



SEZ REPORT SHOWS GROWTH, CONFIDENCE, DIVERSIFYING INDUSTRY
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AUTO SECTOR PLANS TO BREAK STAGNATION

SOUTH Africa's Eastern Cape automotive sector, the backbone of the province's economy and a major national employer, is "stagnant" and at risk of losing ground without urgent government intervention on electricity, logistics, tariffs and electric-vehicle policy.

This warning was issued during Parliament's Portfolio Committee on Trade, Industry and Competition's recent oversight visit to the province.

The committee's two-day oversight visit to the East London Industrial Development Zone and the Mercedes-Benz South Africa plant on 19 and 20 March exposed a sector under severe pressure despite its continued contribution to component localisation, skills development and job creation.

Automotive Industry Development Centre Eastern Cape (AIDC-EC) CEO Thabo Shenxane and chairperson Phumzile Zitumane, led the engagement, providing insights into component supplier support, automotive policy issues, projects in the electric vehicle (EV) space and explaining how the centre is supporting SMMEs in the aftermarket industry.

FOUR-PILLAR ROADMAP

According to AIDC-EC, the Eastern Cape remains the heart of the country's vehicle manufacturing sector but Shenxane warned the industry is currently "stagnant" rather than growing.

To spark a new era of expansion, the AIDC-EC outlined its four pillar roadmap which includes: the need to engage in automotive policy issues; transitioning from Internal Combustion Engines (ICE) to EVs, the empowerment of vehicle maintenance and repair SMMEs and the strengthening of component suppliers who employ more than 39,000 people in the province.

The AIDC-EC told the committee it is preparing the province for the global shift to EVs. A standout achievement highlighted was the establishment of 15 EV charging stations across the province, linking urban centres to rural areas like Libode, Tsolo and Silaka Nature Reserve in Port St John's.

"You are not going to have a population of EVs coming and moving through our province if we do not invest in infrastructure, knowledge



AIDC-EC CEO Thabo Shenxane engaged with the Retail Motor Industry Organisation (RMI) and other stakeholders recently to explore ways to future-proof the region's automotive sector.

and skills," Shenxane said.

The electric vehicle roadmap also emphasises the need for awareness programs to educate government officials and the public on e-mobility, ensuring the Eastern Cape is not left behind.

POLICY AND INFRASTRUCTURE GAPS

The AIDC-EC presented several urgent recommendations from the sector to the committee including:

- A call to promote Completely Knocked Down (CKD) manufacturing, managing import duties and the rise in imports
- Protection for locally based original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) through enabling policies, such as government procurement of vehicles produced by locally based OEMs
- Incentives to support SMMEs in the aftermarket.
- A policy decision to fully utilise the Port of East London to alleviate chronic congestion at the Port of Durban.
- The need to address load shedding and energy security to stimulate investments
- Dealing with crime which is a major deterrent to foreign investors.
- A proposal to create a provincial fund to protect Tier 2 and Tier 3 suppliers from global tariff shocks – such as African Growth and Opportunity Act (Agoa) uncertainty – and geopolitical volatility.

- Recognising the Middle East war will soon affect Europe, the biggest market for South Africa, which means it will suffer in the medium to long term.

Committee chairperson Mzwandile Masina said that while the automotive industry has made a significant contribution to the Eastern Cape's economy, its long-term sustainability cannot be taken for granted.

"The committee will engage relevant stakeholders to address some of the key challenges facing the automotive industry and other businesses in the Eastern Cape," he said.

Masina warned without clear direction on electric vehicles, "manufacturers may delay or forego critical investments in new technologies, putting local production, jobs and export markets at risk."

He acknowledged the need for better coordination between national, provincial, and local government and committed to exploring the formation of a working group to tackle the issues with clear timeframes.

AFTERMARKET PARTNERSHIP LAUNCHED

The oversight visit comes as the AIDC-EC and the Retail Motor Industry Organisation (RMI) announced a partnership to transform the aftermarket sector. As the largest employer in the automotive value chain, the aftermarket is vital to job creation and economic growth.

In a joint statement the organisations highlighted focus areas of their new partnership. These include ensuring compliance with industry automotive industry standards and Occupational Health and Safety compliance, discussions on launching a unified skills programme, apprenticeship programme and artisan recognition of prior learning, implementing an e-mobility skills model featuring online and technical face-to-face training to prepare for the shift towards EVs.

AIDC-EC and the RMI said they would also partner to provide training, mentorship and operational capacitation for SMMEs, while targeting the support of 300 historically disadvantaged individuals. Their work will be aligned with the South African Automotive Masterplan 2035 (SAAM 2035), to include supporting SMMEs in the aftermarket industry, and they will also assist businesses to register with the Companies Intellectual Property Commission, SARS and the Motor Industry Bargaining Council to move toward becoming accredited RMI members.

"The challenges facing the Eastern Cape automotive landscape are unique, and they demand a tailored approach that addresses their specific provincial needs while driving national transformation goals," Shenxane said.

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT DRIVE

The next phase of the partnership involves a high-level consultative workshop to finalise a sustainable funding model and implementation plan to advance the shared vision.

This partnership coincides with recent AIDC-EC support measures rolled out for SMMEs in the aftermarket, alongside a roadmap to future-proof the industry.

The centre and its partners launched the SMME Tools, Equipment and Machinery Project in the Chris Hani District at Sisa Motor Clinic in Manzana Village, eNgcobo on March 20.

The initiative, backed by the Department of Economic Development, Environmental Affairs and Tourism, the Eastern Cape Development Corporation and the Chris Hani District Municipality, saw vehicle lifting equipment, diagnostic tools and workshop machinery handed over to 19 registered businesses. The aim is

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Cogta moves to tighten oversight on Nelson Mandela Bay governance failures

PARLIAMENT'S Portfolio Committee on Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA) has signalled a tougher stance on governance failures at the Nelson Mandela Bay Metropolitan Municipality (NMBM), warning that continued non-compliance could trigger formal summonses.

The warning follows a two-day engagement between the committee, supported by members of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts and the Standing Committee on the Auditor-General, and municipal leadership. The session formed part of ongoing parliamentary oversight after an October 2025 visit and multiple unanswered requests for information.

Committee Chairperson Dr Zweli Mkhize described the engagement as deeply unsatisfactory, citing incomplete, inconsistent and delayed responses from the municipality. He noted that persistent communication failures, particularly with the Office of the Mayor, have significantly hindered Parliament's ability to exercise effective oversight.

"This committee cannot function if information is repeatedly delayed or contradictory. It undermines accountability and weakens public confidence," Mkhize said.

PROCUREMENT AND GRANT SPENDING UNDER PRESSURE

Key concerns centre on procurement practices and the municipality's inability to spend allocated funds. Approximately 22 contracts, including so-called "evergreen contracts" renewed without competitive tender processes, remain under investigation. The committee flagged the scale and lack of clarity around these contracts as highly irregular.

Equally concerning is the municipality's continued under-expenditure of conditional



Image: sanews.gov.za

grants. Around R1.2 billion has reportedly been returned to National Treasury, despite significant infrastructure backlogs.

