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Boegoebaai Port decision expected in 2027 as R13.8 billion Northern Cape megaproject advances

Infrastructure South Africa targets early 2027 for a winning bidder as the Northern Cape megaproject promises 13,770 jobs and a 3,6% GDP boost by 2050.



By Larry Claasen

INFRASTRUCTURE South Africa (ISA) says an announcement on who will win the bid to build a deep-water R13,8 billion port at Boegoebaai in the Northern Cape will likely be made in the first half of 2027.

The port, comprising a dry bulk export berth and a break-bulk berth, along with the adjacent Namakwa Special Economic Zone (SEZ) and a new 550 km rail line, is expected to become a hub for the country's Green Hydrogen programme.

Green Hydrogen is the creation of hydrogen by using renewable electricity to electrolyse water. It is seen by many developing countries, such as South Africa and Namibia, as a huge opportunity to develop their economies.

The idea behind the Boegoebaai project, which is about 20 km from the Namibian border, is to create and export Green Hydrogen, which could add 3.6% to GDP by 2050 and create 370,000 jobs, according to the government's Green Hydrogen Commercialisation Strategy.

Though the government has long envisaged a port at Boegoebaai, progress has been slow.

"Boegoebaai has been a dream of various successive governments in South Africa," said ISA CEO Mameetse Masemola.

The slow pace is evident: Transnet announced a shortlist in July 2023 but only issued a tender for transaction advisory services for the project in November 2025. The winner of the nine-month advisory contract would advise on legal, commercial, financial, and technical transaction services to enable the successful procurement and commercialisation of the port's development.

Masemola said the shortlisted candidates to develop the port — Boegoebaai Port & Rail Consortium, Boegoebaai Development Consortium, and Project Elephant Consortium — were being assessed, and a winner would likely be announced in early 2027 if everything went to plan.

"If there are no external shocks to the process, we believe that in less than a year, Transnet will be at the position where it can announce who the successful bidder is," said Masemola.

Setting up to be invested in

The Boegoebaai project is one of 20 major infrastructure projects worth R286 billion that the ISA is preparing for investment.

The ISA was created in response to the high failure rate of infrastructure projects. It takes over project preparation at an early stage by acting as a single point of entry for infrastructure planning, management, and delivery.

After preparation, projects are handed over to others for financial structuring and implementation, said Masemola.

"And then we hand over these projects to National Treasury, to other Development Finance Institutions (DFIs), the Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA), the Industrial Development Corporation (IDC) and others, who then do the financial structuring and look to get these projects to be fully funded. And then implementation takes place."

Complex and time consuming

Preparing these projects to be investment-ready is a complex and time-consuming process, but if it is not done right, it heightens the chance of failure.

"It's a heavy-lifting exercise, and takes quite a long time. Some projects, we can prepare them for up to 18 months to get it right, because we know that if they are not properly prepared and packaged, 80% of them fail," Masemola said.

The ISA's projects span a wide range of sectors and clients. "So these projects range from wastewater treatment works projects to the City of Ekurhuleni, City of Tshwane, to special economic zones, to health infrastructure projects, and Transnet projects, railway projects."

Continued on P2

Atlas Copco battery energy storage systems (BESS) are reshaping the power supply landscape and driving energy transition forward



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Boegoebaai Port decision expected in 2027 as R13.8 billion Northern Cape megaproject advances

Continued from p1

Masemola said six of these are earmarked for submission to the Budget Facility for Infrastructure (BFI) to unlock fiscal allocations.

“So we will be taking these projects — six of these projects are ear-

marked for what they call National Treasury’s BFI. It is a platform where government-led projects are submitted for appraisal to unlock additional fiscal allocation for these projects.”

ISA’s success is

measured by National Treasury approvals and the quantum of funding unlocked. “So our measure of success will be the extent to which those projects are approved by the National Treasury, and the quantum

of funding that gets to be unlocked for those projects. So that’s our measure of success.”

A big pay off

The economic impact of getting these projects off the ground is

immense. Just the construction phase will see the creation of about 3,000 direct jobs and almost 14,000 indirect jobs. Once the port is completed, 400 permanent jobs will be needed to manage it, and over time, an estimated

13,770 jobs could be created in the region.

This kind of economic boost is sorely needed not only for the country but especially for the Northern Cape, which, according to a presentation its provincial government made

to Parliament a year ago, has sunk further into poverty.

This can be seen in the number of individuals living below the upper poverty line increasing by 338,4%, from 611,000 in 2014 to 817,000 in 2024.

BPO sector in the Western Cape to host awards in October

By Larry Claasen

THE CapeBPO Awards 2026 will be held in October this year.

The announcement of these awards followed Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) becoming a major economic driver in the Western Cape, adding R24 billion annually to the province’s economy in salaries alone, and bringing in R3,6 billion in new foreign direct investment.

About 70 000 Capetonians work in BPO centres, which cater to the needs of off-shore companies that subcontract various business-related operations like call centre operation to third-party sub-contractors.

The country’s “neutral” english speaking accent, and the ability of South Africans to dynamically solve problems has created a niche in the competitive global BPO market.

The emerging sector has also been a significant driver in office commercial property occupancy in the region in the post-pandemic era.

The BPO sector accounted for 60% of net office space absorption over the past 18-24 months in Cape Town and as space runs out and rentals increase, according to the Catalyst Fund Managers’ bi-annual dashboard local listed property report.

The sector has been supported by strong partnerships between the City of Cape Town, provincial government, and national government.

CapeBPO is the City of Cape Town and the Western Cape’s strategic business partner responsible for the growth and development of the BPO industry in Cape Town, the Western Cape, South Africa.

These awards were created to acknowledge and reward those within the BPO sector who have shown outstanding excellence and operational brilliance over the past year.

To help participants navigate the nomination pipeline and showcase their success, CapeBPO will be hosting a live virtual master-

class open to all prospective entrants.

The event will be held on 9 July at 11am and hosted on Microsoft Teams.

In this Microsoft Teams session our awards team will guide participants step-by-step through the journey of submitting a nomination.

The virtual master-class will cover:

Category Alignment: Understanding the difference between Individual and Company categories to find the perfect home for your stories.

The Criteria Break-down: What our independent judging panel looks for when scoring submissions.

Drafting with Impact: Practical tips on how to frame your data, metrics, and human stories of dedication.

The Portal Walk-through: A live demonstration of the online entry tool to make your submission seamless.

Live Q&A: Get direct answers to your technical and criteria-related questions.

South Africa vehicle exports face mixed fortunes despite North America Growth

North American rebound masks deeper structural shifts

By Larry Claasen

VEHICLE exports to North America rose 41% for the first quarter of 2026 compared to the corresponding quarter of 2025, despite the trade tariffs imposed by the US.

Though the US trade tariffs continued to take their toll on local vehicle manufacturers, exports to Canada increased during the quarter, pushing up overall exports to North America. This is according to Naamsa’s Quarterly Review of Business Conditions: New Motor Vehicle Manufacturing Industry/Automotive Sector – 1st Quarter 2026.



for the period. South Africa’s global vehicle production market share decreased from 0,65% in 2024 to 0,64% in 2025, while its global vehicle production

government to provide policy certainty on the issue.

“The significance of Europe’s 2035 timeline to ban the sale of ICE vehicles, with countries such as Germany already implementing the ban from 2030 onwards, requires an urgent and strategic intervention on the part of South Africa’s supply- and demand-side automotive policies.”

Without policy clarity, the sector will struggle to make informed investment and employment decisions.

Record 2025 exports offer a silver lining

Despite the drop-off in exports for the first quarter of 2026, the sector enjoyed a 5,9% increase in exports to a record 414,271 units in 2025.

Naamsa said preferential trade agreements were central to South Africa’s export-led automotive model, as they enabled competitiveness, attracted foreign direct investment, sustained jobs, contributed to sector growth, generated foreign exchange earnings, and integrated the country into global and regional automotive value chains.

It added that the domestic automotive industry has material-

ly benefited from the various trade arrangements over the past three decades, opening up certain markets in Europe, the US, and Africa, among others.

Local market shines with best Q1 since 2013, but global risks persist

Though there is uncertainty in the industry as a result of US trade tariffs and a lack of policy clarity on the EU’s coming ban on ICE vehicles, robust domestic demand is driving optimism in the sector.

“The new vehicle market during the first quarter of 2026 reflected the best first-quarter figures since 2013, with March 2026 reflecting an 18th consecutive month of growth,” said Naamsa.

It said improved consumer and business confidence, supportive inflation dynamics, the lagged benefits of cumulative interest rate reductions, as well as the ongoing influx of new entrants with affordable models, continued to benefit the new vehicle market.

Despite these green shoots, Naamsa warned that conflict in the Middle East may stoke inflation and “pose a significant stagflationary threat to the domestic economy”.

“The new vehicle market during the first quarter of 2026 reflected the best first-quarter figures since 2013.”

The increase in exports to North America, from 1,894 to 2,675 units, should however be seen against the 7,070 units exported to the region in the first quarter of 2024, prior to the increase in tariffs.

AGOA expiry bites as Europe’s ICE ban looms large

Under the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), vehicles manufactured in South Africa could previously be exported into the US tariff-free. This came to an end on 7 August 2025, when a 25% tariff came into effect.

Naamsa said that while there were promising signs for exports to North America and Africa, which rose 32% to 9,115 combined, overall exports were down 10,3% to 87,536

ranking remained at 21st for the quarter.

The biggest drop off was in exports to Europe, which fell from 79,737 to 69,298 units. Europe is a key market for local vehicle manufacturers, as exports to the European Union (EU) and the UK accounted for 80,3% – or four out of five vehicles, exported in 2025. The importance of Europe to the sector could also be seen in the fact that 56,8% of the light vehicles it produces are destined for the region.

Naamsa pleads for urgent policy clarity on 2035 timeline

The EU’s move to ban the importing of Internal Combustion Engine (ICE) vehicles is looming over local vehicle manufacturers and has left Naamsa concerned. It wants the



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Cybersecurity threats in South Africa - why attackers keep targeting local businesses



By Adrian Ephraim

A Kaspersky researcher who tracks the world's most patient attackers says local businesses are not being beaten by Hollywood style hacks, but by stolen passwords, trusted suppliers and a stubborn belief that security is something you buy. "Our job is finding the needle in the haystack," says Omar Amin, a senior security researcher in Kaspersky's Global Research and Analysis Team, who sifts through millions of pieces of telemetry to pull out the attacks that matter, the quiet espionage campaigns, and the loud, expensive ransomware hits. He was in Cape Town and Johannesburg recently to share what that haystack is telling him about South Africa. His

message is not a comforting one. The country is, and will remain, an attractive target.

A target by design

"If you run infrastructure, manage money, manage logistics or operate industrial systems, you are part of a target surface," Amin says. South Africa also hosts a steady flow of foreign nationals whose data sits inside local government, energy, telecom and financial systems. The advanced persistent threat groups he tracks follow opportunity rather than borders. "They are not region locked," he says. A shift in geopolitics or a single high profile event can swing their attention here within months.

That helps explain the run of public sector breaches, from the at-

tacks on Stats SA and the Gauteng provincial government claimed by a group calling itself XP95, to a recent breach at a local dental provider. Amin is careful, because dark web data is hard to verify and criminals often chase clout. But the noise itself does damage. Once South African data is seen changing hands, more attackers come looking.

Loud ransomware, silent spies

Amin draws a sharp line between the two threats people tend to blur. "Ransomware wants the victim to know: we encrypted your systems," he says. "The espionage groups want the opposite. Please don't notice us, let us infiltrate in silence." With ransomware, "the downtime is a weapon." With espionage, "the silence is the weapon," and time is everything. "Six months is bad. A year is a disaster. More than a year is catastrophic." What unites them is rarely glamorous. Stolen credentials, phishing and exposed servers open most of the doors.

The weakest link

The threat that worries

him most is the one a business cannot fully control. "What a company cannot prevent is the supply chain attack, because it all comes from the outside," he says. Attackers break a trusted supplier first, often a managed IT provider with access to dozens of clients. "If they manage to impact one, now it's game over." Their real weapon is patience, researching every vendor a target relies on and working through them one by one.

Common sense over budget

His advice is unfashionably basic: multifactor authentication, phishing training, a full inventory of internet facing assets, prompt patching, and watching the dark web for leaked credentials. "Stolen credentials are behind most of the attacks, in Africa and all over the globe," he says. For smaller firms without big budgets, he is reassuring. "It's not about money at all. It's about common sense," he says. "Don't expose your sensitive data to the internet. Don't download cracked software, because that's often where stolen credentials come from."

AI scales the threat

On artificial intelligence he is measured. "It's not magic. You can't just tell AI to go compromise a government entity," he says. What it does is scale the work. Attackers use it to write flawless phishing in local languages, run faster reconnaissance and generate malware. "They research videos of executives on YouTube, and in two minutes they can clone the entire voice," he says. Yet he warns against writing these groups off as amateurs. "The human operator still matters. AI just makes the attacks faster."

Spend on people, not just tools

This is his real message to South African boards. Security is not a shopping list of products. "If you have to invest in something, invest in your security teams," he says. "Whatever stack you have, the people are what matter most in preventing these attacks." In a country so attractive to attackers, that is the decision he wants boards to stop delaying.

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South Africa's Economic Outlook 2026 shows hope despite inflation risks

Economist John Loos cautions that while July's fuel price drop offers relief, lingering inflation risks and a potential SARB interest rate hike could still dampen household consumption.

By Larry Claasen

THERE is "light at the end of the tunnel" for consumers, but it is still likely to be a tougher year overall, says independent economist John Loos.

Loos' remarks followed the South African economy stalling after the US unexpectedly started a war in the Middle East. The subsequent crisis increased fuel prices, which had a dampening effect on the global economy and capped South Africa's ability to control inflation.

The crisis in the Middle East came just as there were fledgling signs of a recovery in the local economy. Inflation dropping to 3%, the removal

of South Africa from the European Union's (EU) money-laundering monitoring "grey list", and the upgrading of its sovereign credit rating by S&P led to widespread talk of an economic upswing.

In his 1 July research note, "The Household Sector Economy," Loos said last year saw real household consumption expenditure recording a strong 3,6% rise, buoyed by low consumer inflation and declining interest rates. The economy was expected to maintain the growth momentum of the past year, but the crisis in the Strait of Hormuz has stifled economic growth. The higher-than-expected average consumer inflation rate and the interest rate hike

in May have led to a forecast of slower economic growth of 1,7% in real consumption expenditure for 2026, said Loos.

Though the recent drop in the fuel price is a good sign, Loos said South Africa is a price taker, not a price maker, when it comes to crude oil prices.

"July's decline in domestic fuel prices provides some welcome relief for consumers. But much depends on the US-Iran conflict in the Gulf Region as to whether lower global oil prices can hold and result in further reductions in domestic fuel prices in the coming months."

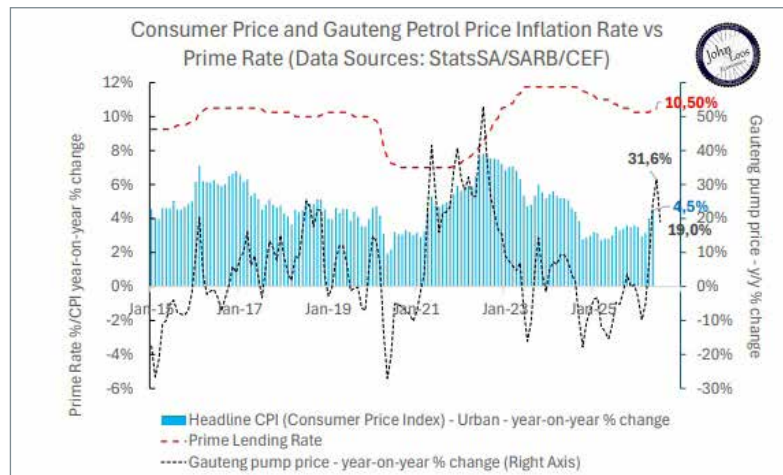
Despite these concerns, Loos said an upcoming general election

in the US will "greatly motivate" its government to seek a way out of the conflict and normalise the oil supply.

Though the fuel price has dropped, the impact of higher fuel prices in May and April still has to be reflected in the economic indicators, said Loos.

"While consumers felt the immediate impact of the large fuel price hikes of April and May on their finances, it can take time before producers who use fuel as an input in various ways, have passed on that input cost inflation to the consumers of their products and services."

But even if oil prices stabilise, Loos said it does not mean there



would be easy answers on inflation. With the CPI expected to be released in mid-July, there is a chance that because people expect inflation to be higher, it could become a "self-fulfilling

prophecy" leading to higher inflation. This, along with the recent inflation data, suggests that there is still a significant risk of an interest rate hike.

Loos said this means

it will be a "touch-and-go" decision for the South African Reserve Bank (SARB) on whether to leave interest rates unchanged or to increase them in its July meeting.

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Wind Power becomes South Africa's fastest-growing renewable energy source

Western Cape is becoming major driver of the wind power industry



The Oyster Bay wind farm near Oyster Bay in the Kouga municipality in Eastern Cape:

By Larry Claasen

WIND power is the fastest-growing renewable energy source in South Africa, according to a research note published by Stats SA.

The statistics agency said that wind power had made “notable headway” as it was the fastest-growing source of renewable energy over a three-year period, increasing generation from 6 512 GWh in 2021 to 10 450 GWh in 2024. This has seen it eclipse solar power, which generated 7 140 GWh.

Stats SA said this represented annual growth of 17,1% and was only outpaced by diesel, which grew by 34,5% per annum over the same period.

From pilot projects to commercial powerhouse

The South African Wind Energy Association’s (SAWEA) Wind Energy Market Intelligence Report: South Africa 2025 spelt out why wind power was taking off in the country.

For one, the sector is maturing, which has created confidence in the market.

“The country has successfully transitioned from early demonstration projects to large-scale commercial deployment,” said the report.

This could be seen in South Africa’s wind energy sector growing from a modest pilot initiative in the early 2000s to become the leading wind energy market on the African continent, with over 3,8 GW of installed capacity across 40 operational wind farms.

Pipeline bulges as Cape winds draw investment

The rate of growth in wind power is showing no signs of slowing, as the 2025 South African Renewable Energy Grid Survey (SAREGS) said

there were over 220 GW of renewable and hybrid projects in the pipeline. Of the 110 GW of hybrid projects in the pipeline, 75,8 GW has a wind component.

Most projects will still be clustered in the Cape region. This is because the Western Cape, Eastern Cape, and parts of the Northern Cape possess world-class wind resources, with exceptional potential concentrated along the southern and western coastlines.

“According to the Global Wind Atlas, large areas of South Africa register average wind speeds exceeding 8,5 m/s at 100 metres, comparable to high-yield regions in the US and Europe,” said the report.

Reforms open the door for private off-takers

Electricity market reforms like the Electricity Regulation Amendment Act (2024) and the establishment of the South African Wholesale Electricity Market (SAWEM) are also expected to boost the wind power market.

The amendment to the act lays the groundwork for a more open, competitive electricity market, and the creation of SAWEM allows for multiple buyers and sellers to trade electricity, unlocking new opportunities for Independent Power Producers (IPPs).

These developments have already enabled IPPs to sell electricity directly to private companies. This could be seen in mining house Anglo American and energy group Sasol committing to buy 5,000 MW and 2,000 MW, respectively, by 2030.

The night-time edge over solar

Though South Africa’s solar renewable projects have long been seen as a key part of the country’s energy mix, wind has the

advantage in that it can provide power at night.

This ability to produce green electricity at night is becoming part of the discussion on energy by many industrial businesses that require round-the-clock power.

“Wind energy is now a vital component of South Africa’s energy transition strategy, offering a low-cost, scalable solution to address both climate and energy security challenges,” said the report.

Offshore capacity offers the next frontier

The report also pointed to the vast potential of offshore wind power.

“Preliminary assessments estimate over 900 GW of technical offshore capacity and more than 2,300 TWh/year of generation potential in deeper waters.”

To this end, the government and industry stakeholders are actively exploring the policy, legal, and technical foundations required for offshore deployment.

Local manufacturing – tailwinds and headwinds

Though the sector is enjoying a tailwind, the report noted that “policy uncertainty and market challenges” were limiting the development of local manufacturing capabilities.

It said South Africa has attempted to boost local manufacturing for wind energy, particularly through the stringent local content requirements in the Renewable Energy Independent Power Producer Procurement Programme (REIPPPP). However, issues like plant components and services required by wind farms remained a challenge.

Despite these issues, it said local manufacturers like GRI Towers South Africa, in Cape Town, and Nordex Energy, in Jeffreys Bay, showed that the country is capable of supporting the sector.

The great living annuity balancing act: Income today versus security tomorrow

By Michael Rossouw, Senior Investment Consultant, 10X Investments

SO, you’re fortunate enough to be one of the small percentage of South Africans to end your career with a decent retirement nest egg. Your worries are over, right? You can spend the rest of your life enjoying your hobbies, friends, and family in the ways you’ve dreamed of for the past forty or so years. And you might well think that because you’ve looked at your savings and answered the question, “how much income can my savings provide today?” with “enough”.

ular income. A guaranteed annuity, on the other hand, pays you a fixed amount until you pass away. Finally, a hybrid annuity is a blend of the two.

Now, you may have been told that a living annuity is simply a tax-wrapped legal vehicle rather than an investment product on its own. That’s not entirely the full picture. Instead, it allows people to meet their statutory income drawdowns between 2.5% and 17.5% while still growing their wealth.

The feeling that living annuities are legal vehicles may come from cases where the living annuity underperforms. In those instances, investors of-

rica (ASISA)’s Living Annuity Standard and Guidelines do offer a useful guide.

Living annuity vs guaranteed annuity: a false choice?

Knowing the above, it might be tempting to go all-in on a living annuity. It’s important to know, however, that doing so comes with tradeoffs. So, while a living annuity offers flexibility, capital preservation, and estate planning benefits, it also leaves the investor carrying the longevity and market risk.

That’s not to say that guaranteed annuities don’t come with their own set of benefits and complications either. It eliminates the longevity risk by guaranteeing an income for life, but means sacrificing capital flexibility and legacy benefits.

A potential solution is to combine the two structures. This can be done either through a single blended annuity or a hybrid annuity strategy. A blended annuity is an all-in-one product, where a guaranteed life annuity is wrapped up as an asset class or portfolio inside your living annuity wrapper. A hybrid approach, meanwhile, entails holding separate guaranteed life and living annuities.

Both options allow you to use your guaranteed life annuity to cover fixed, essential monthly expenses, such as medical aid and utilities, providing income security and peace of mind. Your living annuity, meanwhile, stays actively invested in the markets, allowing you to continue growing your capital and hedging against inflation. It also preserves capital flexibility, which is important in case of high-cost emergencies, and estate legacy planning benefits for your beneficiaries.

In food terms, you can think of a blended annuity as a smoothie, where the protein you need to keep growing muscle (the living annuity) is mixed in with the carbohydrates, fibre, and other nutrients you need to get you through the day (the guaranteed life annuity). A hybrid annuity, meanwhile, is more like having steak, potatoes, and vegetables on your dinner plate. Either way, you’re still getting the “nutrients” you need to achieve the financial

stability needed to survive market volatility alongside the growth potential required to sustain a 20- or 30-year retirement.

