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ON THE COVER

It is not the cranes or concrete mixers that make or break a project - it is the choices made before they even arrive on site. In the scramble to stretch budgets, too many infrastructure projects in South Africa are being quietly, but irreversibly, undermined by a silent compromise - sacrificing quality in construction materials.

This trend, according to leading construction materials supplier AfriSam, is not only becoming more entrenched - it is becoming increasingly dangerous.

“Durable infrastructure doesn’t fail in a headline-worthy moment,” says Amit Dawneerangen, Construction Materials Executive: Sales & Product Technical at AfriSam. “It deteriorates quietly, beneath the surface, because someone, somewhere, decided that cutting costs on aggregate, cement or concrete was a risk worth taking.”

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SA's road building in 2025: **PROGRESS, PROJECTS AND PITFALLS**



Photo: Concor

South Africa's road network is the lifeline of its economy, carrying the bulk of freight and passenger traffic across the country. After years of patchy investment and mounting wear and tear, 2025 is shaping up to be a turning point. New funding streams, major national projects and smarter construction technologies are injecting momentum into an industry that badly needs it.

A big catalyst has been international financing. The World Bank recently approved a USD1,5-billion loan, while the African Development Bank added nearly USD475-million to the pot. This capital feeds into a national infrastructure programme worth over R1-trillion, covering energy, water, and most critically, transport. The intention is clear: unblock trade routes, rebuild failing roads and restore confidence in South Africa's logistics backbone.

Much of this work runs through SANRAL, the national roads agency.

Over the last year it resurfaced nearly 2 000 km of road - well above target - and invested more than R27-billion into both toll and non-toll networks. Its flagship undertakings include the R5-billion rebuild of Durban's EB Cloete interchange, long-planned upgrades to the N2 and N3 corridors, and the R2-billion upgrade of the R56 between Matatiele and KwaZulu-Natal. Together, these projects signal a step change from patchwork repairs to large-scale modernisation.

The Wild Coast is home to the most ambitious project of all: the N2 Toll Route. Two enormous bridges anchor this development. The Msikaba Bridge is set to open at the end of 2025, while the Mtentu Bridge - set to be Africa's tallest at 223 metres - is expected in 2027. Once complete, the route will slash travel times between Durban and East London and open isolated regions to trade and tourism.

Municipal authorities are also

starting to put money where it matters. The Johannesburg Roads Agency, for instance, has budgeted R2,8-billion over three years for resurfacing and stormwater upgrades. Similar investments are emerging in Cape Town and Pretoria, though the challenge remains the same: local and provincial roads often receive far less attention than their national counterparts, leaving commuters to face potholes and quick fixes rather than lasting upgrades.

Beyond budgets, the industry itself is evolving. Construction companies are now deploying drones equipped with LiDAR for faster surveying, while engineers use artificial intelligence to model traffic flows and optimise designs. These tools not only cut costs but also promise longer-lasting roads, reducing the cycle of build-repair-repeat that has frustrated road users for decades.

The momentum is undeniable, but the road ahead is not without obstacles. Heavy trucks still batter highways, partly because rail remains unreliable. Local authorities struggle with capacity, meaning municipal roads lag behind. And despite new funding, the scale of South Africa's backlog means progress will take years, not months.

Still, for the first time in a while, the trajectory looks positive. With world-class bridges rising on the Wild Coast, major highway upgrades underway, and billions in fresh investment, the country is at last starting to rebuild the roads that keep its economy moving.

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BCCEI secures new three-year agreements to strengthen **CIVIL ENGINEERING SECTOR**

The Bargaining Council for the Civil Engineering Industry (BCCEI) has concluded a new three-year settlement for two of its collective agreements in the civil engineering sector.



Representatives from all parties to the BCCEI officially signed the new collective agreements, marking a significant milestone for stability and collaboration in the industry.

Officially signed on Monday 4 August 2025, by employer organisations - the Consolidated Employees Organisation of South Africa (CEO) and the South African Forum of Civil Engineering Contractors (SAFCEC) - together with trade unions - the Building, Construction and Allied Workers Union (BCAWU) and the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) - this milestone comes at a time when South Africa's economy is under pressure and infrastructure investment remains constrained. It provides much-needed stability and certainty for both employers and employees.

The two agreements - the Wage and Task Grade Collective Agreement and the Conditions of Employment Collective Agreement - will take effect once gazetted by the Minister of Employment and Labour and remain in place for three years. These agreements are expected to reinforce industrial stability, safeguard jobs and enable more effective long term planning. The current agreements which will expire on 31 August 2025 have been extended to 28 February 2026 and will be superseded by the new ones upon promulgation.

Kevin Moodley, Acting General Secretary of the BCCEI, says the conclusion of negotiations and the signing of these agreements reflect the maturity of industrial relations in the sector. He emphasises that this outcome gives employers the confidence to plan ahead, while ensuring that workers' employment conditions are protected during what remains a highly challenging period.

The negotiation process was marked by extensive engagement between employer organisations and

organised labour. Driven by a shared objective, the parties worked toward a balanced outcome that supports sustainability, affordability and fairness, ensuring the sector remains resilient in the face of economic headwinds.

In terms of wage adjustments, all employees covered by the new Wage and Task Grade Collective Agreement will receive an across-the-board increase of 6% in the first year, followed by increases of 5.5% in the second and third years, respectively.

Changes to the Conditions of Employment Collective Agreement include a reduction in

the eligibility period for maternity benefits from 24 months to 18 months, with all other terms of this benefit remaining unchanged. The agreement also introduces a food component into the living out allowance, while the sleepout allowance has been increased.

Moodley notes that the agreements have been welcomed by the employer constituency as a vital enabler of business continuity. In an industry that is both highly competitive and unpredictable, multi-year agreements are seen as essential for maintaining stability and supporting operational planning. This outcome, he says, strengthens business viability and helps preserve employment.

Labour representatives have similarly endorsed the agreements for upholding workers' rights while supporting recovery and retention. Moodley adds that the agreements protect employees' interests while recognising the economic challenges the industry continues to face. He describes the outcome as forward-looking, one that enhances job security and supports the future of the sector.

As a statutory body established under the Labour Relations Act, the BCCEI plays a vital role in regulating employment conditions, fostering social dialogue and maintaining a stable labour environment within the civil engineering sector. The Council remains committed to promoting sectoral growth and compliance through transparent and inclusive engagement.

The new agreements will be available on the BCCEI website for reference. Once gazetted by the Department of Employment and Labour these will become binding and the updated versions will also be published online. ☉



Consulting Engineers South Africa's (CESA) CEO Chris Campbell.

“No more **TICK-BOX PROCUREMENT**”

Consulting Engineers South Africa's (CESA) CEO Chris Campbell has welcomed growing recognition among state-owned enterprises (SOEs) that direct engagement with suppliers or original-equipment manufacturers (OEMs) yields greater value than relying on third-party agents.

He argues this approach should also extend to the appointment of professional service providers to ensure value, improved delivery, accountability, and return on investment.

Campbell points out that procurement processes in South Africa have long been stalled and inefficient, frustrating consulting engineers despite the available skills and capacity in the sector. Legacy relationships and outdated procurement practices dominate, often blocking fair and quality-driven selection of service providers. “These procurement woes are a major bottleneck impacting progress in infrastructure delivery,” he says.

He believes the shift toward dealing directly with OEMs, where “there are no guarantees when working through intermediaries,” should be mirrored in the way professional service providers are engaged. “Appointing consulting engineers or other professionals should never be a tick-box exercise. We must demand the same quality and service standards as we do from OEMs,” Campbell emphasises.

Campbell has long advocated for procurement reforms that prioritise quality and competence over cost alone adding that awarding tenders based solely on the lowest bid often leads to underperformance, project delays, and ultimately higher costs. “Procurement should focus on value for money, prioritising quality services that are both effective and sustainable,” he says. This is especially important given that clients often lack the technical expertise to properly evaluate complex bids, underscoring

the need for transparent, quality-based selection mechanisms.

CESA continues to lobby government and industry stakeholders for reforms that promote transparency, professionalism, and consistent procurement standards across all levels of government and SOEs. Campbell stresses that standardised practices are crucial to improving service delivery and enforcing accountability. “Whether procuring equipment or professional services, the goal must remain the same: reliable delivery, accountability, and achieving intended outcomes.”

He adds: “Whereas an inclusive economy is an imperative, we owe it to those that remain unemployed to maximise the use of scarce funds by factoring in quality, risk and value for money that ensures the appointment of professional service providers with the commitment and ability to deliver effective and efficient infrastructure, necessary for the very economic growth required to provide the employment opportunities, both in the short and long-term.”

Beyond policy, Campbell calls for urgent implementation of improvements to address persistent procurement inefficiencies. “Policy announcements alone won’t fix things. We need clear commitments and practical steps to unlock stalled infrastructure projects,” he says.

By pushing for systemic reform and direct engagement with qualified service providers, Campbell adds that CESA aims to drive sustainable infrastructure development that delivers real value to South Africa’s economy and society. ©



GIBB Group CEO, Vishaal Lutchman.

WHEN AFRICA'S RESOURCES RUN OUT, WHO WILL NEED HER?

As with most emerging economies, South Africa and Africa have significant economic potential that remains unexplored, but it is how that potential is leveraged that will determine the ability for these economies to rise above their current challenges," writes GIBB Group CEO, Vishaal Lutchman.

South Africa and Africa need to move beyond a resource-based economic discussion towards a value-add discussion. This is because resources are a finite commodity. When the resources run out, who will need Africa? If Africa does not transition its economies and ecosystems, how will it survive and thrive?

This is more significant now than ever for a few reasons: firstly, time is needed to transition which may take more than 50 years if commencing today; secondly, skills and education ramp-up to build capacity may take a generation, if not longer; and thirdly, because so many economies are in crisis mode and don't have the headspace to consider long-term visions, this could remain a talking point without any action.

Currently, about 16-million people in South Africa are supported by between five- and six-million taxpayers and the country's unemployment rate continues to rise, at 32,9% for the first quarter of 2025. With a Gini coefficient of 63%, South Africa ranks as the country with the lowest level of equality in the world.

There is no 'quick fix' to South Africa's economic woes, recently underlined by the nett closure of 482 businesses in the first four months of the year, according to Statistics SA.

In this respect, key structural reforms that promote fundamental transformation in the economy must be urgently put into place to unlock the country's potential in a meaningful and sustainable way. This requires a short-,

medium- and long-term approach (long-term does not mean nothing happens now).

This must be done while acknowledging that South Africa and many other countries on the continent are hindered by their colonial pasts, resulting in an inequitable balance of trade. The current global trade volatility will always have a negative impact on vulnerable emerging economies; negating gains made in the interim.

South Africa and most of its neighbours are buying economies with a significant emphasis on primary activities such as selling raw commodities and buying finished products, meaning they are not adding as much value to their own economies as is possible, exacerbating the unemployment narrative. These geographies simply must produce more value-added products for domestic and international consumption. This type of value-added production creates socioeconomic ecosystems that have a significant multiplier effect, ushering in much-needed new revenues to the fiscus.