For the Eastern Cape economy, this reflects more than administrative inefficiency. Underspending delays critical infrastructure delivery, limits opportunities for contractors and suppliers, and constrains broader economic activity in a metro already under pressure to attract investment.

Mkhize was direct in his criticism: "Where there are resources, personnel and clear needs, failure to implement raises serious questions about leadership and governance."

INSTITUTIONAL WEAKNESSES PERSIST

The committee also pointed to systemic weaknesses within the municipality, including poor coordination between political and administrative leadership, vacancies in key senior posts and an ongoing inability to provide basic supporting documentation.

Members further cautioned municipal officials that misleading Parliament constitutes a criminal offence, noting that some of the information presented during the engagement appeared unreliable.

TURNAROUND PLAN REQUIRED

COGTA has now directed the municipality to submit a comprehensive turnaround plan detailing how it will improve grant spending, strengthen contract management, address human resource gaps and enhance accountability mechanisms.

In addition, the municipality must provide full reports on outstanding issues, including irregular and unauthorised expenditure, service delivery failures and its response to findings by the Auditor-General and the Special Investigating Unit.

The committee will reconvene with municipal leadership once the documentation has been reviewed, with expectations of a more focused and evidence-based engagement.

SUMMONSES AN OPTION

In a clear escalation, the committee indicated it may request the Speaker of the National Assembly to issue formal summonses compelling officials to appear and provide information. Non-compliance with such summonses could constitute a criminal offence.

"The committee has the authority of Parliament to ensure accountability, and we expect cooperation," Mkhize said. "In its absence, we will not hesitate to act."

While adopting a firmer tone, the committee emphasised that its objective remains corrective - to stabilise governance, restore accountability and ensure effective service delivery.

For Nelson Mandela Bay, the outcome of this process will be closely watched, with implications not only for municipal performance but also for investor confidence and economic recovery in the region.

Auto sector plans to break stagnation

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to enable township and rural mechanics to transition towards effectively competing with established automotive businesses.

"People who are fixing cars are in business as well," said Khaya Njingolo, executive manager of the Aftermarket Support Programme at the AIDC-EC.

Njingolo also highlighted the need to regulate and support the industry.

Eastern Cape MEC for Economic Development, Environmental Affairs and Tourism, Nonkqubela Pieters, outlined the sector's strategic importance.

"Leading our regional economy is the automotive sector, with agriculture as its vital partner. These industries are the backbone of the Eastern Cape - they are non-negotiable for our future," she said.

The project includes dedicated skills training through AIDC-EC, compliance with Occupational Health and Safety standards and insurance requirements, and learnerships aimed at youth to combat unemployment.

On the skills front, the centre highlighted



Sisa Motor Clinic staff proudly participating in the official launch of the SMME Tools, Equipment, and Machinery Project - a collaborative initiative by AIDC-EC, DEDEAT, ECDC, and the Chris Hani Municipality

its recognition of prior learning project, which has enabled 55 veteran technicians to earn Red Seal certificates since June 2025. The qualification gives international recognition to

artisans who have worked for decades without formal schooling and helps retain the R260 million provincial vehicle-maintenance budget within the province.

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SEZ report shows growth, confidence, diversifying industry

THE Coega Development Corporation (Coega) has welcomed the release of the Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) 2024/25 Report on the Coega Special Economic Zone (SEZ), describing it as a clear reflection of the zone's continued resilience and expansion.

The sixth annual report, covering the period 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025 and launched in Gqeberha, presents a data-driven overview of performance across the SEZ. It reinforces Coega's standing as one of South Africa's fastest-growing industrial hubs, with notable gains in employment, tenant numbers and capital investment.

Employment within the SEZ rose to 11 243 by June 2025, marking a 14.2% increase from 9 842 in 2024. The number of tenants also expanded to 57, up by 11 enterprises year-on-year. The report shows a shift in the composition of activity, with non-manufacturing enterprises accounting for 63.2% of tenants, compared to 36.8% in manufacturing.

While total income in the SEZ

remained relatively stable at R24.96 billion in 2025 (down marginally by 0.3% from R25.04 billion in 2024), manufacturing strengthened its contribution, increasing its share to 72.2%. The sector also continued to employ the largest portion of the workforce.

Demographic trends highlighted ongoing challenges in workforce inclusivity. Female representation declined from 38.6% in 2024 to 35.8% in 2025, although non-manufacturing activities recorded the highest proportion of female employees at 47.8%. Youth employment also dipped slightly to 41.6%, down 3.4 percentage points, with younger workers predominantly absorbed within non-manufacturing sectors.

Capital investment remained a key positive indicator, with expenditure on new assets rising to R1.027 billion in 2025, up from R937 million in 2024. Investment was largely directed towards plant, machinery and equipment, signalling sustained investor confidence and long-term commitment to operations within the SEZ.

According to Coega chief knowl-



edge and digital officer, Magama Makgamatho, the findings reflect a well-coordinated and future-focused industrial ecosystem.

"The Stats SA report confirms what we see every day at Coega: a thriving, resilient and forward-looking industrial environment driven by strong partnerships across government, business, labour and communities. This growth is not only eco-

nomic; it is enabling job creation and long-term development. Coega is not just an industrial zone; it is a catalyst for national development," she said.

The report also highlights significant progress in digital adoption, with all businesses within the SEZ now utilising digital tools, reinforcing Coega's transition towards a modern, technology-enabled industrial environment.

Makgamatho added that Coega remains focused on advancing South Africa's industrialisation agenda through investment attraction, job creation and inclusive growth.

Positioned as both a provincial economic anchor and a strategic national asset, the Coega SEZ continues to play a meaningful role in enhancing South Africa's global competitiveness.

Eastern Cape strengthens agricultural resilience with R55m disease control drive

THE Eastern Cape Provincial Government has mobilised significant resources to implement comprehensive disease control, improve biosecurity, and support agricultural production across the province.

Presenting the Department of Agriculture's 2026/27 Policy Speech at the Provincial Legislature on Wednesday, MEC Nonceba Kontsiwe announced that R55 million has been allocated to procure more than one million vaccine doses to combat Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD), alongside R22 million for critical veterinary consumables.

BIOSECURITY AND DISEASE CONTROL ON FOCUS

Kontsiwe said the recent FMD outbreak has severely impacted the sector, disrupting production, restricting livestock movement, and limiting access to key export markets.

"The outbreak has resulted in significant financial losses, placing

strain on farmers and the broader food system. FMD has highlighted the critical importance of strengthened biosecurity systems," she said.

To address these challenges, the MEC announced that the department has invested R25 million in developing infrastructure aimed at enhancing biosecurity and reduce climate change risks in livestock production.

As part of efforts to unlock export opportunities, the department will develop an export quarantine facility at Dohne Agriculture Development Institute.

"This facility will enable both small and large stock producers to quarantine the animals that are earmarked for the export market, as is a requirement of all importing countries," Kontsiwe said.