Don’t underestimate the impact of fees

Regardless of the retirement vehicle, or vehicles, you have, it’s critical to manage costs as stringently as possible, especially once you start drawing down. A good place to start on this front is to look at the total costs of your retirement investments.

How much are you paying in investment, management, and advice fees, for instance? Are those fees comparable to what other retirees are paying on a like-for-like basis?

If not, press for lower fees. Even something as small as a one percent difference can compound over a 25-year retirement. That, in turn, can translate into hundreds of thousands of rands stripped directly from your retirement income stream.

Playing the long game: strategy over structure

Once you’re confident that you’ve got your costs where they should be, it’s important to remember that retirement is (hopefully) a long game, even when you’re in it. With time on your hands, it might be tempting to be a little more active with your investments. That’s even more tempting during a period of general volatility, but making knee-jerk shifts to your portfolio based on news headlines is a bad idea, no matter when you do it. Not least because doing so can lock in paper losses permanently. Patience still matters, even when you feel like you don’t have a lot of time left for it.

Ultimately, no matter which stage of life you’re at, successful retirement planning isn’t about chasing a high starting yield or finding a “magic bullet” product. It’s about being engaged in an ongoing, holistic balancing act that combines flexible income management, cost control, and inflation protection. This will help ensure that you end up with, and can sustain, a financial legacy that you and your loved ones can be proud of.

"A potential solution is to combine the two structures. This can be done either through a single blended annuity or a hybrid annuity strategy".

But there’s a much bigger question you should ask yourself: How do I ensure that this income lasts as long as I do? After all, a generation or so ago, most people could reasonably expect their retirement to last around a decade. Today, retirement can last 20 or even 30 years. That, in turn, means that chasing the highest possible initial payout may end up jeopardising your long-term financial security.

That begs the question: what is the best approach to using your retirement savings? While there’s no universal answer to that question, there are three interconnected decisions that can help put you on the path to retirement success. Those decisions involve choosing the right vehicle (living, guaranteed, or hybrid annuity), getting the underlying asset allocation right, and managing silent wealth killers, such as fees and tax inefficiency.

Demystifying the living annuity (the engine vs the fuel)

For those unfamiliar with the term, a living annuity differs from a traditional guaranteed annuity in one important way: a living annuity keeps your capital invested in the markets while giving you a reg-

ten blame the annuity structure itself. In reality, there are usually other culprits at play, including an inappropriate underlying investment portfolio, an aggressive drawdown rate, or high layers of fees.

On sustainable drawdowns

The middle of those factors is especially important, given that it’s the one investors have the most control over. While a five or six percent drawdown, for example, might seem conservative today, inflation and withdrawals can compound over time, especially if the market stalls during your retirement. Suddenly, you may find that inflation has eaten into your capital and you’re having to draw down more than you’d like in later years. This can leave retirees facing difficult financial choices later in life, potentially compromising the independence and lifestyle they had hoped to maintain throughout their retirement years”.

Avoiding getting to this tipping point means matching your drawdown rates with realistic portfolio growth expectations. While there is a degree of individualisation in this process, the Association for Savings and Investment South Af-

GoTyme Bank's SME Outlook for Q3 2026: A quarter of discipline and opportunity

Miguel da Silva, group executive: business banking at GoTyme Bank, unpacks the pressures facing South African SMEs in Q3 and shares practical ways businesses can protect margins, stay agile and find growth in a slow market.



SOUTH African SMEs enter the third quarter with a little more macro stability, but no easy growth story. There's very little room for complacency. Yes, the country avoided a stall and the economy is still growing, but slowly. Inflation has moved back up, fuel is biting again, interest rates remain tough, and consumers are still watching every rand.

GDP expanded by 0,5% in the first quarter of 2026, marking a sixth consecutive quarter of growth, supported by finance, agriculture, trade and transport. That is encouraging. But it is not yet a break-out. The South African Reserve Bank (SARB) has trimmed its growth expectations from 1,4% to 1,2% for 2026 and from 1,9% to 1,7% for

2027, while higher fuel and input costs continue to squeeze households and businesses.

Growth opportunities will therefore need to be earned through stronger customer relationships, operational efficiency, and a relentless focus on value.

For SMEs, the implication is blunt: businesses will need to compete harder for every customer, making pricing, service quality, and customer retention increasingly important. The ability to clearly demonstrate value will separate businesses that grow from those that merely maintain market share.

Cash flow will remain a critical focus area. Although borrowing conditions have improved slightly, access to affordable capital

remains challenging for many SMEs. Businesses that maintain healthy working capital, manage inventory efficiently, and keep a close eye on expenses will be better positioned to navigate uncertainty and take advantage of emerging opportunities.

July is National Savings Month, a campaign typically aimed at households, but now this message matters as much for entrepreneurs. For small businesses, saving is not a nice-to-have. It is working capital, stock cover, salary certainty and the ability to say yes when an opportunity appears. SMEs that know what is coming in, what is going out and what can be safely set aside will be better placed than those operating month to month.

The goal is not simply to survive Q3. It is to create enough financial breathing room to make better decisions. GoTyme Bank's savings products continue to lead in simple, flexible savings, offering customers up to 10% in interest. For business owners and households trying to build emergency buffers, tax reserves, equipment funds or short-term savings goals, that type of reward is powerful. A

business with healthier reserves can negotiate better, buy stock at the right time, absorb late payments, invest in technology and avoid expensive short-term borrowing. Especially since there are genuine growth pockets.

As South Africa's entrepreneurial sector continues to demonstrate resilience, increased digital adoption among consumers is creating opportunities for SMEs that can sell, collect payments and serve customers online.

Regional trade also deserves attention. The African Continental Free Trade Area is not an overnight answer, but it is gradually opening conversations around cross-border supply chains and new customer bases.

Looking ahead, the businesses most likely to succeed in Q3 will be the most adaptable. In a market where consumer behaviour is shifting rapidly and margins remain under pressure, agility has become a competitive advantage.

This quarter may not deliver a dramatic economic lift, but it does offer SMEs a chance to strengthen their base. In a cautious economy, resilience is not built through optimism alone.

Willpower and judgement: Protect your decision-making energy

Master your decisions. Master your day.

By Joni Peddie, CEO of Resilient People

HERE'S a confession: by 4pm most days, I have made a thousand decisions, and I have zero left in the tank.

What's for dinner? Ask me at 9am and I'll wax lyrical about a balanced meal. Ask me at 4pm and the answer is "fruit and yoghurt, standing up at the kitchen counter".

That's not laziness. That's decision fatigue. And if you're leading a team, a business, or a family, you will relate.

I see it constantly in the leaders I work with: the CEO who is razor-sharp at 8am but can't decide between two almost-identical vendor proposals by 3pm; the manager who handles a crisis brilliantly, then goes home and vegetates in front of the television, unable to chat to their significant others.

Here's the thing nobody tells you about leadership: it's not the big decisions alone, it's the sheer volume of them. Every email reply, every 'quick five minutes', every 'need your sign-off' chips away at the same finite resource. Willpower and judgement share the same tank.

The result?

- Snap decisions (without thinking through the consequences) dressed up as decisiveness.
- Lots of small, irritating errors late in the day.
- Snappy retorts and bad tone as you get tired in the day.
- A creeping reliance on 'I'll decide tomorrow'.

So, what do we do about it? Here are five ways to protect your decision-making energy, rather than spending it until it's gone.

1. Rank your decisions, don't simply react to them

Not every decision deserves the same weight. Some need your full brain, others only need 'good enough'. Before you dive in, ask: does this deserve five minutes of best thinking, or thirty seconds of good-enough thinking? Most of us default to the former, even though most decisions don't require it.



2. Front-load the big calls

Your judgement is sharpest early in the day, before small decisions wear it down. Put important calls in the morning, save routine stuff for the afternoon slump. I schedule anything requiring real judgement before midday. After that, it's 'transactional tasks' only.

3. Build 'decision-free' defaults

Every recurring decision you automate is energy saved for later. Before bed: lay out your exercise gear, tomorrow's clothes, and your lunch. Small tasks, but they eat into the next day's energy bucket. Skip the lunch prep and you're tired by 3pm, grabbing a coffee and a chocolate bar instead, because the bucket is empty. Grab with two hands what you can control: 'no morning meetings', a default 'no' to anything landing with less than 48 hours' notice. Hmmm ... I often break that last one, and my 'irritation barometer' sky-rockets every time I get a last-minute request.

4. Set a decision budget, not merely a time deadline

We give ourselves a deadline, 'decide by Friday', but rarely acknowledge a limited number of good decisions per day. Make forty before lunch, and decision forty-one won't get your best thinking. Notice when you're running low, and push important stuff to tomorrow morning rather than forcing it through on empty.

5. Protect recovery, not only time

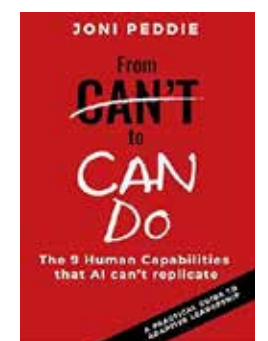
Rest restores decision-making capacity the same way it restores physical energy. A short walk, a proper lunch break, five minutes of doing nothing. These aren't indulgences, they're refuelling. Leaders who treat recovery as optional are choosing to make their afternoon decisions worse.

The goal isn't fewer decisions. Leadership doesn't allow that luxury. It's spending your decision-making energy on purpose, instead of leaking it out through small choices before the big ones arrive.

Remember: judgement and willpower are resources, like time or energy. The leaders who protect this bucket are still making sound, confident calls at 4pm. Let it run empty, and you may end up doom-scrolling on your phone for an hour ... telling yourself it's "just five minutes".

Master your decisions. Master your day.

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Integrated development planning in the Western Cape

THE Department of Local Government, through its IDP Directorate, convened a two-day Provincial IDP Managers' Forum on 11-12 June 2026 at the Cape Winelands District Municipality.

The Forum brought together municipal IDP managers and officials, along with sector representatives, to engage collaboratively on strengthening integrated development planning across the province.

Purpose of the Provincial IDP Managers' Forum

The Forum serves as a key platform to support and strengthen the quality, consistency, and coordination of Integrated Development Plans (IDPs) across municipalities. Its objectives are to:

- Provide a structured

platform for dialogue and knowledge sharing on issues affecting IDP processes.

- Support municipalities in drafting, submitting, and reviewing legally compliant and strategically aligned IDPs.
- Facilitate information sharing, capacity building, and innovation while minimising duplication of effort.
- Strengthen alignment between national, provincial, and local priorities to enhance coordination across the three spheres of government.
- Provide a mechanism for elevating challenges and proposed solutions to broader Intergovernmental Relations (IGR) structures, ensuring that municipal

perspectives inform provincial and national planning processes.

- Through collaboration, standardisation, and shared learning, the Forum reinforces the IDP as the primary strategic instrument for guiding municipal development, service delivery, and long-term growth.

Purpose of the Provincial IDP Managers' Forum

Since 2016, the Provincial IDP Managers' Forum has embraced the Spirit of Giving initiative, a voluntary programme through which Forum members support vulnerable groups across the Western Cape.

This year, the Forum partnered with the Cape Care Fund to support the ASD Sean Kelly Cen-

tre in Worcester, which provides specialised day-care services to children with multiple sensory disabilities in the Breede Valley. Through a collective contribution of R10 000, the Forum reaffirmed its commitment to social upliftment and to improving the lives of some of the province's most vulnerable children.

The initiative reflects the Forum's belief that development extends beyond planning and policy. By working collaboratively with municipalities, government partners, and community organisations, the Provincial IDP Managers' Forum continues to demonstrate that meaningful development is rooted in compassion, inclusivity, and a shared responsibility for building stronger, more caring communities across the Western Cape.

African Continental Free Trade Area drives R2.6 billion in South Africa trade

Official data shows exports and imports under preferential terms surged between January 2024 and February 2026, spanning machinery, food items, and electrical equipment.



By Larry Claasen

SOUTH Africa has been quick to tap into the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), which aims to bring together all 55 member states of the African Union (AU) into a common market.

For South Africa, the AfCFTA presents opportunities to expand exports into new preferential markets in East, West, Central, and North Africa through frictionless trade.

The implementation of the AfCFTA is working to South Africa's benefit. According to a Cabinet statement, total trade under AfCFTA preferential terms

reached R2,6 billion between January 2024 and February 2026.

This figure encompasses both exports and imports across a diverse range of products, including mining equipment, appliances, food items, apparel, plastics, and electrical machinery.

The African Trade Report 2026, published by the African Export-Import Bank, also noted that South Africa was using the AfCFTA to deepen its relationships with the continent's largest economies, such as Nigeria, Egypt, Kenya, Algeria, and Ethiopia. It said the country had strengthened its position as a leading par-

ticipant in intra-African trade by scaling up its engagement under the AfCFTA Guided Trade Initiative, moving beyond initial pilot shipments into more regularised preferential trade.

The AfCFTA Guided Trade Initiative is a pilot programme launched in October 2022 to kick-start commercially meaningful trade under the agreement. It is meant to test the operational, institutional, legal, and trade policy environment of the AfCFTA before its full rollout. Eight countries participated in the initial phase: Cameroon, Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, Mauritius, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Tunisia.

South Africa has taken its participation in the pilot seriously, said the report. "It recorded continued progress during the year on outstanding AfCFTA technical negotiations, including advanced discussions on rules of origin for strategically important sectors such as automotive and clothing and textiles

which are important to South Africa's industrial base."

The report said it also broadened exports beyond early pilot products into more value-added categories such as machinery, processed foods, and chemicals.

In implementing the AfCFTA, the AU hopes to get African countries to increase trade with each other. Historically, this has been relatively low, as Intra-African trade accounted for about 15% of total African trade. This is lower than intra-regional trade in Europe of over 60% or North America, at above 40%.

When it comes to intra-African trade, South Africa stands out as a major player, with deep and growing trade ties with the continent.

"South Africa's exports continued to grow robustly, with data from the International Trade Centre showing that machinery, vehicles, electrical equipment, and processed materials are the main exports to the rest of the con-

tinents. Processed food products and chemicals are two important growth sectors for South African exports and reflect expanding regional consumer markets, particularly within the Southern African Development Community," said the report.

It said the country's diversified industrial base, relatively advanced infrastructure, and strong integration into regional value chains, particularly in automotive, agro-processing, and chemicals, have deepened its position as the regional trade hub.

It pointed out, however, that for the country to unlock further potential, it will depend on deeper cross-border investment, stronger industrial linkages, and improved market access for small and medium enterprises, especially in neighbouring economies such as Zambia, Zimbabwe, and Mozambique, which serve as key suppliers of raw materials and intermediate goods.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Commercial EVs are set to boom as fleet operators drive adoption in South Africa

Public chargers are scarce, but savvy operators are sidestepping the problem by charging at their own depots.

By Larry Claasen



If there are 50 vehicles in their respective fleets, it will cost the ICE fleet operator R6,32 million to fuel up, against R1,32 million for the EV operator. For fleet operators, switching just to save millions of rands on fuel makes sound business sense.

But wait – there is more.

With fewer moving parts, EVs structurally require less maintenance than their ICE equivalents. Service and maintenance comes to about R111 000 for an EV compared to R206 000 for an ICE vehicle over the commercial life of the vehicle, according to [Everlectric](#), an EV-as-a-Service (EVaaS) provider for commercial fleets.

While the sticker price and insurance are higher for EVs, their total cost of ownership works out to R860 000 compared to the ICE equivalent's R1,26 million.

Though the network of public charging stations is still limited, companies like Stellenbosch-based EV charging company Zimi are partnering with logistics firms to set up dedicated charging infrastructure in their depots.

The sticker price for EVs is sure to come down, and the business case is already strong. But what could make it even stronger is if the financial services sector came up with funding and insurance products that actively support the transition.

Large fleet operators with robust balance sheets can afford to make the capital-intensive switch to EVs, but smaller operators need the financial sector to play ball and back them.

Local banks were quick to come up with funding plans for businesses and households that wanted to switch to solar generation during the electricity crisis. Here, then, is another opportunity for them to support a fledgling new sector.

The danger for them is this: if they don't move now, they will look back in a few years' time and wonder how they missed this inflection point – and how some upstart financial institutions and insurance companies came to dominate this lucrative niche.

INFLECTION points usually go unnoticed. For example, you probably can't recall the period when you stopped paying with cash or the moment when all your entertainment went from broadcast to streaming services.

But now your wallet only contains cards, and you have not bought a CD or DVD in at least a decade. A new reality silently replaced a settled one without you noticing it.

When it comes to Electric Vehicle (EV) adoption in South Africa, another stealth shift is happening. The number of EVs on the roads is still relatively small, but this year might be the point where they go from a curiosity to a must-have in certain transport niches.

The niches are not the headline-grabbing fight between Elon Musk's Tesla and China's BYD, but rather in how commercial fleet operators can get more value out of their panel vans.

It is an easy calculation for these fleet operators. They have to find a way to save on fuel costs, keep their vehicles on the road for as long as possible, and also cut maintenance expenses.

When it comes to running costs, the difference between operating an Internal Combustion Engine (ICE) panel van and its EV counterpart is chalk and cheese.

According to GreenCape's [Electric-vehicles-as-a-service](#): A viable fleet transition model in South Africa report, operational cost works out to R2,53/km for the ICE van and R0,52/km for the EV van.

If the average mileage is 50,000 km a year, the fleet operating an ICE van would pay R126 500 to fill its tank annually. In comparison, the EV van would cost the operator R26 500 to keep charged for the year.

City of Cape Town proposes R366 million capital investment in community facilities



City's mayoral committee member for community services and health, councillor Francine Higham

THE four departments within the Community Services and Health directorate, namely Recreation and Parks, City Health, Library and Information Services and Community Arts and Culture Development Departments, have been allocated a draft capital budget of R366 381 000 for the 2026/27 financial year.

The draft capital allocation for the top five projects are:

- Cemetery Upgrades – R63,5 million
- Swimming Pool Upgrades – R20 million
- Vygieskraal Stadium Cycling Track – R20 million
- Rebuild of Suid-er-Strand Library – R19,5 million
- Strandfontein Pavilion Refurbishment – R9 million

Other projects include upgrades to the Delft Clinic and Hartleyvale Stadium; planning of the Parkwood Community Hall; expansion of the Lwandle Library; restoration of Brown's Farm Library and additional expansion work at Tafelsig Clinic.

Construction of the Blue Downs and Westridge synthetic pitches will also get under way, with com-

pletion planned for the 2027/28 financial year.

As Cape Town continues to grow, planning for future burial space remains a priority. The City is committed to expanding existing cemeteries and developing new facilities, together with the supporting infrastructure needed to meet the needs of our communities.

Apart from the projects planned for 2026/27 financial year, the Directorate continues to identify and seek approvals for new and expanded cemetery opportunities in areas such as Strand, Kuils River, Mitchells Plain and other parts of the Southern Suburbs.

There is also a planned phase refurbishment of the Khayelitsha cemetery boundary fencing, due to extensive vandalism.

Over the last few years, the Directorate has invested significantly in the repairs, maintenance and upgrades of public swim-

ming pools, as part of an accelerated swimming pool infrastructure revitalisation programme.

The Directorate also continues to invest in infrastructure repairs, maintenance and upgrades at various swimming pools across areas such as Khayelitsha, Bellville Central, Strand, Athlone, Mitchells Plain, Westridge, Gugulethu, Blue Downs, Atlantis, Mnandi and Sea Point.

"This budget reflects the City's continued commitment to investing in public infrastructure that residents rely on every day. From libraries and community halls to park, sports facilities, clinics and cemeteries, these spaces strengthen communities and improve quality of life for all our residents," says City's mayoral committee member for community services and health, councillor Francine Higham.

GrandWest Mall construction underway in Cape Town with R650 million investment

By Adrian Ephraim

CONSTRUCTION has officially begun on the R650 million GrandWest Mall in Goodwood, marking a major expansion of the GrandWest entertainment precinct. Developed through a joint venture between Flanagan & Gerard Property Group (90%) and GrandWest, a subsidiary of Sun International (10%), the 22,000m² single-level convenience mall is expected to open in June 2027.

The project moved into full construction after the land transferred into the joint venture in May, with partners marking the milestone at a sod-turning ceremony on 19 June.

Leasing has progressed strongly, despite the mall being more than a year from completion. According to the developers, over 70% of the gross lettable area has already been secured, with a further 20% under offer. Confirmed tenants include Checkers FreshX, SuperSpar, Dis-Chem, Clicks, and retailers from the Mr Price Group, Truworths Group and Pepkor.

Confidence in Cape Town's economy

Speaking at the ceremony, James Vos, the City of Cape Town's Mayoral Member for Economic Growth, described the investment as a strong vote of confidence in the city's economy.

"The development is a sign of confidence in Cape Town's growth outlook and demonstrates how private sector investment can create jobs and strengthen the retail economy," he said.

For Sun International, the development forms part of a broader strategy to modernise and strengthen the long-term appeal of the GrandWest precinct.

"This investment is about keeping GrandWest relevant and responsive to changing consumer expectations, creating a more integrated retail, dining and entertainment destination," said Sun International CEO Ulrik Bengtsson.

Local construction and Cape-inspired design

The developers have committed to prioritising Western Cape-based contractors, suppliers and trades-

people throughout the construction process. The main building contract has been awarded to Western Cape contractor Isipani Construction, with preliminary works completed and full construction now underway.

MDS Architecture designed the mall,

drawing inspiration from the Western Cape's coastal landscape and contemporary wine estates. Partner Pierre Lahaye said the design complements the existing GrandWest precinct while introducing a modern retail environment.

Natural materials including timber, off-shutter concrete and metal finishes reflect the architectural language of the Cape's wine estates.

"Breaking ground is a milestone the team has worked towards with great care," said Paul Gerard, Manag-

ing Director of Flanagan & Gerard Property Group.

"With exceptional partners, contractors, architects and tenants, we're confident this development will become an asset the community can be proud of when it opens in June 2027."



(from left) Pierre Lahaye – Partner, MDS Architecture, Ulrick Bengtsson, CEO, Sun International, James Vos, Mayoral Member for Economic Growth, City of Cape Town and Paul Gerard, Managing Director, Flanagan & Gerard



STANDARD BANK BECOMES THE FIRST BANK ON THE CONTINENT AUTHORISED TO CLEAR RENMINBI TRANSACTIONS



Richard de Roos, Head of Operations for Corporate & Investment Banking at Standard Bank.

Standard Bank, the biggest bank in Africa by assets, and the Industrial and Commercial Bank of China Limited (ICBC) have been jointly authorised by the People's Bank of China (PBoC) to clear Renminbi (RMB) in Africa.

Standard Bank is the first African based bank to receive this authorisation.

In November 2025, the bank also became the first on the continent to be authorised to participate in China's Cross-Border Interbank Payment System (CIPS). CIPS enables interbank payments between Africa and China using Chinese RMB as the underpinning currency.

Standard Bank and ICBC will operate jointly as the "Renminbi Clearing Bank of Africa" with operational capacity to clear RMB in 19 African countries.

