is captured automatically, providing verifiable activation times and performance data.

About Ignis Fire Testing

Located at 28 Chardonnay Road, Saxonburg Park 1, Blackheath, Kuils River (Western Cape), Ignis Fire Testing is Africa's most advanced fire-testing laboratory. The facility covers fire resistance, reaction-to-fire and auxiliary fire equipment testing. The company's interdisciplinary team comprises mechanical, electrical, chemical, and civil engineers, providing comprehensive technical support.



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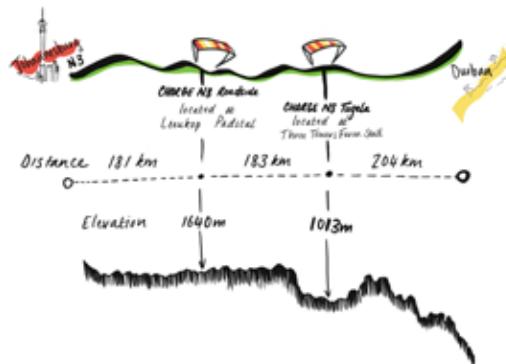
EV Charging stations: CHARGE's innovative off-grid network



By Diane Silcock

ZERO Carbon Charge's (CHARGE's) development of a national network of off-grid, solar powered, ultra-fast electric vehicle (EV) charging stations, has reached a milestone with the pioneering company breaking ground for two new stations along the N3 corridor. This follows the successful launch of their pilot site on the N12 between Klerksdorp and Wolmaransstad.

The Free State site is approximately 180km from Johannesburg, and the KwaZulu-Natal site is just over 180km from the Free State site, and around 200km from Durban.



This milestone has been made possible through the R100 million equity investment CHARGE secured from the Development Bank of South Africa (DBSA) in May 2025. With the uptake in EVs likely to speed up due to lower-priced EVs entering the South African market recently, the investment came in the nick of time for CHARGE to step up development of their planned national rollout of South Africa's first network of 120 off-grid EV charging stations.

CHARGE's decision to focus on long distances emanated from determining, through the government's collection of data on South African roads, that the greatest need for EV charging stations for passenger vehicles is outside of cities and towns. It was substantially more than

they could have imagined: the average daily car count on the N3 between Durban and Johannesburg is 7,500, and the N1 experiences similarly significant volumes—with northbound traffic exceeding 18,000 cars on busy days, and southbound flows often reaching close to 7,000. The statistics they reviewed also indicated that 49% of transport energy for passenger vehicles is consumed outside of the big cities.

"We are very excited to have broken ground and that two new stations will be completed in 2026," says CHARGE Co-founder and Director Andries Malherbe. "Thereafter, we will likely build the

lets at each site, with six DC charge points and two AC chargers," says Malherbe.

The novel concept of a farmstall at the charging stations has been a win with CHARGE's idea being to showcase that area's local produce coupled with being a source of employment opportunities for people in the local communities. For travellers, it provides a unique experience offering them a great place for a break from travelling, a cup of coffee and local food, fast WiFi, and very good bathroom facilities.

Malherbe says that the picture around EVs is not static. As technology and electric vehicles evolve, CHARGE will enhance and upgrade their equipment to meet the evolving needs of the industry. "The way we have structured our business, gives us complete control of the power distribution—never being subjected to load shedding—with robust battery backup ensuring reliability, and a generator providing additional resilience when needed."

CHARGE is aiming to source all of their equipment locally (besides photovoltaic panels), and Malherbe expects that this objective will become a reality in the not too distant future. He too believes that South African car manufacturers need to build electric cars to meet the needs of their global customers. He says, "In most countries now, EV sales—as a percentage of new car sales—are somewhere between 20% and 30%. EVs are going to be a part of our lives going forward."

CHARGE's decentralised energy model not only accelerates the decarbonisation of South Africa's transport sector but also sets the stage for a green-powered transport revolution, supporting large-scale EV adoption with clean, locally generated energy.

next 30 stations the following year."

CHARGE has been particularly innovative with their business model. Realising that the electricity grid was not designed to pull vast amounts of power to put into vehicles, it made sense to them to use solar power especially with their background in renewable energy, plus the environmental aspect. Another important factor they considered was charging time, and for long distances ultra-fast charging is essential.

CHARGE's decision to focus on long distances emanated from determining, through the government's collection of data on South African roads, that the greatest need for EV charging stations for passenger vehicles is outside of cities and towns. It was substantially more than

Transnet seals R1.4bn LPG terminal deal for Port of Durban

THE Transnet National Ports Authority has concluded a 25-year concession agreement with WASAA CEF SOC Ltd for the development of a new liquefied petroleum gas terminal at Durban's Island View Precinct, representing a R1.4 billion investment in South Africa's energy infrastructure.

The concession follows a competitive Section 56 process under the National Ports Act, concluded in July 2024. The partnership brings together a Level 1 black-owned and black women-led company with the Central Energy Fund, addressing both transformation objectives and long-term energy security requirements.

TNPA Board Chairperson Tshokolo Nchongo described the agreement as aligned with the authority's mandate to modernise port infra-



structure while unlocking economic growth through targeted investment. Transnet Group Chief Executive Michelle Phillips positioned the deal within the parastatal's operational recovery efforts, stating that TNPA is rebuilding stakeholder confidence through strategic partnerships that introduce new capacity and expertise.

The Island View facility, designated as LOT

100 Terminal, will provide 50,000 cubic metres of LPG storage and handling capacity. Once operational in 2027, the terminal will dispatch up to 800 cubic metres per hour of heated LPG for industrial and residential markets across South Africa and the SADC region.

The project diversifies South Africa's LPG import infrastructure, which currently concentrates operations at Richards Bay, Saldanha Bay, and Port Elizabeth. WASAA Managing Director Nokwande Qonde highlighted the growing role of LPG in power generation, particularly for regions without access to natural gas networks.

eThekweni Mayor Cyril Xaba indicated the development would strengthen Durban's position as a regional energy and logistics hub while supporting the city's Climate Action Plan.



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Nomqhele JD Dube, an Analyst in NAACAM's Policy and Regulatory Affairs division.

Localisation as the engine of SA's automotive competitiveness in a rapidly changing global market

SOUTH Africa's automotive industry is at a strategic inflection point. Global value chains are being reshaped by electrification, tighter carbon

regulations and geopolitical supply-chain shifts. In this environment, the competitiveness of locally manufactured vehicles increasingly depends

on the strength, agility and depth of the domestic supplier base. Localisation is not a slogan; it is a competitiveness strategy that directly influences

OEM cost structures, production continuity, export viability and future investment decisions. The sector remains a cornerstone of South

Africa's industrial economy, contributing more than 5% to GDP. Component manufacturing alone generated R63.4 billion in exports in 2024 and directly employs over 80 000 people, supporting more than 500 000 livelihoods across the value chain. Yet over 60% of the components used in local vehicle assembly are imported, exposing OEMs and Tier 1 suppliers to currency volatility, rising freight costs, logistical delays and supply disruptions.

Localisation strengthens resilience and underpins competitiveness. Sourcing components locally reduces exposure to exchange-rate fluctuations, shortens supply chains, lowers logistics costs and improves responsiveness. For export-oriented plants, a stable and cost-effective local supply base is increasingly central to securing future model allocations.

The South African Automotive Masterplan targets increasing local content from 40% to 60% by 2035. Even modest gains matter: a 5% uplift under the APDP could unlock R30 billion in domestic procurement, far exceeding South Africa's R4.4 billion US export market, according to DTIC estimates.

Realising this potential requires targeted supplier development, particularly for SMEs needing machinery upgrades, productivity improvements and certifications such as IATF 16949. The transition to new energy vehicles (NEVs) presents a major opportunity.

The global EV components market is projected to reach US\$654 billion by 2030, driving demand for batteries, power electronics, aluminium structures and thermal management systems. With its mineral resources and established industrial base, South Africa is well-positioned to localise high-value EV components.

Existing capabilities in areas such as seating, interior trim and wheels can adapt to hybrid and EV platforms, while emerging fields including battery assembly, high-voltage systems, hydrogen fuel cells and micro-mobility solutions offer additional entry points.

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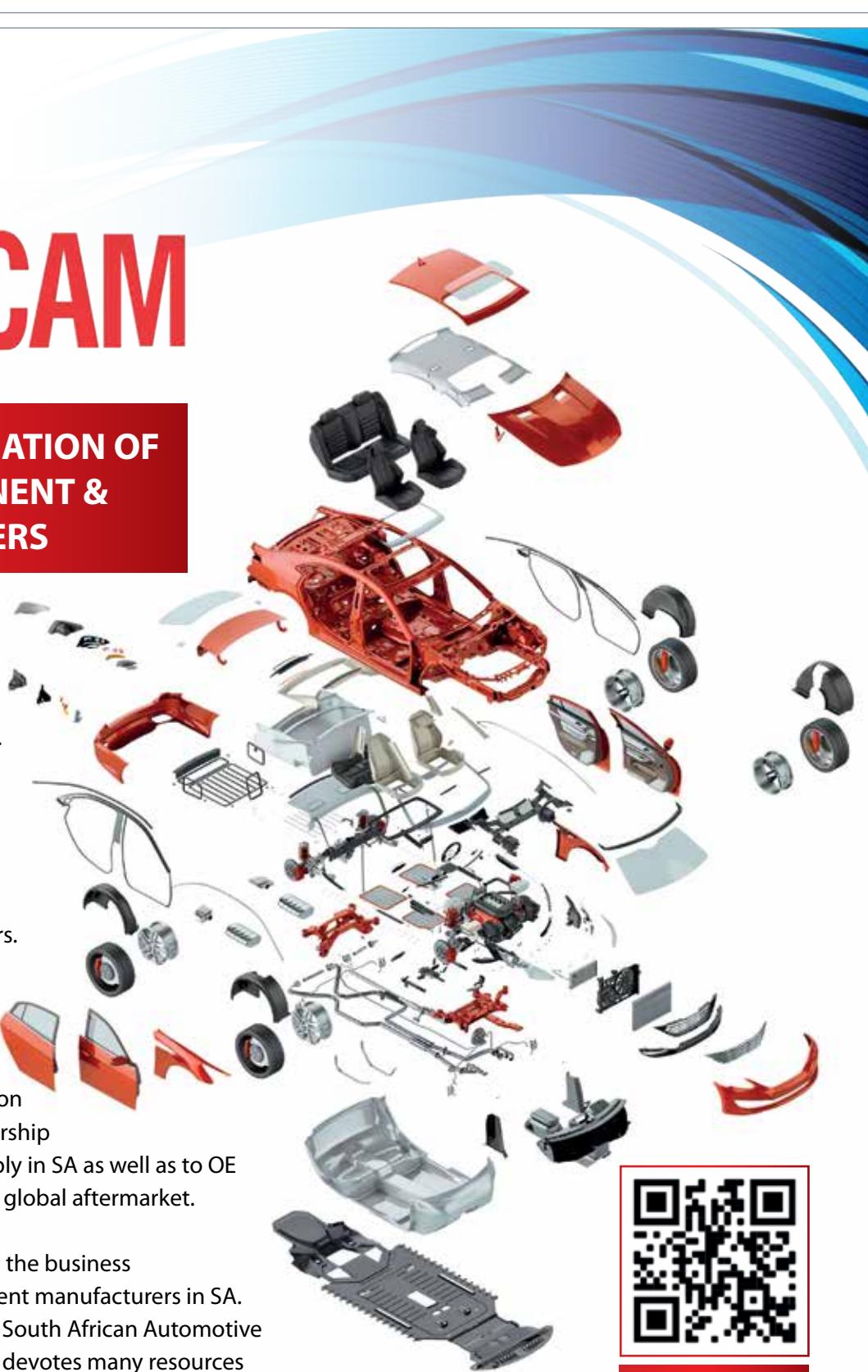
NAACAM is recognised as the voice of the South African automotive component industry both domestically and internationally.