The department outlined a wide range of initiatives to boost productivity, market access, and sustainability across the sector, and these include:

An amount of R4.5 million has been allocated to roll out the Livestock



Identification and Traceability System (LITS), aimed at improving compliance with the Animal Identification Act and strengthening disease control.

A R42 million partnership between the Eastern Cape Rural Development Agency (ECRDA) and the Land Bank will support farmers through blended finance mechanisms.

The department is investing R23.3 million to construct 17 shearing sheds and implement eight stock water projects across the province, while R8 million will support genetic improvement through the provision of 900 sheep and goats.

DRIVING SECTOR GROWTH

The department has allocated R18.3 million to poultry production support, with 40% earmarked for youth and women enterprises. An investment of R7.5 million in poultry infrastructure development will also be made in seven enterprises in Sarah Baartman, OR Tambo, and Chris Hani.

Grain and oilseed production will be intensified and R80 million that will support this initiative. At least 62km of fencing will also be erected to safeguard croplands.

The department aims to leverage R50 million in investment for 36 Black smallholder citrus farms through ECRDA and Land Bank partnerships.

To improve the competitiveness of the citrus industry, the department is also collaborating with the Citrus Growers Association (CGA), industry players, and the national and Western Cape governments, to implement a cost-effective method

of controlling the False Codling Moth using the Sterile Insect Technique in more than 4 500 hectares of citrus in the province.

The department is partnering with the Agriculture Research Council (ARC) to drive water use efficiency through irrigation scheduling technology that is funded to the value of R900 000 to ensure irrigation schemes align with precision agriculture.

A budget of R5.2 million is set aside to develop a commodity-specific shared mechanisation centre offered by the irrigation scheme to farmers of the scheme.

An amount of R1.5 million will be used to revitalise a milk pasteurising facility at Seven Stars Dairy, while R4 million will support lucerne production on 300 hectares in Qamata and Zanyokhwe.

Further support includes R200 000 for oyster and sea urchin producers and R2 million for small-scale fisheries. R18 million has also been allocated to land rehabilitation initiatives.



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New MD for biomass centre

THE Coega Biomass Centre (CBC) has appointed Vernon Slack (pictured) as MD, effective 1 April 2026, marking a strategic step as the company advances into a new phase of growth and operational enhancement.

The appointment comes as CBC prepares to scale production to 80,000 tons in 2026, alongside efforts to improve product quality through the introduction of new technologies, including a dry hammer mill. As part of this transition, the organisation is also strengthening its governance model, with founding shareholders stepping

back from day-to-day operations to allow for dedicated operational leadership.

In his new role, Slack will take responsibility for daily operations, revenue growth, stakeholder engagement and external representation, while driving continued improvements in product quality, as well as health, safety and environmental (HSE) performance.

He brings extensive leadership experience across multiple sectors in Sub-Saharan Africa, with a track record in business turnarounds, opera-



tional optimisation and values-driven leadership. His appointment aligns with CBC's focus on building a resilient, locally anchored business with broader growth ambitions.

"This is an exciting new chapter for CBC," said founding shareholder

Peter Nohlmans. "Slack's leadership style, operational insight and regional experience position him well to guide the company's continued expansion."

Slack said CBC is well positioned to capitalise on its strong foundation.

Global Export Passport Programme prepares Eastern Cape SMMEs for international markets



The 15 participants of the Global Export Passport Programme (GEPP)

FIFTEEN Eastern Cape small businesses are now positioned to enter global markets following their graduation from the Global Export Passport Programme (GEPP), a Department of Trade, Industry and Competition (dtic) initiative aimed at strengthening export readiness among SMMEs.

The latest cohort completed the programme in February 2026, presenting export marketing strategies that outline target markets, entry approaches and growth plans designed to enhance competitiveness. Since its introduction in 2018, the programme has supported more than 50 Eastern Cape companies in accessing international trade opportunities.

Among the top-performing participants in the recent intake were Aruzabiz from Komani (Queenstown), Leafline Washable and Reusable Sanitary Wear from Bathurst, and Intelminds from Dyamala Village near Whittlesea, all of which achieved high scores for their export strategies.

PROGRAMME DELIVERS MEASURABLE OUTCOMES

According to ECDC Trade Promotion Specialist Linda Lubengu, the programme is already delivering measurable results. Previous participant Proglove from eQonce (King William's Town) has begun exporting to Namibia, while Gqeberha-based Analit Africa is supplying Sunpheka cooking oil and cosmetics to both Mozambique and Namibia.

In the Eastern Cape, GEPP is implemented in partnership with the Eastern Cape Development Corporation (ECDC), combining national and provincial support to strengthen export development. The programme provides partic-

ipating businesses with targeted training, mentorship and coaching to improve market positioning and readiness for international trade.

STRUCTURED APPROACH TO BUILDING CAPABILITY

GEPP follows a structured four-phase approach. The first phase introduces the fundamentals of exporting, including key terminology and the global trading environment. The second phase focuses on export planning and market selection, equipping businesses to assess opportunities and identify viable markets. The third phase addresses market entry strategies, sales and marketing, guiding companies in developing practical export plans and identifying buyers and distribution channels. The final phase provides tailored coaching and implementation support to ensure businesses can execute their strategies effectively.

Lubengu notes that the programme is designed not only to build knowledge but to translate that knowledge into tangible export opportunities.

ONGOING SUPPORT INITIATIVES

Beyond training, the dtic supports participating companies through export promotion initiatives, including trade missions, international exhibitions and trade fairs. These platforms enable businesses to showcase their products, engage with global buyers and establish international partnerships.

Through GEPP, the ECDC and dtic continue to enhance the competitiveness of Eastern Cape enterprises, supporting market diversification, export growth and broader economic development in the province.



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Turning bottlenecks into profits

A SIMPLY engineered low-cost component used to reorient cans or containers has the potential to significantly boost production and offer unparalleled return on investment for packaging operations across southern Africa.

Manufactured by polymer specialist, igus, the 3D-printed product turner is designed for high-volume packaging environments to reorient cans and containers for downstream processing. These processes operate under continuous load and friction, where traditional parts wear quickly, leading to stoppages and driving maintenance costs higher.

The solution from igus uses tribologically-optimised polymers called iglidur i150 Tribo-Filament which is highly wear-resistant and can be 3D-printed on demand for end-use applications.

According to Juan-Eric Davidtz (pictured) of igus, the material is specially engineered for high abrasion resistance with excellent strength and mechanical properties. Unlike standard PLA or ABS polymers the iglidur i150's engineered compound also contains solid lubricants that enable it to run dry with no external lubrication while offering significantly longer service life in sliding and rotating applications. The mate-

rial's inherent wear resistance means that these critical elements retain dimensional stability far longer than conventional printed plastics, reducing part replacements and extending maintenance intervals.

"We have demonstration models that we are showing across the region in different industries wherever products need to be turned. Although our demonstration models are designed



to reorient aluminium cans and PET containers on high-speed conveyors, we are also able to work with clients to develop solutions for their packaging needs wherever they require them. "With it being 3D printed, it unlocks fast prototyping and rapid scale-up from prototype to production-grade part which is a big advantage in these fast-paced manufacturing environments. Importantly for

food and beverage packaging lines, our iglidur i150 is compliant with EU Regulation 10/2011 for food contact applications when appropriately specified," says Davidtz.