The Renminbi Clearing Bank of Africa is the first RMB clearing bank named after a continent and the first to be jointly operated by two commercial banks. Leveraging ICBC's leading RMB capabilities and Standard Bank Group's strong African network, the clearing bank will serve as a core hub for RMB business across Africa, significantly enhancing the efficiency of RMB fund flows for various market participants.

RMB Clearing Bank status provides exclusive access to China's onshore financial system, including access to capital markets, liquidity, and payments innovations.

"We are immensely proud to be the first African bank to be granted clearing status. This status speaks to our purpose of promoting the continent's growth and meeting our clients where they need us most. As stated at Standard Bank Group's Capital Markets Day in March 2026, payments are at the heart of every banking relationship, and we are at the forefront of the payments evolution. This new service will provide our clients with transparent, efficient and cost-effective payments solutions between China and Africa, supporting trade and investment between the world's most dynamic economies," says Richard de Roos, Head of Operations for Corporate & Investment Banking at Standard Bank.

According to the latest edition of the [Standard Bank Africa Trade Barometer \(Issue 5\)](#), cross-border trade preferences among businesses in the 10 African markets surveyed have shifted notably. Asian countries are now the preferred partners for an average of 35% of respondents, up from 24% in 2024.

China continues to dominate as the leading source of inputs, cited by 67% of surveyed businesses, with competitive pricing, product variety and supply-chain reliability highlighted as the key drivers of this preference.

"China is Africa's largest export market, and with clearer status added to CIPS participation, Standard Bank is even better placed to support Africa's trade with China. We expect demand for these services to continue to expand," concludes de Roos.

Quality plastic piping systems are the foundation of reliable infrastructure: SAPPMA

SAPPMA highlights the vital partnership between piping material engineers, quality manufacturing and standards compliance



THE success of any piping system depends on sound engineering, robust technical specifications, quality manufacturing and proper installation. Whether supplying drinking water to communities, supporting mining operations or serving industrial facilities, the long-term performance of plastic piping systems relies on every component meeting the highest standards of quality and compliance.

Piping material engineers play a pivotal role in bringing these elements together. Their decisions influence project costs, construction schedules, operational efficiency and, ultimately, the reliability and lifespan of critical infrastructure.

Supporting engineers in this important role is the Southern African Plastic Pipe Manufacturers Association (SAPPMA), which promotes compliance with South African National Stan-

dards (SANS), champions local manufacturing excellence and helps safeguard the quality of plastic piping systems manufactured throughout Southern Africa.

"In an environment where infrastructure reliability, sustainability and value for money are more important than ever, specifying quality-assured, standards-compliant piping systems is not simply good engineering practice, it is essential for protecting South Africa's critical infrastructure," says Jan Venter, CEO of SAPPMA.

Great infrastructure starts with good engineering

In Engineering, Procurement and Construction (EPC) projects, piping material engineers play a strategic role that extends far beyond selecting the correct pipe. They ensure that materials are suitable for the intended application, comply with

relevant South African and international standards, meet required pressure and environmental performance criteria, and deliver the best long-term lifecycle value.

"Every material decision has lasting consequences. Selecting the correct piping system from the outset reduces maintenance costs, improves operational efficiency and extends the service life of valuable infrastructure assets. Poor material choices or the use of non-compliant products, however, can lead to costly failures, repairs and unnecessary operational risks," Venter explains.

One of their most important responsibilities is developing comprehensive piping specifications that guide designers, manufacturers, contractors and inspectors throughout a project. Selecting materials that can withstand operating pressures, temperatures, chemical exposure and environmental conditions is equally critical to ensuring reliable long-term performance.

"Having the right specifications on paper is only part of the equation," says Venter. "Engineers also need confidence that the products specified will consistently meet those requirements once they arrive on site."

Why standards matter

South Africa has well-established standards governing the manufacture and performance of plastic piping systems. Compliance with these standards is fundamental to protecting infrastructure, ensuring public safety and delivering long-term value for money.

"Unfortunately, not every product entering the market offers the same level of quality or compliance. While cheaper alternatives may appear attractive initially, substandard products often prove significantly more expensive over their service life. This is why independent quality assurance and ongoing compliance monitoring remain so important," Venter stresses.

SAPPMA: Raising the bar

For more than two decades, SAPPMA has worked alongside engineers, municipalities, contractors and manufacturers to raise standards across South Africa's plastic pipe industry. Through independent product testing, factory audits and ongoing compliance monitoring, the association helps ensure that pipes manufactured by its members consistently comply with applicable South African

National Standards.

Beyond product compliance, SAPPMA also provides technical guidance to engineers, consultants and contractors, promotes industry best practice and supports skills development across the sector.

"By specifying piping systems manufactured by SAPPMA members and carrying the SAPPMA logo, engineers and infrastructure owners can be confident they are selecting products manufactured under independently monitored quality management systems," Venter adds.

Investing in tomorrow's engineers

Recognising the need to strengthen engineering education, SAPPMA is also helping prepare the next generation of industry professionals by exposing engineering students to the latest developments in plastic piping technology.

"As South Africa continues to invest in water, sanitation, mining and industrial infrastructure, the partnership between skilled engineers, quality manufacturers and organisations such as SAPPMA will

become increasingly important. By promoting high manufacturing standards, supporting engineering education and encouraging the specification of standards-compliant piping systems, we can help ensure today's infrastructure investments continue delivering value for decades to come. After all, engineering excellence always begins with quality materials," Venter concludes.

For more information about SAPPMA and its members, visit www.sappma.co.za.

Public invited to comment on National Water Amendment Bill, 2026

PARLIAMENT's Portfolio committee on water and sanitation has called on members of the public, stakeholders, industry representatives, and interested organisations to submit written comments on the National Water Amendment Bill (B1-2026).

The goal of the bill is to introduce provisions to review and prohibit the issuance of water use licences where water source areas are threatened, according to a blog post by Webber Went-

zel. A new section in the Amendment Bill, 20A, requires the Minister of Water and Sanitation to publish a notice in the Government Gazette, listing scientifically identified water source areas, the post added.

The proposed legislation seeks to amend the National Water Act, 1998, introducing a range of measures aimed at strengthening water governance, promoting equitable access to water resources, and supporting sustainable water man-

agement across South Africa.

Among the key objectives of the Bill are provisions to:

- Insert and amend certain definitions within the Act;
- Ensure equitable water allocation and optimise the use of water in line with the guiding principles of the National Water Act;
- Prevent undesirable consequences associated with private water trading;
- Clarify and expand the purpose of the Act;
- Extend the review period of the National Water Resource Strategy from five years to ten years;
- Introduce periodic reviews of water resource classifications and water resource quality objectives;
- Provide for regular reviews of the ecological Reserve;
- Strengthen the protection of strategic water source areas;
- Enhance provisions relating to the transfer of water use authorisations;
- Enable the reallocation of water resources;
- Expand the scope for the making of regulations;
- Repeal the right to declare existing lawful water use;
- Introduce additional controlled activities;
- Strengthen governance requirements for water user associations and their membership; and
- Advance the transformation of water user associations.

SAPPMA

southern african plastic pipe manufacturers association

QUALITY BUILDS TRUST. STANDARDS DELIVER PERFORMANCE.

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STANDARDS TODAY. INFRASTRUCTURE TOMORROW.

On-site wastewater treatment helps developers bypass sewer capacity constraints



By Kris van der Bijl

ON-SITE wastewater treatment can take a new development off South Africa's centralised sewer network entirely, sidestepping the capacity bottlenecks, connection costs and slow municipal approvals that increasingly hold projects up.

In an interview at the 2026 Western Cape Property Development Forum after a panel discussion, Maskam Water® chief executive Gerhard Cronje made his case for why the Maskam Fusion® can help alleviate this pressure.

It hinges on the 2025 revised national standards regarding on-site wastewater treatment that now stop municipalities from approving bulk user connections, and new developments, where there is no capacity to handle the water and sewage.

They also prevent an authority from unreasonably declining a development that runs its own water-efficient sanitation solution not connected to the municipal system, provided that it operates a Water Efficient Sanitation Solution (WESS).

The Maskam Fusion® is described as a perfect example of a WESS system.

Decentralised treatment sidesteps the central works

South Africa's municipal sanitation runs on centralised treatment works fed by extensive reticulation networks.

Those works are under strain across much of the country, and expanding bulk capacity is slow and costly. When a receiving works is full, developments that depend on it wait for the centralised systems approval.

A decentralised plant sidesteps that dependency. The Maskam Fusion® treats wastewater

where it is generated and returns the treated effluent for toilet flushing and irrigation.

Cronje said a development served by on-site treatment no longer needs to connect to a distant works, which cuts both the internal pipe infrastructure and the reliance on a municipal system the developer does not control.

By reusing treated effluent from the decentralised system for non-drinking purposes (i.e. irrigation, toilet flushing, etc), the development will draw less potable water from the municipal system. Drawing less from the municipality also leaves more water in the network for the wider community, which Cronje said matters most in areas that have faced drought.

Speed is the commercial edge

The strongest part of Cronje's case is time. He pointed to Paarl Junction, a mixed-use development outside Paarl running 19 units.

"The order came through the 28th of February last year. By September, they were operational for the entire system," he said. "There is no way you can have that turnaround time to create capacity in a municipal system. It takes years."

For a single house or smaller development, Cronje said a system can be in place within three weeks of order, roughly two weeks to manufacture and a day or two to install.

The unit is sub-surface and can sit beneath a parking area where a weight-bearing slab is

cast over it, so no usable space is lost.

The plant is modular. A scheme can start with one unit and add capacity as it builds out, and the units can be decentralised across a larger site.

Cronje said the largest project the company is working on serves 3 000 houses.

Sustainability credentials and running cost

Cronje said the Maskam Fusion® supports up to 15 of the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, spanning clean water, sustainable cities and responsible consumption, because treated effluent is returned to use rather than discharged.

The heart of the system, the bioreactor tank and its internal components, is built in South Africa, with only the air pump and four small valves imported. Cronje said local manufacture cuts cost, lead times and carbon footprint.

Being off the grid and self-funded also removes the wait for public budgets. "Much less red tape, and it's private funding," Cronje said. "You don't have to wait for municipal or government budgets."

Government allocates R12,3 billion to municipal infrastructure

THE government is intensifying efforts to address South Africa's water and sanitation challenges, with the Department of Water and Sanitation allocating R12,3 billion in infrastructure grants to municipalities during the current financial year.

Delivering her budget vote speech in the National Council of Provinces (NCOP) Water and Sanitation Minister Penny Majodina said the government was implementing decisive interventions to improve water security, rehabilitate ageing infrastructure and expand access to reliable services across all nine provinces.

Majodina acknowledged that many communities continue to face water interruptions, sewage spillages, deteriorating wastewater treatment systems and high levels of water losses.

These challenges had prompted President Cyril Ramaphosa to establish the National Water Crisis Committee and direct the implementation of the National Water Action Plan.

"The message we bring to this House is clear: Government is intervening decisively, projects are being accelerated, and partnerships are being strengthened to ensure that communities receive reliable water and sanitation services," she said.

The minister said the department's priorities include completing delayed infrastructure projects, rehabilitating failing water treatment and wastewater works, expanding water supply to underserved communities, developing groundwater resources, and investing in water reuse and desalination initiatives. Among the major projects highlighted were the R2,6 billion bulk water supply programme serving Mthatha, Libode, Ngqeleni and Mqanduli in the Eastern Cape; the R4 billion water and sanitation intervention in Maluti-a-Phofung in the Free State; the R1.3 billion Giyani water project in Limpopo, which has already connected 24 villages; and the R4.9 billion Mandlakazi Regional Bulk Water Supply Scheme in KwaZulu-Natal.

In Gauteng, the Hammanskraal water intervention is nearing completion, with a new 50-megalitre-per-day water package plant expected to improve access to clean water for approximately 47,000 households. Majodina also outlined progress in Mpumalanga, the North West, Northern Cape and Western Cape, where several large-scale projects are under construction or nearing completion to improve water reliability and reduce service backlogs.

The department is increasingly using water boards as implementing agents to support struggling municipalities and is working with the Departments of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs and National Treasury to improve governance and financial sustainability in the sector.

The minister announced the rollout of a nationwide Rural Water Access Programme aimed at improving water security in unserved communities through borehole drilling, spring protection, rainwater harvesting and rehabilitation of non-functional systems.

More than 2,600 settlements have already been identified under the programme, with over R200 million allocated for the first phase in KwaZulu-Natal, Gauteng and the Eastern Cape.

Implementation is scheduled to begin in July and conclude in September this year.

Majodina said the government was also strengthening anti-corruption measures through the Water Sector Anti-Corruption Forum, established in partnership with the Special Investigating Unit.

She urged all spheres of government, communities and the private sector to work together to secure the country's water future.

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The VEGADIF 85 differential pressure transmitter delivers accurate influent and effluent flow measurements and reliably detects filter contamination.

VEGA pressure monitoring helps African utilities reduce water losses and protect infrastructure

RAPID urbanisation and expanding infrastructure continue to place unprecedented strain on water networks, especially in Africa. Today, effective pressure monitoring is no longer a technical add on; but a strategic necessity. Accurate, real time pressure data helps utilities maintain consistent sup-

ply, reduce non-revenue water, protect infrastructure, and meet sustainability targets. VEGA's pressure instrumentation supports this shift with reliable sensors designed to improve operational efficiency and infrastructure resilience.

Water management extends beyond deliv-

ering potable water to households. It encompasses the entire lifecycle: from abstraction and treatment to distribution, wastewater collection and safe discharge. As African nations work toward the Africa Water Vision 2063 and SDG 6, utilities increasingly recognise the value of precise pressure

monitoring in reducing losses, improving energy efficiency, and optimising treatment processes.

Although many African countries have improved Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM), financial and institutional constraints continue to slow progress. Reliable instrumenta-

tion helps utilities reduce maintenance, improve data quality and support informed decision making. While upfront cost remains a key consideration for utilities, the long term implications of poor quality instrumentation are significant as inaccurate pressure readings can lead to pipe bursts, pump failures and unplanned outages, erode public trust and inflate operational costs.

VEGA's pressure solutions offer a cohesive approach to sustainable operations, enabling facilities to streamline processes, reduce waste, and minimise environmental impact.

The VEGABAR 38 enables remote monitoring of tanks, pipelines, and chemical dosing systems, reducing site visits and operational emissions.

The VEGABAR 82 withstands abrasion, chemical exposure and extreme conditions commonly found in sewerage feeds and high-pressure pipelines. Its long service life and low maintenance requirements support utilities in reducing downtime and conserving resources.

The VEGADIF 85 differential pressure transmitter delivers accurate influent and effluent flow measurements and reliably detects filter contamination.

Designed for deep wells, reservoirs and basins, the VEGAWELL 52 offers durable hydrostatic level and pressure monitoring in demanding environments. The VEGAWELL 42 complements this enabling treatment plants to reduce operational costs while maintaining high measurement accuracy.

VEGA's Bluetooth-enabled devices and the Tools App reduce the need for on-site interventions, cut travel-related emissions and improve safety, particularly in hard-to-access or hazardous locations.

As African nations strengthen water governance and expand infrastructure, VEGA's pressure monitoring systems offer utilities a practical pathway to sustainability. By enabling real time optimisation of resource use, reducing energy consumption and supporting proactive maintenance, VEGA helps operators focus on their core mission: delivering safe, reliable and sustainable water services.

These technologies protect critical infrastructure while safeguarding the health of communities and ecosystems that depend on clean, well-managed water resources.

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WINTRUST BET ON BIOLOGY:

convenient and natural path to cleaner water

South Africa's sewage, effluent and water crisis is no longer a distant warning. Ageing treatment infrastructure across the country is struggling to keep pace with rising inflow volumes containing increasingly complex and continuously changing widespread contaminants.

For Wintrust, a Stellenbosch-based company that has spent 35 years working at the intersection of agriculture, viticulture and water treatment, the solution does not lie in bigger plants or more expensive equipment. It lies in biology.

"We chase technology and we believe we are at the forefront in this regard," says George Smit, director of Wintrust. The company started in the wine industry, importing equipment and products from France and Germany, before expanding into agricultural fertilizers and, more recently, effluent treatment. Its client base today spans wineries, cooperatives, dairies, juice factories and major beverage producers.



Why the biological core matters

According to Wintrust technical manager Eric Brown, every effluent plant in the world, however advanced its engineering, depends on one thing to actually bring water in the desired specifications with a healthy population of naturally occurring microbiomes.

"For any effluent plant that has been designed in the world, the core, the gut, or the brain, or the heart of any effluent plant is the biological part of the plant," Brown explains. "You can add equipment, you can add fancy stuff, but the core of any effluent plant is still biological."

The problem, Brown says, is the modern effluent streams contain an unpredictable mix of chemicals, hormones, metals and cleaning agents that can kill of the plant microbiome responsible for breaking down COD, contaminants, etc. When this happens, the system becomes what Brown calls "a sick plant," unable to process the waste flowing through it, causing sludge buildup and also unable to reach desired specifications analysis at the outflow.

Wintrust's approach is to keep the biological "heart" of the plant continuously healthy, utilising a wide spread of specific bacillus species.

"It's all natural-born soil organisms and water-born organisms," Brown says. The company's focus is on how to apply microbial complexes. "The application of the product is where the key lies" says Brown. "If the application is wrong, it will not work."

A cost case as much as a technical one

Smit is direct about why he believes biological treatment deserves more attention from industry and government alike. Upgrading



conventional effluent infrastructure can run into billions of rands, while a biological program costs only a fraction of that. The aim is to get the outflow water quality into acceptable specifications.

Researchers across several universities have raised concerns recently about the gap between treatment capacity and the volumes cities now need to process. Wintrust argues that closing the gap does not always require new capital infrastructure. In many cases, restoring a plant's biological function can unlock capacity that already exists on paper but isn't being realised in practice.

Private sector clients, Smit says, have been quicker to adopt the approach than municipalities. Wintrust has worked with major beverage producers on biological conversion of their effluent plants, with operations running for substantial time with checks and balances without incident.

The only realistic way forward

Both Smit and Brown believe water scarcity will become one of South Africa's defining business challenges within the coming years, driven by population growth, rising food production demands, and the limited ability to expand the country's water supply. Their argument is that reusing and cleaning water more effectively, rather than waiting for new infrastructure funding, is the only realistic way forward.

"There are no answers for the problems of effluent at the moment as we speak," says Smit. "We have the idea. It's just that people must just lock into the system of the idea. You don't have to complicate things."

Reality and Facts

For many years, dysfunctional sewage and effluent treatment plants have contributed to the pollution of our oceans, rivers, and other water sources.

If these unsustainable practices continue unchecked and uncontrolled, the risk of a major environmental and public health disaster becomes increasingly imminent. Urgent intervention is needed to restore and maintain these critical systems, protect our natural resources, and safeguard the well-being of current and future generations.

For more information on Wintrust's effluent treatment and agricultural biological products, contact info@wintrust.co.za or +27 (0)21 887 4780.



Urine to fertiliser could help solve South Africa's Wastewater Crisis

Experts highlight urine-to-fertiliser innovation as a sustainable solution to municipal water strain and infrastructure decay.



By Larry Claasen

THE growing water crisis in South Africa should drive the country to consider novel approaches to dealing with it like turning urine into fertiliser, says Dr Jeffrey Baloyi, senior chemical engineer, Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), South Africa.

Speaking at the Big 5 Construct South Africa's 13th Expo in Johannesburg, Baloyi said urine should not be seen as waste but rather as a resource, and pointed to how it contains phosphorus and nitrogen, which are key ingredients for fertiliser.

He gave an example of how the private sector can not only alleviate the crisis if urine is separated at the source – a building – but also

stood to gain financially because they could sell it for use as an ingredient in fertiliser.

Baloyi said the CSIR had conducted an extraction pilot and found that the separation of urine could eliminate 75% of nitrogen and 55% of phosphorus from municipal wastewater. He added it could do this at a fraction of the cost of conventional treatment, and that recovered fertilisers achieve results comparable to or better than those of chemical fertilisers.

The science of struvite synthesis

The best way to extract the phosphorus and nitrogen is via struvite synthesis, which is the process of adding magnesium to urine and adjusting its pH level. This process will crys-

tallise dissolved nutrients into a slow-release fertiliser.

At the same time, it will preserve the water infrastructure as it will prevent pipe-clogging 'struvite rock' from forming. By preventing the build-up of struvite rock, it reduces the possibility of costly plant shutdowns and also turns a waste headache into a valuable product.

Baloyi said the maintenance cost of dealing with struvite rock is huge for a water provider.

"It takes more than a month to get a section back."

This type of maintenance also has an environmental impact, because when treatment is reduced, raw or partially treated wastewater is diverted, causing pollution in other areas.

Water systems at a critical juncture

The potential of turning urine into fertiliser should also be seen against a backdrop where South Africa's water infrastructure is under strain.

The 2026 Blue Drop Progress Report found that South Africa's wastewater treatment performance has declined, with only 16 sys-

tems achieving Green Drop Certification in 2024, down from 23 in 2021. At the same time, nearly half of all municipal wastewater systems assessed – 396 out of 848 – are now in a critical state.

"These results confirm what communities have been saying for years. The crisis is not new – what is new is the continued failure to act. Reports are being released, but where is the accountability?" asked WaterCAN executive director, Ferri- al Adam.

Baloyi warned that if maintenance was not prioritised, the cost to the country would be huge.

He made the point that recovering nutrients and reusing water lowers overall costs. By bringing in the private sector, municipalities can save on maintenance, and those savings can be shared with the solution provider.

UCT spin-off scales up the solution

Baloyi is not the only scientist looking to turn urine into fertiliser. A group of scientists from University of Cape Town (UCT) have spun out their research on the matter into a company, PeeCycling.

Founded by Professor Dyllon Randall and Dr Caitlin Courtney, PeeCycling has developed an engineering system for commercial-scale resource recovery plants for urban and industrial environments.

According to its website it has successfully processed 3,200 litres of urine per day.

"This localised production creates a sustainable, circular supply chain that reduces the carbon footprint associated with both synthetic fertilizer manufacturing and conventional wastewater treatment," it said.

It added that for every litre of urine processed, its system recovers about 700 mL of water that could be reused for non-potable applications, such as irrigation or industrial cooling.

"By capturing and recycling this water on-site, we prevent the loss of significant volumes of municipal water, building vital resilience for high-traffic facilities in drought-prone areas," said PeeCycling.

PeeCycling was shortlisted for an Africa Prize for Engineering Innovation by the Royal Academy of Engineering earlier this year.

The blueprint to fix local government exists. Civil engineers have been drawing it for years - SAICE

BEFORE the next municipal election on 4 November 2026, South Africans will cast their votes knowing what the past five years have delivered.

A Gauteng water crisis that left the country's economic heartland without water for weeks, a Knysna reservoir approaching empty, and a Green Drop Report confirming that nearly half of our wastewater treatment systems are in a critical state.

The question everyone is asking is reasonable. Will a new council actually change this, or will we be having the same conversation in 2031?

The South African Institution of Civil Engineering (SAICE) has spent significant time analysing the Draft White Paper on Local Government, where comments were submitted on 28 May 2026.