Value resides - in the medium term - in structural reform discussions, but short-term initiatives also need to be addressed. In the past, South Africa was able to add value to the infrastructure it needed to advance the mineral extraction to foreign markets through organisations such as the South African Iron and Steel Industrial Corporation (ISCOR), which manufactured steel to supply to the country's rail system. Secondly R&D was a phenomenon that was

appreciated by many organs of state.

Today the country buys rail components from other geographies because they are “cheaper”. I argue if this is really the case – have we accounted for the socio-economic cost of these decisions versus the financial opportunity in the projects? If correct, this suggests the country is risking short-term financial gain over long-term economic losses by perpetuating the current economic ecosystem with the hope of achieving socio-economic liberation.

The structural reforms that would apply relate to policy. The cost of rail is currently being viewed through a narrow lens: rail per ton is more expensive to produce in South Africa than to import from China or Austria. However, the country has not factored in the socio-economic cost – the loss of jobs and steel production expertise – or the value add associated with the beneficiation of raw materials – its own raw material and that of its neighbouring countries.

One way to address the country’s value proposition is to import partially completed goods and transform them into finished products for export. The country has established several special economic zones (SEZs), or custom bonded areas, set up specifically to become key economic drivers. But they are not being leveraged, and many have not realised the potential value.

South Africa is also not including youth-owned firms in the infrastructure procurement process. The current procurement regime requires a BEE certificate proving black ownership, but there is a need to focus on youth-owned firms and encourage women-owned firms to participate directly in infrastructure projects, ideally relating to infrastructure maintenance work, a potential quick win.

Young entrepreneurs could then employ individuals to support them in their businesses instead of the other way round. This is a way to establish an ecosystem around maintenance in the places where service delivery is failing, and boost youth-owned business - as much of the maintenance work is relatively easy to teach.

Additionally, digital transformation of the procurement process is a must. The manipulation of South Africa’s procurement system has not been addressed. It is often not transparent, and the country has not made inroads into digitising its system. This needs to change, especially given that many other countries have already done so to enable the achievement of job creation without the phenomenon of maleficence in procurement transactions.

And, with Development Finance Institutions being automated, the country could go even further by using a human-free procurement process. Technology already exists for this, or it can be developed at a relatively low cost in country.

It is important to note that sustainability covers four areas

– economic, environmental, social and cultural. South Africa is focused on the first two, economic, where the money resides, and environmental, due to pressure to support the Paris agreement.

However, socio-economic disparities between developed and emerging economies require a nuanced approach to sustainability, which must be customised for regions. The adoption of imported technology needs to be considered carefully due to prevailing geo-political headwinds.

The cultural pillar is not seen as a revenue generating pillar and is largely neglected. This is problematic, especially for countries such as South Africa where communities were influenced through cultural alterations over time, resulting in changes to their living spaces, religions, history and languages, to name a few. This erosion or alteration of culture has led to some communities feeling aggrieved.

This is important in so far as infrastructure is planned in a highly standardised way – often a one-size-fits-all approach – contributing to unsustainable communities from a cultural perspective. The community development projects need to incorporate additional facets such as access, schools, play areas, green areas, economic activities, retail, connectivity in data, religious facilities, and other municipal services to ensure communities are connected and can access mainstream economies easily.

Strategic investment is the consequence of a strategy. In South Africa, the strategy has centred around the National Development Plan, with the preamble to the constitution suggesting this investment must be focused on reparations – the need to redress the past must remain.

The country’s constitutional intention is to fix inequality. There is still significant opportunity to do so in the creation of new markets in support of growth - via intra-Africa trade and building relationships in the Southern African Development Community (SADC). South Africa’s focus on social reparations was the key at the start of the democratic journey which meant that much effort was put into social welfare, power and water education, and health etc. Those investments were necessary, however, there was to a lesser extent a commensurate focus on topline growth of the economy with regards to value-add and industrialisation.

In the process, maleficence has also hurt the growth narrative and deprived many of a better life. Here, economic ecosystems can come into play, providing a lens to view the development journey through. The word ecosystem has been used deliberately – to separate it from the ‘projects/ programme’ narrative.

As African societies, we should stop thinking that we cannot cope without someone else’s help. This brings the concept of Pan-Africanism to the fore: where part of the solution may reside with Africans solving African problems for themselves. It’s about being proudly African and working as a collective.

For now, only 16% of trade is conducted with neighbouring countries on the continent. While the country cannot renege on its existing trade agreements, it is possible to grow that 16% by promoting a higher level of intra-Africa trade supported by an industrialisation/value adding approach.

Inter-America trade is at 50% and inter-EU trade is at 80%. This means there is potential to create a new growth narrative to support the construction of sustainable socio-economic ecosystems and so to sustainable communities. As altruistic as it may sound, it is achievable with the right leadership in place. ☺

GVK-SIYA ZAMA: FROM FOUNDATIONS TO FORESIGHT

The construction industry, with its inherent challenges and constant evolution, demands commitment, dedication and adaptability. To retain an employee for 25 years in such a dynamic environment says something about a company's value. GVK-Siya Zama is one such organisation, and its Chief Financial Officer, John de Sousa, stands as a testament to this longevity.

For 25 years, De Sousa has been an integral part of the team that guided the company through significant transformations. His rise from financial manager in the group's Western Cape business to Group Chief Financial Officer is not only a testament to his skills, it also reflects GVK-Siya Zama's commitment to nurturing young talent.

This support, and John's deep understanding of the business, has enabled him to guide the group's financial strategy and leadership over the years, while navigating the waters of exponential growth and levelling up to being one of the biggest privately owned contractors in the local construction industry.

When De Sousa joined GVK-Siya Zama in 2000, the company was primarily a painting and restoration business. De Sousa, just 27 at the time, admits, "The prospect of joining the construction industry was daunting at first. I perceived it as unpredictable, constantly in flux." However, it was precisely this dynamic environment that would eventually capture his entrepreneurial interest.

His early experiences were shaped by knowledgeable mentors. "The leadership that surrounded me from the start was instrumental in my development," De Sousa recalls. "They were industry stalwarts and had a wealth of knowledge that they were more than willing to share." This foundational learning instilled in him the importance of having a holistic business understanding, from the ground up.

"Taking a keen interest in any industry you join is essential – immersing yourself in every aspect of the business is key to managing a business holistically," he adds. For De Sousa, this meant understanding the financial implications of every facet, from materials and people to suppliers and plant. This discovery into operational realities laid the groundwork for his future financial leadership.

One of GVK-Siya Zama's most significant challenges, and an important period in De Sousa's career, was the transition from a painting and restoration company to one of the country's largest privately owned construction firms. This shift required laser focus on the purse strings to fund the group's exponential growth.

It is precisely this autonomy and fiscal discipline that De Sousa believes has been key to the company's success and independence. "Cash is king! Managing and driving our cash flow through a huge growth spurt has been integral to building a sustainable business that could withstand the rigours of one of the toughest industries," he explains.

In his early years with the company, De Sousa also piloted the automation of the business and the establishment of its IT infrastructure. When he started with the company, manual bookkeeping was still the norm. His initiative in driving this transformation enabled real-time, detailed analysis of



Chief Financial Officer,
John de Sousa.

project costs against priced allowances in bills of quantities.

This, combined with more structured policies and procedures, set the company up for successful expansion. "None of that would have been possible, however, without having had a team of dedicated and competent employees who were willing to roll up their sleeves and work tirelessly towards our shared vision of success," he emphasised. Many members of this young, dynamic team have grown and matured with the business and fulfill leadership positions today.

Besides his financial acumen, De Sousa's most significant non-financial contributions include taking charge of transformation and skills development in the business. His efforts resulted in the GVK Education Fund which assists the children of GVK-Siya Zama's employees in attaining valuable skills. The programme has resulted in numerous success stories over the last 10 to 15 years.

"South Africa needs programmes like these to succeed," he says. "It also encourages a sense of reciprocity and family within the company." This programme remains close to his heart as he firmly believes that extending a helping hand starts at home.

Reflecting on career highlights, De Sousa recalls the management buyout that he was part of some 10 years ago.

"It was a significant time for the business, and many senior managers in the company set the group on an exciting gallop of expansion and modernisation while opening numerous opportunities for young employees in the business."

The onset of the Covid pandemic followed some five years



later, and in retrospect, De Sousa asserts that it has made the business stronger. “At the time, it required knuckling down to keep the business on track. However, with a sound foundation, steered by solid business principles and a strong team, one can navigate such a storm and emerge better equipped to deal with such adversity.

About current trading conditions, De Sousa says, “The construction industry has undergone significant changes, particularly in the last decade, with increasingly low margins and intense competition. Our task as financial leaders encompasses much more than standard accounting practices. We need to be involved operationally, from tender pricing and attending project meetings to signing final accounts, and everything in between. Along with a change in trading conditions, the employee landscape and the scarcity

of skills, business owners must remain agile to continue building sustainable businesses.”

A committed family man and the father of two teenage daughters, De Sousa prizes the value of respect. “Respect is the most important value that has steered me. It encourages listening, compassion and understanding, and in return, reciprocity in leadership. It contributes to team building and commitment to a common cause, and it creates a sense of family.”

For aspiring finance leaders in the construction industry, De Sousa offers this advice: “If you want a bit of excitement in what can sometimes be deemed a boring and mundane career in accounting, put on your hard hat and boots and join the construction industry where every day will produce something different.” ☺

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WOMEN ON THE RISE IN INFRASTRUCTURE ENGINEERING

In the last decade, South Africa has seen a steady and significant rise in the number of women in infrastructure engineering, according to the Institute of Municipal Engineering of Southern Africa (IMESA). As the country marks Women's Month, IMESA reports that in 2005, women made up just 12% of its professional members. A decade later, that number had grown to 23%. Today, in 2025, women account for 30% of the Institute's membership, IMESA says.

Importantly, this increase is not the result of formal gender policies or quotas, the institute notes. It has been a natural progression that represents shifting societal norms and the broadening of opportunities in the engineering sector. IMESA's drive to create awareness of the profession and its unwavering support for all engineers has also contributed.

"We've never implemented specific gender equity strategies or formal policies around this," explains IMESA president Geoff Tooley. "What we've done is build a professional home for all municipal engineers, where technical excellence, ethics and service to communities are the common ground. Inclusion has followed naturally."

To honour the growing number of women in the profession, IMESA is marking Women's Month with events around the country and a new social media campaign, #IMESAseesU - Women in Engineering. The campaign features personal reflections from women who have built careers in municipal engineering and infrastructure development, often against the odds. It highlights the professional excellence and powerful impact being made by IMESA's women members and leaders.

First female president

Among them is Bhavna Soni, who made history as IMESA's first female president and currently serves as operations director for the institute's Young Professionals and Membership portfolio. With more than 27 years of experience in eThekweni Municipality's water and sanitation services, Soni's career path was anything but conventional. Originally from India, she moved to South Africa after marrying a Durban-based doctor and began her engineering career in the private sector before joining the city.