As a member-driven organisation, the association is at the forefront of industry leadership, representation and stakeholder engagement for automotive component manufacturers. NAACAM represents approximately 150 manufacturing brands who collectively employ over 80,000 people and contribute significantly to economic value addition in the country. Anchoring the membership base are suppliers to OEMs for assembly in SA as well as to OE export markets and the domestic and global aftermarket.

NAACAM seeks to positively influence the business environment for automotive component manufacturers in SA. Underpinned by the objectives of the South African Automotive Masterplan 2035 (SAAM35), NAACAM devotes many resources towards supporting localisation, transformation and supplier development.

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SA ports handle 4.5m containers in 2025 as logistics reforms gain traction



SOUTH Africa's ports handled 4.473 million twenty-foot equivalent units (TEUs) in 2025, up 3.2% year-on-year, as sustained logistics reforms and increased private sector collaboration begin yielding measurable improvements across the country's trade corridors.

The annual performance marks a significant milestone in the recovery of South Africa's freight system, according to the latest Cargo Movement Update from the Southern African Association of Freight Forwarders (SAAFF) and Business Unity South Africa (BUSA).

Bulk cargo volumes reached 221 million tonnes, up 4.4%, while vehicle throughput surged 15% to 899,094 units, underscoring responsive trade lanes where operational conditions and demand have aligned favourably. The Durban Auto Terminal announced it had reached budgeted volumes well before the financial year-end and continues to outperform targeted volumes.

The positive trajectory comes as the landmark 25-year Transnet-ICTSI joint venture to operate Durban Container Terminal Pier 2 commenced operations at the turn of the year. The partnership is expected to raise DCT2's container handling capacity from 2.0 to 2.8 million TEUs through new equipment and advanced technology, while materially improving operational performance, including crane productivity and ship working hours.

However, the recovery remains incomplete. Despite year-on-year gains, total port volumes remain 6.6% below 2019 levels, while full container throughput grew only 0.4% year-on-year - reflecting broader economic headwinds rather than operational constraints. Industry analysts note this indicates

a lacklustre domestic economy rather than containerised operational issues.

The first weeks of 2026 illustrated both progress and persistent challenges. Weather disruptions across the Eastern and Western Cape resulted in significant delays, with Cape Town Container Terminal reporting 84 hours of non-operational time in just 11 days. The delays particularly impacted fresh produce exports, which require faster processing to reach international markets within strict timeframes.

Durban's Pier 1 suffered knock-on effects from congestion at Western and Eastern Cape terminals, with scheduled vessels delayed at other ports. The terminal used the downtime for maintenance, aiming to increase operational cranes from four to five out of seven available. Equipment availability across most terminals remained steady throughout the period, with one or two non-operational cranes at some facilities.

Cross-border logistics showed notable improvement. Median border crossing times at South African-controlled borders decreased by more than four hours to average 8.4 hours, down 33% week-on-week. In contrast, the greater SADC region excluding South African-controlled borders remained essentially unchanged at 5.2 hours.

The Lebombo border post, a critical corridor to Mozambique, processed approximately 1,300 heavy goods vehicles daily with stable queue times averaging 2.8 hours and processing times of 2.5 hours per crossing - a substantial recovery from the festive season slowdown.

Yet challenges persist at key regional bottlenecks. Three SADC borders took around a day to cross: Beitbridge averaged 29-hour cross-

ing times, while Kasumbalesa - the worst affected - took around three days from the Zambian side. Katima Mulilo also experienced day-long delays. Cross-border queue times across the region averaged 5.2 hours, indirectly costing the transport industry an estimated \$23.8 million (R392 million) in the first week of January alone.

Regional infrastructure developments include Zambia's announcement of higher toll fees for medium, heavy and abnormal goods vehicles - rising from \$60 to \$90 - alongside plans for a new toll gate near Mazabuka. Meanwhile, the Botswana Motorists' Association is planning to relocate the Groblersbrug border post and develop a freight-dedicated bridge in response to rising corridor traffic.

Air cargo showed mixed results. International air freight to and from OR Tambo totalled 350 million kilograms in 2025, up 0.7% year-on-year, though weekly volumes in early January dropped 28% amid typical post-holiday seasonality, with daily averages of 294,381 kg inbound and 230,406 kg outbound.

Global shipping dynamics present both opportunities and risks. Sub-Saharan African imports surged 25% year-on-year through November 2025, remaining a relative bright spot in otherwise subdued global trade. However, structural overcapacity in global container shipping continues to constrain pricing power, while global GDP growth is projected at just 2.6-2.7% in 2026 - below pre-pandemic trends.

Industry analysts forecast South African container throughput of 4.57 to 4.75 million TEUs for 2026, contingent on sustained institutional reform and system-wide coordination.

Cape Town port digital future hinges on Culemborg

By Adrian Ephraim

WHEN Transport Minister Barbara Creecy toured Cape Town's container terminal in early November, she saw nine gleaming "red ladies" - new rubber-tyred gantry cranes capable of withstanding 90km/h winds. What she didn't see was the real bottleneck: 253 hectares of undeveloped industrial land just across the road that could transform the way the port functions and, with it, the city. It forms a huge piece of the economic growth puzzle.

While Transnet celebrates R4 billion in new equipment, industry insiders and city officials are increasingly frustrated that the port's digital revolution - and its economic potential - remains hostage to stalled privatisation talks and an untapped logistics precinct that's been "coming soon" since 2023.

The Culemborg conundrum

Port Manager Rajesh Dana stated that development of the Culemborg precinct adjacent to the port would enhance operations significantly, integrating port, road, and rail connectivity for back-of-port facilities. The first phase was anticipated to start mid-2024, but progress has been glacial.

"Development of this precinct will radically improve the way the port functions and, with it, the city. It forms a huge piece of the economic growth puzzle."



radically improve the way the port functions and, with it, the city. It forms a huge piece of the economic growth puzzle."

For context, in March 2025, the Port of Cape Town reported an average of 15 gross crane movements per hour, while in 2012, cranes at Cape Town terminal managed 33 gross moves per hour.

The Privatisation deadlock

The government set a short deadline of August 2025 to enter the formal procurement phase for private partners, with the Development Bank of Southern Africa involved in setting up a coordinating unit. That deadline has passed with minimal visible progress.

"We urgently need to fast-track the privatisation of the Cape Town terminal to restore competitiveness," said Chris Knoetze, managing director of Link Supply Chain Management. Chris Petzer, operations director at Two-a-Day cooperative, explained that although several initiatives are underway, they've been too slow, with no path back to the port's 2012 performance when it reported 33 GCH.

The economic case is compelling: An efficient port could create 20,000 new jobs, add R6 billion in exports and over R1.6 billion in new tax revenue, according to Western Cape Department of Economic Development research.

Yet trade unions remain wary. Trade unions are unhappy about proposed private sector involvement and fear automation could result in job losses.

Colleen Jacka, founding editor of Maritime Review Africa magazine, counters that greater efficiency should improve exports, boost the agricultural sector and create jobs elsewhere, noting that one must weigh job losses outside the port that result from escalating inefficiencies within the port.

The new anti-sway cranes were supposed to solve this. Instead, the terminal operates at just 13 gross crane moves per hour - far below the global standard of 25-30 GCH.

What digital transformation actually looks like

The new RTGs are equipped with anti-sway systems and fitted with video cameras providing operators with 3D views to assist with load handling, spreader handling, and crane operation. Other initiatives include adding a fourth shift, a performance-based incentive scheme, and real-time performance monitoring.

This season marks the first implementation of a predictive logistics model developed by Transnova Africa under commission from the South African Table Grape Industry, which has been instrumental in optimising port operations.

But piecemeal digital tools don't create "smart ports."

Captain Naresh Sewnath, senior manager of pilotage and vessel traffic services at Transnet National Port Authority, acknowledges that when it comes to digital transformation in South Africa's port system, "we are quite far advanced, but there is still work to be done".

Cape Town achieved the most improvement globally in the World Bank's 2024 Container Port Performance Index, improving by 237.9 points to rise from 405th (of 405) in 2023 to 400 (of 403). That's progress - from worst to fifth-worst.

Economist Dawie Roodt believes privatising or issuing regular concessions will drive improvement, arguing this would bring the efficiency and investment needed to revitalise Cape Town's port.

For exporters preparing for the 2025/2026 deciduous fruit season, with its forecast 3% volume increase, the question is whether South Africa is serious about transforming a strategic national asset, or merely painting a broken system with R4 billion worth of lipstick.

Traxtion's R3.4bn bet on rail marks a turning point for South Africa's reindustrialisation drive



SOUTH Africa's embattled freight rail sector received a powerful vote of confidence this week as Traxtion unveiled a R3.4 billion rolling stock investment — the single largest private freight rail commitment in the country's history. The African Rail Industry Association (ARIA), long a champion of rail reform, hailed the announcement as a breakthrough moment for reindustrialisation and a validation of "the power of local."

A bold pledge in a sector hungry for renewal

Traxtion's investment spans R1.8 billion for

pushing for reform. Today proves that advocacy mattered."

The investment will address roughly 5% of the current national freight capacity gap — small in context, but critical for unclogging ports and easing pressure on key economic corridors. Holley stressed that the move is not a challenge to Transnet but a collaborative push to restore South Africa's competitiveness.

Transport Minister Barbara Creecy echoed the sentiment: private sector capital, she said, is essential to lowering logistics costs and improving environmental performance.

"Traxtion's investment helps bridge mining and manufacturing — the heart of a value-adding economy."

46 locomotives and R1.6 billion for freight wagons, an injection that directly targets South Africa's freight capacity shortfall.

"This milestone required immense resilience and belief," said Traxtion CEO James Holley. "Years ago, when the idea of a competitive rail environment felt far off, ARIA's Mesela Nhlapo stood as a brave voice

Backing Transnet's turnaround targets

The Department of Transport aims to lift freight volumes on the Transnet network from 160 million tons to 250 million tons by 2029. The approval of 11 Train Operating Companies (TOCs) in 2025 marked the first major step toward opening the network to new players.

ARIA estimates these operators could collectively move 20 million tons a year — and Traxtion's new locomotives and wagons will strengthen that early momentum.

Rail as the backbone of beneficiation

The announcement also dovetails with the government's push for mineral beneficiation and industrialisation. "We cannot reindustrialise without railways," said ARIA CEO Mesela Nhlapo. "Traxtion's investment helps bridge mining and manufacturing — the heart of a value-adding economy."

Localisation at scale: 60% South African content

Perhaps the most significant impact lies in local manufacturing.

Traxtion's programme commits to a minimum of 60% local content, with South African suppliers accounting for more than 79% of procurement.

That translates into 662 direct jobs during the build and deployment phases, and a substantial multiplier effect through upstream suppliers.

The investment is also a practical expression of the National Rail Policy White Paper and the

DTIC's rolling stock designation framework, which stipulates local content levels from 55% for locomotives to 80% for wagons. Traxtion's choice to exceed these thresholds shows, ARIA argues, how private capital can advance industrial policy.

Building a continental rail industry

Traxtion operates across 10 African countries, positioning the investment within the African Union's Agenda 2063 vision and the trading ambitions of the AfCFTA.

To unlock even greater investment, ARIA is urging the government to expedite the domestication of the Luxembourg Rail Protocol — ratified in January but not yet embedded in South African law. The Protocol offers the legal certainty and financing mechanisms global funders require for large-scale rolling stock investments.

Next steps: regulatory clarity and expanded access

ARIA said it will continue working with Transnet's Rail Infrastructure Manager on refinements to the Network Statement, the rulebook governing how operators use the national network.

The scheduled release of Volume 4 and the opening of route applications for the 2026/27 timetable are expected to unlock more private-sector participation.

For now, Traxtion's R3.4 billion injection stands as a rare piece of good news for a sector that has endured years of decline — and a strong signal that South Africa's rail reindustrialisation project may finally be gathering speed.

EV Charging Infrastructure South Africa: Where is it heading?