Our view of the White Paper is that it correctly identifies what is broken, and with the right imple-

mentation architecture, it has the potential to become the document that finally changes things on the ground, says SAICE CEO, Sekadi Phayana-Shakhane.

Rethinking how constitutional mandates serve communities

One of the most important areas that the White Paper gets right is its diagnosis of constitutional autonomy as a structural barrier.

Under the current framework, municipalities hold constitutional protection over infrastructure functions, including water, sanitation, and electricity distribution, regardless of whether they have the technical capacity to deliver them.

The result is a system that protects the dysfunction, rather than the delivery of Constitutional rights to the residents.

Part of the answer is structural. South Africa's current two-tier system, where district and local municipalities often hold overlapping powers in the same area, has frequently produced competition rather than co-operation.

The result is bulk infrastructure, like treatment works, planned by one entity while the local pipe network that should connect to it is planned by another. The outcome is exactly what it sounds like: infrastructure that does not reach the people it was built for. SAICE supports the White Paper's move towards a single-tier model with clearly assigned mandates, paired with a performance-linked system in which a municipality that cannot manage a function, such as water reticulation, does not retain it indefinitely.

The Drop Reports, released on 31 March 2026, laid this bare in numbers showing what should concern every South African. Nationally, 47,3% of treated water is lost or unbilled before it reaches a tap, representing approximately R9,9 billion in losses every year.

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Sanitech and SkyJacks partner to rewrite the rules of commercial cleaning with 70% water savings

SANITECH, South Africa's leading hygiene company, has upgraded its national equipment fleet with the high-performance MACH cleaning range, supplied by SkyJacks.

This strategic expansion directly answers a major challenge for South African businesses: how to maintain world-class hygiene standards while lowering utility costs and meeting strict environmental targets.

As local industries face escalating operational costs and increasingly severe water scarcity, this new equipment ensures that large facilities can be serviced with minimal disruption. The MACH range brings more than 40 years of Italian engineering expertise to the South African market, combining durability, operational efficiency and ease of use to support high-demand commercial and industrial cleaning environments. Designed with robust components and reduced reliance on complex electronics, the MACH range focuses on long-term reliability, simplified maintenance and maximum uptime. This ensures that the equipment can handle the heavy workloads of busy corporate, commercial, and industrial settings.

"The ultimate benefit for corporate and industrial clients is total service consistency across all operations," says Sanitech MD, Robert Erasmus.

"By investing in practical, robust machinery, Sanitech removes the common operational bottlenecks of breakdowns and slow service. These machines are built for maximum uptime, meaning facilities receive a superior, uninterrupted clean every single day."

The built-in ECO-system technology tackles the issue of resource waste head-on, which is an increasingly critical factor for businesses managing sustainability goals. While standard commercial cleaning machines rely on a constant supply of fresh water, these new units recycle water up to four times, leading to an immediate 70% reduction in overall water use.

Additional MACH technologies such as DoseMatic and Flow-MASTER further optimise the use of water and cleaning chemicals, helping

businesses reduce both operational costs and environmental impact while maintaining high cleaning standards.

"This technology delivers a major operational win for productivity," Erasmus explains. "Recycling water on site means

that cleaning teams spend less time emptying and refilling tanks. This cuts out unproductive downtime, particularly in large, multi-level facilities where accessing water points poses a major logistical challenge. It allows staff to complete

cleaning tasks faster and more efficiently while actively supporting water conservation goals."

SkyJacks MD Daryn Jacobs, adds that the MACH range was specifically designed to support continuous operations in

demanding working environments. "Features such as longer battery life, quick-change consumables, and durable machine components all contribute to stronger operational uptime," he says. "Businesses need dependable equipment

that can keep pace with demanding cleaning schedules without compromising on performance."

To deliver service continuity across every region, Sanitech leverages the strength of SkyJacks' national technical support net-

work. Because both companies are part of the Waco International group, this internal collaboration eliminates the usual supply chain bottlenecks, ensuring that equipment maintenance never disrupts a client's business operations.



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City of Cape Town triples sewer jet-cleaning efforts to R207,9 million, so as to reduce winter overflows



City's mayoral committee member for water and sanitation, Councillor Zahid Badroodien,

A record 625,5 km of sewer pipelines have been proactively jet-cleaned as part of winter readiness, exceeding the City's annual target by more than threefold.

Valued at R207,9 million, this investment in preventative maintenance helps reduce the risk of sewer blockages and overflows caused by foreign objects, illegal stormwater connections and increased rain entering the network.

Throughout the year, operational teams carry out an extensive maintenance programme to ensure that pipelines, pump stations and other sewer infrastructure are in the best possible condition. Preventative cleaning is especially prioritised before winter, when rain is likely to enter the network, as this has proven to be one of the City's most effective measures to reduce sewer spills before they occur.

On Thursday, 25 June 2026, the City's mayoral committee member for water and sanitation, Councillor Zahid Badroodien, joined maintenance teams in action during routine sewer jet-cleaning in Kraaifontein.

The City manages a vast wastewater network comprising approximately 10 000 km

of sewer pipelines, 487 sewer pump stations, sand traps and other critical infrastructure. To keep the system in flow requires frequent inspection, maintenance and sometimes rapid response all year round.

'Sanitation is fundamentally about dignity, public health and creating communities where residents can live with confidence in the services they rely on every day. Through the Mayoral Priority Programme on Sanitation, we have deliberately focused on long-term, preventative interventions that address the root causes of sewer overflows rather than simply responding to them after the fact.'

'This sewer jetting programme is a key deliverable of that commitment. By dramatically increasing proactive cleaning across our sewer network, we have reduced sewer overflows by approximately 32%. These results demonstrate what can be achieved when we take a big-picture approach to service delivery and investing in the infrastructure, maintenance and operational excellence needed to protect residents, uphold sanitation dignity and build a more resilient

city for generations to come,' said Councillor Badroodien.

Winter preparations include:

- Jet-cleaning sewer mains using specialised combination units
- Cleaning sand traps, pump station sumps and wet wells
- Monitoring pump station telemetry systems for early fault detection
- Rapidly repairing collapsed sewer lines
- Replacing broken, stolen or damaged manhole covers
- Servicing electrical and mechanical components at critical pump stations
- Inspecting properties for illegal stormwater-to-sewer connections
- Educating residents through ongoing campaigns such as Bin It, Don't Block It, which promote responsible waste disposal and discourage inappropriate items from being flushed or washed down toilets and drains

Important reminder to residents: Keep manhole covers in place

Residents are reminded never to remove manhole covers during heavy rainfall. Although this may appear to help drain floodwater, it allows stormwater to enter the sewer network, overloading the system and significantly increasing the risk of sewer overflows, environmental pollution and damage to infrastructure. Stormwater should always flow into the stormwater drainage system, not the sewer network. Residents are urged not to tamper with manhole covers under any circumstances.

Allmech delivers rapid duplex water softening solution using Runxin ceramic valve

WHEN a medical supply customer urgently required uninterrupted softened water for sterilisation processes, Allmech was able to deliver a reliable duplex water softening solution within just two days, despite having no conventional duplex control valves in stock at the time. The team turned to an alternative already proven in practice by Runxin: a ceramic 3-way L-type ball valve configured to manage two softener vessels in a continuous-duty system.

Allmech, a leading South African manufacturer of boilers and supplier of water treatment equipment and chemicals, services customers across a wide variety of sectors. 'We know that in healthcare-related environments, any interruption to water quality or supply can have immediate operational consequences,' says Anelia Hough, Water Treatment Consultant at Allmech. 'The customer required a production capacity of 4m³/h and continuous availability of softened water, with no tolerance for downtime during regeneration cycles.'

Drawing on recent exposure to the system in operation during a Runxin factory visit in China, Allmech's Managing Director, Lionel Maasdorp, proposed using the Runxin ceramic 3-way valve to create a duplex configuration. The valve was installed on the outlet of the system and wired directly into the existing control valves.

'The key was ensuring the correct electrical connections so the system could function as a true duplex softener,' explains Maasdorp. 'Once that logic was in place, the solution was surprisingly simple.'



The Allmech duplex water softener.

How the system works

The working process is cyclical. When the resin's capacity to remove hardness from the supply water decreases to zero, a signal is sent to the 3-way ball valve to change direction. Water is immediately routed from the second softener vessel, which has already completed regeneration, while the first vessel begins its regeneration cycle. Once regeneration is complete, the first vessel returns to standby, and the valves continue alternating automatically.

'The system was assembled, tested, and made available for collection within 48 hours. Performance has met expectations, delivering the required flow rate consistently and ensuring uninterrupted supply,' says Hough.

Benefits of the 3-way valve system

Beyond speed, the solution offers structural advantages over

traditional duplex manifolds. Ceramic 3-way valves generally outperform conventional manifold arrangements in durability and reliability, particularly in abrasive or corrosive environments.

While ceramic valves carry a higher upfront cost, their longer service life and reduced maintenance requirements can offset the expense of frequent manifold rebuilds over time.

The configuration also reduces system complexity. Rather than relying on multiple valves and a complex manifold arrangement, a single ceramic valve controls flow between two vessels. This results in a more compact, mechanically straightforward installation.

While purpose-built duplex valves such as the Runxin F73 or F135 remain a cost-effective option for new installations where 24/7 soft water demand is known upfront, the 3-way valve approach opens new possibilities

for existing sites.

'This setup is particularly well suited to retrofit applications,' says Maasdorp. 'Where a site previously operated with a single softener, but demand has increased, this configuration allows customers to upgrade to continuous operation without a full system replacement.'

Applications include healthcare facilities, industrial plants, food and beverage operations, and any environment where softened water must be available around the clock.

For Allmech, the project reinforces the value of deep product knowledge and practical engineering judgement. 'Sometimes the best solution isn't a standard configuration,' Maasdorp says. 'It's about understanding what's possible and applying it intelligently under real-world constraints.'

For more information, visit www.allmech.co.za or email lionelm@allmech.co.za

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The return of a powerhouse: ElectroMechanica reintroduces TechTop to Southern Africa with exclusive SADC-wide agreement

ElectroMechanica (EM) has officially restored a vital pillar of the Southern African motor market, announcing its appointment as the exclusive SADC-wide agent for TechTop. This strategic partnership marks the return of the globally recognised brand to the regional market, re-establishing a standard of rugged engineering that has been absent for over a decade.

For veteran engineers and plant managers, TechTop represents a legacy of durability. Its return addresses a specific demand in the Southern African industrial sector for motors prioritising structural integrity, mechanical robustness, and thermal headroom.

Expanding the footprint: From components to complete solutions

This partnership significantly expands EM's footprint in motor solutions; for the first time in its 40-year history, EM is offering a range of electric motors, providing customers with a truly complete, end-to-end industrial solution. While EM has traditionally been a leader in control and safety

components, the addition of TechTop "closes the loop," allowing the company to move beyond individual hardware components to offer a fully integrated motor and motor control portfolio.

Engineering for endurance

The reintroduced TechTop range is built for the high-demand environments of the African continent. Standardised for 400V industrial networks, the IE3-compliant range is available in 2-, 4-, 6-, and 8-pole configurations to meet diverse torque and speed requirements. Going beyond standard industry benchmarks, the range is engineered to exceed basic performance requirements with a primary focus on:

- **High-tensile Cast Iron:** Utilising premium-grade frames for superior vibration absorption and structural rigidity in harsh applications.
- **Thermal resilience:** Featuring Class H insulation with a Class B temperature rise, allowing the motors to operate reliably in high-ambient-temperature environments without derating.

- **Premium internals:** Standardised with SKF bearings and high-specification IP55 sealing, ensuring longevity in abrasive and high-moisture conditions.

Note: The heavy-duty Cast Iron range is currently available, with the Aluminum frame expansion scheduled for release later this year.

A new standard in warranty: System independence

The centrepiece of this relaunch is the TechTop 5-Year Warranty, a manufacturer-backed guarantee that offers unparalleled freedom of choice by removing the standard requirement for specific motor protection brands. This industry-leading warranty is fully supported by EM's OEM-authorised field technicians, ensuring that every motor is backed by a local, expert-led technical safety net and rapid-response site service.

"We are re-introducing TechTop as a genuine alternative to the options available on the market," says Nishen Singh, Regional Manager at Electro-

Mechanica. "Engineers shouldn't be forced into a single-brand ecosystem just to secure a warranty. We are backing the mechanical excellence of TechTop regardless of the control environment. If the VFD or motor protection is appropriately rated and the installation is correct, we stand by the motor. It's about restoring decision-making autonomy to the engineer."

Efficiency without compromise

Fully compliant with South Africa's Minimum Energy Performance Standards (MEPS), the TechTop IE3 range offers a competitive Total Cost of Ownership (TCO). By combining modern energy efficiency with "old-school" build quality, EM offers a product range that reduces energy consumption without sacrificing the high-torque characteristics required for heavy-duty cycling.

Immediate availability

Backed by a local stockholding of IE3 motors, ElectroMechanica has ensured that units ranging from 0.75kW to 315kW, in



ElectroMechanica and Techtop Management pictured at the TechTop Global Headquarters in Shanghai, China.

2-, 4-, and 6-pole configurations, are available for immediate dispatch. While major inventory is staged at the Johannesburg, Durban, and Cape Town hubs, the range is accessible through ElectroMechanica's extensive nationwide branch and partner networks, ensuring rapid local support and availability across the SADC region.

About TechTop

Techtop Group is a global leader in elec-

tric motor manufacturing with nearly 40 years of engineering excellence.

Headquartered in Shanghai, the group operates three high-capacity manufacturing hubs, producing over 2.5 million units annually for international IEC and NEMA standards. With a workforce of 2,000 and an expansive service network across the UK, Europe, and the Americas, TechTop is a premier exporter of high-end, branded low-voltage motors,

prioritising customer-centric innovation and global reliability.

About ElectroMechanica

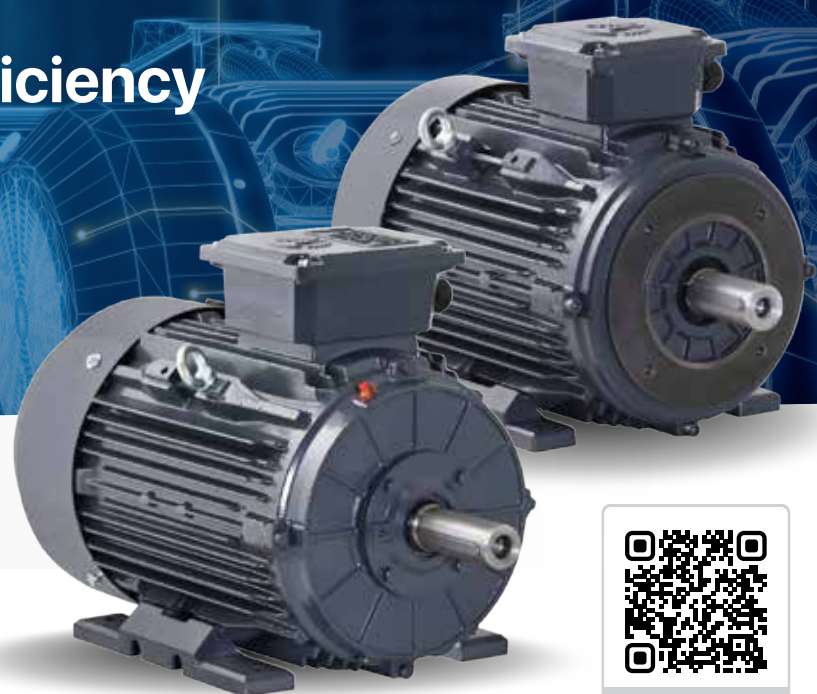
An industrial aggregator and OEM-agent with over 40 years of regional presence, providing access to global energy and automation technology.

This is backed by a technical safety net of authorised field technicians and engineers, and a leading stockholding to ensure uptime.



Discover TechTop's Range of Electric Motors Where Innovation Meets Efficiency

- IE3 Premium Efficiency Motors
- Frame size 80 - 355M/L
- 0.75 to 355kW



Learn More

As Rooibos demand grows, safeguarding its origin matters more than ever



ROOIBOS has earned international recognition for its distinctive flavour, health benefits and uniquely South African origin. As new export markets open and demand grows,

protecting Rooibos' origin is becoming increasingly important to the industry's long-term future. Recent trade developments, including expanded market access

and the removal of tariffs on South African exports to China, are expected to create new opportunities for Rooibos producers and exporters. At the same time, they place renewed emphasis on protecting one of the industry's most valuable assets – the name "Rooibos".

A name rooted in place

Unlike many herbal infusions, Rooibos benefits from formal Geographical Indication (GI) protection and is recognised as a Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) under the European Union system. This means the name "Rooibos" is legally reserved for beverages made from *Aspalathus linearis* grown within a defined production area in South Africa, primarily the Cederberg

and surrounding areas of the Western and Northern Cape, in jurisdictions that recognise the designation.

This protection links the name directly to its place of origin and ensures it may only be used for products originating from the designated production area. Rooibos therefore joins other internationally recognised origin-protected products such as Champagne, Parmigiano Reggiano and Darjeeling tea, where only products produced within the designated region may legally carry the name.

Dawie de Villiers, Director of the South African Rooibos Council (SARC), says protecting the name has become increasingly important as international demand grows.

"As Rooibos becomes more widely



recognised around the world, protecting its origin helps preserve the integrity of the product and the reputation South African producers have built over generations. Consumers want confidence that when they buy Rooibos, they're getting the genuine product from its natural home."

Protection also safeguards the economic value of an industry that supports thousands of jobs across the Western and Northern Cape and exports Rooibos to more than 60 countries.

Protecting authenticity in global markets

While Rooibos enjoys strong origin protection in several key markets, equivalent protection does not automatically extend to every export destination. As international demand grows, broader intellectual property strategies are becoming increasingly important to safeguard its origin across different legal jurisdictions.

Legal protection provides an important foundation, but maintaining consumer con-

fidence requires more than legislation alone.

Once Rooibos enters international supply chains, it may be blended into flavoured teas, functional beverages, food products or cosmetic formulations. The industry's long-term success depends on ensuring its South African origin remains clearly identified throughout the value chain.

As global food supply chains become increasingly complex, provenance has become an important differentiator. Consumers increasingly seek products that are authentic, traceable and sustainably produced, particularly in premium food and wellness markets.

"Origin has become part of the value proposition," says De Villiers. "Our objective isn't simply to increase export volumes. It's to grow demand while maintaining the premium quality, authenticity and provenance that distinguish Rooibos in international markets. That requires more than legal protection – it also depends on strong supply chain traceability, credible

certification systems and ongoing brand stewardship."

Safeguarding long-term value

The industry continues to pursue measured growth rather than rapid expansion.

The SARC has consistently emphasised that production is carefully managed to maintain quality and sustainability, recognising that Rooibos can only be cultivated within a relatively small geographical area where the unique combination of climate, soil and biodiversity gives the plant its distinctive characteristics. That exclusivity is precisely what makes GI protection so valuable.

Unlike products that can be grown almost anywhere in the world, authentic Rooibos cannot simply be replicated elsewhere. Protecting the name helps ensure that the economic benefits created by growing international demand continue to flow back to the producers and communities responsible for cultivating this indigenous South African crop.



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Nordex Energy South Africa expands livestock for livelihoods to unlock market value for farmers



THE Livestock for Livelihoods initiative, implemented as part of Nordex Energy South Africa's economic development contribution linked to the Koruson 2 construction project, was launched in late 2024 to improve income-generating opportunities through livestock ownership.

"We are already seeing practical, visible changes with farmers relocating stock to the commonage."

in line with municipal by-laws.

"We are already seeing practical, visible changes with farmers relocating stock to the commonage. They have started shearing activities and making initial wool sales. This shows the value of pairing infrastructure with targeted training and market linkages," added Lynn Munsamy, transformation manager at Nordex Energy South Africa.

Expansion planned

The programme initially focused on strengthening livestock management practices while helping participating farmers diversify the value derived from their animals.

"Livestock for Livelihoods is moving from foundational farm level interventions to unlocking sustainable market value for farmers," said Nordex Energy South Africa, md, Robert Timmers.

"Strengthening governance and market access, especially in the wool to textile chain, is critical to creating long term income opportunities, particularly for women and youth."

Infrastructure unlocks progress

Early implementation identified limited water infrastructure on municipality-approved commonage land as a major constraint, forcing many farmers to keep livestock at their homes to ensure access to water.

To address this, the programme supported the installation of boreholes on the commonage, enabling farmers to relocate livestock and improve management practices

The programme currently supports 24 farmers in Noupoot, with women making up around one-third of participants. The latest phase places particular emphasis on increasing opportunities for female farmers through participation in the wool and textile value chain.

Nordex Energy South Africa is also exploring the expansion of the programme into neighbouring Middelburg. Early stakeholder engagements and a hydrogeological study will inform planned interventions between June and September 2026.

Preliminary findings suggest as many as 30 farmers could participate across the Midros, Lusaka and KwaNonzame commonage areas.

"This initiative continues Nordex's long-standing commitment to actively contributing to the local communities where we operate. The support and partnership of these communities are fundamental to our success, and we remain committed to contributing to their long-term development," concluded Timmers.

Agricultural automation helps South African producers reduce product losses, improve efficiency and increase profitability

SOUTH African agriculture faces increasing pressure from rising labour costs, tighter margins, demanding export requirements and the ongoing need to improve efficiency. In this environment, profitability is no longer determined solely by what is harvested, but by how effectively products are weighed, processed, packed and transported. Through advanced agricultural automation, Goldpack helps producers improve efficiency, reduce waste and increase packing accuracy across the supply chain.

For Goldpack, the objective is to help customers eliminate hidden losses and maximise operational performance.

How much product are agricultural processors giving away every day without realising it?

For many, the answer is far more than they realise. A 10-gram overweight on a 1kg pack may appear insignificant. Yet across hundreds of thousands of bags, that small discrepancy can amount to tonnes of product leaving the facility without generating additional revenue. Similar losses occur through inaccurate grading, inconsistent pack weights, labour-intensive processes, inadequate traceability and product damage during transport.

The challenge is not identifying these losses. The challenge is eliminating them.

While the market offers a growing range of automation solutions, experienced producers understand that the true cost of equipment extends far beyond its purchase price. Reliability, throughput, accuracy and service life all play a critical role in long-term profitability. When packing facilities process thousands of tonnes of produce each season, downtime, inconsistency and equipment failure come at a significant cost.

This is why many of the world's leading agricultural operations

continue to invest in proven technologies from specialist manufacturers with decades of experience.

Goldpack has built its reputation on bringing world-class technologies to African producers. Companies such as Newtec, JASA, C-Pack Gillenkirch, Squid Ink and Reisopack have earned global reputations for engineering excellence and have entrusted Goldpack with representing, supporting and maintaining their technologies throughout Africa.

Through these partnerships, Goldpack helps agricultural businesses improve efficiency, reduce product losses and protect profitability throughout the supply chain. From Newtec's internationally recognised weighing and grading systems



The Newtec 4012B2 and 2014PC accurately weighing and portioning produce before packing.

to JASA's automated packaging solutions, the technologies are designed to improve accuracy, increase throughput and reduce dependence on manual processes. Combined with advanced coding, bag-closing and load-securing solutions, they help ensure products move effi-

ciently from packhouse to market.