He adds that the solution interfaces perfectly with the company's own 3D printing service which supports a wide range of motion and wear parts from plain bearings and gears to custom rollers in igus materials that offer lubrication-free and maintenance-free performance. For packaging engineers, the ability to print mechanically strong abrasion resistant parts on demand can significantly improve processes and reduce downtime.

Predictive maintenance and expert support now available to the bottling industry

BMG's Power Transmission division is now offering the food and beverage sector access to Regal Rexnord's Premium Services package, designed to improve production line efficiency and minimise costly downtime in demanding manufacturing environments.

BMG's Regal Rexnord's Premium Services programme provides glass, bottling and beverage manufacturers with expert audits, predictive maintenance capabilities and comprehensive on-site training to optimise conveyor system performance. This proactive approach helps facilities maintain continuous operations while reducing unexpected equipment failures that can halt production lines.

"Our Premium Services package represents a significant advancement in how we support our food and



beverage customers," explains Carlo Beukes, business unit manager of BMG's Power Transmission division. "By combining predictive maintenance with expert technical support and easy access to replacement parts, we're helping manufacturers protect their production schedules and improve overall equipment effec-

tiveness.

"Regal Rexnord's Premium Services align perfectly with BMG's commitment to providing comprehensive solutions that go beyond simply supplying equipment. Our customers in the food, beverage and glass manufacturing sectors face intense pressure to maintain production schedules, while managing costs. Through our Premium Services offering, we're able to deliver predictive maintenance strategies, expert technical audits and training that transform how our customers approach equipment management.

"The Regal Rexnord Data Portal integration means our customers can identify and order the exact components they require quickly and accurately, reducing inventory carrying costs, while ensuring they have crit-

ical parts available when required."

CONVEYING SOLUTIONS

BMG's comprehensive Regal Rexnord portfolio for the beverage industry includes integrated hot and cold end conveying solutions specifically engineered for the demanding conditions of glass and container manufacturing. The company provides a full range of product conveying systems, complemented by an expanding portfolio of PowerTrain solutions.

The product range features TableTop chains, with precision-engineered steel and plastic construction, that deliver excellent flatness and surface finish, ensuring efficient product handling, reduced

container tipping and extended operational life. MatTop belts are designed for enhanced container stability and reduced product damage, helping manufacturers maintain product integrity and minimise waste during the conveying process.

The Dynamic Transfer System (DTS) enables smooth and reliable transfer of delicate or unstable containers, minimising breakage, while ensuring consistent line performance. Superior chain-sprocket interaction is achieved through optimised engagement design which extends chain life and reduces maintenance downtime. These features improve overall equipment efficiency, while lowering operational costs.

Ceramic valve rapidly delivers duplex softener solution

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

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



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

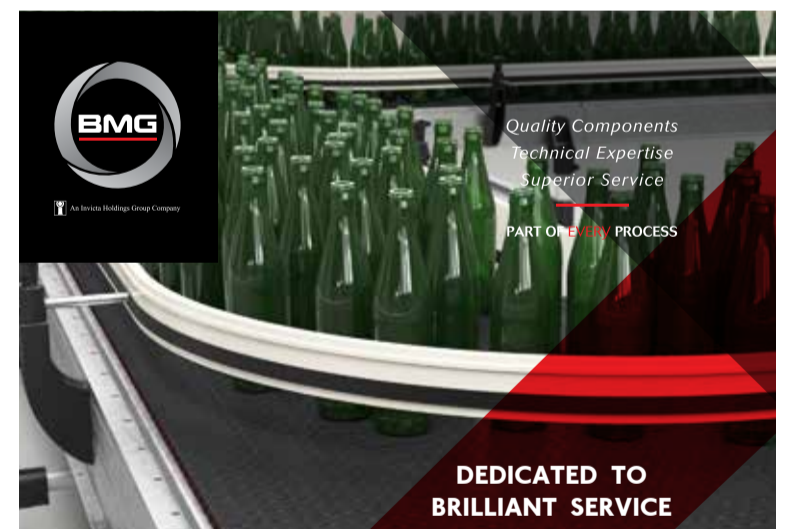
"The key was ensuring the correct electrical connections so the system could function as a true duplex softener," explains Maasdorp. "Once that logic was in place, the solution was surprisingly simple."

The working process is cyclical. When the resin's capacity to remove hardness from the supply water

decreases to zero, a signal is sent to the 3-way ball valve to change direction. Water is immediately routed from the second softener vessel, which has already completed regeneration, while the first vessel begins its regeneration cycle. Once regeneration is complete, the first vessel returns to standby, and the valves continue alternating automatically.

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

Beyond speed, the solution offers structural advantages over traditional duplex manifolds. Ceramic 3-way valves generally outperform conventional manifold arrangements in durability and reliability, particularly in abrasive or corrosive environments. While ceramic valves carry a higher upfront cost, their longer service life and reduced maintenance requirements can offset the expense of frequent manifold rebuilds over time.



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Belt tension meter delivers precision, drives peak machinery performance

BELTS are the heartbeat of a vast array of machinery, from compressors and conveyors to pumps and harvesters, providing the essential link that transfers power and drives motion, ensuring smooth operation and sustained productivity.

"In a nutshell, when belts perform at their best, machinery runs seamlessly, production stays on track, and reliability becomes the standard," says Eddie Martens, product manager: MaPro at SKF South Africa. "Belts play a critical role, with accurate alignment and proper tensioning essential to achieving peak performance and efficiency, long-term reliability and extended system longevity."

This is where SKF's TKBT 10 Belt Tension Meter steps in as a game-changer. Engineered to transform belt tensioning into a process defined by accuracy, reliability and ease, this portable, user-friendly tool turns a critical requirement into a confident routine.

Equipped with a flexible neck sensor and an optional long cable for challenging hard-to-reach or hazardous environments, the instrument's robust design makes belt maintenance easier, safer, more precise and also remarkably simple.

The TKBT 10 determines a belt's natural frequency (Hz) and calculates tension force in Newtons (N) or pound-force (lbf).

Results are displayed clearly on a



bright LCD screen, ensuring measurements are easy to read even in poorly lit areas. With a multi-lingual interface offering six language options and internal memory with a storage capacity of up to 750

readings, the tool is built for versatility.

Martens also highlights that zero-point calibration allows users to perform calibration independently, adding convenience to precision.

The TKBT 10 Belt Tension Meter is ideal for a wide spectrum of belt-driven machinery, from HVAC systems, centrifugal fans and blowers to crushers, vibrating screens, combine units, irrigation pumps and mobile equipment.

"In fact, this instrument ensures precision in pumps, fans, mixers, machine tools, mobile equipment and countless other belt-driven applications on vehicles and machinery," notes Martens.

The versatility of the TBKT 10

makes it a trusted solution across industries, including manufacturing, material handling, packaging, mining, mineral processing, cement, agriculture and food & beverage, where reliable performance and efficiency are non-negotiable.