EV charging doyen Shaun Maidment and MD of Breev, standing beside his 2016 model BMW i3 which has so far clocked an astounding 360 000km, losing just 27% of range over the period.

By Robin Hayes

THE EV landscape in SA has changed dramatically over the past few years with offerings from premium OEM's to highly competitive Chinese and Indian brands that offer tech rich vehicles with range rivalling those of ICE vehicles due to advances in battery energy density. Top performing commercial lithium-iron cells have nearly doubled in energy density over the past decade, rising from around 160Wh/kg to nearly 300Wh/kg.

categories, each attracting infrastructure owners, operators or a combination of both.

Distinct categories

These include: home charging, workplace charging AC, destination charging AC, destination charging DC, passenger travel (long distance intercity), passenger solar offtake hubs and commercial – usually long distance and intercity destinations – each with a different business model, management and profit criteria.

Those expecting to

"The capture of excess generating capacity by power wheeling is a major benefit to charging network rollout says Maidment, who's vision is to have affordable charging facilities in every town in the country."

And the development of crucial charging networks is driven by similar technologies – without many tangible incentives from our Government despite commitments to reduce our carbon footprint where transport could make a vital contribution.

Nevertheless there are plenty of entrants in SA's EV charging space – 26 at the last count according to participants Breev whose MD Shaun Maidment explained to CBN the somewhat complex landscape of operators/owners of charging stations, whether AC or DC, main routes, dealer facilities, destination charging – in fact, according to Maidment, there are seven distinct

grid. The capture of excess generating capacity by power wheeling is a major benefit to charging network rollout says Maidment, who's vision is to have affordable charging facilities in every town in the country.

Solar not always the panacea

Breev's business modelling indicates that stand-alone solar powered EV charging is unlikely to be financially feasible for remote guest, game farms and other tourist attractions but having EV charging facilities as an added attraction to an existing or extended solar installation means that EV owners can confidently take on trips further afield than just the daily city commute.

While there is a slow uptake in the sales of EV's due to the high cost of premium offerings and the introduction of hybrids (which provide additional range security, albeit at a cost), industry experts estimate that the price of average EV models will be at a price parity with ICE vehicles by 2030 which is just around the corner for those contemplating the purchase of a new vehicle.

The reality of significant market penetration by Chinese and Indian brands has not been lost on big players such as BYD who compliment their vehicle offerings with a committed to investing in charging infrastructure while another as yet unnamed Chinese investor has secured a majority stake in GridCars, South Africa's biggest EV charging network player.

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How vision-guided robotics is transforming South African manufacturing



By Andrew Crackett,
Managing Director
at Yaskawa Southern
Africa

IN South African manufacturing, the final stages of production – picking, placing, packing, and palletising – are no longer routine tasks.

Rising product variety, fluctuating volumes, and increasingly exacting quality standards mean that manufacturers need more than manual labour or conventional automation. For many, vision-guided robotics is becoming the solution to smarter, more flexible end-of-line processes.

The challenges at the end-of-line

For companies in fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG), food and beverage, and logistics, the end-of-line can quickly become a bottleneck. Historically, tasks such as case packing, stacking, and palletising relied on manual labour. However, with growing SKUs, mixed-case orders, and seasonal peaks, these traditional methods struggle to keep up.

High-volume bakeries or food-packaging lines that switch products frequently cannot afford delays, product damage, or errors associated with manual

handling. The need for speed, precision, and adaptability has never been more pressing.

Vision-guided robots: transforming production

Vision-guided robots combine advanced manipulators with machine-vision systems and intelligent software. Yaskawa's pick-and-place robots, when paired with MotoSight and MotoPick software, allow production lines to dynamically track products, pick them in real time, and adapt to changes on the fly.

Rather than simply following pre-programmed paths, these

systems detect incoming products, classify them, allocate tasks among robots, and adjust automatically – even on moving conveyors. On the palletising side, Yaskawa's Motoman robots use vision-enabled stacking strategies, intelligent grippers, and advanced software such as Pallet Solver to optimise throughput while reducing errors.

Why this matters for South African manufacturers:

Handling mixed SKUs and packaging types

Production lines today often deal with a wide variety of box sizes, bag types, and packaging formats. Fixed-pattern palletising cannot keep up. Vision-guided robotics enables robots to identify shapes and weights, adjusting stacking and picking strategies in real time. This flexibility is critical for manufacturers responding to customer demand, seasonal changes, or varied SKUs without lengthy downtime.

Rapid changeovers and flexibility

With integrated vision systems and intelligent software, Yaskawa solutions allow for fast changeovers with minimal reprogramming. Engineers can quickly switch the line to a new product, reducing downtime and improving overall agility.

Reducing product damage and improving output

Manual handling comes with risks: errors, fatigue, and damaged

products. Vision-guided systems pick accurately and consistently at high speeds, lowering reject rates and increasing output.

Labour efficiency and safety

Automating repetitive or physically demanding tasks frees human workers to focus on higher-value activities. Robots can operate 24/7 without fatigue, while reducing the risk of injuries associated with manual palletising.

"Development of this precinct will radically improve the way the port functions and, with it, the city. It forms a huge piece of the economic growth puzzle."

deployment requires trained integrators, engineers, and operators who understand vision systems, gripper design, and stacking optimisation.

embracing automation.

- Industry 4.0 and digitalisation: Data-driven production relies on vi



Strong return on investment

When configured correctly, vision-guided pick-and-place and palletising solutions deliver measurable cost benefits, including lower handling costs, reduced waste, and more efficient labour deployment.

Over time, these gains typically outweigh the initial investment, especially in high-volume or labour-intensive operations.

Building local capability

Technology alone is not enough. Successful

Collaborating with local experts and investing in training helps create a strong ecosystem that supports long-term innovation and sustainable adoption.

Looking ahead

Adoption of vision-guided robotics in South Africa is set to grow for several reasons:

- Automation beyond automotive: While robotics was once closely associated with automotive manufacturing, industries such as FMCG, food and beverage, and logistics are increasingly

sion-guided robots to improve process control, traceability, and performance analytics.

- Sustainability: Flexible automation reduces product waste, lowers damage, and optimises transport efficiency, supporting more sustainable manufacturing practices.

For South African manufacturers navigating growth, volatility, and digital transformation, vision-guided robotics offers a clear pathway: smarter machines, greater productivity, and a stronger competitive edge.



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Konecranes sees service opportunities in Southern Africa as port modernisation accelerates

SOUTHERN Africa's port infrastructure is undergoing a significant transformation, and global material handling leader Konecranes, a crane

manufacturer, sees opportunities to support the ongoing growth of these essential facilities and services, while preserving job creation – an es-

sential driver for economic growth.

Charles Dhaniram, Manager of Port Services, South Africa at Konecranes, oversees operations as far afield

as Madagascar, Mozambique and Mauritius, with expansion plans extending to Angola. The company maintains a crucial partnership with Transnet through an OEM contract, servicing straddle carriers at Durban port and rubber-tired gantry cranes (RTGs) in Cape Town.

Digital transformation

Assisting customers in multiple countries and often in remote locations requires some smart thinking and innovation.

Konecranes' TRU-CONNECT remote monitoring system exemplifies the digital revolution sweeping through port operations. Dhaniram can now access real-time data from all 20 straddle carriers operating at South African ports directly from his office, enabling advanced notice of problems, ensuring minimum downtime, and efficient maintenance approaches.

"We can log on to each machine remotely, analyse performance data, and address issues before they become critical breakdowns," Dhaniram explains. This capability has transformed maintenance from reactive to predictive, reducing costly operational disruptions.

Konecranes partners with ports across the globe with their automation ambitions; over 60% of automated terminals worldwide run with Konecranes equipment.

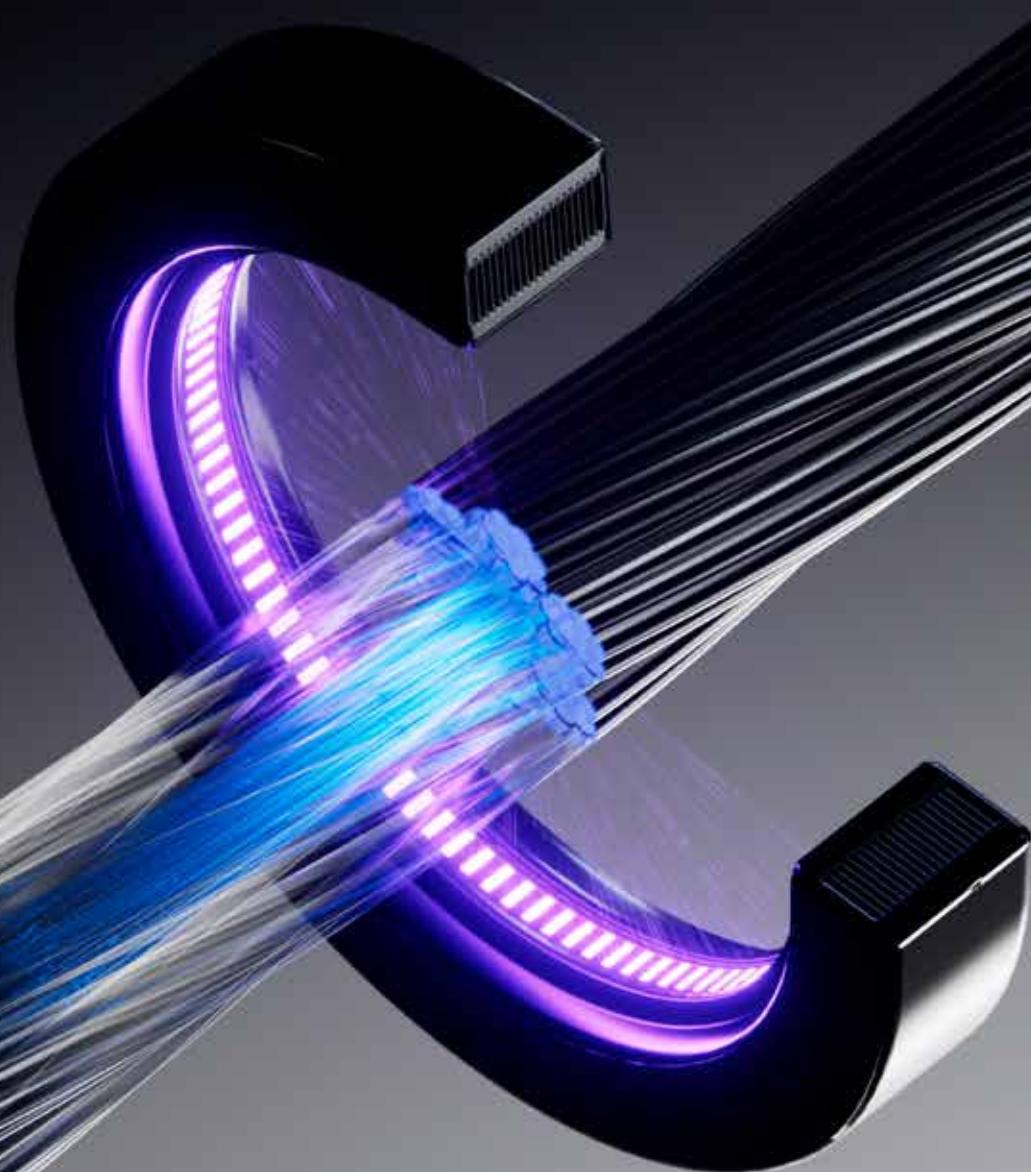
Dhaniram says that whilst Konecranes is always able to present options and efficiency gains, they are also conscious that automation decisions carry profound employment implications in a country grappling with unemployment above 30%.

Competitive positioning

Konecranes differentiates itself through comprehensive life-cycle support rather than merely equipment sales. The company's service division handles all maintenance, breakdowns, and spare parts supply – and is a premier provider of data-enabled agreements that drive equipment

Continued on P25

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Here's how

Konecranes sees service opportunities in Southern Africa as port modernisation accelerates

Continued from P24

ment and port performance. This approach has created long-term relationships with port operators.