For Goldpack, the objective is to help customers eliminate hidden losses and maximise operational performance.

For many producers, the question is no longer whether to invest in automation, but whether they are investing

in technology capable of delivering reliable performance for years to come.

In modern agriculture, every gram counts.

For further information, contact Sales@goldpack.co.za. Website: www.goldpack.co.za



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Cape Town’s first Commonwealth Agriculture Conference - Programme released

ORGANISERS of the 31st Commonwealth Agriculture Conference have released the preliminary programme for the event, which will be hosted in Cape Town, South Africa, for the first time.

Hosted by Agri-Expo in partnership with the Royal Agricultural Society of the Commonwealth (RASC), the conference will take place from 1 to 5 November 2026 under the theme “Opportunities of Change in a Connected World – From South Africa to the World.”

Importantly, the conference is open to all interested delegates and is not limited to members of the RASC.

Recent Commonwealth Agriculture Conferences have been held in Edinburgh,

Brisbane, Edmonton, Livingstone and Singapore, with Cape Town now preparing to welcome delegates from across the Commonwealth and beyond.

Conference Programme

The preliminary programme reflects both global agricultural priorities and uniquely South African perspectives.

“Agriculture operates in an increasingly interconnected world,” says Breyton Milford, GM of Agri-Expo and RASC Trustee.

“Decisions made in one part of the world increasingly affect farmers, agribusinesses and consumers elsewhere. The programme is designed to bring together international

and South African perspectives on the issues that matter most, while highlighting the role of women, young people and future leaders in shaping agriculture’s future.”

Through keynote addresses, panel discussions and networking opportunities, delegates will explore the opportunities and challenges shaping agriculture today, from food security, sustainability and climate resilience to geopolitical developments, changing trade dynamics, evolving consumer expectations and the future of rural communities.

Confirmed Speakers

Among the confirmed speakers are:

- Dr Ivan Meyer, the

Western Cape Minister of Agriculture, Economic Development and Tourism. John Bennett OAM, President of the Royal Agricultural Society of New South Wales, Australia

- Christo van der Rheede, Chief Executive of the FW de Klerk Foundation, South Africa
- Joel Cowley, Chief Executive of the Calgary Stampede, Canada
- Melt Loubser, Managing Director of Fair Cape Dairies and Chairman of the South African Milk Processors’ Organisation (SAMPRO)
- Robyn Sermon, Chief Executive of the Royal Agri-

cultural Society of Western Australia

- Elmarie Prinsloo, Chief Executive of Bloem Show, South Africa
- Ivor Price, Co-founder and Managing Director of Food For Mzansi, South Africa
- Emily Norton, Chair of the Agricultural and Horticultural Development Board (AHDB), UK
- Dr Tobias Doyer, Chief Executive of Grain SA and the organiser of NAM-PO Harvest Day
- Shannon Robertson, Western Cape Prestige Agricultural Worker of the Year 2025
- David Grindle, President & Chief Executive of the



International Association of Fairs & Expositions (IAFE), United States

- Beauty Mokgwame, General Manager, The Mohair Empowerment Trust, South Africa
- Francois Rossouw, National Young Farmer of the Year 2025, South Africa
- Stefan Gerber, Wool Producer and

Founder of Gerber & Co, South Africa

Additional speakers and programme updates will be announced in the coming months.

Opportunities For Delegates

“Whether delegates are interested in food security, agricultural innovation, sustainability, agricultural events or leadership development, the conference offers a valuable opportunity to learn from global experts and connect with peers from across the Commonwealth,” says Milford.

Pre-Conference Tour

A major highlight of the event is the Pre-Conference Tour from 29 to 31 October 2026, which offers delegates exclusive access to leading agricultural enterprises, educational institutions, and farming operations across the Western Cape.

Hosted in and around Stellenbosch, the tour provides a unique opportunity to experience South African agriculture firsthand while building relationships with fellow delegates before the conference begins..

The preliminary conference programme, registration details, accommodation information, and the pre-tour programme are available at <https://www.rasc2026.com>.

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Trident spray gun improves food and beverage plant cleaning efficiency



The Trident spray gun boosts cleaning efficiency and aligns with the industry's push toward more sustainable, cost-effective operations.

IN the food and beverage industry, maintaining impeccable hygiene is essential. Traditional washdown methods often lead to excessive water and chemical use, prolonged downtime, operator fatigue, and inconsistent results. Spraying Systems Co.'s new GunJet® Trident™ spray gun provides an optimal solution to these challenges, delivering ergonomic, high-performance cleaning designed specifically for demanding food and beverage environments.

less trigger design significantly reduces hand strain and fatigue during long sanitation shifts, while the lightweight body (0.64kg) and ergonomic grip, make extended use far more comfortable than conventional heavy metal spray guns.

In the beverage sector, the Trident handles liquid temperatures up to 93°C, features stainless steel wetted parts for food-grade compliance, and offers models for low pressure up to 20 bar, 30lpm, or high

er wastewater volumes, directly supporting sustainability goals and cutting operational costs.

Beyond the spray gun itself, Spraying Systems Co. offers comprehensive solutions including cleaning solutions for tanks and vessels up to 30m in diameter, air knives for moisture control on bottles and cans, and expert on-site support. These tools help address industry-specific pain points such as stubborn organic buildup, high resource usage, and the need for rapid turnaround between batches. The result is improved uptime, consistent product quality, and safer working conditions for sanitation teams.

The Trident is a smart upgrade for modern beverage facilities. Its combination of power, precision, and operator-friendly design not only boosts cleaning efficiency but also aligns with the industry's push toward more sustainable, cost-effective operations.

For wineries, breweries, and distilleries striving to maintain the highest hygiene standards without sacrificing productivity, the Trident delivers a powerful, reliable solution.

For further information, contact Monitor Engineering (sole agents in Southern Africa for Spraying Systems Co. since 1949). Email: grant@monitorspray.co.za Website: www.spray.co.za



The Trident spray gun integrates seamlessly into broader cleaning strategies.

In wineries, breweries and distilleries, fermentation tanks, bottling lines, and processing equipment accumulate stubborn residues from yeast, malt, hops, sugars, and tannins that can compromise product quality and safety if not thoroughly removed.

The Trident spray gun's two-stage spray control allows a partial trigger pull for wide-area rinsing with a cone pattern and a full pull for high-impact stream cleaning which is ideal for scrubbing tough residues in tanks and on floors.

Its innovative, spring-

pressure up to 50 bar. A protective trigger guard prevents snags and accidents, while the durable construction minimises maintenance and downtime.

The spray gun integrates seamlessly into broader cleaning strategies in the beverage sector by complementing advanced tank cleaning systems that tackle sticky residues with high-impact power while conserving resources. By enabling faster, more effective rinse-downs and targeted scrubbing, plants can shorten cleaning cycles, reduce water consumption, and low-

South Africa wine scoops major innovation award for climate-smart tech

SOUTH Africa Wine, the unified voice of the country's wine and brandy industry, is raising a glass to a major win.

The organisation was honoured with a top Industry Innovation Award at the 2026 Western Cape Economy Innovation Awards for its pioneering work in climate intelligence.

The award specifically recognises South Africa Wine's support and funding of TerraClim,

the home-grown agri-tech powerhouse developed in Stellenbosch.

Coming just three years after South Africa Wine was formed as the industry's umbrella body, this accolade proves that the sector is becoming more agile, tech-savvy, and ready for the future. The awards, organised by the Cape Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCCI), identify the champions who are

moving the needle on economic growth and job creation in the Western Cape.

TerraClim is a practical tool that helps farmers make real-time decisions. By providing hyper-accurate climate data, it allows producers to stay one step ahead of changing environmental conditions.

"For us, innovation is all about the long-term survival of our vineyards," says Gerard

Martin, Research, Development and Innovation Executive at South Africa Wine.

What started as research at Stellenbosch University has evolved into a vital platform used by consultants and researchers across the board. TerraClim's journey from a university spin-off to an industry essentially shows what happens when long-term investment meets world-class research.

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SCAN ME



Industrial steam generation: Why South African manufacturers are outsourcing steam plants

John Thompson’s Energy Management unit helps manufacturers improve plant productivity, reduce operational risk and transition to more sustainable steam generation solutions

FOR manufacturers across South Africa, steam is a production-critical resource. In industries such as the food and beverage, where steam is essen-

tial for processes, an interruption in reliable steam supply can bring production lines to a standstill, impacting product quality, delivery schedules and

profitability. Against a backdrop of rising energy costs, ageing infrastructure and increasing pressure to improve operational efficiency, more man-

ufacturers are choosing to outsource their steam generation to specialist partners. The focus is no longer simply on reducing costs, but on secur-

ing reliable, efficient and sustainable steam supply that enables businesses to concentrate on their core operations. This is where John Thompson’s En-

ergy Management unit is delivering measurable value. According to the business unit’s General Manager, Peter Rube, this strategic

shift moves beyond being a traditional boiler manufacturer and reflects a deep understanding of changing client needs. “Today, the business partners with industrial customers across multiple sectors, assuming responsibility for the design, operation, maintenance and optimisation of steam plants to improve performance, reduce operational risk and ensure reliable steam supply.

“We started with a handful of sites around the Western and Eastern Cape,” says Rube. “From there, we built our reputation on operational excellence and reliability.” Steam outsourcing enables businesses to convert capital-intensive boiler operations into predictable operating costs while gaining access to specialist expertise. For customers, the benefits extend well beyond financial savings.

John Thompson’s outsourced steam solutions focus on long-term partnerships, which allow manufacturers to maintain consistent production standards without the complexity of managing boiler operations internally.

“As production demands fluctuate, our experienced engineers continuously optimise boiler performance to maximise efficiency,” says Rube.

The key differentiator for John Thompson is its strong heritage as a leading original equipment manufacturer (OEM) of industrial boilers. “We do not just operate equipment, our company combines decades of experience in designing, manufacturing, installing, commissioning, servicing and operating industrial boiler systems,” explains Rube.

This capability enables John Thompson to optimise equipment performance throughout its lifecycle while providing customers with a single trusted partner for every aspect of their steam generation requirements.

For industries where reliable steam is essential, outsourcing has become a pathway to improved competitiveness, operational resilience and sustainable growth.

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John Thompson’s Energy Management team turns energy from a cost burden into a competitive advantage. By outsourcing steam and energy operations, manufacturers gain higher efficiency, lower risk and predictable costs, freeing them to focus on production. Supported by deep engineering expertise and an expanding range of renewable and hybrid solutions, John Thompson delivers reliable, future ready energy strategies that drive long term value and sustainability.



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Western Cape Brandy industry drives jobs, growth and export opportunities



By Kris van der Bijl

FROM Paarl and Stellenbosch to the Breede River Valley and Calitzdorp, brandy production anchors a substantial part of the Western Cape's agri-processing economy, supporting rural employment and a widening export base.

try contributes R56.5 billion to South Africa's GDP, equal to 0.9% of national output at market prices, and supports 270 364 jobs, about 1.8% of national employment.

A Cape-anchored value chain

Production is overwhelmingly Western

"Brandy holds a 28% share of the spirits category by volume, making it one of the dominant spirits in the domestic market."

The South African Brandy Foundation (SABF) describes the sector as a substantial contributor to the national fiscus, the agri-processing economy and the rural employment base.

The wine and brandy value chains are tightly linked, with most brandy brands operating from wine estates.

The combined indus-

Cape, with Paarl, Stellenbosch, the Breede River Valley and the Klein Karoo around Calitzdorp forming the core production geography.

These areas are supported by long-established cooperage and maturation infrastructure.

The sector supports 7.51 jobs for every R1 million of value-added output, a ratio that com-

pares favourably with more capital-intensive agri-processing categories.

That employment intensity makes brandy a meaningful labour-absorbing activity in rural and peri-urban Western Cape communities.

Production stays concentrated among a small number of established proprietary brands, with major brands like KWV leading on blended and pot still volume.

A second tier of premium estate and craft producers contributes far higher value per litre than their volume share suggests, and drives much of the category's reputational repositioning at home and abroad.

Tourism adds to the Cape footprint

The sector's economic reach extends beyond production.

Wine and brandy tourism contributes R9.3 billion to GDP and supports 40 108 jobs, drawing visitors to the same Cape regions that anchor distillation.

The brandy routes link estates, cellars and maturation cellars across the winelands, adding a consumer-facing layer to the industry's rural economic base.

Premium growth and the export opportunity

Brandy holds a 28% share of the spirits category by volume, making it one of the dominant spirits in the domestic market.

Over the past five years it has recorded a compound annual growth rate of about 0.8%, which the SABF describes as stabilisation.

Growth is concentrated at the top. Certified pot still brandy, some

premium blends and Cape Brandy are posting healthy volume and value growth.

Exports stand at roughly 5.5 million litres against domestic consumption of about 28 million litres, an export-to-domestic ratio near 1:5.

The primary destinations are Namibia, Tanzania and Zimbabwe, markets with established consumer affinity for South African products and existing distribution infrastructure.

The SABF treats export growth as a strategic priority for a category that has largely exhausted domestic volume expansion, with offshore markets seen as the route to incremental revenue and a stronger basis for distillery investment.

The Foundation frames premiumisation and export development as complementary strategic imperatives.

Excise weighs on future growth

The main pressure on that growth trajectory is tax. Excise on a standard 750ml bottle of spirits has roughly doubled since 2016, outpacing consumer price inflation and compressing margins through the chain.

The SABF calls it one of the most significant structural cost pressures facing the formal brandy industry, and warns that sustained above-CPI increases deter long-cycle investment in distillation and ageing stock.

Proprietary brandy, the high-volume lower-priced tier, carries most of that pressure, where excise pass-through and substitution by illicit product are felt most acutely.

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

Vergelegen Wine Estate expands with new warehouse and distribution partnership



By Adrian Ephraim

VERGELEGEN Wine Estate is putting its money where its mouth is. Somerset West based producer has built a major new warehouse and signed a new distribution agreement, two moves it says are intended to broaden market access and to strengthen the brand across South Africa.

With a 4 226 m² fa-

so that the visual and environmental impact could be kept to a minimum.

Distribution to new owners

Vergelegen has appointed boutique distributor Cape Wine Group (CWG) to handle sales and distribution of its wines in South Africa. The appointment should further enhance the estate's relationship

winning wines," says CWG managing director Jacques Steenkamp.

A new chapter in the basement

The commercial changes are matched by a change in the cellar. Winemaker Luke O'Cuinneagain joined Vergelegen in 2022 and the 2023 vintage marks a turning point, with the first reds made entirely under his custodianship being released this year.

"I always try to express the site, a true picture of the geology, geography and micro-climate of each wine. In the reds, that translates to fresher fruit, less overt oak and a greater sense of precision, balance and drinkability," says O'Cuinneagain.

For Coetzer, it's steadiness that ties it all together. "The focus for Vergelegen is very much on continuity and consistency and caring for our wines and customers as we enter this next chapter," he says.

"We are excited to build on the estate's legacy with renewed vigour and to continue sharing Vergelegen wines with trade partners and wine drinkers who value quality, heritage and excellence."

"Vergelegen has appointed boutique distributor Cape Wine Group (CWG) to handle sales and distribution of its wines in South Africa."

cility, it can house more than two million bottles. It provides the estate with far more storage than before, and it co-alesces distribution, logistics and quality control into one hub.

The design includes a 890 m² tractor facility and a 150 m² maintenance workshop to ensure that vineyard operations flow smoothly and keep the trim on inefficiency.

NK Construction completed the project in seven months. In line with Vergelegen's sustainability principles, the build used reused and upcycled materials sourced from the farm and its surroundings, such as steel and paving.

Location was important. The warehouse is close to the winery on the hilltop, but out of sight, sheltered from the prevailing winds and surrounded by the vineyards and trees so that it hardly intrudes on the landscape. The estate said the site was chosen

with trade partners and retailers and take it further into important domestic channels, bringing the commercial operation closer to its growth plans, said managing director Wayne Coetzer.

"We want to make our wines more accessible than ever before, with a seamless, consistent flow to existing and new customers," Coetzer says.

"We are excited to partner with an estate rich in heritage and known for its award



Bomb Squad Beer grows its brand expanding into the UK and Australia

International rugby legends Steven Kitshoff and Malcolm Marx reach South African rugby fans abroad

By Diane Silcock

IN three years of launching their iconic Bomb Squad Beer in South Africa, Springbok rugby legends Steven Kitshoff and Malcolm Marx have grown their brand and expanded into international markets (specifically the UK, Australia and New Zealand) bringing their products to South African rugby fans abroad. They have also diversified, exporting their Cape Town-produced brandy to the UK and introducing a ready-to-drink whiskey and gin-

ger-ale mix (High Ball) to the local market.

In less than a year of launching in the UK, Bomb Squad Beer launched in Australia and New Zealand in June/July of 2025. But Kitshoff says that “building a brand internationally takes time, consistency, and a clear plan”.

“A key part of making the entry into the UK smoother,” says Kitshoff, “was partnering with people on the ground who really understand the UK alcohol market and its regulatory landscape. Working with experienced operators, including Scott Campbell, gave us the insight and guidance needed to navigate the space properly and avoid unnecessary missteps.”

Brewing offshore has required some adaptation due to local ingredients and brewing conditions, resulting in all products having their own recipes and taste profiles. “When you’re working with locally-sourced ingredients in a market like



Steven Kitshoff standing outside one of The Savanna stores in London which stocks their Bomb Squad beer and brandy.

nuances will exist and rather than seeing that as a drawback, they view it as part of the brand’s evolution.

In terms of the brand’s global recognition and positioning, the UK launch has been very successful according to Kitshoff. Looking at volume and revenue, he says there is still a lot of room for growth. “We’ve always been realistic that building meaningful scale in a market like the UK takes time”.

As with their UK entry, the early focus in Australia and New Zealand (ANZ) was on getting the local South African community to buy into the brand and what it represents, which has been important in establishing initial traction and credibility in the market.

“Where ANZ differs slightly, is in its approach,” says Kitshoff. “There’s been a bigger emphasis on building the brand through events, merchandise, and a broader Bomb Squad product offering, rather than relying purely on beverage sales. This has helped create a more experiential feel around the brand and build a stronger community connection.”

Beyond beer, the rugby duo’s brandy and ready-to-drink range play an important role in broadening the brand’s presence within the beverage category.

A major focus for 2025 and 2026 has been their launch of a licensing division within South Africa with the goal being to extend the Bomb Squad brand by licensing the name into a range of products and categories through the right partnerships.

As part of that process, their external team has expanded meaningfully, bringing in specialised expertise and adding significant value to both the brand and the broader business.

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PUBLICATION DATE
7 OCTOBER 2026

PUBLISHED ACROSS CBN'S MULTI-CHANNEL DIGITAL PLATFORMS

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COMPRESSED air has become a cornerstone of industrial productivity in many sectors, including automation, materials handling, mining, manufacturing, food processing and automotive assembly operations.

throughout the industry.

The food processing and agricultural sectors also depend heavily on pneumatic technologies, from conveying systems and packaging machinery to hygienic air handling applications. In auto-

"As companies prioritise efficiency, reliability and safer production environments, access to high-quality pneumatic systems and dependable technical support has become increasingly important," says Storme Loots, BMG Pneumatics, Fluid Technology, Low Pressure division. "BMG has reinforced its position in this critical sector through our comprehensive pneumatics offering, supplying engineered solutions designed to support the operational demands of diverse industries throughout Africa. As an authorised partner of Festo, BMG combines access to globally recognised pneumatic technologies with local application expertise and technical support.

"A key differentiator for BMG in the local market is our ability to not only supply quality components, but to also provide the technical expertise needed to specify, integrate and maintain increasingly

sophisticated pneumatic systems."

BMG's pneumatics portfolio encompasses core components required to build and maintain efficient compressed air systems. These include air preparation and treatment equipment, including compressors, dryers, filters, regulators and lubricators, that ensure clean, dry and controlled air delivery. The range also comprises pneumatic actuators and cylinders, including single-acting, double-acting, guided and rodless variants for linear and rotary motion applications.

Flow control and directional management are also critical in modern automated systems. Solenoid valves, manual control valves and proportional flow control solutions ensure precise machine sequencing and operational consistency. Supporting these systems are high-quality fittings, tubing and connectors, designed to minimise leakage and



BMG has reinforced its position in the pneumatics sector through customised engineered solutions designed to support the operational demands of diverse industries throughout Africa.

"BMG has reinforced its position in this critical sector through our comprehensive pneumatics offering, supplying engineered solutions designed to support the operational demands of diverse industries throughout Africa."

Pneumatic systems, which use compressed air to transmit and control energy, are widely valued for their versatility, operational safety and efficiency. In manufacturing, pneumatic actuators, cylinders and control systems play a vital role in automating repetitive processes, enhancing precision and improving production

motive manufacturing and heavy industrial assembly, pneumatic tools, clamps and control systems contribute to fast, repeatable and efficient production processes.

In mining environments, these systems are used in both underground and surface applications, where robust and dependable performance is essential.

maintain long-term performance.

According to BMG, the engineering sector's continued investment in automation, uptime optimisation and energy-efficient technologies, presents significant opportu-

nities for pneumatic solutions that combine global pneumatic innovation, product quality and local technical support.

For further information contact:
Storme Loots, BMG

Pneumatics, Fluid Technology, Low Pressure division

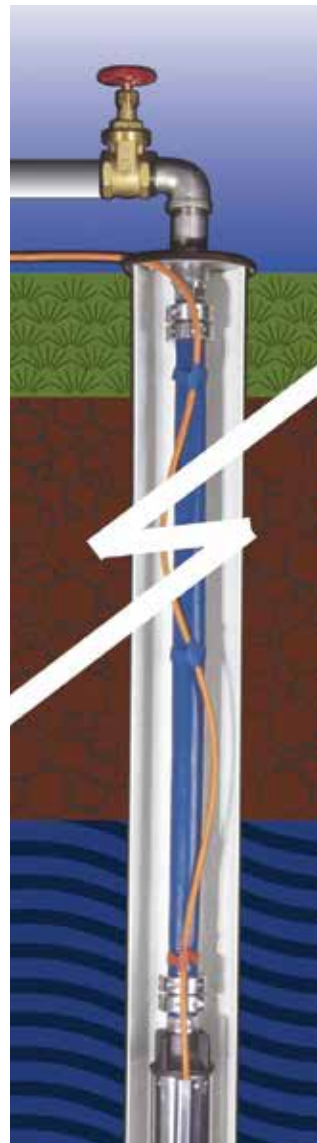
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Atlas Copco launches Integrated Hybrid Generator range to help cut fuel use, emissions and operating costs

New compact hybrid power range combines diesel engine and battery technology in one rental-ready unit, simplifying logistics, speeding up deployment and reducing environmental impact.

COMPANIES are under increasing pressure to reconcile sustainability requirements with practical operational needs.

On one hand, customers, regulators and project owners are demanding measurable reductions in emissions and fuel consumption. On the other hand, commercial realities dictate that equipment must be easy to deploy, simple to operate, reliable in harsh conditions, and profitable across every rental cycle.