"When I joined, female engineers were extremely rare," she recalls. "But I had a passion for physics, maths and problem-solving. Once I found my way into the municipal planning division, I realised I could have a real impact, especially in water infrastructure where the needs are urgent and continuous."

Soni says she faced challenges that are typical for women entering male-dominated professions, but family support, professional mentorship and a solution-focused mindset helped her persevere. "There are always obstacles," she says. "But I don't take things personally. I believe in moving forward, speaking up and not giving up. Engineering is about solving problems, not just technical ones, but human ones too. Gender should never be a limitation, and if you believe in yourself, others will, too," she asserts.

Urban Mobility and Roads Infrastructure Management

On the other side of the country, Cape Town-based Jeanine du Preez has spent over two decades in the municipal engineering environment and has been a member of IMESA and a dedicated volunteer at the institute since starting her career. She is currently a district head for Urban Mobility, Roads Infrastructure Management at the City of Cape and IMESA's operations director of Marketing and Communications.

Du Preez's entry into engineering was sparked by a year in the South African Army Women's College, where she encountered the Corps of Engineers. "I had always been creative, with a passion for drawing, writing and architecture," she says. "Engineering gave me a way to apply that in the real world. It's both creative and technical."

Since joining IMESA in 2003, she has held a series of leadership roles, including a 14-year term as the Western Cape branch chair. "IMESA gave me the confidence to speak publicly, to lead teams and to step into more strategic spaces. It was not just about networking; it was about personal growth."

Commenting on gender equity in the sector, Du Preez



says that she has never felt discriminated against for being a woman. “The industry was certainly much more male-dominated when I started my career and it is exciting to see that changing. However, I have never felt like I was denied opportunities because I was a woman. Although others may have had different experiences, I have found that most organisations strive for strong, diverse teams where appointments are made based on what you can offer. No one wants to get the job because of gender or race,” she stresses, adding that the ideal situation is a level playing field where everyone can contribute equally to South Africa’s economic growth and our people’s wellbeing.

Academic research and firsthand experiences

From IMESA’S Northern Provinces branch, Matseliso Fosa brings a perspective rooted in her academic research and firsthand experiences. A Professional Engineering Technologist and IMESA Council member, Fosa recently completed a Master’s degree at Wits University focusing on the effectiveness of the existing strategies for retaining women in the construction industry.

“There’s definitely been progress,” she says, “but the number of women in senior roles and on boards remains worryingly low. Representation is improving in technical posts. It is not happening fast enough in management,” she expands.

Fosa’s journey into engineering began in childhood. “I was exposed to basic science at a young age, and I knew early on that this was my path. Even when it’s been difficult - such as when I have been ignored in the workplace or my comfort has not been considered - I’ve pushed twice as hard and stayed focused. I have always reminded myself why I chose this field. What inspires me every day is being able to contribute to improving infrastructure for the betterment of communities and to enhance the delivery of services.”

Fosa is clear on the changes needed to get more women engineers into leadership: “Organisations need

to offer real promotion pathways for women, not just token inclusion. Gender equality must be structural, not symbolic. That includes fair hiring, respectful work environments and targeted mentoring.”

She emphasises the role that IMESA has played in her career growth. “Being part of a professional body that supports and recognises all engineers equally and offers women the same opportunities to lead and share their views is crucial. IMESA has supported me, and now I’m doing the same for others - mentoring my colleagues as they work towards professional registration.”

Focus on engineering not gender

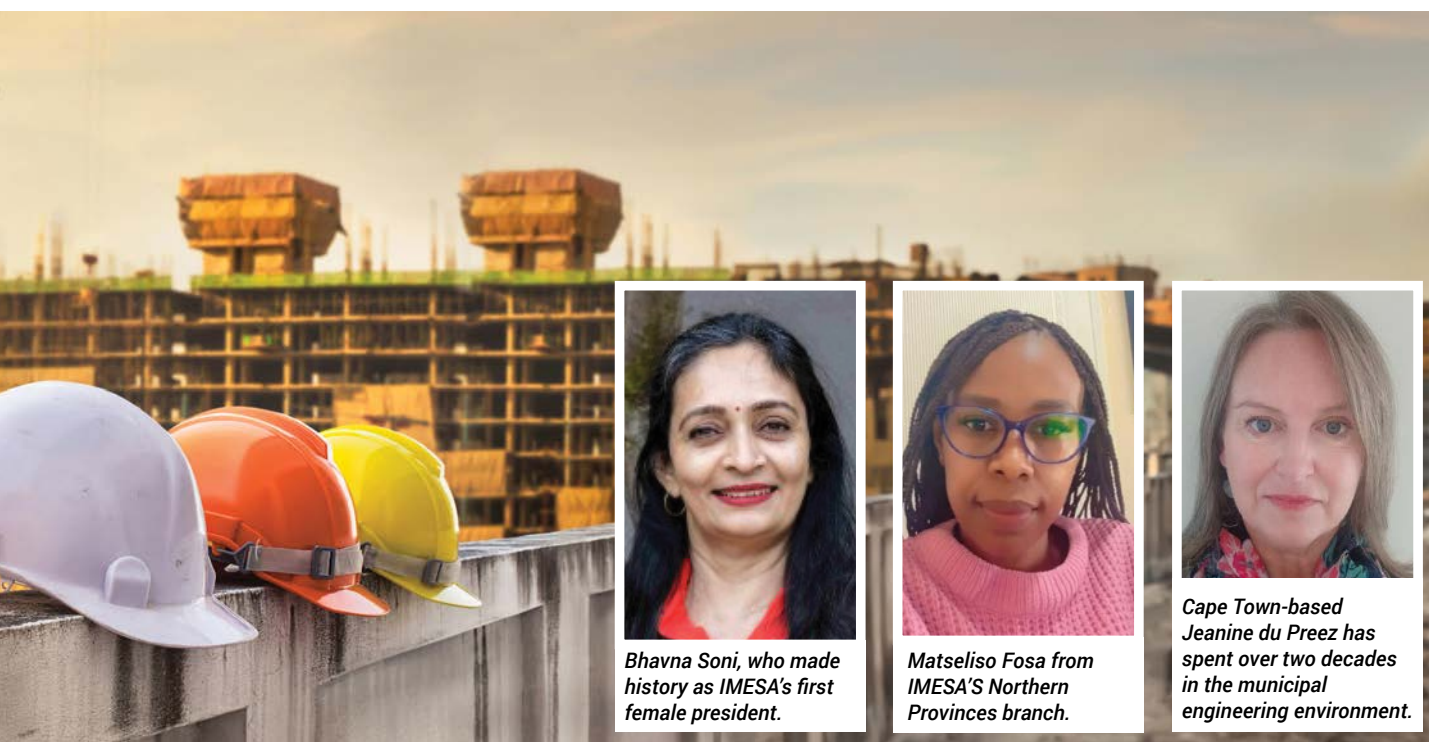
Soni echoes this and stresses the value of a professional community like IMESA where the focus is on engineering and professionalism, not gender. “IMESA gave me the opportunity to serve as a president and that opened new doors for me.”

While their journeys and experiences have been different, all three women agree on one thing: the importance of visibility, support and believing in yourself.

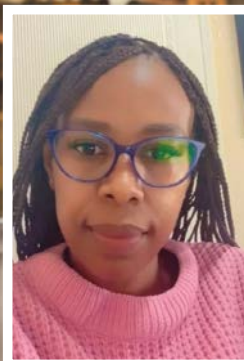
“Leadership starts at home,” says Soni. “How we raise girls and boys to value each other’s contributions is where it begins.”

Du Preez adds: “Let’s show young women that they can lead with strength as well as kindness and consideration. I strongly believe in leadership through example. It is important to take the time to help shape other women, to give them guidance and opportunities to express themselves in this great environment. Engineering offers a wide spectrum of career opportunities where you can make a difference and serve local communities - especially if you opt to join a local Council or Metro.”

Fosa’s message for young women aspiring to a career in infrastructure engineering is: “Be your own role model. Ask for help. Work hard. And know that the system is slowly changing - in part because we are changing it.” ☺



Bhavna Soni, who made history as IMESA’s first female president.



Matseliso Fosa from IMESA’S Northern Provinces branch.



Cape Town-based Jeanine du Preez has spent over two decades in the municipal engineering environment.

Proposed construction regulations to strengthen **SAFETY AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

The proposed 2024 amendments to the Construction Regulations signal upcoming adjustments for South Africa's construction industry. These proposed changes are designed to significantly improve health and safety oversight on building sites while shifting more legal responsibility onto both contractors and, critically, their clients.

The draft regulations, which build on the current 2014 version, reflect the evolving complexity of the built environment, the need for greater safety, and a stronger emphasis on accountability. With consultation closed mid-June, industry leaders, including the Master Builders Association Western Cape (MBAWC), have been vocal in responding to the draft.

"These amendments are not just regulatory housekeeping," says Petra Devereux, Executive Director of the MBAWC. "They represent a structural shift in how the industry views and manages risk, particularly in how responsibility is shared across the entire project team from client to contractor to designer."

The first set of construction-specific regulations was introduced in 2003 in response to an unacceptably high number of site-related injuries and fatalities. These were updated in 2014 and are now under review again to keep pace with modern construction methods and increasing project complexity.

One of the key features of the new draft is a stronger emphasis on client and designer responsibility. The proposed changes make it clear: safety begins at the drawing board.

"From a practical and legal perspective, these amendments shift accountability upstream," says Devereux. "Clients, referred to as 'Givers of Work', will now be legally required to provide detailed pre-construction information, conduct risk assessments before the project starts, and ensure the competency of everyone on site. It's a far more integrated and preventative approach."

Contractors will also see a rise in compliance obligations. The draft regulations propose the appointment of a Construction Health and Safety Manager, who must be registered with the South African Council for the Project and Construction Management Professions (SACPCMP), to be responsible for health and safety on specific areas designated to the person. "The appointment of this person is not mandatory and will be based on the size and potential hazards of each project," says Deon Bester, Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Manager, MBAWC. "However, there is some relief for smaller contractors with respect to the appointment of a Health and Safety Officer. The wording has changed from "must appoint" to "may appoint", depending on the level of risk.

From the outset, the regulations aim to align more closely with international best practice by embedding safety into the project lifecycle. However, some industry experts have highlighted gaps, most notably the absence of ergonomics risk assessment from contractor duties, and lingering ambiguity in how "competence" is defined and enforced.

Still, the proposed requirement for formal and

documented risk assessments, with regular reviews and mandatory monthly audits, represent a significant step forward in proactive site management. For Devereux, this institutionalisation of safety roles is significant. "Appointing qualified safety personnel will institutionalise oversight and could, in our view, directly reduce incidents," she says.

One of the most debated aspects of the new regulations is the increased liability placed on clients. Developers and clients will now bear joint responsibility for ensuring site safety and failing to provide adequate pre-construction information or verify contractor credentials could result in criminal charges.