With precise pulley alignment and accurate tensioning as critical foundations for long belt life and continuous production, the innovative SKF TKBT 10 delivers the critical data needed – quickly, safely and with absolute confidence. By protecting against wear, securing reliability, maximising uptime and powering productivity, the tool amplifies efficient, sustainable operations – setting a new benchmark in belt maintenance.

New-generation wheel loaders launched in SA

BABCOCK has announced the local launch of Volvo Construction Equipment's new-generation wheel loaders in South Africa, bringing enhanced productivity, fuel efficiency and operator comfort to customers across construction, quarrying, mining and material-handling applications.

The new generation range available locally includes the Volvo L150, L180 and L220 wheel loaders, each designed to perform in demanding operating conditions while supporting lower total cost of ownership over the machine lifecycle.

HIGHER PRODUCTIVITY

Volvo CE's new generation wheel loaders incorporate advanced load-sensing hydraulics to improve attachment responsiveness and reduce cycle times. Auto bucket fill technology enables faster, more consistent bucket filling, while automatic bucket levelling helps operators return the bucket to a level position from both dump and curl modes for improved accuracy and

repeatability.

The integrated Volvo powertrain synchronises the engine, transmission and axles for optimal efficiency and performance. OptiShift technology, together with Volvo's patented Reverse-By-Braking (RBB) system, helps shorten cycle times, reduce fuel consumption and limit drivetrain wear in repetitive loading applications.

All models are compatible with Hydro-treated Vegetable Oil (HVO) fuel, supporting customers' decarbonisation goals without requiring engine modifications.

STEP CHANGE IN COMFORT

The redesigned cab environment focuses on visibility, ergonomics and ease of use. The intuitive Volvo Co-Pilot interface allows operators to manage machine functions, productivity tools and comfort settings through a single display, with the ability to view up to four widgets simultaneously.

Additional improvements include enhanced armrests, increased storage, multiple USB charging points,

improved climate control and a choice of seating options, including heated and ventilated seats. Optional Comfort Drive Control (CDC) enables single-lever steering to reduce operator fatigue during long shifts.

SAFETY AND SERVICEABILITY

Service access has been improved through a tiltable cab and a new service platform with harness anchor points, making routine maintenance safer and more efficient. Under-grille lighting improves visibility during refuelling, particularly in low-light conditions.

Safety features include Volvo Smart View with 360-degree visibility, an upgraded collision mitigation system, high-visibility lighting, automatic door opening and robust handrails – all contributing to safer operation on busy sites.

DIGITAL SOLUTIONS

Customers can further enhance productivity through Volvo's digital solutions suite. Load Assist provides on-board weighing and oper-

ator coaching, while Load Ticket enables seamless data transfer from the machine to the office, simplifying invoicing and reporting. CareTrack telematics and site operations tools support uptime monitoring, fleet optimisation and mixed-fleet management.

FLEXIBLE FUNDING

To support customers' capital investment decisions, Babcock offers access to tailored funding and financing solutions through Volvo Financial Services. These solutions are designed to align equipment investment with operational and cash-flow requirements, enabling customers to deploy the latest technology while managing risk and long-term costs more effectively.

"As the authorised Volvo Construction Equipment dealer in South Africa, Babcock is proud to introduce this new generation of



wheel loaders to the local market," said Quintin O'Reilly, head of sales: equipment, Babcock.

"These machines deliver tangible gains in productivity, efficiency and operator comfort. When combined with Babcock's national service footprint, parts availability and flexible financing options, they offer a compelling solution for customers focused on long-term performance and value."

Latest light plant model thrives in demanding conditions

THREE Atlas Copco H7+ light towers supplied by Atlas Copco dealer, Airlif Compressors and Pumps, to a coal mine in Mpumalanga in early February 2026, perfectly align with the customer's focus on safety, efficiency, reliability, performance and productivity.

The robust H7+ stands out as a holistic light solution, combining cutting-edge technology with practical design, delivering easy, reliable operation, powerful illumination across wide areas, low fuel consumption, reduced noise, easy operation and hassle-free maintenance.

Riaan Burke, business development manager at Atlas Copco Power

Technique, explains that the mine had previously been supplied with the earlier-generation Atlas Copco H6+ light towers and was now seeking an automated solution.

"Their priority was a light tower designed to switch on at dusk, shut down at sunrise and allow easy raising and lowering of the mast. As an upgrade to the H6+, the H7+ unit presented the ideal solution, featuring a photocell for automated power management and hydraulics that provide safe, effortless mast operation thereby minimising human intervention and improving operator safety."

The new light towers are already delivering outstanding results.

Equipped with advanced SMD (Surface Mount Device) LED floodlights, the H7+ delivers bright, energy-efficient coverage across more than 7,000 sqm, an increase of 1,000 sqm over the earlier H6+ units which used COB (Chip on Board) technology. Fewer towers are needed to cover a given area, streamlining operations and cutting fuel use – a dual saving for the customer. Dimming control added to LED technology and energy-efficient engines lowers fuel consumption by up to 40%, reduces CO₂ emissions and ultimately lowers long-term costs.

Servicing intervals on the H7+ of over 600 hours maximise uptime

and drive consistent performance, translating into improved total cost of ownership for customers across industries. With noise levels around 55 dBA at 7m, the H7+ runs far quieter than traditional towers, presenting a major advantage for noise-sensitive environments such as residential areas.

The robust, reliable H7+ is built with a hard hat body incorporating a corrosion-resistant, crack-resistant polyethylene canopy designed to protect components from impacts and environmental exposure. The light tower thrives in demanding conditions including open-pit mining, night-time industrial and construction sites, outdoor events,

emergency response zones, maintenance yards and rental fleets.

The H7+ is also easy to use and transport. With its compact, towable design, the light plant can be deployed quickly across multiple sites. An automatic mast-lowering function triggered by the handbrake release prevents towing with the mast extended.

Kenneth Smit, sales manager at Airlif Compressors and Pumps says that all these qualities make the H7+ a standout choice for dealers, rental companies, contractors and utilities. "The unit's suitability for a wide range of operations broaden dealers' sales and application opportunities."



Measurement accuracy: Ink fades, but process precision leaves a mark

PAPER manufacturing is a demanding process that relies on consistency, precision, and control at every stage. From the preparation of raw pulp to the continuous operation of bleaching towers and storage systems, each phase presents unique measurement challenges. In South Africa, where local mills must remain competitive in a global industry, reliable instrumentation is vital to ensuring operational efficiency and maintaining product quality.

WHERE THE PRESSURE'S ON

During stock preparation, pressure screens are tasked with removing contaminants and filtering out usable fibres. Operating under conditions of constant pressure changes, abrasive materials, and flow variability, these units require accurate pressure monitoring. The Vegabar 82 pressure transmitter is well-suited to these harsh environments. With a robust ceramic measuring cell, it delivers stable readings even in the presence of pressure surges and solid-laden media. Maintaining the correct pressure differential across the screen is critical, and continuous monitoring helps ensure that only clean, well-prepared stock moves forward in the process.