Enter the new QHS Integrated Hybrid Generators from Atlas Copco – designed to enable rental fleets to deliver reliable, lower-emission power without adding operational complexity. Combining diesel engine and battery tech-

nology into a single, all-in-one canopy unit, QHS integrated hybrid generators reduce fuel consumption and CO₂ emissions while supporting fast installation, autonomous operation and high utilisation.

QHS Integrated Hybrid Generators are engineered to deliver measurable cost reductions for businesses.

By dramatically reducing fuel consumption and cutting generator runtime, these units lower operating expenses and help extend the working life of key components.

Reduced runtime also means fewer service interventions, less wear and tear, and longer service intervals, supporting lower maintenance costs and stronger long-term fleet

economics.

QHS Integrated Hybrid Generators are designed with the end user in mind.

Ease of operation is at the heart of these machines. With engine and battery power available at the press of a button, operating the Integrated Hybrid Generators is straightforward and intuitive.

A one-click start/stop interface and fully autonomous operating mode allow QHS generators to adapt to changing load profiles without user intervention, minimising training requirements and operational errors.

Fewer maintenance intervals allow for faster project completion, and issues caused by wet stacking and low loads become a thing of the

past.

The Atlas Copco ECOController™ specifically designed for hybrid power systems serves as the heart of the system, providing easy access to smart energy management at users' fingertips. Seamlessly switching between engine and battery power, the interface ensures optimised performance across all applications.

The controller automatically selects the most efficient power source and delivers power to the load accordingly. Whenever the generator is running, the energy management software prioritises supplying power to the load and then uses any surplus energy to charge the battery, ensuring efficient operations at all times.

KSB pump spares and parts keep critical infrastructure running across Africa



Sales Manager at KSB SupremeServ, Johannes Tokwana

KSB Pumps and Valves employs a customer-first approach to the supply of spares and parts for its massive installed base of pumps and valves across Africa. With a history spanning more than 50 years supplying critical infrastructure to the private and public sectors, the company maintains a significant stockholding of spares and parts for tens of thousands of pumps.

Their stockholding includes decades old pumps that are still in operation across water utilities, power stations, mines and chemical plants as well as smaller plants on farms, municipalities and businesses. The company also maintains procedures for spares and parts for its complex engineered pumps.

Johannes Tokwana, Sales Manager at KSB SupremeServ responsible for spares and part sales, says the company employs sophisticated logistics techniques based on enterprise and manufacturing resource planning software from SAP, which has been specially adapted for the company's needs. It relies on decentralised stockholding backed by a central support base in Johannesburg which ensures all branches in South Africa and companies in Africa are sufficiently stocked.

Apart from its branch network in South Africa, the footprint covers KSB operations and partners in Kenya, Nigeria, Zambia, Namibia and Angola, with agency support in Ghana. Many of these markets are heavily mining driven while others are in water scarce areas where authorities are under sustained pressure to improve water and wastewater reliability. In all cases, equipment uptime is non-negotiable.

"For us, the human factor is vitally important with our branches and sales partners still required to regularly visit their customers and identify fast-moving and critical items. This is so we can accurately gauge requirements and hold these items on site to ensure they are not replenished by our staff at SupremeServ before they are depleted.

The same principle applies to sister operations throughout the region where fast-moving parts are identified based on installed base data and service history. Critical components are prioritised and where necessary emergency logistics are arranged to protect uptime.

"In areas where, for example, municipalities are battling ageing infrastructure and water shortages or production plants rely on liquid pumping circuits, this type of responsiveness is essential. In these instances, pump or valve downtime cannot wait for overseas lead times and that is

"By supporting customers from within the continent and coordinating regionally, the company reduces its dependency on longer international supply chains."

the beauty of having our local manufacturing plant that is able to cater for most of these types of spares. However, our aim always remains to collaborate with our customers to establish preventative maintenance routines that work for them and ensure their pumping infrastructure remains dependable.

"The strategic advantage lies in proxim-

ity and that is why we have invested heavily in our African network and having service and support situated in close proximity to our customers. By supporting customers from within the continent and coordinating regionally, the company reduces its dependency on longer international supply chains. This is particularly important in remote African operations where logistics can be unpredictable," says Johannes.

He adds that service parts usually consist of wear components, seals and hydraulic parts that must be checked and replaced at regular intervals under certain conditions. Keeping these fast-moving items in stock is easy but having them in the right place at the right time is essential and this is the key role of the company's structured supply chain and forecasting discipline.

"That is the critical role that KSB SupremeServ plays to close the loop between manufacturing, installation and long-term operation. That means ensuring the right part is available in the right place at the right time whether that is Germiston, Cape Town, Kitwe or Nairobi," Johannes concludes.

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ifm conductivity sensors: The cornerstone of South Africa's water-smart industry

SOUTH Africa's engineers operate at the intersection of resource constraint and industrial ambition. Few parameters illustrate this balancing act as clearly as water quality. Whether in municipal treatment works, food and beverage plants, mining operations, the ability to measure water quality accurately and continuously has become non-negotiable.

Among the suite of analytical measurements available, conductivity stands out for its simplicity, robustness, and relevance. As an indicator of ionic content, conductivity provides immediate insight into purity, contamination, separation of media, and cleaning efficiency. In a water stressed country, this insight translates directly into reduced waste, improved uptime, and better compliance.

hubs from the Western Cape to KwaZulu-Natal, conductivity is used to optimise CIP cycles, reducing chemical consumption and water use without compromising hygiene. In mining and power generation, it's an early warning signal for scaling and mineralisation in cooling circuits.

"Sensors must operate reliably in environments defined by resource scarcity, high operating costs, and limited tolerance for failure."

Compact sensors for real world plants

Traditional conductivity installations often relied on separate

the application.

Conductive sensors measure current directly through the medium and offer extremely high resolution at low conductivity levels. Devices such as the LDL101 can measure down to $0.04 \mu\text{S/cm}$, making them ideal for ultrapure water systems in pharmaceuticals, electronics manufacturing, and hydrogen electrolysis.

Inductive sensors, by contrast, use electromagnetic coupling to determine conductivity without direct electrode contact, making them exceptionally resilient to fouling, coating, and aggressive media, key advantages in mining, water treatment, and CIP processes. They are widely used to distinguish between cleaning fluids, rinse water, and product, enabling faster phase detection and reduced wastage in food and beverage plants.

condition-based maintenance, reducing unplanned downtime and extending asset life which is critical in remote or energy intensive installations.

From measurement to decision: IO Link and data transparency

Modern conductivity measurement does not stop at the sensor. Digital communication via IO Link allows engineers to extract high resolution process data, temperature compensated values, diagnostics, and configuration information directly from the field device. This enables:

- Reduced wiring and faster commissioning;
- Standardised sensor inventories across plants;
- Remote diagnostics and troubleshooting; and
- Integration into



ifm LDL400 application: By enabling precise measurement, early intervention, and data driven control, ifm conductivity sensors help engineers deliver safer water, cleaner processes, and more efficient plants.

IIoT and asset management platforms.

What ultimately distinguishes South African engineering is context. Sensors must operate reliably in environments defined by resource scarcity, high operating costs, and lim-

ited tolerance for failure.

Conductivity sensors may be small components, but their impact is systemic. By enabling precise measurement, early intervention, and data driven control, they help engineers deliver safer water, clean-

er processes, and more efficient plants.

To view these products in action, visit ifm at Electra Mining Africa from 7 to 11 September 2026 at stand A06 in Hall 7. <http://www.ifm.com/info.za@ifm.com>



ifm's LDL family of conductivity sensors integrates the measuring element and evaluation electronics into a single housing, communicating digitally via IO Link or analogue outputs.

Why conductivity matters in a South African context

Conductivity measurement reflects how well a liquid conducts electrical current, which in water applications is directly related to dissolved salts and contaminants. For local industries, this single parameter supports multiple critical objectives:

- Verifying drinking, process, and ultrapure water quality;
- Monitoring filtration, reverse osmosis, and demineralisation efficiency;
- Distinguishing between product, rinse water, and cleaning agents in Clean-in-Place (CIP) processes; and
- Preventing downstream corrosion, fouling, and product losses.

In food processing

probes, transmitters, and extensive cabling, adding cost, complexity, and failure points. Modern compact sensors have changed this equation decisively. ifm's LDL family of conductivity sensors integrates the measuring element and evaluation electronics into a single housing, communicating digitally via IO Link or analogue outputs. Where cabinet space, installation time, and maintenance skills are limited, this compact architecture reduces both capital and lifecycle costs.

Conductive vs inductive measurement: Choosing the right tool

Modern conductivity sensing requires engineers to select between conductive and inductive measurement principles depending on

Polypropylene and corrosion resistance: A local advantage

One of the most significant recent developments is the introduction of fully polypropylene housed inductive conductivity sensors. In coastal plants, desalination facilities, chemical dosing stations, and filter installations, stainless steel sensors can suffer premature degradation due to salty air, acidic media, or aggressive cleaning chemicals. The LDL400's polypropylene construction provides continuous corrosion resistance while maintaining a wide measurement range from 100 to 2 000 000 $\mu\text{S/cm}$.

Pure water, ultrapure challenges

As South African industry moves into higher value manufacturing and energy applications, pure and ultrapure water systems are becoming more common. In these environments, even trace contamination can disrupt processes or damage equipment.

Conductivity sensors designed for ultra-low ranges enable continuous monitoring of ion exchange, filtration, and membrane performance. A rising conductivity value acts as an early indicator that cartridges require replacement, or that breakthrough has occurred, long before quality is visibly compromised.

This preventative capability supports



Measure conductivity. Control processes reliably.

Conductivity sensors detect the conductivity and concentration of different media and can differentiate between e.g. cleaning agents, rinsing water, and the food product. This means that it is not only possible to constantly track the product but also to reduce the waste of product and rinsing water – all possible without making adjustments to the sensor. Precise, fast and reliable process measurements also help to improve plant availability and optimize cleaning cycles.

To view these sensors, make sure to visit us at Electra Mining Africa Expo from 07 - 11 September 2026, NASREC Expo Centre, Johannesburg.



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From sorting to sales - Sky Park streamlines De Beers' diamond journey



An employee analyses large rough diamonds using microscopes and advanced technology

SINCE opening in March 2023, De Beers Group's Sky Park facility has streamlined the journey of South Africa's rough diamonds from sorting and valuation through to secure sales, combining advanced technology, specialist expertise and rigorous traceability systems.

Strategically located near O. R. Tambo International Airport, the facility also strengthens sustainability and skills development through innovative cleaning methods, solar power integration and its Diamond Academy training programmes.

From the moment rough diamonds arrive from mine operations to the point they are presented for sale, De Beers Group's Sky Park facility has become the central point where precision, security and consistency converge. Since opening in March 2023, the De Beers Sightholder Sales South Africa (DBSSSA) facility has strengthened the end-to-end flow of South Africa's rough diamond production, efficiently guiding each stone through cleaning, sorting, valuation, traceability and final sale.

Strategically located near O. R. Tambo International Airport, east of Johannesburg, DBSSSA serves as the primary processing and sales hub for De

Beers' South African rough diamond production. The facility combines proprietary technology, specialist expertise and rigorous controls to move diamonds securely and efficiently from production through to market.

According to Blanche Louw, senior operations manager at DBSSSA, the facility was purpose-designed around the logical progression of each diamond's journey.

"Our operation is meticulously sequenced - moving diamonds through the cleaning zones and immediately into technical sorting and valuation areas," she says. "The layout of the building is specifically designed to bring optimal efficiencies into our processes."

Diamonds arrive under tightly controlled custody and are first weighed and registered before entering the Central Cleaning Plant.

Here, De Beers has introduced an innovative alternative to traditional hydrofluoric acid cleaning, significantly improving both safety and sustainability while still meeting stringent valuation and export standards.

This sustainability focus extends to the building itself which has earned a five-star Green Star rating.

A 360 kW solar installation, comprising more than 1,200 panels

and 575 kilowatt-hours of battery storage, further enhances the facility's environmental performance while reducing energy costs.

Once cleaned, diamonds move into specialised valuation and sorting streams where carat weight, clarity, colour and cutting potential are assessed.

Smaller high volume stones are processed through automated technical sorting systems, while larger higher value stones continue to rely on the expertise of highly skilled human sorters. Together, these processes enable diamonds to be classified into more than 10,000 categories, each linked to De Beers' global pricing framework.

A defining strength of the operation is the consistency it delivers through De Beers' Sightholder sales model.

By aggregating like-for-like categories from multiple mines, the business creates consistent rough diamond "boxes" tailored to customers' manufacturing requirements and downstream market demand.

These are presented at ten Sight sales events each year, with South African customers viewing their allocations in dedicated rooms at Sky Park.

Traceability and provenance are also embedded at the core of the operation.

All rough diamonds of one carat and above are digitally scanned on arrival to create a unique fingerprint record. At the point of sale, each diamond is rescanned and matched against the original intake data through Tracr, De Beers' blockchain-backed traceability platform, which now holds records for more than five million rough diamonds.

Industrial automation without the mega factory: How mid-sized manufacturers are scaling smarter

By Jan 't Hart,
National Sales
Manager at Yaskawa
Southern Africa



FOR many South African manufacturers, automation still carries an outdated perception. Robotics is often viewed as technology reserved for large automotive plants, multinational factories, or highly standardised production environments with substantial capital budgets. But that perception is changing.

"There is also growing recognition that automation is not simply about reducing labour."

A growing number of mid-sized manufacturers are exploring automation not as part of large-scale transformation projects, but in response to rising costs, skills shortages, increasing quality expectations, and the need for greater efficiency. Importantly, automation is becoming more practical, flexible, and financially accessible than many businesses realise.

The conversation has moved beyond fully automated factories. Instead, manufacturers are adopting targeted automation strategies designed to solve specific operational bottlenecks.

This may involve

automating a palletising process, introducing robotic welding for repetitive tasks, or integrating a robotic cell into an existing production line to improve consistency and throughput. In many cases, the goal is not replacement, but smarter production support.

One of the most significant developments in recent years has been the ability to retrofit automation into existing facilities. Historically, robotics often required purpose-built production environments and extensive infrastructure changes. Today, modern robotic systems are far more modular and adaptable, allowing manufacturers to integrate automation into existing factory layouts without major disruption or costly re-designs.

For businesses operating under tight capital constraints, this flexibility is critical. Automation can be introduced incrementally, focusing on areas where returns are most immediate, reducing implementation risk while allowing manufacturers to build confidence over time.

Advanced simulation software is also making automation more accessible. Manufacturers can now model robotic solutions before investing in equipment, assessing cycle times, throughput, robot reach, accessibility, and return on investment with a high degree of confidence.

Platforms such as Yaskawa's MotoSim and Motoman NEXT digital engineering environment go beyond robot path validation, enabling manufacturers to simulate complete production systems, including robots, peripheral equipment, material flow, and process logic. This helps

optimise processes, validate concepts before implementation, accelerate commissioning, and minimise operational disruption.

The financial discussion around automation is also evolving. While robotics remains a significant investment, manufacturers are increasingly evaluating automation based on long-term operational value rather than upfront cost alone.

Reduced downtime, improved product con-

sistency, lower scrap and rework rates, increased throughput, and the ability to maintain production quality under labour pressure all contribute to stronger profitability and customer retention.

For many mid-sized manufacturers, automation is increasingly becoming a growth strategy rather than



simply a cost-saving exercise. Businesses that improve consistency, scale output reliably and meet stricter customer specifications, are often better positioned to secure larger contracts, support localisation initiatives, and compete in regional and export markets.

Manufacturers no longer need to become "mega factories" to benefit from automation. The technology is becoming more scalable, adaptable, and aligned with the realities of modern manufacturing. Those achieving the greatest success are often not pursuing the largest automation projects, but taking practical, focused steps towards smarter production.

Advances in robotic software, simplified programming, and flexible tooling have

For more information on Yaskawa's robotic solutions, visit www.yaskawa.za.co.za



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Ideal for welding agricultural equipment, automotive frames or construction machinery, the new AR2010 robot offers fast and powerful performance for arc welding applications. While the streamlined arm design gives easy access to parts in confined places, the slim robot profile permits close robot placement for high-density weld cells. Improved axis composite speed and expanded wrist range optimize robot functionality, and a symmetric wrist provides equal access to both sides of a part. A 50mm thru-hole reduces cable interference and wear, and an enhanced feeder mounting area on the arm reduces equipment obstruction.

YASKAWA

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Next-generation combustion technology improves boiler efficiency

COMBUSTION technology is evolving rapidly as industries face increasing pressure to improve boiler efficiency, reduce emissions and meet sustainability targets. Intelligent combustion control, advanced flame management and real-time performance monitoring are transforming modern boiler plants, enabling safer, cleaner and more efficient operations. At the forefront of these developments is Combustion Technology, which continues to bring the latest global combustion innovations to customers across Africa.

Combustion Technology's Managing Director, Grant Renele, represented South Africa and Mauritius at this year's Annual Autoflame & Limpsfield Global Combustion Conference in Miami, Florida. Bringing together Autoflame Global Tech Centres from around the world, the conference provides a unique platform for technical collaboration, research, engineering workshops and the exchange of real-world project experience.

The event showcased the latest developments in combustion control technology, with technical discussions spanning OEM partnerships, healthcare facilities, industrial process applications, remote installations and large-scale boiler plant optimisation. The common objective across every session was clear: helping industry achieve safer, cleaner and more efficient combustion.

"Participation in these events," says Renele, "reinforces our commitment to remaining at the forefront of combustion engineering, ensuring our customers benefit from the latest global developments."

"As Africa's exclusive Autoflame Global Tech Centre, our engineers work closely with customers across a wide range of industries, delivering complete combustion solutions that improve efficiency, reliability and environmental performance. Every installation is approached with the understanding that combustion is a dynamic process requiring continuous optimisation rather than a once-off commissioning exercise."

A strong theme that emerged from the conference was the evolution of intelligent combustion control. New developments are enabling combustion systems to respond more rapidly and accurately to changing operating conditions, improving efficiency while enhancing

plant reliability.

A major focus was Autoflame's UV Flame Trim technology which improves combustion stability, greater efficiency and reduced component wear. Also of significant interest, was Change on the Fly functionality, allowing combustion systems to

transition automatically between fuel curves without stopping the burner, improving operational efficiency and reducing unnecessary downtime.

In terms of safety, the Autoflame Flame Safeguard platform is a flexible solution that enhances operational

safety while simplifying commissioning, troubleshooting and long-term maintenance.

Beyond individual technologies, the conference reinforced the growing importance of data-driven combustion management. Modern combustion systems continuously monitor

fuel consumption, oxygen levels, combustion efficiency, emissions and overall boiler performance in real time.

This shift is transforming the way facilities manage energy. Intelligent combustion management enables predictive maintenance, identifies efficiency loss-

es before they become costly failures and provides the performance verification increasingly required for sustainability reporting and ESG initiatives.

"By combining decades of field experience with ongoing investment in training, innovation and global technical

partnerships, we continue to deliver combustion solutions that improve operational performance, maximise energy efficiency and support our customers' long-term sustainability goals," concludes Renele.

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



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WHY INDUSTRY CHOOSES COMBUSTION TECHNOLOGY



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Babcock completes complex brownfield low-NOx retrofit at major South African petrochemical facility

AS environmental regulations tighten across South Africa's petrochemical and energy sectors, operators are increasingly required to upgrade existing combustion infrastructure to meet stricter emissions limits while maintaining operational reliability.

Brownfield retrofit projects of this nature present particular engineering challenges, especially where installations must be executed within limited outage windows and within live operating environments.

"The retrofit is expected to achieve significant NOx emissions reduction."

Babcock has recently completed the installation of a low-NOx burner system on a boiler at a major South African petrochemical facility.

The project forms part of the client's broader emissions reduction programme aimed at ensuring compliance with Minimum Emission Standards

(MES) under the National Environmental Management: Air Quality Act.

The project demonstrates Babcock's capability to execute technically complex retrofit work within operating industrial facilities while maintaining strong safety performance and schedule discipline.

In its drive to reduce emissions and improve environmental performance, the chemicals and energy producer has been implementing a phased programme to retrofit its boiler fleet with low-NOx combustion technology.

Babcock was awarded the contract to implement the NOx abatement solution on one of the facility's critical steam generation units, drawing on its experience in combustion engineering, boiler modifications and brownfield project execution.

The boiler unit involved in the project forms part of the site's steam generation infrastructure supporting petrochemical production processes.

The retrofit is expected to achieve sig-

nificant NOx emissions reduction, supporting the plant's environmental compliance objectives.

The Engineering, Procurement and Construction (EPC) scope required Babcock to validate previously completed engineering work before completing construction and commissioning activities.

The project scope included:

- Validation and completion of legacy engineering designs
- Procurement of mechanical, piping, structural and instrumentation packages and sub-contract services
- Site mobilisation and outage preparation
- Installation of low-NOx burners and associated boiler modifications
- Commissioning and handover of the abatement system

According to Puvern Pillay, Project Manager at Babcock, the project required careful technical review before execution could begin.

Steinmüller Africa delivers engineering solutions to keep coal power plants viable in a renewables-driven grid

SPECIALIST high-pressure equipment engineering firm, **Steinmüller Africa**, showcased practical engineering solutions for one of South Africa's future power generation challenges: how to keep existing coal-fired power stations performing reliably as renewable energy feeds increasing volumes of unpredictable power into the national grid.

The company presented its solutions at Enlit Africa 2026, held at the CTICC in Cape Town from 19 to 21 May, demonstrating that conventional power plants can be adapted to more rapidly increase or decrease output, and can operate efficiently at significantly lower generation loads than originally designed, without requiring significant plant replacement. These capabilities are increasingly important in a power system where conventional plants must operate more dynamically to complement variable renewable generation.

Their technical presentation, "Improving the Flexibility of Steam Generators in Low Load Operation," set out how existing steam genera-

tors can be modified to operate safely at minimum loads as low as 20 to 30 per cent of rated capacity. Where power stations were originally designed to run at or near full capacity around the clock, they will in the future be called on to increase load rapidly when renewables cannot meet demand and then suddenly decrease load when renewables start generating again. Without sufficient grid-scale energy storage, conventional plants carry this balancing burden directly, placing new demands on ageing steam generator equipment. In this context, improving low-load performance is not only a technical enhancement, but a practical way of helping existing coal-fired assets provide the required grid support as the proportion of highly variable renewable energy increases.

Steinmüller Africa, which designs, fabricates, commissions, installs and maintains customised high-pressure equipment across a range of industries, drew on three real-world case studies to demonstrate that solutions are both technically



The Steinmüller Africa team at Enlit Africa 2026, Cape Town, delivering practical engineering solutions for a more flexible, future-ready power grid.

achievable and practically deliverable. In one example, engineers reduced a plant's minimum operating load from 40 per cent to 22 per cent of maximum continuous rating through changes to operating procedures alone, with no physical plant modifications required.

In a second case, a targeted two-step modification incorporating an economiser bypass and a feedwater recirculation system restored a plant's original design minimum load of 30 per cent after significant emission reduction systems had been retrofitted to the plant.

A third case demonstrated how detailed

thermal and hydraulic stability modelling can establish the true low-load limits of a plant and identify the specific measures needed to reduce these limits further without damage to the plant or any safety concerns.

Across all three cases the message is consistent: meaningful flexibility improvements are available to existing power plants quickly and cost-effectively by firstly performing detailed engineering analysis and identifying a solution tailored to each specific plant.