"The message is clear: safety is no longer the sole domain of the contractor," says Chandré Abrahams, Chairperson of the MBAWC Marketing Committee. "Clients need to be actively engaged, from design inception through to construction. It's not just about what's being built, but how it will be used and maintained over its entire lifecycle."

This could reshape client-contractor relationships entirely, with contracts requiring new clauses around safety oversight, budgeting for compliance, and more formalised collaboration with design teams.

"We hope this marks the beginning of a continuing and evolving collaborative and informed relationship between clients and contractors," Abrahams adds. "It's also an opportunity to elevate client understanding and create safer, more sustainable outcomes across the board."

The draft regulations represent a clear step forward in improving safety and accountability in South Africa's construction sector. But the shift will require adjustment from training and certification to the adoption of digital systems and new internal processes.

"The proposed changes are necessary and largely constructive," says Devereux. "Clarity, practicality, and phased implementation will be critical to ensuring that they don't inadvertently exclude smaller players or create unintended bottlenecks."

While the regulations aim to reduce site incidents and improve design-stage foresight, their successful implementation will depend on the industry's collective commitment to evolve and on regulators' willingness to listen to and incorporate on-the-ground feedback.

"There's no one-size-fits-all answer," concludes Devereux. "However, if implemented effectively, these regulations could establish a stronger foundation for a safer, more accountable, and more professional construction industry. I also hope it will foster greater collaboration between clients and contractors and support ongoing client education, ultimately benefitting the entire industry." ©

Why workforce flexibility is key to powering **SA's RENEWABLE FUTURE**



**Pierre Bekker, Director
at Quyn International
Outsourcing.**

South Africa's renewable energy sector is entering a new chapter. After years of growth focused on building solar farms and wind projects, the spotlight is shifting and the new priority is making sure these sites operate efficiently and reliably for the long term. This is where Temporary Employment Services (TES) providers are stepping in. By supplying skilled, reliable labour that can adapt to changing site needs, TES providers are helping energy operators keep performance high, manage costs, and support surrounding communities.

By Pierre Bekker, Director at Quyn International Outsourcing.

From construction to long-term performance

In the early days, renewable energy projects were all about construction. Teams were sent into rural areas to build the infrastructure, install panels and get everything up and running. While the construction phase sees the most action, it is once a project has been commissioned that the real work begins - with these sites needing maintenance to ensure they produce energy as expected and remain financially viable.

Here, ongoing maintenance is more than a technical requirement. It is essential for the long-term success of the entire renewable energy strategy. These sites need regular inspections, fault detection, cleaning, and servicing to stay productive, as without proper maintenance, even the best solar or wind farm can end up underperforming or sitting idle.

Maintenance is what ensures these projects continue delivering power, return on investment, and energy security over their full 20-year lifespan. As more sites move from construction to operation, there has been a rise in specialised maintenance companies. They are creating a whole new layer of the industry focused on long-term performance and they need the right resources in place to keep things running smoothly.

A smart, flexible workforce model

TES providers are uniquely positioned to support this next phase. Unlike the large workforces required during construction, maintenance relies on smaller, specialised teams that need to be flexible and responsive. TES providers are built to meet this demand, offering a staffing model that allows companies to adjust their workforce according to site needs, without the complexity or cost of hiring permanent employees.

TES teams are often involved in renewable energy projects from the construction phase, which means they are familiar with the local talent pool. They identify people with potential and help them grow into skilled roles, so that by the time maintenance starts, there is already a trained and trusted workforce available.

Creating jobs and building local capacity

One of the most powerful contributions of TES providers is their role in uplifting rural communities. In towns

where there were once no qualified artisans, renewable energy projects have opened the door to real career opportunities. Locals who started as general workers during construction have since become semi-skilled, qualified electricians and technicians, often staying in their communities to work and live.

The right TES partner does more than just fill vacancies. They help build the local infrastructure needed to support long-term operations. Because they operate across multiple projects in a region, they can establish shared resources that benefit several companies and communities. They also take on the heavy lifting of HR, payroll, industrial relations, and compliance on behalf of the operator. Their ability to serve multiple sites with shared resources enables efficient operations, even in remote rural areas, without the need for full internal teams. With strong supplier networks and on-the-ground presence, they keep projects running smoothly.

Ensuring continuity and compliance

A well-established TES partner will already be registered with the relevant bargaining councils and understand the complexities of workforce management in isolated environments. They provide expert guidance across HR functions, giving site managers the support they need to stay compliant and lead with confidence.

Supporting transformation and sustainability

The right TES partner actively contributes to transformation by investing in people. They identify local talent, offer training and development opportunities, and help build long-term careers in renewable energy. These aren't just jobs, they are pathways to better livelihoods in communities that were once overlooked.

Ultimately, it's about partnership. A trusted TES provider brings local insight, national reach, and the systems to support renewable energy operators for the long haul.

As the sector grows, so does the need for consistent, responsible people management - and that's exactly where the right TES partner adds real value. ☺



Specifying high-performance cement and aggregates is essential to achieving durable, safe and cost effective road upgrades that meet long-term service requirements.

AFRISAM IS CEMENTING SOUTH AFRICA'S FUTURE WITH QUALITY

It is not the cranes or concrete mixers that make or break a project - it is the choices made before they even arrive on site. In the scramble to stretch budgets, too many infrastructure projects in South Africa are being quietly, but irreversibly, undermined by a silent compromise - sacrificing quality in construction materials.

This trend, according to leading construction materials supplier AfriSam, is not only becoming more entrenched - it is becoming increasingly dangerous.

“Durable infrastructure doesn’t fail in a headline-worthy moment,” says Amit Dawneerangen, Construction Materials Executive: Sales & Product Technical at AfriSam. “It deteriorates quietly, beneath the surface, because someone, somewhere, decided that cutting costs on aggregate, cement or concrete was a risk worth taking.”

That risk has now become routine. From road upgrades and bridge construction to housing and water infrastructure, there is growing concern across both public and private sectors about a shift away from high quality technically specified materials toward cheaper borderline alternatives.

On the surface, the savings may seem substantial. But once roads begin to rut, buildings start to crack and pipelines leak long before their design life ends, the real costs come due - and they are measured not only in rands, but also in safety and public confidence.

This regression is being driven by a toxic mix of affordability pressures, regulatory gaps and, in some cases, what Dawneerangen describes as “misplaced innovation.” Borrow pits - often unregulated and lacking the geotechnical validation of established quarries - are being favoured purely on the basis of proximity and price. Material that would not pass formal compliance is being repackaged under new product names to obscure its true quality. And in the absence of a formal regulatory body for the readymix sector, opportunistic



From foundational slabs to finishing elements, high quality cement contributes to the durability and integrity of housing developments.



Ensuring the application of premium-grade construction materials is non-negotiable in safeguarding load-bearing performance and lifecycle resilience of bridges.

suppliers are entering the market with offerings that underperform and under-yield.

“Unfortunately, this has become a race to the bottom,” says Dawneerangen. “And as a responsible business, AfriSam is not going to join that race. Our responsibility to customers, and to South Africa, is to be a partner in building infrastructure that lasts.”

With a heritage of more than 90 years in the business of building South Africa, AfriSam is raising a red flag on the long term consequences of short term cost cutting. “Infrastructure is a long game,” he says. “And when we get it wrong at the material stage, we are locking in a future of inflated maintenance budgets, early failures and expensive rework.”

This is why AfriSam continues to invest in certified quality across its cement, aggregate and readymix concrete operations. Its manufacturing facilities meet ISO 9001 standards, while its Centre of Product Excellence maintains SANAS 17025 accreditation - the gold standard for laboratory testing in South Africa.

“These are not box-ticking exercises,” says Dawneerangen, “but the foundation of consistency and reliability.”

“At AfriSam, our technical teams conduct process control and product testing on a daily basis, and quarterly performance audits are built into our operating rhythm,” he says. “We don’t do this for compliance; we do it because we believe our customers deserve to get exactly what they paid for. And, in fact, we go a step further to help them understand how



AfriSam’s technical teams conduct process control and product testing on a daily basis.



AfriSam continues to invest in quality across its cement, aggregate and readymix concrete operations.

quality choices pay off over time.”

That philosophy extends beyond major infrastructure contracts to every customer segment, from civil contractors and engineers to informal builders and DIY customers. “Regardless of the project size or location, quality should not be negotiable,” Dawneerangen insists. “That’s why we developed products like All Purpose Cement - to take the guesswork out of cement selection for small-scale builders while still delivering a high-quality solution.”

Quality, however, is not just about strength and durability. AfriSam is equally focused on the environmental footprint of its products. By incorporating recycled industrial byproducts like fly ash and ground granulated blast furnace slag into its cementitious blends, the company is actively reducing the carbon intensity of its products.

The company has also pioneered the use of low water demand cements, helping projects in water-scarce regions meet environmental targets without compromising performance.

“True quality today must be sustainable,” says Dawneerangen. “That’s why our innovation isn’t about pushing

down cost through dilution. It is about raising performance, extending life and reducing environmental impact - all at once.”

And the market, he believes, is still listening. Through AfriSam’s Voice of Customer programme, the company routinely engages with clients to gather feedback, understand project needs and identify pain points. One message comes through clearly - customers still want to build well.

“Most people want to do the right thing,” he says. “But they’re under pressure. That is why we need everyone in the value chain - suppliers, contractors, consultants, regulators - to push back against the slide into mediocrity. We have to champion quality together.”

Ultimately, the message is simple but urgent - materials are not just a line item. They are the DNA of infrastructure. And when that DNA is compromised, so is the nation’s future.

“If we want to build a South Africa that lasts,” concludes Dawneerangen, “we need to stop trading durability for discounts. The real question is not what your project costs today - the question is what it will cost tomorrow if you choose the wrong material today.” ☺



Water infrastructure systems - including reservoirs, pipelines, and treatment facilities - require materials that can withstand constant exposure to moisture, pressure and chemical processes.

FROM FOUNDATION TO FINISHING



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BUILDING TRUST





WHY SUSTAINABILITY AND RESILIENCE MATTER MORE THAN EVER TO NAVIGATE THE ESG BACKLASH

*We are at a pivotal moment in the evolution of the global sustainability agenda. ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance), once heralded as a pragmatic framework for embedding long-term resilience into business, is now facing growing resistance. It is under scrutiny from both political and cultural fronts, particularly in markets that were previously considered ESG frontrunners. **By Stephan Jooste, Managing Director – Sustainability, Africa, Zutari.***

In this climate, I often find myself returning to the core purpose behind the sustainability of creating long-term value in a world of escalating uncertainty. The backlash we are seeing may appear reactionary, but it should not distract us from the facts. Climate volatility is increasing. Resource scarcity is deepening. Social equity remains unresolved. These are not ideological constructs; they are tangible, measurable forces shaping our world.

The recently released Sustainability at a Crossroad 2025 report, developed by GlobeScan, ERM, and Volans, confirms the

shifting tides. Based on insights from 844 sustainability experts across 72 countries, the survey highlights a sobering truth in that over 90% of experts believe the current sustainability approach requires revision, with more than half calling for a radical overhaul. Most respondents from Europe, the Middle East, and Africa are particularly critical of progress to date. Fewer than one in ten believe our efforts have been “excellent”.