FROM BROWN TO BRILLIANT

The bleaching stage involves the use of strong oxidising agents such as oxygen, ozone, or hydrogen peroxide to remove lignin

and whiten the pulp. These chemicals are introduced into 25-meter-high towers that operate continuously at temperatures close to 95°C. Given their size and operational demands, these towers are never emptied and require ongoing level monitoring.

Here, a combination of Vegapuls 6X, Vegabar 82, and Vegacap 64 instruments provides reliable measurement data. Vegapuls 6X, with its radar-based, non-contact level sensing, handles high temperatures and steam-laden environments without loss of accuracy. The Vegacap 64, a capacitive level switch, adds redundancy and ensures safe, reliable operation under variable conditions. Together, these instruments allow process engineers to maintain chemical dosing and pulp consistency at optimal levels, avoiding overflows, dry runs, or chemical waste.

NO BLOCKAGES ALLOWED

At the start of the process, waste paper or pulp bales are introduced into the pulper via conveyor belts. Here, they're combined with process water and broken down by mechanical stirrers. The aggressive motion of the stirrers, coupled with possible foreign objects like wires or metal debris, creates a demanding measuring environment.

Bales, belts, and breakdowns? Not with Vegamip 61 and Vegabar 82 on duty. For these conditions, Vegamip 61, a microwave-based sensor, provides non-intrusive level detection, even through thick vessel walls or turbulent product surfaces. Used alongside the Vegabar



82, this setup allows for accurate detection of water-to-fibre ratios, essential for maintaining fibre consistency. Additionally, conveyor monitoring with Vegamip ensures that blockages or jams from bale congestion are quickly identified and addressed before they cause downtime.

STOCKED AND STEADY

Once prepared, the stock is stored in large vertical towers with high throughput. Constant agitation within these towers ensures homogeneity, but also creates turbulent surfaces, foam, and steam - all of which can interfere with less capable sensors.

Agitators churning, steam rising, storage towers are chaos without the calm of good level measurement. Vegapuls 6X proves its value here. Designed for difficult conditions, it provides accurate, continuous level readings regardless of condensation or agitation. Paired with Vegabar 82, which can handle tempera-

ture fluctuations and mechanical stress, this setup helps avoid dry running of agitators, ensures consistent material availability, and prevents unplanned stoppages in the production line.

ZERO DRIFT, MAXIMUM UPTIME

IO-Link, myVega, and non-contact radar keep calibration and diagnostics friction-free. Vega's instruments are designed to integrate easily with industrial control systems, offering IO-Link capabilities, wireless adjustment via Bluetooth, and compatibility with myVega for streamlined configuration and monitoring.

This connectivity supports more agile operations, where maintenance teams and operators can make adjustments in real time or access diagnostics without stopping the process.

HIDDEN HEROES OF PAPER

Reliable measurement and monitoring at every stage of the paper manufacturing process are essential, not just for maintaining output, but for achieving long-term sustainability and competitiveness.

With instrumentation like Vegapuls 6X, Vegabar 82, Vegacap 64, Vegamip 61, and others, South African mills are better equipped to meet the demands of both local and global markets. These tools support better decision-making, reduce production risks, and enable smarter, more resilient operations from pulp to finished product.

Flow metering without disruption



way that the reflection occurs on the opposite inner side of the pipe.

This means that no interfering structures are necessary inside the measuring pipe, which is made entirely of stainless steel. Another advantage: the sensor does not require any seals and ensures permanent tightness. The SU

LOW meters with moving parts are prone to errors and require extensive maintenance. The new SU Puresonic flow meter from ifm has no moving parts inside the measuring tube and hence offers many advantages.

In applications where conventional flow meters are affected by components in the measuring pipe, the SU Puresonic is an ideal solution. A typical problem of flow meters that involve moving parts such as a paddle wheel, for example, is that the wheels can become porous and break (a risk that increases over the service life) or that a blockage occurs due to foreign bodies in the medium. Moreover, components can be damaged during cleaning and cause the meters to malfunction. The SU Puresonic flow meter works with ultrasonic technology.

The ultrasonic transmitter and receiver are placed on the outside of the wall in such a

Puresonic is equipped with an operating status LED that can signal different status messages: e.g. a deterioration of the signal quality due to air bubbles, particles or deposits, a failure of the electronics or the presence of a short circuit. In addition to green and red, the LED can also light up blue according to Namur NE107 to indicate a change in the process.

As the SU Puresonic flow meter consists of a stainless-steel pipe with no components built in or protruding into it, the customer's choice is very simple. A time-consuming selection of the appropriate meter, for example based on the wet parts or the sealing materials depending on the process parameters, can be dispensed with. The new flow meter is available in two sizes with process connections of 1" and 2"; the measuring ranges of the two models are 1...240 l/min and 5...1,000 l/min



Continuous online vibration monitoring on submersible/ Immersible pumps in wastewater pumping stations.

Submersible pumps do the essential – but dirty work – of transporting sewage to treatment plants. Prone to blockages, ragging, and general wear and tear, pumps need to be monitored to avoid events such as overflow and environmental contamination of public and residential areas.

With ifm's remote monitoring solution you can visualize the condition of your submersible pumps and diagnose issues before they become serious problems. It combines ifm's VSE proven diagnostic technology which uses task specific submersible accelerometers. Data from this system is directly coupled to ifm's analytic software to identify pumping issues which in turn provide current data and warnings via email or text.

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Effective monitoring of solar panels for dust and debris

KEEPING solar panels clean is the only way to ensure that they function effectively. Dust, dirt and other assorted debris can block the sunlight that solar panels rely on to deliver power. Dirty solar panels can lead to a reduction in performance of up to 25% as well as potentially causing hot spots that damage cells. To assist in the quick monitoring of solar panels for dirt, Senseca has introduced their Dust Fall Monitoring System (MDFS), which has been designed to alert control centre operators at photovoltaic solar farms and other commercial developments utilising solar panels as to when their panels need to be cleaned.

"The MDFS system is easily added to the solar panel control system

and compares the radiation collected by two-compensated reference cells with outputs either in voltage (Model MDFS2) or Modbus protocol (Model MDFS2-S). One cell (Clean Cell) must always be kept clean, while the other (Dirty Cell) is cleaned at the same time as the PV panels," said Jan Grobler, Managing Director of Senseca South Africa.

"The device enables a quick identification of dirty solar panels which ensures that any drop in the performance of the panels is rectified timeously. The device is compact, lightweight and easy to install to existing systems," said Grobler.

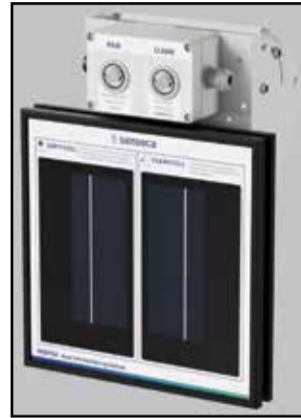
TWO WAYS TO BE USED

Basic mode: When manually

comparing the Clean and Dirty cell readings, the operator can decide when cleaning is needed. In this mode, the control box is not required.