This service-centric approach has proven resilient. Even as equipment procurement decisions face delays, ongoing maintenance contracts provide steady revenue streams. The company's willingness to service competitor equipment further expands market opportunities.

"We don't only service Konecranes equipment. If customers need help with efficiency on other brands, we'll step in to assist," Dhaniram emphasises, highlighting a prag-

matic approach to market share growth.

Regional hub strategy

Konecranes has established South Africa as its regional office, leveraging the country's infrastructure and skills base to support operations across Southern and East Africa. The company maintains service partnerships with independent operators in territories beyond its direct operational footprint, extending its reach while managing capital deployment efficiently.

Equipment logistics benefit from port-to-port shipping, with machinery arriving disas-

sembled in containers and open-top units for on-site assembly.

As the southern African port sector balances modernisation imperatives with social considerations, Konecranes' approach reflects the nuanced approach required for long-term industrial transformation in developing economies.

With multiple projects advancing across the region and hybrid technology gaining traction, Konecranes is positioning itself for growth in a market where efficiency gains must be carefully calibrated against job creation, and per capita GDP growth.

Eskort invests in robotics to scale premium sliced meat production

ESKORT, South Africa's largest pork producer, has commissioned a multi-million-rand robotic production line at its Heidelberg, Gauteng facility, strengthening its premium sliced meats offering while improving operational efficiency and product consistency.

The automated line integrates robotic slicing, check weighing and packaging technologies designed to optimise yield, enhance presentation and extend shelf life, while lowering energy consumption. According to Eskort CEO Arnold Prinsloo, the investment forms part of a broader strategy to modernise production and support growing demand for value-added meat products.

The line begins with a precision slicing and

check-weighing system that measures each slice in real time and automatically adjusts cutting speed and thickness. This ensures accurate portion control, maximises raw material utilisation and delivers consistent quality across product batches.

Once sliced, products are assembled into pack quantities and transferred via conveyor to a robotic "pick-and-place" system. Using advanced servo drives and vacuum grippers, the robot positions slices accurately into trays, improving visual appeal while reducing product waste. The fully automated process eliminates direct human handling, supporting stringent food safety and hygiene standards.

The new line produces Eskort's premium sliced range, including

gypsy ham, pork pastrami, sandwich ham, cooked ham and sliced gammon. Designed for gentle product manipulation, the system is particularly suited to delicate sliced meats and has an expected operational lifespan of 10 years.

The robotics investment follows a series of major upgrades at the Heidelberg plant. In February 2024, Eskort launched a 10,000 m² factory extension that increased overall production capacity by 50%. The site also houses Africa's largest continuous box freezer, capable of freezing 120,000 kg of product to -18°C every 24 hours, alongside chilled and frozen warehouses equipped with multi-level mezzanine picking systems, a first for South Africa's food industry.

As a turnkey mechatronics and robotics integrator, Directech specialises in designing and building complete automation ecosystems—from the autonomous vehicles

Autonomous material handling: SA's intelligent capabilities

By Diane Silcock

BY 2031, the South African Autonomous Material Handling Vehicle market is set to evolve into a highly intelligent and interconnected system. This is according to international market research company, Mobility Foresights, which states that this market is projected to grow from USD 6.9 billion in 2025 to USD 17.5 billion by 2031, registering a CAGR of 16.9%.

The report states that "growth is driven by the surging need for flexible intralogistics, rising labour inefficiencies, and the push toward fully automated material flow".

To remain competitive in the international landscape, businesses across industry sectors are pursuing intelligent automation to enhance navigation and safety, and achieve lower operational costs and higher throughput efficiency.

An industrial mechatronics company that is ahead of the curve and playing a defining role in the transformation towards an intelligent, interconnected ecosystem, is Directech.

CEO Peter Erasmus says, "Our technologies are built around advanced navigation, connectivity, and seamless system integration, allowing factories to adopt automation that communicates, adapts, and optimises operations in real time. Through our autonomous solutions, we are already delivering the intelligent capabilities the industry is expected to embrace by 2031. For us, this is not a future target - this is what we deliver today."

As a turnkey mechatronics and robotics integrator, Directech specialises in designing and building complete automation ecosystems—from the autonomous vehicles



A robotic handling system capable of lifting and placing eight 20-litre water bottles simultaneously during the automated refilling process, enabling high-speed, consistent material movement.

that move goods across a facility, to the robotic systems that assemble, weld, inspect, or package products, through to the industrial control architecture that ties everything together.

Their work spans articulated robotic cells, collaborative robotic applications, custom machinery, conveyors, intralogistics, automated storage, and advanced control systems. "This allows us to support industries such as automotive, rail, mining, manufacturing, food and beverage, and general engineering with solutions that are robust, reliable, and purpose-built for their specific production requirements," says Erasmus.

Directech's Automated Guided Vehicles (AGVs) and Autonomous Mobile Robots (AMRs), which they continue to refine and expand, offer several benefits for material handling and logistics operations. These technologies significantly enhance operational efficiency and create safer

er, smarter production environments that align with global Industry 4.0 standards.

Their systems include wireless opportunity charging to maximise uptime, autonomous and remote driving modes, sophisticated obstacle-avoidance technology, and highly accurate docking capabilities that support loading, unloading, and machine handoffs with minimal human intervention.

"One of our most exciting recent projects," says Erasmus, "highlights the scale and speed at which Directech can operate. We designed and delivered a 12-ton autonomous trolley for a major rail manufacturing environment. The system, which itself weighed 4.8 tons,

was taken from concept to fully commissioned build in just three months before being shipped to the United States for integration. Achieving this demonstrated not only our engineering capability but also our

ability to deliver under intense pressure, with exacting requirements and minimal room for error.

Alongside this, we have completed extensive automotive applications, including complex handling and assembly systems for component production and body-in-white processes."

Automation enhances consistency and reliability across production environments and creates safer workplaces by removing people from repetitive, hazardous, or heavy-duty tasks.

In a landscape where efficiency, precision, and uptime are critical, Directech's solutions empower companies to operate at levels that would be impossible without automation.

"Through intelligent technology and a collaborative engineering approach, we help organisations unlock the productivity and resilience required to remain competitive in a rapidly advancing industrial world," concludes Erasmus.

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Steinmüller Africa wins top honours at Duvha Power Station awards



STEINMÜLLER Africa has earned top industry recognition at Eskom's Duvha Power Station awards, taking home Key Service Provider in Maintenance 2025 and Best CSI Contribution Team honours. The awards highlight the company's use of advanced technology, rapid-response maintenance and strong community impact.

The maintenance award caps a standout year in which Steinmüller Africa completed South Africa's first three-unit simultaneous shutdown in more than a decade. The complex project set a new benchmark for large-scale maintenance, demanding precise coordination, compressed timelines and uncompromising safety standards.

Central to this achievement was the deployment of drone technology and a rapid mobilisation model that transformed emergency repairs. "Our team mobilises tube-leak repairs within hours, not days," said Thomas Maduna, Project Manager at Steinmüller Africa Duvha Power Station. "This award validates an approach that delivers measurable results for our clients."

The introduction of the Elios 3 drone for furnace and confined-space inspections eliminated the need for risky manual inspections and costly sky climbers. The result was improved safety, faster inspections, reduced downtime and lower operating costs.

Leadership presence on site and a ze-

ro-harm culture, reinforced through daily toolbox talks and the "My Brother's Keeper" safety initiative, further underpinned performance.

Beyond operations, the company's CSI award reflects sustained community investment in 2025, including support for more than seven schools and community centres. Contributions ranged from a vehicle for CMR Witbank to a fully equipped kitchen for Mmagogana Primary School, improving learner nutrition and local support systems.

For industrial maintenance providers, Steinmüller Africa's success underscores a clear message: excellence is driven by speed, safety and real commercial impact.

AS industries weigh cleaner and more cost-effective energy options, one South African operator says coal and biomass still have a critical role to play — if managed correctly.

Specialist steam and boiler services firm Associated Energy Services (AES) is making the case that solid fuels remain viable for industrial steam production, despite their operational complications.

The slow burn problem

AES Operations Director Ray Lund says the biggest drawback of coal and biomass is one that engineers know all too well: response time.

"Solid fuel takes time to ignite. When steam demand changes, liquid- or gas-fired boilers respond almost instantly. Solid fuel doesn't," he explains. Moisture-heavy biomass — with water content fluctuating between 20% and 55% — is even slower to ramp up than coal.

That delay means solid fuel boilers are better suited to plants with stable steam demand. But, Lund stresses, skilled operators and advanced con-

trol systems can compensate for fluctuating load profiles.

"We run coal-fired boilers with significant load changes. Good operators must anticipate those shifts. Automation helps, but operator intervention is still essential when fuel quality varies or when demand spikes," he says.

The safety protocols are stricter too. Should steam demand suddenly drop or water levels fall dangerously low, operators must actively intervene — including manually removing burning fuel from a furnace. "In solid fuel systems, the fire doesn't simply stop when you need it to. Someone has to physically remove it," Lund notes.

Plants supplying steam to multiple production lines face a more complex balancing act. Start-up sequencing is key: if too many lines start simultaneously, overlapping steam draws can cut pressure, ruin product quality, or compromise sterility.

Where solid fuels don't fit

AES Commercial Director Dennis Williams warns that solid fuels should not be



used with thermal oil systems. "Local overheating can crack thermal oil and cause dangerous carbon build-up on internal surfaces. A rupture would be catastrophic," he says.

Switching from coal to biomass isn't straightforward

As industries explore lower-carbon options, many consider swapping coal for biomass. Williams and Lund say the shift is possible — but not simple.

Companies must first secure a consistent fuel supply, then match the correct com-

bustion technology to the fuel's characteristics. Size, composition and moisture content differ vastly between coal, wood chips and agricultural residues.

Coal quality itself is becoming more variable. In industrial boilers, coal ideally ranges from 6–25 mm with a calorific value near 27.5 MJ/kg. But mine seam variations and inconsistent processing often lead to sub-standard coal.

AES mitigates this by testing every coal delivery at its Cape Town laboratory. "Fuel quality directly affects efficiency and safety. We hold suppliers accountable," Lund says.

Transport introduces another complication: vibration and tipping increase the fines content, degrading energy performance. Storage also brings rare but serious risks such as stockpile collapse or spontaneous combustion.

Biomass, on the other hand, can offer more consistent sizing and moisture — but only when specifically processed as fuel. "When buying off-cuts or production waste, the quality varies widely," Lund says.

A sector still reliant on expertise

AES, now more than 25 years old and operating across multiple industries, argues that solid fuels can remain a cost-effective option — but only with the right technology, monitoring and operational skill.

For plants trying to balance affordability, energy security, and emissions, the company's message is clear: solid fuels still work, but they must be handled intelligently.

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Industrial leaders turn to hybrid boiler technology as carbon tax surges

WITH the industrial sector in South Africa facing increasing pressure under the updated Carbon Tax Act, industry leaders are urgently seeking sustainable solutions to reduce their carbon footprint. Among the frontrunners in this transition is John Thompson, a division of ACTOM (Pty) Ltd, which is a seasoned expert in industrial boiler technology and energy systems, whose latest initiatives are setting a benchmark in embracing renewable fuels.

John Thompson's commitment centres on biomass as a viable alternative to traditional fossil fuels. Biomass, derived from organic materials such as agricultural residues and wood waste, offers an effective pathway to lower carbon emissions while maintaining industrial energy demands. Recognising the critical timing of policy changes in South Africa, John Thompson has aligned efforts to partner with companies not only to comply but thrive under the new taxation framework.

A key element of this strategic shift is John Thompson's recent partnership with Berkeley Energy Corporate Solutions (BECS), which provides energy and decarbonisation solutions across Africa. Together, they have embarked on industrial steam solutions projects using sustainable biomass. Parallel to this initiative, John Thompson's new hybrid solid fuel boiler solution - the Omnipac, offers industries fuel flexibility without compromising performance.