"Increased plant flexibility by reducing the present minimum technical load is a possible option for every power plant," said Warwick Ham, Group Leader Process Engineering, Steinmüller Africa. "As renewable energy penetration increases, this kind of flexibility will become increasingly important to maintaining grid stability and protecting the integrity of conventional generation assets. The engineering investigation is just the first step, followed by optimisation of operating parameters and, where necessary, plant modification measures."

For South Africa's power generation sector, where the pressure to integrate renewables while maintaining grid stability is growing, Steinmüller Africa's approach offers a credible and cost-efficient path forward for plant operators looking to extend both the capability and the working life of their existing assets while improving the flexibility needed to operate in a grid which is having to incorporate an increasing quantity of variable renewable energy.

For enquiries, contact mpmo.mafela@bilfinger.com
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SME costs rise as fuel, forex and cross-border pressures intensify



By Adrian Ephraim

SOUTH Africa's June fuel price adjustment told two stories at once. Petrol rose by R1.43 per litre, while diesel was cut by between R2.62 and R3.25 per litre. On the surface, that looks like good news for diesel-reliant freight operators.

Look closer, and the real story for South Africa's SMEs isn't what happened at the pump. It's what's happening underneath it.

It's not the price, it's the dollar

South Africa imports nearly all its refined fuel, priced in US dollars. The average Brent Crude price rose from 101 USD to 104.59 USD over the review period, driven by US-Iran tension and disruption around the Strait of Hormuz. The rand strengthened only marginally, from 16.65 to 16.52, doing little to soften the impact.

"SMEs often don't have the same financial buffers or procurement flexibility as larger corporates."

"Fuel costs don't exist in isolation," says James Booth, Head of Revenue at Verto. "They feed directly into transport, logistics, imported goods, supplier pricing, and ultimately the cost of doing business."

Because fuel is dollar-denominated, every move in the rand amplifies or cushions what local businesses pay. A weak rand doesn't just make imports costlier, it makes the fuel that moves those imports costlier too.

Three moving parts, one small business

For an SME trading across borders, the fuel adjustment lands on top of two other var-

iables moving at the same time:

- Fuel costs shape transport and logistics pricing, feeding into delivered cost of goods
- Exchange rate movements affect what imported inputs and finished goods cost in rand terms
- Cross-border payment costs affect how much of a payment to an overseas supplier actually lands, after fees and spreads

A large corporate can hedge currency exposure or absorb a bad month. An SME importing stock from a regional supplier usually can't.

"SMEs often don't have the same financial buffers or procurement flexibility as larger corporates," says Booth. "A sudden increase in transport or import costs can force difficult decisions around pricing, stock orders, payment timing, or even whether expansion plans remain viable."

When unpredictability is the real cost

The deeper issue isn't the size of any single increase, it's that fuel, currency and payment costs move independently, for different reasons, on different timelines, making forecasting genuinely difficult.

Take an importer bringing in components from a regional supplier. By the time a shipment lands, the rand may have weakened, diesel may cost more for the final transport leg, and the payment itself may carry a wide FX spread. The result: a shrunk margin, even though the business changed nothing about its own pricing.

"As economic pressure becomes more persistent, businesses are having to think far more carefully about

operational resilience," says Booth. "That includes everything from when they pay suppliers to how they manage foreign currency exposure and forecast future costs."

The AfCFTA angle: a barrier before the opportunity

This squeeze matters even more for SMEs eyeing expansion into Africa under the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). The agreement lowers tariffs, but tariffs are only one part of the cost of trading across borders.

Logistics costs and cross-border payment friction are already known barriers to African intra-continental trade, and they don't disappear when a tariff line drops to zero. For an SME weighing regional expansion, the same triple squeeze determines whether that move is commercially viable.

"What this is exposing is how interconnected local businesses are with global trade and financial systems," says Booth. "The challenge facing SMEs is no longer simply managing higher costs but adapting to an operating environment where global pressures are playing a far greater role in shaping local business decisions."

What this means for SMEs right now

- Treat fuel price announcements as a forex story, not just a transport story
- Build a wider cost buffer into quotes on import-dependent goods
- Review when and how supplier payments are made to help manage exposure
- Factor logistics and payment costs into AfCFTA expansion plans from the outset

Capetrain Express pitched as Cape Town rail capacity falls short by 2050

By Kris van der Bijl

CAPE Town's rail network will not keep pace with the metropolitan region's growth by 2050, even if the national plan to rebuild it is delivered in full.

That is the case made by Gareth Ramsay, the engineer behind the proposed Capetrain Express. Its AI-generated images of a sky train in Cape Town have flooded social media recently.

"Rail use in the city peaked in 1997 at around 774 000 passenger trips per day. The metro population at the time was roughly 2.5 million."

The project, sometimes referred to as the Cape Town Skytrain, seeks to provide an express train service proposal designed to revolutionise urban mobility in Cape Town.

In an interview with CBN, he called it an "economic and social project," highlighting that about 76% of Cape Town households earn under R22 000 a month, and lower-income households spend close to 43% of that on transport, losing hours a day to the commute.

Reducing waste of a valuable asset

"Anyone's most valuable asset is their time," he says. "The number one driving factor for an individual to get out of a car and onto public transport is, will that route get them to their destination in a faster, more convenient manner than their private vehicle?"

The existing network does not, he argues, because it was laid out to move people in a "pizza slice" to and from the CBD instead of across the city.

Current programmes like MyCiti only help once you are already inside a business district or certain region segments of the city.

But it does not cater to the majority of Capetonians, who travel on average more than 21 km one way to places of work and oppor-



tunity.

Rather, it should in theory work as a feeder system, connecting these longer distance commutes to more efficient modes of transport.

The answer he offers is an express overlay that complements and integrates with the existing Metrorail network at strategic transfer stations, so a short leg on the existing network feeds a faster, longer distance leg on the new express network.

Cape Town rail capacity to fall short of 2050 demand

The city and national government, through their railway agencies, are putting measures in place to alleviate the

disproportionate pressures on transport that exist in Cape Town. But Ramsay points out that this likely will not be enough.

Rail use in the city peaked in 1997 at around 774 000 passenger trips per day. The metro population at the time was roughly 2.5 million.

The National Rail Master Plan recently published in April 2026 aims to lift daily ridership to about two million trips per day by 2052. But by 2050 the metro population is projected to reach around 10 million.

"In a period where Cape Town's population would have quadrupled, passenger rail would have only a little over doubled in capaci-

ty in a 50 year period." And this figure itself would only be true if the government fulfils its rail infrastructure promises.

"This means we're already behind and will still be playing catch in the 2050's if nothing else is done," he says.

Densification, the City's policy for holding growth inside the urban edge, only sharpens that, because the added residents cannot be moved by road. Something new must be brought.

Of course, the feasibility of a high speed express trainline is futuristic and potentially impossible. But what Gareth Ramsay points out are issues that will not be resolved on their own.



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Pangolin Logistics upgrades fleet with ten new DAF trucks from Babcock



Pangolin Logistics has taken delivery of ten new DAF trucks from Babcock.

AS part of its fleet replacement programme, Pangolin Logistics has taken delivery of ten new DAF trucks from Babcock. The new fleet, comprising five XF 480 and five XF 530 units, has been deployed in a cross-border side-tipper application, transporting bulk commodities between mining towns in South Africa and Mozambique.

Paul Botha, founder

and owner of Pangolin Logistics, is a respected veteran in the trucking sector. Botha's association with DAF Trucks dates back more than two decades. Before establishing Pangolin Logistics in 2018, his previous company ran a fleet of 250 DAF CF85 units locally and on cross-border routes between South Africa, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Malawi and Botswana and the

Democratic Republic of Congo. Since returning to the industry, Pangolin Logistics has deployed DAF vehicles in demanding side-tipper operations, transporting bulk commodities such as iron ore and chrome from mining regions including Rustenburg, Brits, Steelpoort and Phalaborwa to Mozambique.

In early 2026, Pangolin Logistics began replacing some of the DAF XF105 units acquired between 2018 and 2020.

The company has now taken delivery of ten new DAF trucks (five XF 480 and five XF 530 units), with a further five XF 530 trucks scheduled to join the fleet.

For Botha, several factors influence purchasing decisions: total cost of ownership (TCO), reliability,

driver comfort and aftermarket support rank among the most important. The ultimate goal, he explains, is to maximise uptime and fuel efficiency while minimising operating costs, all of which directly impact profitability.

"Truck reliability is the foundational pillar of any successful transport business," says Botha. "It directly influences profit margins, customer retention and operational continuity. A truck standing idle due to mechanical failure costs money in lost productivity, driver wages and potential penalties. Reliable trucks reduce emergency repair costs and ensure uninterrupted operations."

"We have found DAF trucks, especially the XF105, to be exceptionally reliable, even under the harsh

operating conditions in which we deploy them."

Fuel efficiency is another critical consideration, particularly in today's volatile operating environment. According to Botha, the new DAF units have already demonstrated impressive results in this regard after just two months in service.

"We are already seeing fuel savings of between 80 and 100 litres of diesel per trip, depending on the route and the driver," he says.

Driver comfort is equally important. "With their spacious cabs and premium comfort features, the new DAF units are extremely comfortable," says Botha.

Pangolin Logistics benefits from Babcock's flexible finance solutions, which simplify the truck purchasing process. Botha says Babcock's deep understanding of the transport industry enables the company to offer tailored financing structures suited to individual business requirements.

Babcock's guaranteed buy-back and trade-back options assist with cost management and cash-flow planning, and trucks financed through Babcock Financial Services are supplied with repair and maintenance contracts. These managed maintenance plans are designed to minimise operating costs and ensure timely servicing, thereby reducing downtime.

Botha highlights the strong relationship between Pangolin Logistics and Babcock, the sole distributor of DAF Trucks in South Africa, as a key factor in the company's continued investment in the brand.

"There are several individuals at Babcock whom I have worked with closely for many years, and they have always supported us every step of the way," he says.

"In today's highly competitive trucking market, there is often very little separating one brand from another. What truly makes the difference is the people behind the brand. The DAF team at Babcock consistently goes above and beyond to support our business."

Learn more at <https://www.babcock.co.za/>
Email: sue.troskie@babcock.co.za

Real-Time Data is transforming South African factory floor operations



By Adrian Ephraim

Avoiding the cost of a full system overhaul

SOUTH African manufacturers, FMCG producers, and agri-processors are increasingly turning to data-driven business process outsourcing to solve a problem that has dogged the sector for years: decisions being made on yesterday's information.

Willie du Preez, managing director at Programmed Process Outsourcing (PPO), says many local operations are still running on paper trails and end-of-shift reporting, despite the availability of real-time alternatives.

"Walk into many South African factories or warehouses today and you'll still see it: clipboards, paper printouts, handwritten notes, and supervisors walking the floor trying to piece together what's happening in real time," he says.

From hindsight to live visibility

According to du Preez, the shift towards modernisation is usually triggered by recurring questions on the factory floor, such as why bottlenecks are only understood after the fact or why performance reviews rely on assumptions rather than verified data.

He argues that without real-time visibility, corrective action is always delayed. Some BPO providers are now addressing this by introducing warehouse management systems, handheld devices, and process-specific tools that convert floor activity into live operational data.

This allows supervisors to move from interpreting problems after a shift has ended to responding to them as they happen.

One of the biggest obstacles to modernising factory floors, du Preez says, is the capital outlay typically required for new systems and infrastructure. For many operations, that upfront cost is enough to delay transformation indefinitely.

He says some BPO models address this by building technology costs into per-unit pricing, service fees, or shared benefit arrangements tied to performance improvements, rather than requiring large upfront investment.

A shift from headcount to flow

Du Preez says the role of the factory supervisor changes once real time data is introduced. Rather than focusing on managing headcount, supervisors increasingly manage flow, output, and performance against measurable benchmarks.

He notes that the data often reveals causes of inefficiency that were not previously obvious, such as layout constraints or system limitations, rather than staffing shortages.

"That's the real value shift, when decisions move from opinion to evidence," he says.

Continuous improvement over firefighting

Du Preez links this approach to Kaizen, the Japanese philosophy of continuous improvement, which favours incremental operational changes over large scale transformation projects.

He maintains that the underlying barrier to modernisation in many operations is not technology but inertia, with inefficient processes often persisting simply because they have never been properly measured.



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South Africa's Automotive Masterplan goals stall as production targets slip

A decade on, production, localisation and employment goals remain stubbornly off-target



By Larry Claasen

THE government admits its plan is to make the local vehicle manufacturing sector a player on the global stage and a major economic growth driver is falling short.

Released in 2016, South African Automotive Masterplan (SAAM 2035) set out to produce 1,3 million to 1,5 million vehicles a year, to increase employment to 224 000, and to push up local content in South African-assembled vehicles to up to 60% by 2035.

A decade after its release, the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition (dtic) admitted it was falling short. In its Industrial Development Strategy (IDS) 2026, which was released in June, the government said "progress towards the SAAM 2035 goals was stalling." It said stagnant production volumes had led to a localisation rate of 39%, well below the 60% target.

Production and job figures paint a sobering picture

The government is also falling short on its other measures. It wanted to produce at least 1,3 million units by 2035, but according to Naamsa, only 616 466 units were produced in 2025.

There is a similar story with the employment target. Instead of being close to reaching its 224 000 target, the sector currently employs only about 115 000 people.

It also had the goal of accounting for 1% of global vehicle production, but according to Naamsa, it accounted for just 0,62% in 2025.

CKD strategy emerges as a stopgap to protect jobs

The dtic said the automotive industry remains an important part of the local economy, as it contributes roughly one-third of manufacturing value and supports significant employment and export activity, and it is looking at ways to support the sector.

It is, for example, looking at supporting completely knocked down (CKD) assemblies – a shipping strategy where a vehicle is exported as entirely unassembled parts and put together in the destination country.

It hopes that if vehicle manufacturers adopt this strategy, industry jobs could be protected and the sector could better navigate changing environmental legislation.

Several vehicle manufacturers have already embraced CKD. BAIC's plant in the Eastern Cape is using it to assemble Foton bakkies, while Mahindra signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Industrial Development Corporation (IDC) to conduct an in-depth feasibility study on the potential establishment of a CKD vehicle assembly facility in the country.

NEV incentives seen as critical to safeguard European export markets

The dtic also said it is looking at scaling up its incentives for the manu-

facturing of new energy vehicles (NEVs) – commonly referred to as EVs – in South Africa. Such a move would also include support for component manufacturers.

"These measures will assist the industry to remain globally competitive and attract new investors into the country."

Support for NEVs is something vehicle manufacturers have been calling for some time. Without it, they would struggle to hold onto their export markets in Europe, which plans to ban the importing of Internal Combustion Engine (ICE) vehicles in 2035.

Having incentives for NEV production is essential for the sector, as it accounted for 75,7% of total vehicle exports in 2025.

Mineral wealth offers a dual opportunity for decarbonisation

In the IDS, the government also noted that the country has the potential to be a big player in the global NEV and renewable energy storage sectors, given the richness of lithium, copper, cobalt, and manganese deposits in Africa.

"The beneficiation of minerals and addressing hard-to-abate sectors are two closely linked priorities in the IDS. Done right, mineral beneficiation can directly support the decarbonisation of hard-to-abate sectors."

Engen invests in 30 new lower-emission fuel trucks to strengthen national fleet



The new Euro V fuel-specification vehicles are designed to support both short- and long-haul fuel distribution.

ENGEN has reinforced its commitment to safe, efficient and more sustainable fuel distribution with the addition of 30 new lower-emission trucks to its national fleet. The investment forms part of the company's ongoing Own Fleet Lifecycle Management Programme, aimed at enhancing operational resilience, improving safety standards and reducing environmental impact across its logistics network.

The new Euro V fuel-specification vehicles are designed to support both short- and long-haul fuel distribution. They incorporate advanced engine management systems, improved fuel-efficiency technology and emissions-reduction solutions that contribute to cleaner exhaust output and enhanced reliability.

Les Moodley, General Manager: Operations at Engen, says the investment reflects Engen's disciplined and forward-looking approach to operational excellence.

"Our fleet plays a critical role in ensuring reliable fuel supply across South Africa. This investment future-proofs our transport operations through smarter technology, enhanced safety systems and lower emissions, while maintaining the high standards our customers and partners expect from Engen," says Moodley.

"By continuously renewing and optimising our fleet, we are strengthening supply chain resilience and reinforcing our commitment to responsible, efficient operations."

Lower emissions and improved efficiency

A key feature of the new trucks is the integration of Euro V emissions technology supported by Selective Catalytic Reduction (SCR) systems and AdBlue. These sys-

tems significantly reduce nitrogen oxide (NOx) emissions while allowing engines to operate at optimal performance levels.

Jason Heath, General Manager: Lubricants at Engen, highlights the role of advanced fluids and emissions solutions in supporting performance and durability.

"Modern engine technology demands equally advanced solutions. AdBlue and high-performance lubricants contribute to reduced emissions, improved fuel efficiency and extended engine life. This investment reflects how Engen integrates technology, products and operational expertise to deliver more sustainable transport outcomes without compromising performance," says Heath.

Advanced safety and risk management

The new vehicles are equipped with comprehensive driver-assist and risk-mitigation technologies, including electronic braking systems, stability control, traction management and predictive cruise control. These features enhance vehicle stability, reduce driver fatigue and improve safety under demanding operating conditions.

The fleet also incorporates Advanced Driver Assistance Systems (ADAS), using AI-powered cameras and sensors to monitor the vehicle's surroundings in real time. Features such as automatic emergency braking, lane-keeping assist and collision warnings help prevent incidents before they occur.

To further strengthen operational oversight, Engen has installed a sophisticated In-Vehicle Monitoring System (IVMS) across the fleet. The system provides real-time visibility of vehicle performance and driver behaviour.

Each vehicle is fitted with multiple internal

and external cameras, providing 360-degree visibility and enabling real-time fatigue detection. AI-driven systems analyse driver alertness and vehicle behaviour, issuing alerts where potential risks are identified.

This layered safety approach enhances accountability, reduces operational risk and supports compliance with best-practice transport standards.

Lifecycle-led fleet management

Jaco Henning, Engen Procurement Category Head: Transport & Products, says the acquisition aligns closely with Engen's structured lifecycle strategy.

"Our Own Fleet Lifecycle Management Programme spans acquisition, operation, maintenance and replacement to ensure maximum value throughout a vehicle's lifespan," explains Henning.

"These trucks were selected based on stringent technical, safety and efficiency criteria. Their advanced systems enable a shift towards predictive maintenance, improving uptime while reducing long-term operating costs and emissions."

Supporting national partnerships and ESG commitments

Adding a distinctive national element, the new trailers carry Springbok branding, reflecting Engen's proud sponsorship of SA Rugby and its longstanding connection to South African communities.

The fleet expansion also supports Engen's broader environmental, social and governance (ESG) commitments by reducing transport emissions, improving safety standards and ensuring compliance with evolving regulatory requirements.

As Engen continues to invest in smarter, safer and more sustainable logistics solutions, the new fleet stands as a tangible demonstration of how strategic infrastructure investment underpins operational excellence, environmental responsibility and long-term business performance.

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

Domestic vehicle sales drive first-half growth momentum - Naamsa

SOUTH Africa's new vehicle market extended its growth momentum in June, while navigating a demanding domestic economic landscape during the month, in high inflation, and interest rate domestic operating environment.

June's performance is particularly noteworthy given the contraction in consumer confidence recorded during the second quarter of 2026.

While households and businesses have become increasingly cautious amid rising fuel costs and broader economic uncertainty, vehicle demand remained underpinned by essential mobility needs and ongoing economic activity. The ability of the market to sustain growth

in a more uncertain economic environment underscores the essential nature of domestic product offerings and the continued role of the automotive sector in enabling economic participation, trade and logistics activity across the country.

Aggregate domestic new vehicle sales in June 2026 reached 54,482 units, the best overall June monthly performance since 2007, representing an increase of 7,213 units, or 15,3%, compared to the 47,269 vehicles sold in June 2025.

In contrast, export volumes decreased to 33,879 units, a contraction of 6,9% relative to the 36,377 units shipped in June 2025.

Overall, out of the total reported industry sales of 54,482 vehicles, an estimated 47,368 units, or 86,9%, represented dealer sales, an estimated 7,8% represented sales to the vehicle rental industry, 2,8% to government sales, and 2,5% to industry corporate fleets.

The June 2026 new passenger car market at 38,393 units recorded an increase of 5,882 units, or 18,1%, compared to the 32,511 new cars sold in June 2025. Car rental sales accounted for 9,7% of new passenger vehicles sold during the month. Domestic sales of new light commercial vehicles (bakkies and mini-buses) at 13,171 units during June 2026 recorded a gain of 1,016 units, or

8,4% compared to the 12,155 units sold in June 2025.

Sales in the medium and heavy commercial vehicle segments reflected a positive performance during June 2026. Medium commercial vehicle sales at 647 units recorded a 0,6% increase compared to the 643 units sold in June 2025, while heavy trucks and buses, at 2,271 units, reflected a 15,9% increase compared to the 1,960 units sold in June 2025.

Exports remained under pressure in June 2026, with vehicle export sales reaching 33,879 units, down 2,498 units, or 6,9%, compared to the 36,377 units exported in the corresponding month last year.

DP World surpasses 160,000 tons of CO₂e savings across UK supply chains



DP World has helped customers cut more than 160,000 tons of CO₂e savings from UK supply chains in less than three years, driven by a combination of increased rail freight, lower-carbon trucking solutions and innovative carbon inset programmes.

The pioneering Modal Shift Programme launched in September 2023 has played a major role in the achievement, increasing the share of rail freight at DP World's Southampton

terminal from 21% to more than 30%, with more than 200,000 truck trips moved from road to rail.

DP World UK's Low Carbon Truck Programme (LCTP) trial has registered more than 1,500 trucks to the scheme, enabling hauliers serving London Gateway and Southampton to transition from diesel to Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO) at no additional cost under phase one.

The LCTP has been further strengthened

by the second phase with the implementation of the Electric Vehicle Introduction and Transition Accelerator (EVITA) trial at Southampton, allowing hauliers to operate electric HGVs at the same cost as diesel and test in real world operations for a period of 12-weeks.

John Trenchard, vice president – sustainable supply chains, DP World, said: "Exceeding 160,000 tons of CO₂e savings in just three years is a major milestone. We

see the net zero economy as a key factor in our future growth and our ability to deliver for customers. This achievement demonstrates the real benefits of ports, logistics providers and customers working collaboratively to decarbonise supply chains at scale. Through initiatives spanning rail freight, lower-carbon fuels, electrification and carbon inset credits, we are helping customers reduce emissions while maintaining efficient, resilient and commercially sustainable supply chains."

The initiatives are helping customers reduce Scope 3 emissions without compromising supply chain efficiency, reliability or competitiveness.

DP World's Carbon Inset Programme (CIP) has continued to scale since launching in January 2025, with registrations now surpassing 250,000 TEUs worth of cargo after the credits

available through the scheme were increased five-fold from 50kg to 250kg of CO₂e per container.