A d v a n c e d mode: With the optional control box, the system automatically calculates the soiling attenuation rate (%) of the PV panels. This value can be used directly to decide if cleaning is necessary whilst providing confirmation that cleaning and other maintenance tasks have been performed. The MDFS system provides five

data channels: sun elevation, clean solar cell rad, dirty solar cell rad, MDFS status and attenuation.



Both the MDFS2 and MDFS2-S offer a measurement range of 0 to 1400 W/m², operating temperatures of -20 °C to +60 °C and warning, pairing instruction via digital outputs, whilst the MDFS2 offers a measurement error of +/- 2.1% the

MDFS2-S offers a +/- 2.2% measurement error.

The Data Acquisition System (DAS) model METEODATA-4000

collects the solar radiation gathered by the clean reference cell and the dirty reference cell, and additional information regarding tasks performed at the field, sensed by the control box.

This is all utilised in the calculation of attenuation due to soiling. The data collected by the DAS is recorded in a SQL server installed in a data collection centre where it is accessible to be displayed and exported to Excel files.

"The MDFS is a welcome addition to the Senseca product range of environmental monitoring instrumentation, which we believe will assist in ensuring that PV farms and large commercial solar panel installations are running optimally at all times," said Grobler.

Reliability restored through systemic vibration analysis

CONDITION monitoring specialist company, WearCheck, uses a variety of testing techniques to enhance reliability in machinery components and prevent failures. In addition to its core service – the scientific analysis of used oil samples – the company offers Asset Reliability Care (ARC) services such as vibration analysis, thermography, balancing, operation-

al shape deflection, motion video amplification and many condition monitoring services.

This case study highlights how a structured vibration analysis approach was used to diagnose and resolve persistent vibration on a critical boiler induced draft (ID) fan at a heavy industrial site.

WearCheck vibration analyst, Renier Kalp, discusses the case. "During routine condition monitor-

ing, elevated vibration levels were detected on the ID fan. Initial inspection revealed severe structural looseness, with multiple base bolts either loose or missing. Vibration data supported this finding, showing a dominant 1X running-speed peak - a typical indicator of looseness due to insufficient structural rigidity.

"Structural looseness allows excessive movement in the direction of least resistance, amplifying vibration levels and placing additional stress on machine components. If left uncorrected, this can lead to secondary damage.

"After the base was repaired and all bolts secured, follow-up vibration analysis confirmed an improvement. However, the data now revealed multiple harmonics of the 1X peak, indicating the development of rotating looseness associated with bearing wear. The instability caused by the looseness had already initiated secondary damage within the fan bearings.

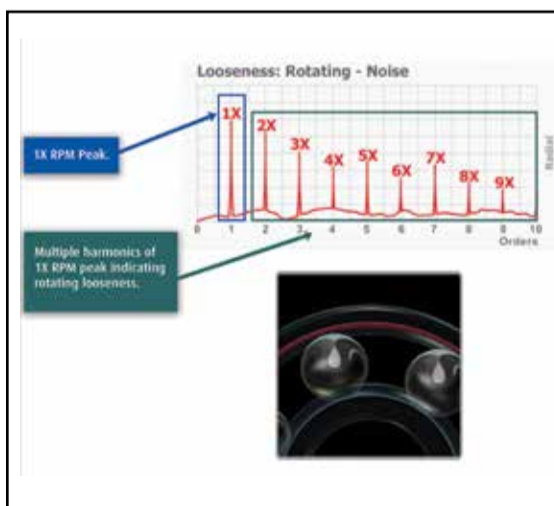
"The affected drive-end and non-drive-end bearings were replaced, and a pulley alignment was performed to ensure correct installation and prevent further mechanical stress. Post-maintenance measurements confirmed that the bearing-related vibration had been eliminated.

"Despite these corrections, a high 1X vibration component remained. With structural looseness, bearing defects and misalignment addressed, the remaining cause was identified as impeller unbalance through a process of elimination supported by vibration analysis.

"An in-situ balancing procedure was conducted using phase and amplitude measurements. The initial vibration level was recorded at 11 mm/s. A trial weight was applied to determine the system response, allowing accurate calculation of the



WearCheck uses a wide variety of condition monitoring applications to diagnose machine defects and advises asset owners how best to rectify the faults before they lead to component failure.



Rising vibration signals danger—causing secondary damage. In this case, rotating looseness developed, with bearing clearance producing 1X harmonics linked to bearing damage

required correction. A final correction weight of 104 g was installed at the calculated position on the impeller.

"Following balancing, vibration levels were reduced to 1.8 mm/s, confirming that the fan was operating within acceptable limits."

Kalp cites this case to demonstrate the importance of addressing primary faults before attempting corrective actions such as balancing. "Multiple defects can present similar vibration signatures, particularly at 1X running speed, making accurate diagnosis

essential," he says.

By systematically identifying and eliminating each contributing factor, WearCheck's ARC team was able to resolve the root cause of the problem and restore the fan to reliable operation.

The study highlights how detailed vibration analysis, combined with practical mechanical understanding, enables effective fault diagnosis, prevents unnecessary maintenance, and improves overall plant reliability.

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Using cross-disciplinary thinking to power a greener future

As the global community marks World Engineering Day for Sustainable Development in March, Aurex Constructors is celebrating more than 13 years of delivering photovoltaic (PV) plant installations. Its engineering division was established in March 2023 to further strengthen its technical capabilities and drive sustainable innovation in South Africa.

This year's theme, 'Smart Engineering for a Sustainable Future Through Innovation and Digitalisation', underscores the importance of resilient, responsible, and forward-thinking engineering in supporting critical systems such as infrastructure, energy, water, industry, and food production.

Proclaimed by UNESCO in 2019 and celebrated annually on 4 March, World Engineering Day recognises the vital contribution engineers make toward achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The 2026 theme places sustainability and innovation firmly at the centre of global development, principles that are deeply embedded in Aurex Constructors' renewable operations.

RENEWABLES LEADERSHIP

For over 13 years, Aurex Constructors has been at the forefront of South Africa's renewable energy journey. Since its first project in 2012, the company has installed more than 1.3 GW of clean photovoltaic (PV) power and constructed 16 solar plants, positioning itself as a trusted partner in large-scale renew-



able delivery.

Herman Buhmann, operations director: renewable energy solutions at Aurex Constructors, says the company's fully integrated EPC model sets it apart in an increasingly competitive market. "In our renewables division, we engineer in-house, procure in-house, and construct with our own teams. That integrated capability gives us a significant advantage in terms of quality control, efficiency, and interface management. When engineering and construction sit under one roof, decisions are made faster. Problems are solved in the interest of the project, not in isolation."

Operating across oil and gas, chemicals, mining and metals, thermal power and renewable energy, Aurex Constructors has strategically evolved its renewable offering to meet growing market demand. In recent years, the company expand-

ed into full turnkey EPC solutions in renewables, establishing a robust internal engineering department to complement its construction expertise.