The Omnipac is designed with a large furnace volume, increased refractory, and heat recovery systems to optimise fuel combustion and reduce particulate emissions to ensure compliance with environmental standards. By simplifying the transition, it empowers industries to proactively manage their carbon liabilities and reduce operational costs in the long term.

John Thompson's approach demonstrates how expertise and financial collaboration can turn regulatory challenges into opportunities for sustainable growth. As carbon taxes continue to reshape industrial landscapes, John Thompson and BECS are proving that

renewable fuel adoption is not only necessary but achievable and economically sound. Their work is paving the way for a cleaner, greener industrial future.

John Thompson, a division of ACTOM (Pty) Ltd, is a leading boiler and energy solutions provider with more than 90 years of experience. The com-

pany specialises in industrial steam generation, boiler design and manufacture, maintenance, and energy optimisation across diverse sectors.



Fuel Flexibility That Keeps Your Operation Running

Omnipac Biomass and Coal Hybrid Solid Fuel Boiler



The Omnipac is engineered by John Thompson to fire biomass or coal whichever is available or most economical even at high moisture levels. Its robust design and upgraded features ensure consistent output, reduced downtime and reliable performance across changing fuel conditions.

This is adaptability built for industrial realities.



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Hartenbos microgrid: Municipal energy independence blueprint



By Adrian Ephraim

SOUTH Africa is witnessing a fundamental shift in how energy infrastructure is delivered - and municipalities are leading the charge.

This is according to DeVilliers Botha, Chief Commercial Officer at Solareff. Speaking after the official launch of the Hartenbos Waste Water Treatment Works Solar PV Plant and Microgrid in Mossel Bay, Botha outlined how the project, which recently won "Top Performing Project" at the AMEU Awards 2025, demonstrates a viable pathway for local governments to achieve energy resilience while generating substantial

cost savings.

"The whole country is moving away to what we call distributed generation," Botha explains. "Before Eskom, before the 1920s, each town and city had their own generation plant. All that's now happening is that we are shifting towards this opportunity with distributed generation, where Eskom can still play the role of a transmission company, connecting all these systems."

The multi-million-rand Hartenbos facility represents a sophisticated hybrid grid-tied microgrid spanning 3.5 hectares of municipal land. The system features 4,400 PV panels generating 2.5 MVA of solar capacity, a 4,512kWh battery en-

ergy storage system (BESS), and standby diesel generators for ultimate backup resilience.

What makes the project particularly innovative is its dual function. While initially conceived as a load-shedding mitigation strategy, the system has evolved into a significant revenue generator for the municipality.

"The waterworks currently consumes a constant load between 600 and 700 kVA," Botha notes. "But the plant, on a sunny day, especially at this time around midday, generates at 2.1 MVA. So there's about one-and-a-half megawatt being exported onto the local municipal grid that creates a saving for the municipality as they don't need to purchase that power from Eskom."

From backup to financial benefit

The project's evolution highlights the adaptability of modern microgrid infrastruc-

ture. When load shedding subsided mid-2024, the municipality questioned the system's continued value. Solareff's response was to pivot the battery storage strategy.

"We call it arbitrage of the battery," Botha explains. "During peak hours, we discharge the battery rather than buying from Eskom, because the round-trip cost of charging the battery through the sun on an asset you've financed is cheaper than buying from the Eskom grid in those peak times."

This operational flexibility didn't require physical modifications—merely control system adjustments. "We didn't need to change anything on the physical design. It's just a change on the controller," Botha says.

The financial benefits have exceeded expectations. "The output or the benefit of the system, the financial benefit, already surpassed their expectations," Botha confirms, noting that the municipi-

pality can now quantify substantial returns on their investment through reduced electricity purchases and optimised energy management.

A replicable model

The Hartenbos success has significant implications for South Africa's broader energy transition. Botha envisions the model scaling dramatically across municipal contexts.

"You could literally scale this to other municipalities, or instead of just taking a point of connection at waterworks or at a shopping mall, you could go to the central supply of a small town and install such a microgrid system that would supply the full needs of a whole town," Botha says.

Solareff is already exploring projects "about 30 times the size" of Hartenbos, targeting irrigation schemes, industrial parks, and entire municipal grids. "This system is currently a two-and-a-half meg PV plant. We'd likely

have a 30 to 60 megawatt PV plant supplying either towns or load centres."

Battery technology economics

Botha also shared an unconventional perspective on battery asset management that challenges traditional thinking about equipment longevity.

"Batteries are the converse of cars," he explains. "When you buy a car, the chances of needing to replace it in five years, if it's more expensive, are real.

Batteries are becoming cheaper to replace over time. So you should really work that battery, because in five or 10 years' time, once you've worked out those cycles, you can replace it with a cheaper unit."

This counterintuitive approach - actively cycling batteries rather than preserving them - optimises both operational returns and long-term replacement economics as battery technology continues its rapid cost decline.

Community engagement

The November 5 launch attracted neighbouring municipal mayors, district representatives, consulting engineers from Element Consulting, and - significantly - local school learners.

"We invited schools. I always like inviting schools to these types of launches for them to see what the systems look like," Botha says. "The municipal officials were quite pleasantly surprised by the schools being present."

With the technical and financial validation now established, Solareff's Hartenbos project offers South African municipalities a proven blueprint: energy resilience, financial sustainability, and community benefit through intelligent infrastructure investment.

For Mossel Bay Municipality, the system represents a revenue-generating asset demonstrating that energy independence and fiscal responsibility can advance together.



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Common battery tester errors and what they mean



BATTERY testers are essential tools in any automotive workshop—whether at a dealership, independent repair centre, or fleet maintenance facility.

They provide fast insights into battery health, help diagnose electrical issues, and guide decisions on charging or replacement. But when testers display error messages, the results can be confusing.

Misinterpreting these errors can lead to incorrect diagnoses, unnecessary battery replacements, or repeat customer complaints because the root cause wasn't addressed. Understanding what these messages mean ensures technicians make the correct call the first time, improving workshop efficiency and customer satisfaction.

This guide breaks down the most common battery tester errors, what causes them, and how to troubleshoot them effectively.

1. Battery voltage too low

A "Low Voltage" error means the battery's voltage is below the threshold required for an accurate test—typi-

cally under 9.6 volts. In this condition, the tester cannot complete the procedure.

Common causes include deep discharge due to a vehicle standing unused, an interior light left on, excessive parasitic drain, or sulfation (lead sulphate build-up on the plates).

What to do:

- Check for corrosion or loose terminal connections.
- Recharge the battery and retest.
- If it won't take or hold a charge, the battery is likely beyond recovery.

2. Surface charge detected

A "Surface Charge" error appears when the battery still holds residual voltage from recent driving or charging. This can create a falsely elevated reading that prevents an accurate diagnosis.

Fix:

- Remove the surface charge by switching on the headlights for ~60 seconds.
- Switch them off and retest to get a true state-of-charge reading.

3. Battery not detected / connection error

If the tester shows "Battery Not Detected" or "Connection Error," it means it cannot establish proper contact with the battery.

Common causes include corroded terminals, loose clamps, or damaged battery cables.

Troubleshooting:

- Inspect and clean the battery terminals and tester clamps.
- Ensure solid, stable contact.
- If the error persists, the battery may have an internal failure—confirm with a multimeter or another tester.

4. Internal resistance too high

This error signals that the battery's internal resistance has increased, compromising its ability to deliver sufficient current for engine starting. Symptoms may include slow cranking and dim lighting.

The primary cause is sulfation, often due to frequent deep discharges or exposure to extreme heat or cold.

Next steps:

- Attempt a slow, controlled charge to break down sulphate crystals.
- If internal resistance remains high after charging, replacement is recommended.

5. Test interrupted / unstable voltage

A "Test Interrupted" or "Unstable Voltage" error occurs when voltage fluctuates during testing. Causes include poor connections, electrical noise from vehicle accessories, or charging system issues.

To resolve:

- Ensure clamps are secure and making full contact.
- Turn off all vehicle accessories before testing.
- If the issue continues, check the alternator and charging system.

6. Charge & retest

This instruction means the battery's voltage is too low for a conclusive reading, but the tester cannot yet confirm that the battery is bad.

Deep discharge may occur when a vehicle has stood unused or when lights or accessories were left on.

What to do:

- Fully charge the battery.
- Allow it to rest for a few minutes.
- Conduct a second test.

If the battery still tests weak, it likely cannot hold charge and should be replaced.

7. Replace battery

When a tester recommends "Replace Battery," it has determined—based on voltage, cold cranking amps (CCA), and internal resistance—that the battery can no longer perform reliably.

Before replacing:

- Double-check connections.
- Retest to confirm.
- Inspect the charging system to ensure the alternator isn't causing repeat failures.

Reliable testing with midtronics

Understanding battery tester errors helps technicians avoid misdiagnosis and deliver better service. But accurate diagnostics also depend on using high-quality equipment. Midtronics, a global leader in battery testing and diagnostics, offers advanced tools trusted by professional technicians.

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For more information on Midtronics testers, contact COMTEST at 010 595 1821, sales@comtest.co.za, or visit www.comtest.co.za

Kobold advances process measurement with the integrated magnetic-inductive flow meter



Display rotatable in 90° steps

GERMAN instrumentation manufacturer combines proven technology with smart electronics to meet evolving industrial automation demands

Kobold has launched an enhanced version of its MIK magnetic-inductive flow meter, integrating the company's U-PACE compact electronics system and IO-Link connectivity to address growing demand for cost-effective, space-saving measurement solutions in process manufacturing.

The development comes as the global market for magnetic-inductive flow meters maintains steady demand, with over five million devices sold annually. According to Manfred Heil, Kobold's Development Manager, market analysis revealed significant customer interest in combining the established MIK platform with more versatile electronics in a single, competitively priced package.

and high-volume applications.

Technical advantages

The MIK's contactless measurement approach eliminates moving parts, preventing mechanical wear and reducing maintenance requirements. The compact design requires minimal inlet and outlet sections, enabling installation in space-constrained environments while maintaining bidirectional measurement capability.

Performance remains stable regardless of viscosity, density, temperature, or pressure variations, with minimal pressure drop across the measurement section. Material combinations ensure compatibility with corrosive media, while electrode options— including stainless steel, Hastelloy, and tantalum—address varying chemical challenges.

U-pace electronics integration

Previous generations required separate modules for display and dosing functions. The U-PACE (Universal Precision and Control Electronics) platform consolidates these capabilities into a single unit with two independently configurable outputs that users can set as pulse, frequency, alarm, or analogue signals.

The technology serves diverse industrial sectors:

- Food industry: Flow control and quantity recording
- Chemical processing: Handling corrosive acids and alkalis
- Paper manufacturing: Process flow measurement
- Construction: Aggressive fluid monitoring
- Water treatment: Ground, cooling, and wastewater applications

Measuring ranges span 0.01 to 700 litres per minute, accommodating both precision dosing

while programmable colour changes provide visual indication when flow volumes reach specified thresholds.

Industry 4.0 connectivity

IO-Link integration enables the MIK to connect with existing automation architectures using standardised real-time communication protocols. Heil noted that customer demand for this capability has accelerated, with Kobold selling its ten-thousandth IO-Link-enabled measuring device in 2024.

"Engineers and technicians neither have the inclination nor time to read extensive manuals for each new product," Heil explained. "Our development premise was: electronics for everything, easily operable."

The standardised interface reduces commissioning time and enables remote configuration, supporting predictive maintenance strategies and data-driven process optimisation.

Market positioning

By consolidating previously separate components, Kobold aims to reduce total cost of ownership while expanding measurement capabilities for neutral and aggressive media in both compact installations and large-scale process plants. The measuring range span of up to 50:1 provides flexibility across varying operational conditions.

Heil indicated that additional product innovations incorporating targeted measurement and process engineering knowledge are under development to align with evolving market requirements.