Building on the programme, DP World UK earlier this year launched the new 'Container Terminal Inset Certificates' created through emissions reductions at Southampton, which will be

included in DP World's Carbon Inset Programme.

These inset certificates enable customers to count emissions reductions generated through electrification, renewable electricity and lower-carbon fuels such as HVO towards their own supply chain decarbonisation targets.

DP World operates across more than 75 countries, enabling over 9% of global containerised trade. Through its integrated ports, logistics and transport network, DP World is helping customers accelerate supply chain decarbonisation while maintaining efficient and resilient trade flows worldwide.

Logistics group BLG holds its ground in a challenging market environment and remains on track

THE BLG Group held its own in a challenging market environment during the 2025 fiscal year and further strengthened its financial stability.

The German transport company BLG Group's South African subsidiary, BLG Logistics operates at five sites in the country, and offers a vehicle export service.

Revenue for the group amounted to approximately €1,2 billion. Earnings before taxes (EBT) amounted to €77,4 million, exceeding the company's original expectations.

The Group's equity ratio increased from 25,3% to 27,2%. In light of BLG AG's results, the Executive Board and Supervisory Board also proposed to the Annual General Meeting that a dividend of €0.50 per share be distributed for the 2025 fiscal year.

"We ended 2025 with better results than we had expected at the beginning of the year. That is the key takeaway. Not because the environment made it easy for us. But because we acted decisively where necessary. And because we stayed the course where it was the right thing to do," said Matthias Magnor, CEO of the BLG Group, at the 146th Annual General Meeting.

Strong results in a challenging environment

Geopolitical conflicts, trade uncertainties, and weak economic growth characterised the past fiscal year. At the same time, the automotive industry in particular continues to undergo profound structural change. As a logistics service provider, BLG feels the effects of changes in global goods flows early on and directly.



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At the same time, the measures implemented to focus on economically attractive activities began to show initial positive results. In addition, market positions in selected segments were maintained and further developed.

The Container division once again made a significant contribution to the Group's earnings. The income from the investment in EUROGATE continued the strong performance of previous years and contributed €56,6 million to earnings after taxes. The Wilhelmshaven site performed particularly well: handling volume increased by approximately 75 percent compared to the previous year.

Looking to the future with confidence

The challenges ahead remain significant as

we look to the coming years. Geopolitical tensions, trade conflicts, and the profound changes taking place in many markets will continue to affect businesses.

With its "Klar auf Kurs" strategy, the BLG Group is consistently aligning its actions with profitable growth, operational excellence, and long-term customer relationships. At the same time, BLG is making targeted investments in infrastructure, networks, and the future viability of its locations.

For the current fiscal year, the BLG Group expects economic and geopolitical conditions to remain challenging.

However, thanks to its broad positioning, international presence, and strengthened financial foundation, BLG considers itself well-equipped to respond to changes in its markets and capitalise on new opportunities.

Looking ahead to the coming years, Magnor emphasised: "Free global trade, open markets, functioning supply chains, and efficient ports are prerequisites for prosperity and competitiveness. BLG will do its part—through investment, a sense of responsibility, and a commitment to remaining a reliable partner for customers and the business community in the future."

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ACTOM calls for investment certainty to unlock Africa's grid expansion

Shifting the focus: From technical barriers to investment certainty

AT the 2026 ENLIT Africa Exhibition, Nicholas Msibi, CEO of ACTOM EPC, challenged the prevailing focus on technical obstacles in Independent Power Transmission (IPT) by spotlighting a far more pressing need: investment certainty. In doing so, he reframed the conversation, moving it from what Africa can build to how Africa can build with confidence, at scale, and for sustainable impact.

Proven capability across Africa

Africa, and especially South Africa, has repeatedly demonstrated both the technical know-how and industrial capacity to deliver large-scale grid projects. The region's engineers have designed and built advanced high-voltage systems, achieving feats that are respected and emulat-

ed worldwide. Their expertise is not just proven at home; it's been shared with and adopted by international partners.

Progress stalled by uncertainty

Yet despite these proven capabilities, progress has slowed, stalled not by lack of skill, but by uncertainty. The real roadblock is not in the competence and capability or on the construction sites, but in the boardrooms and policy offices where decisions about the future are made.

The impact of inconsistent demand and policy signals

Msibi argued that the primary challenge is inconsistency, shifting demand signals and unpredictable policy directions. For manufacturers, contractors,

and investors, the absence of a clear project pipeline creates hesitation and stalls investment. Without predictability, local businesses cannot scale up, invest in talent, or innovate with confidence. He cautioned that simply replicating international models without adapting them to African realities risks eroding domestic manufacturing, undermining local value chains, and sacrificing national priorities. "International competition does matter", he said, but it should be harnessed to strengthen, not replace, the local ecosystem.

Infrastructure as a socio-economic lever

Who gets to build Africa's transmission infrastructure is not just a technical or financial question; it's a social and economic

one. Prioritising local firms means investing in jobs, skills development, and broader industrial growth. When projects are awarded abroad despite local capability, the opportunity cost extends beyond lost contracts; it means fewer jobs for Africans and slower progress towards national development goals.

Local procurement as a strategic approach

Local procurement, Msibi emphasised, is not about protectionism. It's about building a resilient, innovative ecosystem capable of sustaining Africa's long-term energy ambitions. Sourcing locally creates a multiplier effect, spurring job creation, supporting industrial growth, and building the societal stability needed for a thriving energy sector.

Emerging momentum from IPP Programmes

There are encouraging signs. Initiatives like the Independent Power Producer programme are beginning to provide clearer demand signals, sparking investment and renewed interest in transmission infrastructure. However, Msibi cautioned that these gains will only translate into long-term benefits if they are underpinned by unwavering policy support and a steadfast commitment to local industry development.

Aligning the ecosystem for long-term success

Ultimately, Msibi believes that the challenge is one of ecosystem alignment. Real progress in grid expansion will require deliberate coordination: policies that support long-term investment,



Nicholas Msibi, CEO of ACTOM EPC.

investment that nurtures local industry, and industry that delivers socio-economic value back to communities. Only with this holistic approach can Africa unlock the full potential of its transmission sector.

A call for commitment and certainty

The call to action is clear. For Africa to realise its energy future,

leaders, policymakers, and investors must step up with courage and consistency to provide the stable, predictable investment environment that will unleash the continent's technical and industrial potential. Without this certainty, Africa risks leaving its greatest assets, its people and its ingenuity, underutilised. The time to commit is now.

<https://actom.co.za>



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Atlas Copco battery energy storage systems (BESS) are reshaping the power supply landscape and driving energy transition forward



Atlas Copco's ZBC energy storage systems deliver scalable, containerised power solutions for industrial and commercial needs.

ATLAS Copco Power Technique's advanced battery energy storage systems deliver reliable, flexible, long-duration power, drive operational sustainability and ensure continuity in demanding applications where a constant, high-capacity energy flow is critical.

Engineered for the efficient storage and delivery of energy to match load demand, these industry-leading lithium-ion energy storage systems are designed for off-grid applications and reinforcing limited grid capacity, also excelling in managing high-demand scenarios with variable load profiles, seamlessly balancing low loads and peaks with efficiency.

These compact, robust systems are the very definition of low Total Cost of Ownership (TCO), delivering operational efficiency, fuel and emission economies and scalable solutions that unlock reliable energy across industries and empower operators to optimise energy use, boost productivity and cut costs. Coupled with a generator, these systems manage low loads with such exceptional efficiency that running hours are slashed by up to an impressive 70%. The resulting boost in reliability and the extension of

generator lifetime by five to ten years further provide tangible savings for operators. Even more compellingly, in standalone operation or when paired with the grid and/or renewables, the units consume no fuel at all. Moreover, daily fuel consumption can be cut by up to 90% in hybrid solutions with power generators, further lowering costs and emissions.

Combined with an integrated ECO Controller™, Atlas Copco's in-house developed Energy Management System (EMS), which intelligently adjusts the power offering to match demand based on the load profile, energy storage systems enable operators to decarbonise their operations while achieving significant fuel, energy and lifecycle savings. Complementing this, Atlas Copco's intelligent telematics solution, FleetLink, optimises fleet utilisation by providing smart insights and remote monitoring in real-time for maximum efficiency and performance.

Lithium-ion energy storage systems are transforming the way power is deployed. Lithium-ion battery-based systems are recharged solely by renewable sources, delivering regulation-com-

pliant performance that meets stringent emission norms during operation. In hybrid setups with fossil energy sources, they proportionally cut CO₂ emissions, that is, no emissions in line with fuel savings, depending on the application or load profile. Their inherently quiet operation makes them ideal for noise-sensitive environments.

Atlas Copco's energy storage systems portfolio includes the extra-small 2 to 10 kVA units, the 15 to 150 kVA Canopy range and the 200 to 1200 kVA ZBC Container series. As the largest container energy storage system in the prime power market, this next-generation ZBC 1000-1200 delivers 1 MW of power output and 1.2 MW of energy capacity from a single unit, all conveniently

partment temperature control and advanced fire suppression for safe, dependable operation and extra winterisation for harsh climates. Plug-and-play capability supports quick installation and connection, saving time, manpower and costs.

The ZBC range can be synchronised in parallel, up to 16 units (≤ 500 kVA) and up to 8 flagship ZBC 1000-1200 units (> 1000 kVA), enabling the creation of a microgrid most efficiently, particularly when the available energy sources are renewable options.

Atlas Copco's energy storage systems combine efficiency with scalability, unlocking smarter, more sustainable solutions tailored to diverse energy demands. They can properly size cranes and



Atlas Copco energy storage systems are strategic enablers of modern sustainable operations.

packed into a compact container.

The ZBC 1000-1200's improved LFP battery management system and trusted LiFePO₄ lithium-ion phosphate technology ensure incredible reliability and a long operating life. An advanced thermal management HVAC system guarantees lasting power in extreme conditions from -20 °C to +50 °C. Sustaining high performance even at higher altitudes, the container integrates precise battery-com-

other electric motors, while low-noise operation makes them ideal for managing peaks at EV recharging stations and in noise-sensitive environments. They deliver resilient, responsible energy on demand across construction, telecoms, manufacturing, mining, oil and gas, and rental applications, ensuring performance where reliable power is paramount.

For more information, email david.stanford@atlascopco.com

Battery performance critical to cold chain and airport productivity

AIRPORTS and cold chain operations are built around continuous uptime, with battery-powered equipment playing a critical role in maintaining productivity.

From refrigerated warehouses and distribution centres to food retail and pharmaceutical logistics, every minute of operational disruption can translate into product spoilage, missed delivery deadlines and increased costs.

Airports, too, require continuous equipment uptime. Even a failure in critical systems such as baggage handling can lead to delayed flights, frustrated customers and, ultimately, revenue losses amounting to billions globally.

Alexander Campbell, Area Sales Consultant at Industrial Power, a division of CFAO Equipment, says one of the key operational disruptions faced in cold chain and airport productivity is battery downtime.

"Forklifts, pallet movers and other electric material-handling equipment are critical to modern cold chain logistics, as are baggage handling tow tractors and electric pallet jacks to airports. This means poor charging disciplines, ageing batteries and limited visibility into battery performance can result in operational bottlenecks that directly impact efficiency and, for cold chain environments, product integrity."

One of the greatest challenges that operators face is unplanned downtime caused by inefficient charging practices. Traditional charging approaches often result in equipment standing idle for extended periods, especially during peak operating windows.

To counter this, fast charging and opportunity charging technologies are helping businesses overcome this challenge by allowing batteries to recharge during short breaks or shift changes, reducing interruptions and improving equipment availability throughout the day.

"This proactive approach not only reduces

risk and improves uptime but also enhances workplace safety and extends useable battery life," adds Campbell. Smart charging technologies are also helping operators reduce energy consumption and stabilise electricity demand. Intelligent charging systems optimise charging cycles based on battery condition and operational requirements, reducing unnecessary energy use while preventing premature battery degradation. In regions where grid reliability and electricity costs are under pressure, this can deliver meaningful operational savings.

Campbell says lithium-ion technology, in particular, is transforming uptime performance in high-demand environments. "These batteries support rapid charging, maintain consistent power output and eliminate the need for battery swapping in many applications. For cold chain or airport operations requiring continuous throughput, this can significantly improve productivity while simplifying battery management." That said, lead-acid batteries continue to offer an affordable and reliable solution for less intensive duty cycles. "It is, however, important to select the correct battery technology for the operational requirement rather than adopting a one-size-fits-all approach," he notes.

Battery visibility is another growing concern in cold chain and airport environments. Many businesses rely on reactive maintenance, only addressing issues once a battery fails or equipment performance declines. Notably, modern battery monitoring systems built into lithium-ion batteries or easily retrofittable onto lead acid equivalents now provide real-time insights into battery condition, charging behaviour and operational health. Automated alerts visible on a dashboard or sent via email can identify overheating, undercharging, overcharging or declining performance risks before these issues lead to equipment failure or safety incidents.

"As cold chain and airport operations continue evolving, the often-overlooked matter of battery performance will play an increasingly important role in determining productivity, efficiency and operational resilience," concludes Campbell.

Learn more at <https://www.cfaoequipment.co.za/industrial-power/>

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1 Advanced Li-ion integration:

Atlas Copco's Energy Storage Systems feature cutting-edge lithium-ion battery technology for reliable performance.

2 Fuel-free operation:

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3 Optimised energy delivery:

Engineered to efficiently store and supply power in line with varying load demands.

4 Low ownership cost:

Designed to minimise lifecycle expenses, ensuring a low Total Cost of Ownership (TCO).



In a hybrid setup with a generator, daily fuel use can be cut by up to 90%



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THE NEXT GENERATION

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Skills transfer and continuous training

Key to the future competitiveness of South Africa's Plastics Industry

AS South Africa's plastics manufacturing sector navigates rapid technological change, sustainability demands and increasing global competition, skills development and knowledge transfer are emerging as critical priorities for the industry's long-term competitiveness. With experienced operators, technicians, artisans and supervisors approaching retirement, manufacturers face the risk of losing decades of practical knowledge built on the factory floor.

From training challenge to strategic business risk

"The skills shortage facing the plastics industry is no longer simply a training issue. It has become a strategic competitiveness issue," says Kirtida Bhana, Head of the Academy for Learning and Development at Plastics SA.

"The industry needs people who can operate effectively in today's production environment while adapting to tomorrow's manufacturing technologies - Kirtida Bhana."

For many years, manufacturers have relied on highly skilled operators, setters, technicians and supervisors whose expertise has been developed through years of practical experience. As many approach retirement, businesses face the challenge of replacing critical institutional knowledge while addressing ongoing shortages of technical and production skills.

"The future success of the sector will depend on our ability to build a technically capable workforce that can support a modern, resilient and competitive manufacturing base," Bhana stresses.



processing, materials and quality management expertise with an understanding of automation, digital technologies and sustainability.

Building skills for a circular economy

As recycling and sustainability become increasingly important, manufacturers will also need a workforce equipped to support the transition to a circular economy.

"The circular economy will require new technical competencies, including the ability to work with recycled materials, manage material variability, maintain quality standards and understand the link between processing, product performance and environmental responsibility," says Bhana. These requirements further reinforce the need for continuous learning and ongoing workforce development throughout the plastics value chain.

Attracting the next generation

While young people continue to enter the plastics industry, numbers remain insufficient to meet future replacement and growth requirements.

Explains Bhana: "Manufacturing is often viewed as traditional factory work rather than a sector connected to advanced technology, product innovation, healthcare, infrastructure development, agriculture, automotive manufacturing and the circular economy. Changing this narrative is critical."

The industry offers career opportunities ranging from entry-level production roles to machine setting, quality management, technical supervision, product development, recycling and entrepreneurship. Stronger career guidance, workplace exposure, learnerships, apprenticeships and mentoring will be essential to attract more young talent.

Creating career pathways

Plastics SA's Academy for Learning and Development is strengthening occupational learning pathways for key manufacturing roles while supporting both new entrants and existing employees through structured technical training.

A key priority is developing recognised occupational qualifications that create clear career pathways, enabling employ-

ees to progress into specialist and leadership positions. Succession planning is also becoming increasingly important, with businesses identifying and preparing future setters, supervisors, trainers and technical specialists before experienced employees leave the workforce.

Investing in the Workforce of 2036

Looking ahead, Plastics SA advocates an integrated training model combining occupational qualifications, workplace learning, practical training, digital learning platforms, simulation technologies and technical coaching.

"The most important shift industry must make is to stop treating training as an annual event and start treating workforce planning as a board-level competitiveness priority," Bhana emphasises.

Strong partnerships between employers, training providers, SETAs, schools, TVET colleges and industry bodies will be essential to build sustainable talent pipelines and improve productivity, quality, safety and competitiveness.

People remain the industry's greatest asset

As the plastics industry continues to support packaging, infrastructure, water systems, agriculture, healthcare, automotive manufacturing and recycling, people remain central to its future success.

Automation may change jobs, but it will not eliminate the need for skilled human judgement, technical problem-solving and production leadership.

Plastics SA is encouraging manufacturers to identify critical roles, invest in structured training, create opportunities for young talent and ensure experienced employees transfer their knowledge before leaving the industry.

"The workforce that South Africa's plastics industry will need in 2036 will not appear by accident. It must be built today through intentional planning, ongoing training, skills transfer and collaboration," says Kirtida.

For more information visit www.plasticsinfo.co.za or contact:

Kirtida Bhana - Head: Academy for Learning and Development

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Kirtida Bhana, Head of the Academy for Learning and Development at Plastics SA.

The growing demand for technical and hybrid skills

Technical roles such as machine operators, machine setters, process technicians, maintenance artisans, thermoplastic welders, quality controllers and production supervisors are becoming increasingly difficult to fill. These positions require technical knowledge, practical competence and strong problem-solving abilities.

At the same time, manufacturers require employees who combine plastics

The future of leadership: Why presence matters more than identity

By Chantelle Botha



FOR the last two decades, leadership development has been heavily influenced by personality assessments, strengths-based development, leadership archetypes and values clarification.

Each asks, in its own way, the same question: Who are you?

It has been a useful question, but I suspect it is no longer the most important one.

The leaders who will thrive over the next decade will be the ones who allow themselves to adapt, not the ones who can define themselves most clearly.

The problem with identity-based leadership

Today, organisations are navigating technological disruption, economic uncertainty, and unprecedented access to information. What worked five years ago may no longer work today.

Identity provides a sense of consistency, but the danger is that consistency can become rigidity.

Have you ever heard someone say, “I’m not good with conflict,” or “I’m not a creative person”? While these statements may feel true, they can become constraints because they create fixed definitions in a world that is anything but fixed.

In this environment, certainty has a shorter shelf life than ever before.

The challenge is that many people become trapped by who they believe they are, or who they believe they should be, rather than responding to what the situation requires of them.

The emerging question

What if we moved beyond “Who am I” and asked “How am I” instead?

This linguistic reframe represents a fundamental shift in how we think about leadership.

When the environment becomes uncertain, our instinct is to seek certainty. In an uncertain world, this can show up as procrastination or anxiety. Yet the only place we can influence outcomes is in the present moment.

Asking “How am I?” brings awareness back to what is happening right now.

“Who” asks for a definition, whereas “How” asks for an experience. The former seeks certainty, whilst the latter creates awareness.

If you’re tired of carrying the weight of always knowing who you are and what to do

next, presence offers a different path: you don’t have to have the answers, you only have to show up to the moment.

Presence creates momentum

This shift from identity to presence is not merely philosophical, it is already being recognised in global leadership research.

A senior L&D Director is quoted in Harvard’s 2024 Global Leadership Development Study: “What our business leaders need to do differently is to recognise that the things that have gotten them to the place they are, will not get us to the next level. We need internal introspection on not just our strengths and weaknesses, but on those things that we don’t like to do and embrace the changes.”

The best leaders remain present long enough to ask better questions. They stay curious when situations become unclear, tolerating discomfort without immediately retreating into old habits. They respond rather than react. Most importantly, they take action before certainty arrives.

One of the biggest misconceptions in leadership is that confidence comes first. Confidence is built through repeated actions over time. Presence allows us to take that first courageous step before certainty arrives.

Presence creates the conditions for action. And action creates momentum.

A new leadership advantage

The future belongs to leaders who allow

themselves to flow with radically changing dynamics.

In an increasingly uncertain future, perhaps the most valuable leadership question is no longer: Who am I?

But rather: How am I? ... and what does this moment require of me?

If you’re a leader who wants to thrive over the next decade, you don’t need another framework. You need permission to stop performing certainty and start practising presence. If that conversation resonates, message me.



Chantelle Botha is an international speaker, author and founder of Phoenix. Through her speaking, coaching and facilitation, she helps leaders move beyond fixed identities to become more curious, courageous and confident in an ever-changing world.

THE BUSINESS TRAVELLER THE EXECUTIVE GUIDE TO STRATEGIC TRAVEL

Southeast Asia business travel gains momentum among South African companies

By Adrian Ephraim

SOUTHEAST Asia is steadily turning into one of the busiest commercial regions for South African companies, according to travel experts at Sure Mithas.

Manufacturing, technology, retail sourcing and logistics are driving the trend, and it’s no longer only the big multinationals making the trip. Mid-sized and owner-managed businesses, including a growing number from the Western Cape, are now flying out regularly to build supplier relationships and open new markets.

Singapore as the entry point

- Singapore is usually the first stop for South African companies entering the region, largely because English is the language of business and the legal system is transparent and well understood
- It hosts regional headquarters for hundreds of multinationals, making it efficient for meetings and introductions that lead to deals elsewhere in Southeast Asia

- There are no direct flights from South Africa. Most routes go via Dubai or Doha, with total travel time of 13 to 15 hours
- Accommodation costs in Singapore sit close to European capital-city levels, so budgeting matters

Thailand and Vietnam for sourcing and manufacturing

- Bangkok has a large industrial base and has attracted South African buyers in textiles, consumer goods and food manufacturing for years
- Business culture in Thailand is formal and relationship-driven, particularly in first meetings
- Vietnam has become a priority for companies diversifying their supply chains away from single-country dependency
- Ho Chi Minh City is the commercial hub, Hanoi is where regulatory relationships are managed, and South African passport holders can now apply for an e-visa, which has simplified entry considerably

Planning a multi-city trip

- A single-city trip to Singapore can be worthwhile, but combining Singapore, Bangkok and Ho Chi Minh City in one itinerary improves the economics of the trip
- A realistic multi-city Southeast Asia trip needs seven to ten days to be commercially useful
- Routing should follow a logical geographic sequence rather than the cheapest available fares

What catches South African travellers off guard

- The heat and humidity in all three cities is more intense than most South Africans expect, and outdoor meetings or transfers during midday should be avoided
- Southeast Asia runs five to seven hours ahead of South Africa, so early morning calls back home become routine
- Cash is still widely used in Bangkok and Ho Chi Minh City, especially for smaller transactions



- Bangkok and Ho Chi Minh City are often two to three times cheaper than Singapore for equivalent accommodation

Why it matters for Cape Town and Western Cape businesses

South African firms that build relationships in Southeast Asia early tend to benefit over time, since these are markets where trust is built in person rather than over email or video calls. As flight connections and visa processes keep improving, the barriers that used to make these trips impractical are falling away, and the commercial case for going is getting stronger.



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