Even more striking is that seven in ten experts now report significant backlash against sustainability agendas in their countries, up 13 percentage points from 2024. These are not



Stephan Jooste is the Managing Director – Sustainability, Africa at Zutari.

mere outliers; this represents a global pattern. But backlash, however noisy, is not the same as obsolescence. In fact, it often signals that the work is beginning to hit a nerve, disrupting entrenched norms, assumptions, and interests.

A shifting landscape

The past six months have seen a flurry of changes from Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) rollbacks in the US to political resistance in the EU, a regulatory freeze in the UK, policy slowdowns in Australia, and mixed signals from emerging markets. Companies are reacting in a variety of ways, with some dropping ESG language altogether, and others maintaining sustainability commitments but keeping them quiet.

What this tells us is that, even amidst reputational risk and political pushback, there is a persistent, underlying drive for sustainable action, whether that be out of obligation, transaction, or deep conviction. This moment of tension is also a moment of truth. The ESG narrative has been dominated by investor concerns and regulatory compliance.

As a result, it has often failed to capture the imagination or trust of workers, customers, and communities. The legitimacy crisis is real—but it is not inevitable. If sustainability is to remain relevant, it must be embedded into business purpose, not just branding.

How do we move forward?

At Zutari, we believe that navigating ESG whiplash requires a

recalibration, not a retreat. Here is what I have learned from working with clients across the continent:

Embed sustainability where it matters: Go beyond reporting and embed sustainable thinking into product development, operations, talent strategies, and capital allocation. This is not box-ticking. It is value creation.

Be honest about trade-offs: Sustainability will not always be easy, or instantly profitable. But the alternative of short-termism is far riskier. The decisions made today will define our resilience tomorrow.

Build broad coalitions: True sustainability cannot be imposed from the top down. It must engage employees, customers, suppliers, and the communities where businesses operate. That is how legitimacy is earned, and impact is amplified.

We are not naïve about the challenges ahead. The ‘Sustainability at a Crossroads’ report finds that more than half of experts believe current global shocks from economic to political and environmental are a threat to sustainability.

Governments, in particular, are perceived to be lagging. Yet the report also highlights a critical insight in that there is still momentum in the corporate sector and civil society to drive real change. Mechanisms like green bonds, circular economy models, and integrated sustainability strategies are seen as high-impact levers for transformation.

It is encouraging to see that academic and research institutions are gaining credibility as trusted sources of innovation. As engineers, planners, and advisors, we at Zutari share this responsibility. We bring rigour, systems thinking, and a deep commitment to co-creating solutions that are locally grounded and globally relevant.

As Dr Ioannis Ioannou of London Business School aptly puts it: “The backlash will eventually subside. What will endure are the decisions made in this moment – what to prioritise, what to safeguard, and what principles to uphold.”

We are truly at a crossroads. Those who take a long view and resist the noise and stay true to the purpose of sustainability will not only build resilience but unlock new opportunities for innovation, inclusion, and growth. Let us not be deterred by the backlash. Let us lead through it. Because the future is not ESG or not ESG. The future is resilience – and resilience demands leadership. ☺

****Stephan Jooste is the Managing Director – Sustainability, Africa at Zutari. He works at the intersection of infrastructure, strategy, and systems thinking to help organisations navigate complexity and drive sustainable impact.***

DEMAND AND LAND SCARCITY MAKE CAPE TOWN AND DURBAN INVESTOR HOTSPOTS

With land constraints tightening, infrastructure under pressure and demand surging, well-located industrial and logistics facilities in Cape Town and Durban will remain sought after.

As global supply chains shift under the weight of e-commerce, localisation and climate risk, Cape Town and Durban have emerged as two of Africa's most investable logistics and industrial (L & I) markets due to their resilience, adaptability and strong investor appeal. While much of the world grapples with rapid reconfiguration of supply chains and shifting tenant conditions, key South African nodes are being defined by scarcity, rising demand and strategic repositioning, according to the latest commentary from Cushman & Wakefield | BROLL, backed by insights from the firm's Waypoint Global Industrial Dynamics and Climate Risk: Logistics & Industrial Global Outlook reports.

Scarcity, strategy and semigration fuel Cape Town's industrial edge

Cape Town continues to outperform, with rising rents

and declining vacancies underpinned by a period of semigration, operational stability and constrained industrial land. "Demand is being driven by a flight to quality, semigration from other provinces and growing e-commerce," says Shane Howe, Head of Western Cape Industrial Broking at Cushman & Wakefield | BROLL.

Strong governance and functioning infrastructure position the city as a low-risk node compared to Gauteng. "The Cape market is supported by limited stock availability and escalating demand, especially for modern industrial parks," says Howe. Development hotspots such as Brackengate and Richmond Park are expanding, while gentrification in older nodes like Epping and Parow unlock additional opportunity.

"Against this backdrop, investors and occupiers must thoroughly align business strategy with location and asset selection to ensure long-term sustainability," he says.

*Brackengate Business Park
in Cape Town.*



Land scarcity creates strategic opportunity in Durban

In Durban, chronic land shortages and rising operational costs have created a landlord-favoured market. “There has been no meaningful release of flat, flood-free land in over a decade. Most viable land is tied up in Tongaat Hulett’s portfolio and development remains stalled by topography and financial constraints,” says Anthon van Weers, Full Status Property Practitioner at Cushman & Wakefield | BROLL.

Vacancy rates are at historic lows. “Units, especially mini-units and large distribution centres (DCs) are snapped up almost immediately,” says Van Weers. Triple net rentals for A-grade DCs currently range between R105/m²–R110/m² with further rental escalation likely if supply remains constrained. However, high municipal rates double that of Cape Town or Johannesburg deter some tenants.

Still, Durban remains attractive to owners. “Despite high costs, Durban is a low-risk investment market because of stable demand and long-term leases from logistics operators near the port. Proximity to port infrastructure offers a decisive cost advantage,” says Van Weers.

Rental trends and vacancy pressures

Cushman & Wakefield’s global data shows a 43% surge in logistics investment over the past decade, driven by urbanisation, e-commerce and supply chain

reconfiguration. Globally, more than half of logistics markets are projected to experience rental growth through 2027, driven by strong occupier demand.

South Africa is on the same path but with an added urgency due to land scarcity around key Cape Town nodes and the Durban port. Rental growth is accelerating in both cities, particularly in high-demand, low-supply zones, signalling a unique opportunity for climate-conscious and future-proof investment.

While formal L&I development lags mature markets, African developers increasingly see infrastructure as integral to asset value, a shift aligned with global best practice.

Van Weers stresses this in the Durban context: “Buying land now may seem expensive, but rising scarcity means that pricing could look attractive in hindsight.”

Climate risk emerges as a new driver

According to Cushman & Wakefield’s Climate Risk report, climate-resilient assets are now achieving stronger lease uptake and longer tenures, with facilities in lower-risk zones commanding higher rentals and lower incentives. Yet, many markets have ignored climate risk, leaving assets exposed and underscoring the need for smarter development.

In addition, climate risk is now central to asset valuation and investment due diligence. From capital expenditure planning to leaseability and compliance, assets that embed mitigation strategies early attract stronger investor interest and pricing premiums.

This is mirrored locally, with tenants, especially multinationals factoring in resilience, water security and energy independence when selecting sites. South Africa’s Western Cape corridors and select Durban nodes are emerging as premium options, according to Cushman & Wakefield | BROLL.

Growth drivers

Global trends point to e-commerce, 3PLs (third-party logistics) and last-mile delivery as major sector drivers.

E-commerce alone has surged 289% globally in the past decade and is now the leading demand driver in the Americas and EMEA regions (Europe, the Middle East, and Africa).

Locally, the Western Cape’s infrastructure, lifestyle appeal and political stability are reinforcing this trend. In Durban, mini-units and small-format warehouses measuring 100 m² to 500 m² are in high demand as small businesses shift from traditional retail to fulfilment-based industrial space.

“Some retailers are closing stores and shifting to warehouse models to meet online demand,” says Van Weers. “Decentralised nodes like Cato Ridge, Shongweni and Tongaat, however, have struggled to gain traction due to high logistics costs.”

As supply chain strategies globally shift toward nearshoring, flexibility and resilience, South Africa’s logistics and industrial sector, particularly in Cape Town and Durban, is not only keeping pace but offering unique value propositions for investors and occupiers.

“This is no longer just about real estate. It’s about strategic alignment between business operations, infrastructure resilience and long-term investment performance,” adds Howe. ©



Shane Howe, Head of Western Cape Industrial Broking at Cushman & Wakefield | BROLL.

THE SMARTEST PUBLIC PROJECTS BEGIN WITH COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

*At the heart of every municipal or state-level public project are the people it aims to serve. Public services are fundamentally established to benefit communities, making their involvement essential to a project's success. For their inclusion to be truly beneficial, effective public engagement must begin early, ideally during the planning phase, or as early as the feasibility phase, to avoid the critical delays, disruptions, and even cancellations that have historically resulted from inadequate community consultation. **By Roelof van den Berg, CEO of the Gap Infrastructure Corporation (GIC).***



The benefits of engaging communities go beyond simply mitigating resistance and potential liabilities. By actively involving residents and genuinely understanding their concerns and priorities, project developers can better adapt plans to reflect local realities. Meaningful interactions help establish a strong sense of community ownership and pride in the developments occurring in the area, leading to improved implementation outcomes, fewer disruptions, and better community adoption.

The strategic advantage of early consultation

The timing and method of community engagement chosen by a developer significantly influence community reception and willingness to accept project terms. Ideally, community consultation should begin at the earliest possible stage. Typically, municipalities engage community stakeholders, including environmental protection agencies, even before the tendering process gets underway.

Once a contractor is assigned, early engagement should continue into the planning phase, providing sufficient detail about the project while remaining flexible enough for community feedback to influence final plans.

Recognising the necessity of public participation is as important as the developer's method of approach. Public consultation is not a quick or straightforward process and requires concerted effort from all parties involved, especially for the developer driving the conversation and motivating others to join in. A combination of public meetings, workshops, information sessions, and digital communication through accessible platforms and social media is key to reaching and engaging a broad community base.

Beyond simply engaging and sharing essential project information, building trust with community stakeholders takes time and ongoing effort to conduct successfully. Developers must be consistent, transparent, and responsive from initial discussions through project completion. Regular engagement reassures communities that their contributions remain valuable and relevant

throughout the entire project lifecycle.

The legal framework supporting public participation

Communities have a fundamental right to participate in decisions affecting their local environments. This right is enshrined in South Africa's Constitution, reinforcing the necessity for government, often through public-private partnerships (PPPs), to ensure active public involvement. Specifically, Section 152 of the Constitution mandates municipalities actively promote public participation, facilitating sustainable delivery of essential services.

Complementing this, Section 16 of the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act (2000) requires municipalities and their development partners to create and maintain an inclusive environment for community feedback on a variety of projects, including housing and essential utilities such as water and electricity.