Kobold's MIK series with U-PACE electronics is distributed in South Africa by Instrotech. For technical specifications and application support, contact Instrotech at 010 595 1831 or sales@instrotech.co.za



MVT Battery & Electrical System Tester - Powered by MDX-AI, the MVT handheld battery tester showcases diagnostic capabilities never thought possible in handheld battery testing. MVT makes battery testing lightning fast while delivering professional accuracy.

Cape Town desalination plant: R5bn water security for industry



By Adrian Ephraim

CAPE Town's ambitious R5-billion Paarden Eiland desalination plant is positioning the city as a manufacturing powerhouse capable of outpacing Gauteng's infrastructure unreliability, with water-intensive industries set to benefit from climate-independent supply by 2030.

The facility, which will convert 50 to 70 million litres of seawater daily into drinking water using advanced reverse osmosis technology, forms the cornerstone of Cape Town's New Water Programme - a strategy to add 300 million litres per day from diversified sources including groundwater, water reuse, and invasive species clearing.

"Building more dams will not provide more water security, as we will still need to depend on unpredictable rain."

"Adopting water-wise operations needs to remain top of mind for industries regardless of capacity," said Councilor Zahid Badroodien, Mayoral Committee Member for Water and Sanitation. "However, the Desalination Plant will enable economic growth within the City of Cape Town, including the expansion of industries."

The city's food and beverage sector - comprising 3.6% of Cape Town's gross value added and employing major players like South African Breweries, Rhodes Food Group, and Peninsula Beverages - stands to gain most from guaranteed water security. Food and beverage manufacturing is Cape Town's largest industrial subsector at 26%, followed by pe-

troleum and chemical products at 25%.

But the investment comes with a price. Tariff modelling reveals an approximate 6.57% real increase in 2030/31 and 6.63% in 2031/32 for the desalination project alone, though officials note tariff smoothing could mitigate impacts when considered alongside other portfolio projects.

"All capital projects impact tariffs due to costs," Badroodien acknowledged. "They are a smart investment to secure water and avoid significant detrimental economic impact associated with exposure to climate change and droughts."

The energy challenge looms large. The plant will rely on grid supply with energy recovery devices incorporated to reduce consumption, though no dedicated renewable integration has been specified - a notable gap given Cape Town's R120-billion 10-year infrastructure pipeline emphasising climate resilience.

The city has appointed a multidisciplinary Independent Advisory Panel of international and local experts, which determined that most desalination plants globally operate under private management due to process complexity. Following this guidance, Cape Town recommends a 20-year public-private partnership where the private party designs, finances, builds, operates and maintains the facility before transferring it to the city.

International case studies from Perth, Tel Aviv and Singapore informed this approach, with lessons extracted from Cape Town's own temporary desalination installations at Strandfontein and the V&A Waterfront during the 2018 Day Zero crisis.

"The drought taught Cape Town that it is vital to diversify our

water sources and not depend on rain-fed dams," said Badroodien. "Building more dams will not provide more water security, as we will still need to depend on unpredictable rain."

The project timeline shows construction starting after completion of the Section 78 Municipal Systems Act study currently underway, with procurement opportunities expected to reach the market in 2027. The facility presents business opportunities spanning water-treatment systems, chemical supply, membrane maintenance, and civil engineering works - creating approximately 30 direct jobs and 100-150 indirect positions.

For Cape Town's manufacturers, the desalination plant represents more than drought insurance - it's a competitive advantage against Johannesburg's persistent water and electricity challenges. The city's infrastructure investment rate outpaces Johannesburg and Durban combined over the next three years, with R43-billion allocated.

The plant is designed to maximum capacity with no explicit expansion provisions, though it forms part of a broader water resilience portfolio addressing anticipated growth in consumption. Public consultation on the external service delivery mechanism closed in March 2025, with Council decisions pending.

As Cape Town positions itself as Africa's most infrastructure-reliable metro, the R5-billion desalination bet signals a fundamental shift: water security is no longer just about preventing Day Zero - it's about powering industrial expansion in an era where climate volatility defines competitive advantage.

KSB unveils locally engineered wastewater pump to tackle South Africa's sewage infrastructure crisis



SOUTH Africa's wastewater infrastructure is buckling under pressure. Ageing treatment plants, rising sewage volumes, and maintenance backlogs have created a perfect storm of pump failures, blockages, and environmental spillages. Against this backdrop, KSB Pumps and Valves has launched the ELN-150 Imvubu, a self-priming wastewater pump designed, tested, and manufactured entirely in South Africa to tackle the specific challenges that plague municipal and industrial operators across the continent.

Building on decades of local expertise

KSB South Africa began manufacturing self-priming pumps in 2005, developing a range specifically suited to Southern African conditions. The company's local production includes the ELB, ELK, and ELS series, which handle grey and black water systems with screened solids of 50-75mm. These pumps have become trusted choices in dewatering, sludge transfer, and screened sewage applications.

However, KSB identified a critical market need: solutions capable of handling raw, unscreened sewage containing solids of 76mm and larger - one of the most challenging environments for pump design.

"We listened to the market, where customers told us exactly where

ries a double meaning. Its distinctive top-mounted lifting "ears" mimic a hippo's profile in water, while its massive free-pass capacity mirrors the animal's ability to handle oversized material. Developed using advanced Computational Fluid Dynamics (CFD) modelling, the Imvubu delivers measurable performance advantages:

- Hydraulic efficiency exceeding 65% - well ahead of competitor self-priming pumps
- 77.3mm free-pass solids handling - exceeding the global raw sewage benchmark of 76mm
- Bearings-for-life with no oil lubrication - using grease-for-life bearings and KSB's own mechanical seal

"The free pass is what sets us apart. If a pump can pass a bigger solid, it will clog less. Less



the problems lie—pump clogging, difficult seal replacement, thin castings that wear quickly, and designs that simply don't stand up to raw, unscreened sewage," says Hugo du Plessis, product manager for Wastewater at KSB Pumps and Valves.

Engineering for African conditions

Named after the Zulu word for hippopotamus, the Imvubu car-

clogging means fewer callouts, less downtime, and less cost," du Plessis explains.

Practical design for real-world maintenance

The Imvubu addresses the realities of South Africa's strained infrastructure through thoughtful engineering. Heavy-duty volute walls resist erosion and extend operating life.

An inspection hatch

allows staff to clear blockages without removing the suction cover - a major advantage for municipal maintenance teams working with limited resources.

Unlike competing pumps requiring oil chambers and contamination-prone top-up checks, the Imvubu's grease-for-life bearings create an environmentally cleaner, safer maintenance profile. Speed adjustments use simple pulley changes, and the pump handles both low-to-high heads and flows, effectively doing the work of two pumps. It can even be mounted on diesel skids for remote pumping or flood emergency use.

"We've made this pump for Africa - that's why we made it to be maintained using basic tools," says du Plessis.

The pump has completed extended testing at the Drakenstein Wastewater Treatment Works in the Western Cape, operating continuously with excellent results. Applications extend beyond municipal wastewater to mining sumps, industrial effluent, pulp and paper operations, agricultural waste dams, and portable dewatering units.

Local manufacturing as strategic advantage

Darren Ward, KSB's Western Cape branch manager, emphasises the importance of local production in a market where many competitors have reduced their South African presence.

"Many of our competitors have shifted to an import-only model. KSB has gone the other way. We've

invested in South African manufacturing expertise and nationwide support through our SupremeServ service network. Our customers are getting lifetime support from people who understand local wastewater challenges," Ward explains.

The SupremeServ network offers field service, maintenance, and pump refurbishment through regional branches and certified technicians, while the SupremeServ Academy provides training for customers and operators.

Because the Imvubu is 100% locally manufactured, it aligns with the Department of Trade and Industry's localisation incentives, supporting South African industry and employment while positioning KSB as a contributor in exporting high-value engineered products across Sub-Saharan Africa.

A timely solution for critical infrastructure

Du Plessis notes the self-priming pump market in South Africa remains largely dominated by imported brands, presenting significant growth opportunity.

"This is a pump we're proud to build in South Africa - it keeps our people employed and shows we can compete with and lead international brands. We don't follow; we leapfrog."

"Our Imvubu pump is a direct answer to many of the failures making national headlines. Municipalities and utilities urgently need equipment that can keep working with minimum attention to clear the backlog - and the answer is the KSB Imvubu."

60 cash prizes highlight Condra's lifting durability

CONDRA is running a competition to find the company's oldest working crane, showcasing product durability and offering cash prizes for the three longest-working machines discovered.

The contest is part of the run-up to diamond jubilee celebrations, aiming to reinforce a core company concept of delivering value over time. Open to hoists, original cranes and refurbished machines (to highlight the viability of upgrading veteran cranes to modern, fit-for-purpose standard), entry is free.

Condra will turn sixty in 2026.

Managing Director Marc Kleiner said that buying new is not always the best option.

He listed the two principal advantages of crane refurbishment – an immediate realisation of cost savings, and the continued use of an as-new machine already familiar to operators. This avoids any need for retraining, he said. Production can continue as before, with no change to established procedures.

"We need about three weeks to refurbish to top standard," said Kleiner. "The cost is almost always less than buying a new crane, and we can upgrade to incorporate any kind of modern technology the customer wants."

"Refurbishments carry a three-year warranty if Condra-authorised agents service the crane, or one year if not."

Kleiner explained that Condra usually refurbishes only its own cranes because spare parts from rival firms are not always available. They are also expensive to import, whereas Condra manufactures all spare parts locally.

"If the crane is one of ours, then refurbishment is usually worthwhile," he said. "We encourage it because new crane prices are about 60% higher today than they were ten years ago. If needed, we can change crane capacity and span. Even cranes twenty years or older can usually be improved by installing variable frequency drives to facilitate easily changeable speeds."

"By refurbishing, we deliver back to the customer a crane much faster and lighter than before, and we can automate it, too, upgrading the mechanics to work with new electrical equipment."

"These options are offered during any refurbishment, from

standard 2M workshop cranes to the higher performing machines such as Class 3 and Class 4," Kleiner added.

Turning to the market for new cranes, Kleiner pointed to worrying examples of end-users buying cheap cranes from rival firms, then finding it impossi-

ble to timely rectify breakdowns when they occurred.

"I believe it's fair to say that the Condra product not only works, but also lasts because it has 60 years of manufacturing and service experience behind it."

Kleiner admitted the difficulty of competing with the sale price of

imported machines in the absence of South African tariffs or other protective mechanisms.

"It's not easy," he said, "but where we are more than competitive is in the overall lifetime cost of the crane, because imported parts are expensive and often not readily available.

"We compete on

product reliability and durability. Many operators don't factor into their cost projections production losses caused by downtime.

The purpose of an overhead crane is to move what the factory is producing. If the crane isn't working, the factory isn't producing. It isn't making money.

"Initial price is not what overall cost effectiveness is all about."

2026 will mark sixty years since Condra's formation as a general engineering company offering a range of locally made, competitively priced hoists. Crane manufacture began in 1971. Today the company is headquar-

tered at a 22 000m² factory site in Germiston, with a second factory in Cape Town. There are subsidiary companies in Bulgaria and Chile.

Full details of the contest to find Condra's oldest crane can be found at the company website: www.condra.co.za



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Proper system sizing is critical for water treatment success



CUTTING corners on water treatment can cost companies far more than they realise – especially when boilers are involved. That's the message from Lionel Maasdorp, Managing Director at Allmech, a leading South African boiler manufacturer and supplier of water treatment equipment and chemicals.

"All too often, clients request a specific softener size or quote specifications from another supplier," says Maasdorp. "They may be surprised when we ask for a water analysis, but one size simply doesn't fit all. System sizing depends entirely on the actual composition of the incoming water. In many cases, small adjustments to the plant design can deliver better performance than what the client originally asked for. Accurate sizing, based on real data, saves money and prevents unnecessary system upgrades."