Moreover, the National Environmental Management Act (NEMA) mandates that projects with potential environmental impacts undertake comprehensive Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs), which must explicitly incorporate public consultation phases lasting at least 30 days.

These processes allow residents, environmental groups, businesses, and other relevant stakeholders ample opportunity to voice their concerns, provide feedback, and suggest alternative solutions effectively.

Navigating the complexities of public input

Despite clear advantages, meaningful community consultation presents its own set of challenges. Large and diverse stakeholder groups frequently have competing interests, and achieving consensus necessitates skilful negotiation alongside regular, transparent communication. Managing expectations realistically and clearly defining the extent of community influence within project parameters are critical tasks for developers.

Adhering to well-structured public participation frameworks guided by regulations, such as those outlined by NEMA and municipal laws, helps developers navigate these complexities more effectively and successfully. Leveraging expertise from environmental practitioners and consultation specialists can further ensure consultations remain productive, sensitive, and focused on mutual benefits.

While it's impossible to incorporate every community suggestion, open and clear communication helps stakeholders understand decision-making processes, mitigating tensions and encouraging mutual respect.

Ultimately, comprehensive and strategic community engagement is both a regulatory obligation and a strategic advantage for developers looking to benefit from constructive external input that will help drive project success and minimise opposition, benefiting both communities and developers alike. ☺

ROCLA CULVERTS CHOSEN FOR MBOMBELA BRIDGE REBUILD

Rocla was recently awarded the contract to supply culverts and bases for the rehabilitation of a bridge in Karino, Mpumalanga. The project was in partnership with the contractor, 'The Hope Mandate' and Mbombela Municipality, who had embarked on an infrastructural upgrade and maintenance programme.

Rocla Sales Consultant, Keegan Prince said "Rocla's excellent reputation in the manufacture and supply of high quality pre-cast concrete culverts was a key reason for the company being awarded this bridge re-build contract".

"We supplied 28 Rectangular Portal (RP) 2 100 mm x 2 100 mm Culverts and 28 x 2 100 mm RP Culvert Bases to this project. Our RP Culverts are particularly well suited for bridge and roadwork developments as they reduce construction time and associated labour costs due to their ease of installation and general suitability for stormwater drainage applications" said Prince.

The RP Culvert, which primarily allows for a waterway underneath a road, consists of a deck and two legs and is placed on a concrete base. This base can be cast in-situ or prefabricated.

Custom-made culverts

Whilst the Rocla Culverts supplied to the Karino bridge re-build were standard culvert sizes, special sizes can be considered for design and manufactured to customer specifications, however, minimum quantities

might apply in order to off-set associated costs. For angled road crossings, culverts can be cut on site or skew culverts can also be considered for custom manufacture.

The standard strength classes for these culverts are 75S, 100S and 125S. Special intermediate strengths or heavier loading requirements can be custom designed and manufactured. These are subject to various material constraints, which can be evaluated by Rocla engineers on a case by case basis.

When there are project time constraints, Precast Concrete Base Slabs are more economical and a quicker option than cast-in-situ bases.

RP Culverts are also suitable for culvert crossings and can be used inverted as a drainage ditch, however, this modification must be advised at time of quotation request as the lifting holes are moved and the reinforcement layouts might need to be adjusted. Custom designed culverts have been used as tunnels, especially in mines, where a conveyor runs along the centre of the culverts underneath stock-piles, down incline shafts, in cable ducts, etc. ☺

ASTECCOLD PLANER ENSURES PRECISION MILLING ON N5 ROAD REHABILITATION

In a landmark order, global equipment manufacturer Astec Industries has supplied and commissioned the first Astec (Roadtec) cold planer on the important N5 corridor maintenance and rehabilitation project in the Free State.



The group reports that it is proud to be contributing to SANRAL's critical national infrastructure improvements after supplying an Astec (Roadtec) RX-600ex 2,0 m Cold Milling Machine to Damian's Contractors, for use on the roadworks between Bethlehem and Harrismith.

This is the first deployment of an Astec RX-600ex (Roadtec) cold planer in this part of South Africa. The order is also significant because this is one of the first demo-to-direct sales of this model by Astec Industries' South African Infrastructure Solutions division.

The high visibility of the site and the often-heavy traffic volumes on the N5 corridor demand precision milling, speed, efficiency and uncompromising safety. The Astec RX-600ex has got what it takes to exceed expectations, comments Philip Saunders, product sales manager for Astec Industries' Materials and Infrastructure Solutions divisions.

Smooth and uniform roadways

Cold planing, also known as asphalt milling, is the removal or milling up of an asphalt surface to provide an improved surface for repaving or resurfacing.

It ensures smooth and uniform roadways.

Powered by a 630 horsepower Cummins QSX 15Tier III engine, the Astec RX-600ex has a 2007 mm wide QX1 asphalt milling drum with 16 mm tool spacing. Its key features include a dust extraction system, hydraulically folding conveyor, Astec's ACE Grade & Slope Automation with auto-cut entry, dual water spray bars and bolt-on track pads – all of which are standard on the machine. It also boasts an Astec QX1 quick change cutter drum, integrated dual operator platform with simplified intuitive controls and dual water spray bars.

Saunders explains the benefits of these features: "A standard dust extraction system improves operator comfort and safety by removing dust and debris from the milling operation through a hydraulic fan at the primary conveyor. The dust is ejected at the end of the secondary conveyor into the dump truck. As the dust is ejected, the material exiting the secondary conveyor belt helps to channel the fine material into the dump truck.

"The folding secondary conveyor available on the Astec RX-600ex as 'standard' simplifies transport and loading. A

boost function, also offered as a standard feature on the machine, temporarily speeds up the conveyor should it become overloaded.”

Improves access

He notes that the cold planer’s Astec QX1 cutter drum improves access for bit and insert removal.

Astec cold planers like the RX-600ex have two independent spray bars to inject water in the cutter housing. The front spray bar is primarily for dust suppression. The rear spray bar cools the drum.

The ACE system enables the automatic calibration of specific hydraulic parameters - ensuring that the machine consistently achieves the precise milling depth, while the grade and slope sensors maintain the prescribed parameters when in full operation. New graphic displays allow the milling crew to easily select, calibrate and control sensors with minimal time and effort. The ACE Auto-Cut Entry system automatically controls the drum’s depth when initiating a cut, rather than requiring the operator to do so manually. It ensures that the drum connects with the pavement at the required depth and angle for the milling task.

This machine’s operator platform is conveniently accessed from the right or the left side. Two control stations allow machine operation from either side. With multifunctional joysticks and accessible controls, operating the cold planer is clear and intuitive. The controls are designed to be operated with one hand to allow for truck signalling.

Saving road builders’ time and money

“When your track pads are ready to be replaced, you can simply unbolt the old ones and bolt on new ones, saving road builders time and money,” Saunders notes. Because the bolts are not exposed to the surface, there is also the benefit of no asphalt build-

up. “Traditional track pads utilise ‘through bolts’ which build up with asphalt and take longer to remove and replace.”

The RX-600ex is part of Astec’s expansive Rock to Road range, which includes equipment for every phase of road building - from quarrying, crushing and processing the aggregate to concrete production and road construction. High-performance, fuel-saving machines like the Astec RX-600ex are ideally suited for infrastructure programmes in Africa. Like all the equipment in Astec’s range, the RX-600ex is supported by Astec’s skilled team in South Africa, which offers commissioning, training and aftersales service, support and spares.

Saunders says that the factors that contributed to Astec netting this order from Damian’s Contractors included the immediate availability of the machine and its suitability for the project, including its advanced automation (ACE) system. In addition, Astec was committed to ensuring the seamless commissioning of the machine and offering training.

Among the challenges that Astec rose to were the tight project timelines, accommodating public road traffic and training the crew on advanced automated milling systems. In addition, the machine had to be commissioned and handed under testing and live working conditions. ©



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THE FUTURE OF ENGINEERING: DRIVING SUSTAINABILITY THROUGH AI AND AUTOMATION

The future of civil engineering extends far beyond concrete and steel, it is increasingly shaped by data, digital tools, and intelligent decision-making. Technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), automation, and advanced analytics are rapidly transforming how engineers plan, design, and maintain infrastructure. In South Africa, these tools bring tremendous opportunity but also carry the responsibility to use them ethically and sustainably.

The South African Institution of Civil Engineering (SAICE) is at the forefront of these changes. As Dr Marcus Dlamini notes, "SAICE is embracing its role as a strategic enabler of digital transformation while staying rooted in the technical excellence that has historically defined the engineering profession". Through partnerships with tertiary institutions, SAICE is helping to integrate AI, digital twins, and automation into core engineering practice.

SAICE may not claim to be a tech authority, but it is a platform for critical conversations, professional training, and ethical leadership in this evolving digital landscape. The institution is guiding civil engineering professionals to think beyond project delivery but toward long-term impact, community wellbeing, and sustainable innovation.

Technology with purpose

South Africa faces ongoing infrastructure challenges, from project delays to corruption and inadequate maintenance. Here, digital tools offer real potential. "Digitising procurement, evaluation, and adjudication of tenders can dramatically reduce the risk of manipulation and political interference," explains Wynand Dreyer, SAICE's Advocacy Champion. "It enhances transparency and ensures fairness across the system."

Tools like digital twins and predictive maintenance are already yielding results. "These technologies have been in use in facility management for years. Utilities such as Johannesburg Water are using digital systems to log and resolve infrastructure faults more efficiently," Dreyer adds. For example, Forcelink's system, originally developed for facility management, is now helping Johannesburg Water track and repair faults in real time.

Yet these tools only deliver value when paired with collaborative thinking and long-term vision. "If we're still operating in silos and only cooperating rather than collaborating across project phases, we miss the full potential of the technologies," cautions Marius Bierman, a key contributor to SAICE's IT and digital transformation discourse.

Skills and mindsets for a digital era

As civil engineering undergoes digital transformation, it is not only the tools that must evolve, it is also the mindsets. SAICE is addressing this by revamping its Continuing Professional Development (CPD) framework to include AI, Building Information Modelling (BIM), and systems modelling. It is also supporting online learning platforms, bootcamps, and mentorship initiatives that empower both seasoned professionals and young engineers.

"We're seeing pioneering projects using AI for structural crack detection, slope stability monitoring, and lifecycle predictions," says Dr Dlamini. "These systems don't replace

engineering judgement—they enhance it with data-driven insights".

To bridge the digital divide, it becomes increasingly important to implement a unique form of reverse mentorship: younger, tech-savvy graduates mentoring experienced engineers on digital tools, while senior professionals guide strategy and project delivery. This blend of experience and innovation is critical in shaping a resilient future.



Ethics and oversight in the age of AI

The rise of AI introduces not only opportunities, but complex ethical challenges, ranging from algorithmic bias to data quality and human oversight. "SAICE advocates for ethical standards focused on transparency, fairness, and accountability," Dr Dlamini confirms. At the core is the principle of "human-in-the-loop"—ensuring that even the smartest systems remain subject to professional judgement and contextual understanding.

Engineering a sustainable future

Sustainability is another major driver of SAICE's innovation agenda. Engineers use digital tools to model carbon emissions, optimise water use, and build climate-resilient infrastructure. "From dam deflection surveys to hydrology and pavement analysis, engineering has always been a data-rich discipline," Dreyer points out. "What's changed is the speed, scale, and smartness with which we can use that data today."

Smartphone-based mobility data, real-time traffic apps, and automated asset management systems are transforming how infrastructure is planned, monitored, and maintained. These solutions aren't just convenient, they're vital in a resource-constrained and climate-vulnerable context like South Africa.

Collaboration and vision: a collective digital leap

SAICE's commitment to transformation doesn't end with technology. Its strategy aligns with both the National Infrastructure Plan 2050 and the global Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) agenda. "We must ensure Africa doesn't miss out on this technological wave like it did in previous industrial revolutions," says Dr Dlamini. "That means prioritising equity, accessibility, and relevance at every stage".

To this end, SAICE is building alliances across government, academia, private sector, and civil society. Partnerships with public sector entities are strengthening policy frameworks and accountability mechanisms.

A future that is digital and human

SAICE envisions a future where civil engineering is both digitally enabled and deeply human. As Dr Dlamini concludes, "Our goal is to ensure no one is left behind, from the paper-era engineer to the AI-native graduate. Because at its heart, engineering is still about people." This digital transformation is not just about using smarter tools, it's about building a smarter, fairer, and more sustainable South Africa and SAICE is proud to be leading that charge. ©





Leadership lessons in quantity surveying: **BUILDING EFFECTIVE TEAMS**

*While technical expertise is essential in the quantity surveying profession, it is often leadership ability that sets individuals apart and propels their careers forward. Leadership in this field involves not only guiding project teams and addressing challenges proactively but also making strategic decisions that influence project success. As a result, quantity surveyors in leadership positions typically take on responsibilities that extend beyond cost estimation and budget control, including project coordination, team leadership, and client engagement. **By Nosiyabonga Mgudlwa Mongane.***

Here are some of the leadership skills essential for quantity surveying: communication

Communication is a cornerstone of effective leadership, and this holds true for quantity surveyors in leadership roles. They must clearly articulate project requirements to clients, contractors, and team members while also listening and responding to team concerns. Strong communication skills enable a quantity surveyor to lead with clarity, ensuring that all stakeholders understand their roles and responsibilities within the project.

Promoting team collaboration

Effective leaders excel at uniting teams and promoting collaboration. They strive to create a positive and cooperative work environment where team members feel empowered to

share ideas and work collectively toward shared objectives.

Decision-making

In the field of quantity surveying, critical decisions frequently influence project timelines, costs, and quality. Quantity surveyors in leadership positions must be able to swiftly evaluate situations, consider possible outcomes, and make well-informed decisions that serve the best interests of both the project and the team.

Adaptability and resilience

The construction industry is inherently unpredictable, with projects frequently encountering unforeseen changes. Quantity surveyors in leadership roles must demonstrate adaptability and resilience, responding effectively to shifting circumstances. Leaders with these qualities are better equipped to manage



changes in project scope, budget adjustments, and evolving stakeholder expectations.

Emotional intelligence

Emotional intelligence is crucial for quantity surveyors to build and sustain strong relationships with clients, team members, and stakeholders. For those in leadership roles, developing emotional intelligence enhances communication, strengthens interpersonal interactions, and supports more thoughtful, informed decision-making.

How women can harness the identified five leadership skills to promote collaboration and efficiency in quantity surveying

Leadership roles within the quantity surveying profession continue to reflect gender disparities. Addressing this imbalance calls for focused efforts aimed at empowering women and promoting their leadership growth. Elevating more women into leadership positions not only promotes inclusive decision-making but also fuels innovation and contributes to a more diverse and equitable work culture. By providing women with the necessary skills and opportunities to lead, the industry stands to improve overall productivity and cultivate a more balanced and progressive professional environment.

Here is an overview of how women can harness the identified five leadership skills to promote collaboration and efficiency in quantity surveying:

Communication

Women leaders often bring strong interpersonal and empathetic communication styles to their roles. By leveraging these strengths, they are able to facilitate open, two-way communication within teams, creating an environment where ideas and feedback flow freely. They also bridge gaps between stakeholders by listening actively and addressing concerns

with clarity and tact, promoting trust and understanding. Furthermore, their approach encourages inclusive dialogue that boosts team morale and ensures all voices are heard, ultimately enhancing both collaboration and overall project alignment.

Promoting team collaboration

Women often excel at creating collaborative environments through relationship building and consensus-driven approaches. To promote efficiency, they can create safe spaces where team members feel comfortable contributing, ensuring that everyone has a voice. They can employ team-building strategies that encourage cooperation and promote shared ownership of project outcomes, which strengthens commitment and accountability. Additionally, they can champion diverse perspectives, recognizing that inclusivity drives innovation and leads to more effective problem-solving.

Decision-making

Women in leadership can strengthen decision-making by combining analytical thinking with empathy and stakeholder awareness. By combining technical knowledge with strategic foresight and human-centered thinking, they can ensure that decisions are both effective and inclusive.

Adaptability and resilience

Women often juggle multiple roles and responsibilities, which helps them develop a natural sense of adaptability. In leadership roles, they can demonstrate calmness and flexibility during project disruptions or unexpected changes, providing steady guidance when challenges arise. They can also lead teams through uncertainty by maintaining a solution-oriented mindset and an optimistic outlook, which helps to keep morale high.

Emotional intelligence

Women leaders can use emotional intelligence to build strong professional relationships with team members, clients, and stakeholders. Their ability to navigate conflicts with empathy allows them to resolve issues before they escalate, maintaining harmony and productivity within teams. They are also highly attuned to team dynamics and emotional cues, enabling them to respond effectively in ways that support team well-being and foster a positive work environment. ☺



Nosiyabonga Mgudlwa Mongane.

THE STATUS QUO OF ASPHALT PRODUCTION IN SOUTH AFRICA

South Africa's asphalt industry finds itself at a crossroads in 2025. On one hand, the country boasts world-class know-how, modern production plants and an increasingly sophisticated approach to testing and design. On the other, it is grappling with an unstable bitumen supply chain, rising input costs and an urgent need to deliver more with less. The result is a sector that is both under pressure and surprisingly innovative.

Bitumen bottlenecks

The biggest challenge is no secret: bitumen. For decades, local refineries provided a steady supply to asphalt producers, but the domestic picture has changed dramatically. SAPREF in Durban and ENREF in Durban South have shut down, Astron's Cape Town facility no longer produces bitumen, and Natref in Sasolburg - the last producer still making the product - has announced it will stop by September 2025. From that point onward, South Africa will be almost entirely dependent on imported bitumen.

Imports have kept projects moving, but not without headaches. Price volatility, port congestion and storage constraints mean producers and contractors must plan far ahead and often carry higher working capital. Simply put, asphalt plants can have the capacity, but without reliable binder supply, they cannot run at full tilt.

There is some hope of relief. Government has been negotiating to revive the flood-damaged SAPREF refinery, while Astron is investing heavily in upgrades that improve national fuel security. But for now, the asphalt sector knows it must live with a high-risk, high-cost supply environment.

Producers under pressure

Despite these challenges, South Africa's network of asphalt plants is strong. AECI Much Asphalt, the country's largest producer, operates a wide spread of fixed and mobile facilities, integrated with its binder conversion and modification operations. Alongside it are a host of regional players plus municipal plants in major metros.

What sets producers apart in this climate is less about how many tonnes they can produce per hour and more about how they manage binder logistics, energy efficiency and rapid-response contracts. Clients are demanding agility: smaller lots of asphalt delivered faster, often for emergency maintenance and pothole repair programs.

Specs and standards tighten

On the technical side, the industry is raising the bar. The Council for Transport and the Built Environment (COTO), SANRAL and SABITA continue to update specifications and design procedures. SABITA's latest manuals, including guidance on mix design and performance testing, push contractors and labs to deliver more consistent, reliable results.

Laboratories and research bodies are also investing in advanced testing equipment. The emphasis is shifting away from just meeting volumetric requirements and toward performance-based design: assessing how mixes stand up under stress, temperature fluctuations and heavy traffic loads.



Technology on the rise

One silver lining of the current crisis is that innovation is accelerating. Three themes dominate the plant floor today:

- Warm-Mix Asphalt (WMA): Already established in South Africa, WMA is gaining ground as contractors look to reduce burner fuel, cut emissions and extend paving windows.
- Recycling and RAP: With binder prices soaring, reclaimed asphalt pavement (RAP) has never been more attractive. Producers are pushing RAP contents higher where specifications allow, often supported by WMA to ensure proper blending.
- Modified and high-modulus mixes: For heavy-duty corridors, polymer-modified binders, crumb rubber and high-modulus asphalts are still essential.

Demand drivers

On the demand side, routine maintenance and rehabilitation projects dominate the market. Provinces and municipalities face large backlogs, with pothole programs eating up significant volumes. SANRAL's long-term upgrades and corridor works continue to drive more substantial demand, but the bread and butter for many producers is quick-turnaround, high-mobility resurfacing work.

Building sustainability

Sustainability is no longer just a buzzword - it is becoming a market expectation. Producers are cutting fuel use through burner optimisation and WMA, reducing trucking through regional depots and mobile plants, and diverting waste streams into asphalt through RAP and alternative aggregates. SABITA has made resilience and environmental stewardship central to its messaging, and many in the sector see these practices not just as good for the planet, but South Africa's asphalt industry may be navigating a rough patch, but it remains resourceful and resilient. The challenges of 2025 are forcing producers and contractors to think smarter, innovate faster and collaborate more closely. In the long run, this could mean better, more sustainable roads - even if the journey there is anything but smooth. ☉

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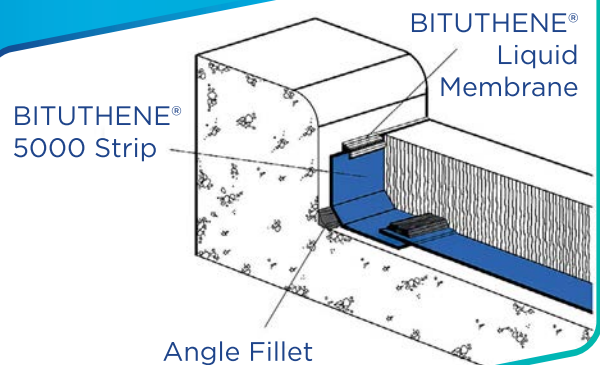
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Athos Crushing & Screening launches fully **ELECTRIC MOBILE CRUSHERS AND SCREENS**

Following an extensive testing regime, Athos Crushing & Screening is officially launching a fully electric range of mobile crushers and screens called Powertrack, built by SRHeavy (SRH). Dubbed the Powertrack, the range initially comprises a mobile jaw crusher, a mobile cone crusher, a mobile triple-deck screen and a mobile scalping screen.