According to Maasdorp, some customers have insisted on buying undersized plants and later been forced into costly upgrades. Ignoring specifications also increases the risk of

downtime and production disruptions.

"We've had clients who tried to save money by using less salt in their softeners or diluting boiler chemicals," he explains. "When we service those systems, the damage is clear – corrosion, scale and fouling that could have been avoided. In severe cases, boilers have needed acid washes or even tube replacements, which are extremely expensive and shorten equipment lifespan."

Why specifications matter

Customers who follow expert recommendations and maintain their systems correctly enjoy far better results. "Some of our clients have been with us for more than 15 years and have needed only a handful of acid washes – sometimes just one," says Maasdorp. "They keep their brine tanks filled, their chemical tanks topped up, and their dosing pumps in good condition. The payoff is lower servicing costs, less downtime and improved efficiency."

Poor-quality feedwa-

ter can severely impact boiler performance. Calcium, magnesium and silica scale form insulating layers that reduce heat transfer and increase fuel usage. "In electrode boilers, scale acts as an insulator, preventing current from passing through the water," Maasdorp adds. "The boiler then burns more fuel to produce the same amount of steam – which is simply money wasted."

While some clients view water treatment as an unnecessary cost, Maasdorp encourages them to look at the full picture. "Chemicals and maintenance do cost money, but the fuel savings and reduced downtime far outweigh those expenses. When we compare annual service and chemical costs with the savings generated, the numbers always speak for themselves."

The importance of ongoing care and maintenance

Allmech complements its systems with continued training and aftersales support. "We commission every system we install, train operators, and conduct regular monthly check-ins," says Maasdorp. "If staff changes occur, we train new team members. With some clients, we even use WhatsApp groups for quick troubleshooting."

His advice to companies is simple: "Stick with a reliable partner instead of switching between suppliers. Keep records and photos of your equipment so you can monitor trends and changes. And most importantly, follow the recommendations you're given. Operating procedures aren't just paperwork – they protect your investment."

Water sector faces renewed scrutiny as King V takes effect

THE King V Code on Corporate Governance for South Africa was published on 31 October 2025. Given the country's ongoing water crisis, the text should be taken to heart by every entity involved in water services management.

"Technical fixes and infrastructure development will fail if governance at national, provincial and municipal levels remains weak, especially in water services management," says Dr Lester Goldman, CEO of the Water Institute of Southern Africa (WISA).

He says the Code is as relevant as ever but will have little effect if it falls on deaf ears that don't care to adopt its principles. However, even good adoption at the top demands ethical leadership and professional competence all the way down, to succeed.

Leadership and professionals

Whether attorneys, accountants, engineers or water process controllers, professionals are meant to bring ethical assurance and technical competence to their environment and work.

"So, where are these ethical professionals in government and why don't we see their influence in whatever setting they find themselves - have they been muzzled through intimidation or are they just too afraid of los-



ing their jobs to speak out against corruption and malpractice?" asks Goldman.

Whether against tender fraud, financial mismanagement or other misconduct, the voice of ethical professionals in the public sector is deafeningly silent.

There's a glaring need for ethical leaders who will empower and support them in bringing order and integrity to the sector, as they are meant to.

"The second principle in King V makes the governing body responsible for creating an ethical culture, and this is sorely needed at all levels of government," says Goldman.

The role of professional bodies

As for professional competence, this is where professional bodies come in, providing governance for their related profession and the practitioners in it.

Their functions in-

clude, among other things, setting high standards for competency to which their members must adhere, supporting and managing continuing professional development (CPD) of those members, and providing independent oversight and disciplinary processes that protect the profession and the public from misconduct and corruption within its ranks.

The result of these rigorous requirements is embodied in one or other professional designation, such as WISA's Professional Water Process Controller (Pr. PC Water). And holders of such titles are expected to be both competent and ethical.

"Any member who is found guilty of misconduct will be struck from WISA's register," says Goldman.

Unfortunately, this does not mean the offender would be unable to continue working in their current role, only that they could not op-

erate as a Supervisor in terms of Regulation 3630.

"The decision to terminate or penalise them would be at the discretion of their employing municipality or organisation," says Goldman.

A sign of assurance

However, professionalisation - especially when backed by legislation requiring a designation be held in order to practice - offers assurance that the practitioner is subject to independent oversight.

Members who have invested significant time and effort into maintaining their designation are less likely to jeopardise it by becoming involved in malpractice.

"This gives a designation greater effect than a mere qualification because its loss can have a major impact on one's career, and is therefore a meaningful deterrent to misconduct," says Goldman.

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Keeping on pumping: Tips to maintain commercial and industrial pumps



Built for the toughest jobs, Xylem's Flygt submersible pumps tackle sludge, slurry, and abrasive conditions with unmatched durability and performance.

A site may have the best pipes, valves, filters, and seals, but if the pumps stop working, everything else is just an expensive pile of equipment going nowhere. This advice is obvious, yet many operations fail to maintain their pumps properly, even though it doesn't need to be costly or take up much time.

Pump management and maintenance ensure uptime and help manage costs. Energy use and maintenance typically account for about half of a pump's lifetime spend, and they are closely linked.

"You don't need a complicated or expensive maintenance plan to keep a pump going."

A well-maintained pump runs more efficiently, uses less energy, and needs fewer costly interruptions.

Yet many sites cut corners by skipping maintenance or using cheap replacement parts, says Chetan Mistry, Xylem's Strategy and Marketing Manager for WSS.

"We're often called in to fix pumps that have either been neglected or fitted with parts that just weren't up to the job. Those shortcuts don't only reduce efficiency.

They can cause major failures, damaging components that would normally last for years. Overall, it costs the owner far more than if they had invested in proper maintenance upfront."

A chain of failure

Pumps from reputable suppliers are designed to deliver efficient and reliable service. Components such as bearings and seals are considered wear parts which need to be periodically replaced. Parts such as couplings, impellers, pump casings, and motors will last for a long time but need to be inspected for wear and only need replacement if required.

However, there are conditions that can create a chain of failure across the pump. Worn bearings can cause vibrations and lead to further mechanical damage to the pump shaft, coupling and motor. A failed seal will allow for the ingress of water into the pump's motor chamber and cause motor failure.

Likewise, the wrong pump choice or improper installation costs more, works less, and doesn't last as long. The pump is likely to break down much sooner than it should, use more electricity than necessary, or keep getting blocked and failing.

Tips to maintain pumps

Regular and consistent inspections help spot issues early, often before they become serious:

- Paying attention to what you can see and hear. Signs of corrosion, small leaks, unusual heat, higher-than-normal energy use, grinding noises, or odd vibrations. These are early warning signals that the pump needs attention. Catching them early can save both time and money.
- A pump needs to be the right fit for the job. Every site is different, ranging from high viscosity and pressures to abrasive and clogging materials such as sand or threads. Environmental factors impact longevity: pumps that run deep below the surface operate under harsh conditions with excessive dust, heat, and moisture, and the

limited space makes regular maintenance difficult.

If a pump doesn't match its operating conditions, it will become unreliable, require more maintenance, and have a much shorter lifespan, says Mistry. "Choosing the right pump for the right job makes all the difference in performance, reliability, and cost."

Good parts matter

Most companies choose a quality pump from a trusted supplier because they know it will do the job. But then they undermine the investment and try to save money by using cheap parts or unqualified workshops.

That attempt to save money ends up costing more. Non-genuine parts wear out faster, and when they fail,

the damage spreads to other components in the pump.

What starts as a small issue, like a worn seal or clogged impeller, can snowball into a chain of failures and costly downtime.

By contrast, pumps maintained with genuine parts and serviced by trained technicians tend to run smoothly, only needing quick checks and occasional attention.

As Mistry puts it:

"You don't need a complicated or expensive maintenance plan to keep a pump going. These machines are built to last, as long as you respect them with the right parts and proper care."

xylem
Let's Solve Water



Chetan Mistry, Xylem's Strategy and Marketing Manager for WSS.

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NDE Cape Town expands range to include premium quality stainless steel round bar



By NDE

IN an effort to continuously service the local manufacturing industries better, NDE has expanded our extensive range of products to include a broader supply of premium quality stainless steel round bar, as well as hex bar and square bar. We now stock from 3mm up to 400mm diameter round bars on the shelf at our warehouse in Montague Gardens. In addition, we also offer a range of grades, including 304, 316, 303 and 431.

"Our range of complementary stainless steel products ensures that you save time and money."

Plus, we have a state-of-the-art, fully automatic band-saw and can offer precision cutting while you wait. We can accurately cut to the millimetre, which means that you save time and money with less wastage.

The use of stainless steel round bar in pump and valve manufacturing is a testament to the material's unparalleled properties and the critical role it plays in industrial applications. Stainless steel, renowned for its corrosion resistance, strength, and durabil-

ity, is an ideal choice for manufacturing components that are often exposed to harsh environments and high-pressure conditions. This makes it indispensable in industries such as water treatment, chemical processing, and food and beverage production, where pumps and valves must perform reliably over extended periods," says Sales Manager, Heinrich Vollgraaff.

Stainless steel round bar is particularly favoured in these applications due to its uniform composition and exceptional machinability. The round bar form allows for easy manipulation and fabrication into precise components, ensuring that pumps and valves meet stringent specifications and performance standards.

It is worth noting that while the initial cost of stainless steel can be higher than other materials, the investment is often justified by the extended lifespan and reduced maintenance needs of stainless steel components.

The use of stainless steel round bar in pump and valve manufacturing is a strategic decision influenced by the material's superior characteristics. Its role is crucial in ensuring the efficiency, safety, and reliability of systems that are foundational to numerous industries. As technology continues to evolve, the potential for stainless steel to further revolutionise pump

and valve manufacturing remains significant, promising continued innovation and enhanced performance in the years to come.

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BMG - an authorised distributor for over 50 years of Bijur Delimon lubrication systems - supplies and supports the full range of manual and fully automated lubrication equipment throughout Southern and Central Africa.

"Through this partnership - which has been in place since 1974 - we are able to offer the local market Bijur Delimon's global lubrication technology, designed for automated and manual delivery of oil and grease in demanding environments. This advanced equipment is enhanced by BMG's on-site engineering capability and technical support that extends equipment life and improves lubrication reliability in every day plant operation," explains Taylor Black, Business Development Manager, Fluid Tech Projects BMG's Fluid Technology division.

"Our Fluid Technol-



BMG - an authorised distributor for over 50 years of Bijur Delimon lubrication systems - supplies and supports the full range of manual and fully automated lubrication equipment throughout Southern and Central Africa.

line systems, progressive divider technologies, gear-spray systems and positive displacement injectors. Every system is designed to enhance reliability, reduce friction and ensure precise lubrication delivery in light, medium and heavy industrial machinery.

The single-line resistance system range, with manual and automatic options, offers compact and economical operation and is recommended for light to medium machinery, requiring up to 100 lubrication points. Dualine lubrication systems, including the Farval Dualine range, are supplied for continuous-duty applications in mining, steel, pulp and paper and machine tools. These systems use paired supply lines to alternately deliver lubricant via Dualine valves, with central stations, reversing valves and controllers forming part of the configuration.

Bijur Delimon's progressive lubrication systems, which operate through modular divider valves driven by robust pumps, are recommended for medium-duty applications. The divider block design enables proportioned lubricant output to multiple bearing points, with discharge determined by piston diameter selection. These systems allow maintenance teams to easily add or remove divider blocks without disturbing installed



ogy team designs and installs manual and fully automated lubrication systems - with Progressive, Dualine and injector-based configurations - tailored to specific equipment duty cycles and lubrication point counts. This equipment is suitable for use in many industries - from medium-duty manufacturing, to demanding conditions found in cement and mining."

BMG's Bijur Delimon product portfolio comprises single-line resistance systems, Dua-

pipework. This is an important feature which enables service continuity in high-utilisation plants.