Athos Crushing & Screening, sister company to Pilot Crushtec International, was established some five years ago with the mandate to provide mobile and static crushing and screening solutions, focusing on entry-level and mid-tier segments of the market. The overarching intent, explains Sales and Marketing Director Francois Marais, was to create a true “home of crushing and screening” with Pilot Crushtec concentrating on the premium end of the market.

In line with this strategy, Athos is debuting the e-Power Powertrack range in Southern Africa. At a launch event held at the company’s Jet Park in July, the company introduced the Powertrack PT Pro J-11E jaw crusher, the Powertrack PT Pro C-20E cone crusher, the Powertrack PT Pro ST-08E mobile triple-deck screen and the Powertrack PT Pro SP-08E scalping screen to local customers. Target markets, says Marais, include contractors, quarries and certain mining applications, particularly sites where there is access to grid power or renewable energy sources.

“Ideal for aggregates, mining and recycling, the Powertrack PT Pro J-11E is equipped with an SJC108 jaw crusher with a 1 060 x 700 mm feed opening,” explains Marais. “The machine can handle a top size up to 600 mm and typically runs with a closed side setting of about 70 mm. It has the capacity to process between 150 and 500 tonnes per hour (tph), application dependent.”

The Powertrack PT Pro C-20E, which features the SCH2000 cone crusher, is ideal for secondary and tertiary crushing. The machine has the capacity to produce between 150 and 250 tph, depending on application.

The Powertrack PT Pro ST-08E mobile triple-deck screen

comes with a 5,4 m x 1,5 m screen box and a large 8,4 m² screening area. With its four product conveyors, it can be deployed in 250 tph production capacity requirements.

The Powertrack PT Pro SP-08E scalping screen, which comes with a 4,8 m x 1,5 m screen box, is ideal for pre-screening of feed with excessive fines such as topsoil, recycled waste and gravel, amongst others. The machine is designed to process capacities up to 500 tph.

“A major factor behind the decision to go the fully electric route is that these machines come in at an extremely competitive price point,” says Marais. “Manufactured in China, arguably the global leader in electromobility, the economies of scale for electric components such as electric drives provides for a notable cost advantage, making the e-Power Powertrack range an attractive crushing and screening solution for the local market, especially for cost sensitive, entry-level operations.”

Another remarkable advantage of fully electric crushing and screening solutions is the lower cost of operation. These machines are primarily intended to be plugged into grid electricity. Electric drive systems are cost effective and more efficient than their conventional diesel hydraulic counterparts.

“In the absence of an electric plug-in, end-users can power the machine/s with a genset which, unlike in a dual-power setup, is completely separate from the mobile machine. This is a completely new concept in the local mobile crushing and screening market. One of the major benefits of keeping the generator away from where crushing takes place, is the elimination/reduction of dust ingress into the engine, which tends to be a major challenge for machines that come with an on-board genset,” concludes Marais. ☺



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Wind power drives SA's future **OF SUSTAINABLE ENERGY**

*Ever wondered about the behind-the-scenes logistics involved in building or transporting wind farm turbine components? **Richard Reid, Regional Director at Concord Cranes**, looks at the potential of wind power and the complex groundwork required to bring a wind farm online.*

When people talk about renewable energy, solar power usually gets all the attention. However, wind power, with its simple design, holds major potential and is quietly becoming one of South Africa's best hopes for a cleaner, more reliable energy future.

According to a report by the South African Wind Energy Association (SAWEA), wind energy is increasingly turning into a leading driver of South Africa's transition to a future built on renewable energy. The country has world-class wind resources, especially along its extensive 3,000 km coastline, particularly in the Eastern and Western Cape.

As of March 2025, SAWEA estimates that over 3.5 GW (gigawatts) out of 63,4 GW of installed capacity is generated from the 37 wind power plants currently operating in the country. These wind farms are estimated to contribute over 46 480 GWh (gigawatt hours) annually.

"Although solar power is more widely adopted – especially at the residential level – wind farms are purely mechanical and don't rely on complex chemical processes," says Reid. "But the logistics and planning behind getting a wind farm operational are highly complex."

With the Integrated Resource Plan (IRP 2024) set to be



released this year, wind energy is projected to contribute between 69 and 76 GW of new capacity by 2050. “This presents significant opportunities for investment, industrialisation and job creation,” Reid adds.

Infrastructure to deliver

While wind power generation uses a simpler mechanical process, the components are large and heavy, requiring precise logistics management to enable efficient rollout of wind farms.

In the ‘wind-rich’ landscapes of the Eastern and Western Cape, Concord Cranes is helping power the country’s renewable energy future, one turbine at a time.

“Since June 2025, we started supporting African Clean Energy Developments in the construction of a 144 MW wind farm. Our 260t crawler crane, operated by a team of 12 to 20 experts over an 11-month project, off-loads equipment from vessels in the laydown area at Port of Coega in Gqeberha, and then reloads it on demand for delivery to the site in Murraysburg,” says Reid.

While this may sound straightforward, he emphasises the sheer scale of the work. “The planning and detail required to get these projects completed is enormous, and the financial commitment is equally significant.”

In broad terms there are three tasks that need to be undertaken, and the requirements for each vary quite considerably.

Phase 1 - discharging the vessel

The first step focuses on logistics in the port: off-loading all the turbine components, such as blades, tower sections and nacelles, into the port laydown area for storage. “This 24-hour round-the-clock operation requires cranes, specialised vehicles and rigging crews and can take up to seven days,” Reid explains.

Once this is completed, re-loading the components – some weighing up to 130 tonnes, 90 metres long and 6 metres wide – are re-loaded onto specialised vehicles for transport to site. Detailed route surveys identify obstacles along the way, and all the necessary permits and police escorts must be arranged well in advance.

“A delivery of a set of three blades will require a convoy of up to 10 vehicles, excluding the delivery trucks themselves. By car, the drive from Port of Coega to Murraysburg takes about four hours, but with these oversized loads and the complexity of the operation, a layover is often required,” he says.

Phase 2 – building the turbines

Once components arrive on site, assembly cranes off-load them in a detailed logistics operation. “The turbines themselves can reach heights of 120m,” says Reid. “Positioning the nacelle, containing the drive train and weighing between 80 to 120 tonnes, and then attaching the rotor and blades at heights up to 130 metres must be done in near wind-free conditions, often in the freezing early hours.”

Here, the contractor must adhere to strict safety standards using cranes with between 800 and 1 000 tonnes, as well as a variety of support and tailing cranes.

Phase 3 - maintenance afterwards

The third operation is repairs and maintenance of existing turbines. “This involves getting spare components to site, providing cranes, riggers and the removal of damaged parts,” he says.

As with the previous phases, safety and compliance remain central.



“Every employee or subcontractor must have valid medical certificates, working at height certificates and certificates of competence,” Reid adds. “Then there’s letters of appointment, labour market information, letters of good standing, professional driving permits and confirmation of public liability cover. Plus, every contract must include a detailed risk assessment, method statement, safe operating procedure and lifting plan.”

While wind farming itself is a relatively simple and scalable way of producing electricity, setting it up is an intricate logistical ballet, with countless moving parts.

“Each of these must be managed carefully, with continuous improvements in processes to ensure that South Africa can take full advantage of its abundant wind resources and power the country’s economic growth and a sustainable future for the next generation,” says Reid. ☺

Built to work smart and harder - **LOAD AFTER LOAD**

From rugged farmlands and remote forest landscapes to demanding construction and mining sites, success in today's industries requires machines that are faster, smarter, and more versatile. In environments where efficiency and productivity are key to business sustainability, Wacker Neuson's range of wheel loaders rises to the challenge.

Designed to adapt, perform and deliver in diverse conditions, wheel loaders offered by Wacker Neuson feature standout innovations – such as All Wheel Steering (AWS) and a broad range of attachments – that redefine manoeuvrability, stability, and on-site productivity.

“When efficiency, performance and long-term value matter, these machines rise to the occasion,” says Stefan le Roux, Wacker Neuson Managing Director – Sub-Saharan Africa. “They're more than just loaders. With high-flow hydraulics and a quick hitch system, our wheel loaders become true multi-tool carriers.” This adaptability enables operators to seamlessly transition between tasks by effortlessly changing attachments to efficiently tackle a variety of tasks such as materials handling, loading and logistics, and site clean-up - maximising on-site productivity. Attachments include brooms, standard and screening buckets, mulchers, mixing buckets, branch cutters, front wood grabs, pallet forks and dozer blades – transforming each unit into a productivity powerhouse. This value-driven versatility also contributes to lowering the total cost of ownership.

Wacker Neuson's wheel loader range comprises seven models. The compact 5035 model starts with a tipping load of 1 140 kg, a bucket capacity of 0,35 m³, and an 18,5 kW power unit. At the top end of the range, the robust 8155L offers a tipping load of 5 600 kg, bucket capacities ranging from 1 m³ up to 2,5 m³ depending on the specific gravity of the material being moved, and engine outputs reaching 100 kW – ensuring there is a solution for every application, from light to heavy-duty tasks. A telescopic version (8145T) is also available.

The All-Wheel Drive (AWD) feature on all loader models provides excellent traction and pushing power across all terrain. Exceptional stability and high payload capacity, even on uneven surfaces, are achieved through a robust one-piece chassis or rigid frame with rear axle oscillation, combined with All-Wheel Steering (AWS). This offers enhanced agility and a significantly smaller turning radius. “The AWS system improves the loaders' manoeuvrability, enabling them to effortlessly navigate the tightest spaces while completing loading and offloading tasks up to 35% faster,” highlights le Roux.

The rigid frame design of these wheel loaders maintains the machine's centre of gravity, even during sharp turns. This ensures even weight distribution and a balanced, secure ride across slopes and rough terrain. Combined with premium components and a rugged frame, the loaders are built to withstand tough working environments – maximising uptime and machine longevity.

Efficiency, both in fuel consumption and environmental impact, is essential for operators striving to meet their economic and sustainability goals. Wacker Neuson's wheel



loaders feature fuel-efficient power units designed to optimise fuel use, achieving the perfect balance between performance and cost-effectiveness. Le Roux highlights, “During loading and offloading tasks, the wheel loaders consume up to 60 percent less fuel per day compared to backhoe loaders.” He also points out that the continuously variable hydrostatic transmission helps maximise fuel efficiency while preserving optimal performance.

Operator comfort, safety, and productivity are closely linked – and Wacker Neuson's wheel loaders are designed with this in mind. The ergonomic cab features intuitive controls and thoughtful amenities that reduce fatigue and enhance safety – supporting extended, more productive shifts.

From the compact and powerful 5035 to the high-capacity 8155L and 8145T, Wacker Neuson's wheel loaders are purpose-built to meet the evolving needs of the construction, agriculture, mining and forestry sectors. With an optimal balance of productivity, manoeuvrability, fuel efficiency and operator comfort – alongside their compatibility with a wide range of attachments – these machines are true multi-tool carriers, ready to perform in any environment. ☺





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