BMG provides Bijur Delimon gear-spray systems for external gear drives used in cement, mining, iron ore and kiln operations. These installations apply lubricant to pinion and ring gears at controlled intervals, reducing friction and limiting gear wear.

In older installations, asphalt-based lubricants were typically used, but in newer systems, the use of synthetic lubricants reduces downtime and extends gear life. Automated control equipment, air-pressure regulation and divider-block manifolds now form part of typical configurations.

Positive displacement injector systems are recommended for low to medium-pressure oil or grease circuits requiring precise, adjustable dosing. Injectors operate sequentially once system pressure is achieved, enabling single manifolds to deliver different quantities of lubricant to multiple friction points.

Bijur Delimon lubrication systems are available from BMG in South Africa, Zambia, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Botswana, Eswatini, Angola, Namibia, the DRC, Tanzania and Ghana.

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THE NEXT GENERATION

Internships, Skills & Development Programmes

A CALL FOR GREATER COLLABORATION: INDUSTRY NEEDED TO UNLOCK SOUTH AFRICA'S NANOSCIENCE POTENTIAL

Two decades ago, the Department of Science and Technology recognised nanotechnology as a strategic field capable of reshaping South Africa's industrial future. This led to the establishment of the Masters Nanoscience Programme, a collaboration between four universities designed to train MSc graduates who can drive innovation, manufacturing and technology development locally rather than relying on imports.

WHY NANOSCIENCE MATTERS

Nanoscience focuses on materials measured in nanometres, structures at least 1,000 times thinner than a human hair. Its applications span chemistry, physics, biomedicine, electronics, petrochemicals, manufacturing and environmental solutions.

"The biological applications of nanoscience have spurred remarkable growth in biological science companies in the Western Cape, something that few people seem to be aware of," says Professor Robbie Lindsay, national director of the programme.

Nanoscience is also becoming essential in efforts to reduce carbon emissions. Advanced nanomaterials are improving energy efficiency, enhancing catalytic processes in petrochemicals, enabling cleaner manufacturing, and powering next-generation filtration and carbon-capture systems. These innovations reduce emissions while boosting industrial competitiveness, positioning nanoscience as a key enabler of South Africa's transition to a greener economy.

SUCCESS STORIES SHOWING THE PROGRAMME'S IMPACT

Graduates of the programme work at several successful companies in the Cape, offering clear proof of the growing local nanotech industry and the programme's relevance and impact:

- **Bio-Vac** manufactures vaccines locally.
- **Medical Diagnostics** in Brackenfell develops advanced diagnostic tests.
- **Synexa**, a company that specialises in advanced bioanalytical measurements, has expanded beyond South Africa into Europe and the USA.
- **Kapa Biosystems**, developed by South African researchers, was acquired by Roche, which subsequently invested in a major Cape Town facility.

These examples show how nanoscience skills and research can translate into value-added manufacturing, new exports, and globally competitive businesses.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR BUSINESS – AND YOUNG SCIENTISTS

For students, the programme provides far more than academic learning. Funded traineeships give graduates real-world experience in tackling industrial problems, preparing them for careers in fast-growing technology sectors.

One standout example is the partnership with **Stellenbosch Nanofibers Company**, which manufactures nanofibres at scale using technology initially developed at a South African university. "This company shows how research can transform into industry," says Lindsay. "It's exactly the kind of environment where a nanoscience graduate can thrive."

For businesses, collaboration offers several advantages:

- Access to specialised scientific expertise
- Joint research and innovation opportunities
- Practical solutions to local industry challenges
- A pipeline of trained graduates ready to contribute immediately

Companies can strengthen their Research & Development capabilities without the cost of establishing large in-house research units.



THE CRITICAL CHALLENGE: TOO FEW INDUSTRY PARTNERS

Despite strong foundations, the programme's growth is now held back by a shortage of internship and traineeship opportunities, the essential bridge between academic expertise and industry application.

"We don't have enough internship opportunities for the students we have in the programme," Lindsay explains.

This shortage has become a bottleneck at a time when South Africa urgently needs to expand value-added manufacturing and technical innovation. At the recent Export Symposium and Expo in Midrand, Deputy Minister of Trade, Industry and Competition, Zuko Godlimpi, highlighted that South Africa's export basket remains too dependent on raw materials and too concentrated in a few markets.

The Masters Nanoscience Programme is one of the clearest pathways to building a more diversified, knowledge-driven and competitive economy, but this requires far greater industry involvement.

A DIRECT CALL TO BUSINESS: PARTNER WITH THE PROGRAMME

The programme invites collaboration from companies across sectors, including advanced manufacturing, pharmaceuticals, biotech, petrochemicals, mining, energy, agriculture, environmental technologies, water management, electronics, and food and packaging.

Opportunities include:

- Hosting interns or trainees
- Joining collaborative research projects
- Identifying real-world problems for student research
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Four habits that separate sustainable leaders from burnt-out ones in 2026

By Chantelle Botha



JANUARY is a strange month. Most of us return to work armed with our resolutions and commitments to make this our best year yet. But by February, it's all a distant memory and you are counting down the days to the Easter holidays once again. Research tells us that 90% of people fail to achieve their goals.

Why?

Because you've confused motivation with sustainability. Your habits haven't changed, and that means you're back to the same patterns that burn you out every year.

Leadership has very little to do with **WHAT** you do, and almost everything to do with **HOW** you do it. Habits are the key to incremental change and ultimately radical transformation.

The leaders who are sustaining and growing their impact aren't doing anything mystical – they've just taken four habits and turned them into non-negotiables.

Here's what sustainable leadership looks like in 2026:

1. Celebrate wins instead of weaponising them

Most leaders treat wins like evidence in a performance review – proof they're not failing YET. But your nervous system doesn't work that way. When you dismiss your progress and immediately move to the next deliverable, your body learns that success means **MORE** pressure, not more capacity.

You're celebrating because your brain needs evidence that growth is sustainable, not just survivable. What you celebrate, you create the conditions for more of. What you weaponise eventually kills you.

Not every celebration calls for a fancy dinner – just a pause, an acknowledgement, and a sharing. The more you name and share your wins, the more your brain builds neural pathways that expect **MORE** growth, not fear it.

2. Build rituals, not routines

Routines work when you're motivated. But when pressure hits, routines become prisons – silent monuments to everything you haven't checked off your list. Rituals energise you. They hold space for the ebb and flow of changing circumstances instead of condemning you for not keeping up.

The leader who meditates every morning when things are calm isn't impressive. The leader who has a 60-second grounding practice for when everything is on fire – THAT's sustainability.

Your leadership doesn't need perfection, it needs tending. What's your return-to-self practice when you've drifted into reactivity, people-pleasing, or decision fatigue? If you don't have one, you're not leading – you're performing until you collapse.

3. Curate your circle like your leadership depends on it

When pressure mounts, the first thing we

sacrifice are our relationships. We cancel that dinner with friends because we're too busy, we snap at our families, and bark out staccato orders to our teams. Isolation doesn't just hurt morale – it starves your brain.

A 2020 research study by MIT neuroscientists showed that your brain cannot distinguish between social starvation and physical starvation. When you're isolated, your midbrain dopamine neurons fire the exact same way they do when you're hungry. Connection isn't a nice to have – it's a physiological survival need.

But there's a caveat: your growth is directly proportional to the **QUALITY**, not quantity, of your relationships. Do the people in your circle energise you and inspire you to keep becoming the best leader, the best version of you, that you can be?

An African proverb says it best: "If you want to go fast, go alone, but if you want to go far, go together."

4. Accountability works both ways

Every leader I've watched sustain their impact has one thing in common: they refuse to do it alone. Whether it's a mastermind, a coach or a mentor – the structure doesn't matter – the refusal to go it alone does.

The game changer of leadership is to mentor someone AND be mentored by someone. It's the cycle of growth – invest in, and be invested in.

Steven Bartlett says it best in Diary of a CEO: "If you want to learn something, read about it. If you want to understand something, write about it. If you want to master something, teach it."

Teaching what you've learned cements it deeper than any workshop ever could. Being held accountable to your growth keeps you honest when the pressure to regress is overwhelming. If your plan for 2026 is

steeped in strategy and not habits, you'll default to 2025's patterns and call it leadership.

We've blamed burnout on bad leadership. But burnout is just the symptom. Becoming someone you no longer recognise because you've sacrificed non-negotiable habits – that's what causes it.

YOU are your number one job in 2026, and your habits will determine whether you sustain your leadership fire or burn out.

Celebrate yourself. Build rituals. Curate your circle. Stay accountable.

Or prepare to have this same conversation with yourself in January 2027.



Chantelle Botha, known globally as The Catalyst, is an Identity Architect who helps leaders build sustainable, burnout-proof practices. As founder of Phoenix and author of "Phoenix Rising," she challenges the myth that leadership requires sacrifice through her Phoenix methodology.

Ready to ignite sustainable leadership?
Connect with Chantelle today.

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Beyond cost savings: How procurement can drive social change in South Africa

PROCUREMENT in South Africa is undergoing a profound strategic transformation, shifting from a narrowly defined cost-saving function to a central driver of economic inclusion, ethical governance and long-term social impact.

This is according to Paul Vos, Regional Managing Director of the Chartered Institute for Procurement & Supply (CIPS) Southern Africa.

"Historically, procurement was seen primarily as a mechanism to reduce costs. Today, organisations recognise their power to influence resilience, transparency and responsible sourcing. Procurement is increasingly being used deliberately as a lever for social change."

Banks and telecoms companies like Absa, Vodacom and MTN run enterprise and supplier development (ESD) programmes that help small suppliers become production-ready and compliant, ultimately improving supply continuity. Such programmes often include access to finance, mentorship, technology upgrades and guaranteed offtake agreements.

Vos highlights three major shifts redefining the function: a move from compliance to impact-driven outcomes; the integration of

ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance), B-BBEE and ethical standards into procurement frameworks; and the professionalisation of the discipline.

Procurement teams are moving toward holistic sourcing strategies that reward responsible suppliers. Weighted evaluation criteria, life-cycle costing, ESG-aligned Request For Quotes (RFQs) and Request for Proposals (RFPs), and adherence to the CIPS Global Standard are helping organisations prioritise suppliers who contribute meaningfully to South Africa's socio-economic priorities.

"Economic inclusion becomes meaningful when selection decisions deliberately favour suppliers who support national development goals," he says. "Supplier diversity is not charity but sound business practice."

He notes that diverse suppliers bring local insight, reduce concentration risk and strengthen resilience. Organisations are increasingly setting deliberate spend targets, streamlining onboarding for emerging enterprises and partnering with development institutions to uplift historically disadvantaged and township-based suppliers.

Responsible procurement is fast becoming a non-negotiable for organisations under pressure to demonstrate social and environ-

mental impact. Vos points to the growing adoption of transparent governance, ethical frameworks, environmental performance assessments, and digital tools that provide deeper visibility into supply chain risks.

However, he adds that South Africa's inequality challenges cannot be addressed by individual sectors acting in isolation. Collaboration between the public and private sectors is essential to modernise systems, strengthen governance and build the capabilities required for effective procurement.

"Joint standards, shared expertise and co-investment in supplier development can transform entire value chains," he says.

Vos says procurement is uniquely positioned to drive measurable progress against the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Organisations are increasingly mapping spend to SDG indicators and embedding sustainability metrics into procurement scorecards, reporting cycles, and supplier audits.

"Procurement can materially move the dial on SDG progress when decisions are intentionally aligned to sustainability objectives," he explains.

"Professionalisation at scale, aligned standards across sectors, digital transfor-



mation and regional integration can unlock procurement's full potential to drive social change. The opportunity exists – if capability, ethics and governance keep pace with ambition."

About the Chartered Institute for Procurement & Supply (CIPS)

The Chartered Institute for Procurement & Supply (CIPS) is a global professional body dedicated to advancing procurement and supply management. With a presence in over 180 countries, CIPS sets the international standard for excellence in the profession, defining best practices, promoting innovation, and supporting the transformation of supply chains worldwide.



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