ENGINEERING BUILT FROM THE GROUND UP

Unlike providers that price projects per megawatt, the company develops each plant from first principles. Every site presents unique topographical, geotechnical, and grid-connection challenges. "Although PV technology may be similar, every plant layout is different," explains Buhmann. "We develop each solution from the ground up, based on client requirements and what we believe is the best technical outcome for long-term reliability."

Regulatory reforms, rising electricity tariffs, and the removal of generation caps have accelerated

private renewable investment in South Africa. Businesses increasingly seek long-term price certainty through power purchase agreements (PPAs), alongside sustainability commitments and energy security.

Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) are also transforming the landscape. "Battery storage enhances energy stability and reliability," notes Buhmann. "Where conventional supply may fluctuate, renewable plants typically commit to very high availability levels. Storage allows us to flatten generation profiles and provide greater certainty to off-takers."

BUILDING THE NEXT GENERATION OF ENGINEERS

Central to Aurex Constructors' success is its in-house engineering capability, led by engineering manager Natie Odendaal. Over the past three years, the department has grown rapidly, incorporating multidisciplinary expertise across electrical, civil, mechanical, and structural engineering.

"Renewable energy projects demand cross-disciplinary thinking," says Odendaal. "Our engineers collaborate across civil and electrical design to optimise land use, reduce costs, and improve constructability. We also integrate the latest digital tools to enhance quality and efficiency."

As climate patterns shift, engineering resilience has become essential. Increased rainfall in certain regions, for example, has required advanced stormwater management and ero-

sion-control designs to ensure 25- to 30-year plant lifespans. Beyond project delivery, Aurex Constructors is committed to skills development and closing South Africa's engineering age gap.

"We have identified a significant gap between older and younger engineers in the market," explains Odendaal. "Our focus is to mentor young professionals, support professional registration, and create structured development plans so that knowledge is transferred effectively. We are investing in engineers who will power Africa's future."

Buhmann adds that opportunity and growth are key drivers for retaining talent. "People want to broaden their skill sets and be part of something meaningful. As our projects grow in scale and complexity, so too do the opportunities for our engineers. We believe strongly in the future of this country and in the role renewable energy will play in that future."

EMPOWERING A GREENER TOMORROW

Aurex Constructors continues to expand its footprint across South Africa, and increasingly into the broader African market. On World Engineering Day, the company reaffirms its commitment to innovation, sustainability and excellence in delivery. Engineering is not only about infrastructure. It is about enabling energy security, supporting economic growth and building resilient communities for generations to come.

Precision test and measurement equipment range in SA

COMBINING a technically led and digitally enabled approach with an exceptional team of experts, global product and service solutions provider, RS, has launched its own brand RS Pro. The company says the growing demand for precision and efficiency led it to launch the brand to provide a complete portfolio of test and measurement equipment engineered to meet the highest standards of performance, safety, and value.

With more than 1,500 products and over 300 new additions, the RS Pro test and measurement range is designed to meet the diverse needs of professionals across maintenance, manufacturing, and laboratory environments.

RANGE FOR EVERY APPLICATION

The RS Pro portfolio covers all areas of test and measurement, including:

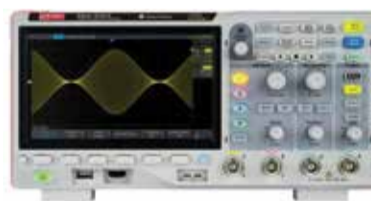
- Handheld instruments: electrical test equipment, multimeters, and

thermal imaging cameras.

- Bench equipment: oscilloscopes, bench power supplies, and signal generators.
- Environmental testing: data loggers, sound level meters, hygrometers, and thermometers.
- Laboratory equipment: ultrasonic cleaners, microscopes, pipettes, and lab bottles.
- To complement this range, RS Pro also offers a variety of accessories, including test leads, oscilloscope probes, test connectors, batteries, and cable assemblies.

QUALITY

RS Pro test and measurement products undergo rigorous testing and approval by RS Pro test and design laboratories, ensuring uncompromising quality and safety. According to the company, this commitment to excellence is reflected by an exceptionally low return rate of just 0.04%, highlighting the reliability and long-term durability of the range.



Many instruments are available in calibrated versions, with calibration and re-calibration services offered to ensure consistent accuracy throughout the product's lifespan.

Erick Wessels, sales director at RS South Africa, said that "test and measurement is essential for maintaining accuracy, efficiency, and safety across South Africa's industrial sectors. RS Pro offers professionals reliable, high-quality solutions that meet international standards while delivering strong value and performance." Accuracy, efficiency, and reliability

Whether for everyday monitoring, preventive maintenance, energy management, or environmental control, test and measurement equipment is essential for operational excellence and safety compliance.

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A new era for strategic water treatment launches in SA

XYLEM, a global water technology company focused on solving complex water challenges, launched its new Dissolved Air Flotation (DAF) products and services for the South African market.

In an event hosted at Xylem Africa's headquarters in Kempton Park, Johannesburg, the company unveiled its DAF equipment and services, delivering reliable wastewater treatment to key sectors such as mining, municipalities, agriculture, aquaculture, food & beverage, paper & pulp, chemical manufacturers, and pharmaceutical companies.

DAF is a critical pre-treatment and solids-separation system within broader wastewater treatment works. It can operate as a standalone solids-separation step, or complement downstream biological, filtration, or reuse systems to help achieve site-specific compliance and reuse objectives. The compact and modular design enables deployment in constricted and crowded sites. Xylem also provides excellent DAF rental options that support smaller and seasonal projects.

"We are very excited to bring cutting-edge DAF solutions to our local customers. Xylem has introduced our DAF solutions to several other markets, where they have become a big hit among companies of various sizes. They appreciate the logistical benefits of DAF's compact designs and convenient deployment, supported by our expert technicians. South

African organisations in the private and public sectors can now also leverage DAF to expand their choices for water treatment and recycling," says Chetan Mistry, strategy and marketing manager at Xylem WSS (AMETI).

WHAT IS DAF?

Xylem's DAF systems use Hellbender™ pumps to release microscopic air bubbles that, following appropriate coagulation and flocculation, attach to suspended and destabilised colloidal particles, enabling their separation from the water phase which can be skimmed away.

The DAF technique efficiently removes Total Suspended Solids (TSS), Fats, Oils, and Greases (FOG), and particulate-associated biochemical oxygen demand (BOD) from wastewater streams. These systems offer an effective solution for a wide range of applications, including:

- Thickening of biosolids
- Product recovery from wastewater
- Treatment of industrial wastewater to meet site discharge limits
- Polishing of biological treatment effluent (algae and phosphorus removal)
- Pretreatment to reduce loading on downstream biological treatment systems
- Clarification of biosolids downstream of aerobic and anaerobic treatment

- Removal of fats, oils, and greases (FOG)
- Temporary treatment of biosolids during harvest seasons
- Removal of metals and fines
- Recovery of proteins from slaughterhouse wastewater

DAF systems are also remarkably compact, often requiring significantly less footprint and depth than conventional sedimentation tanks, depending on design and loading rates. Its combination of convenient sizes and broad applications makes it attractive to numerous industries that clean water for reuse, extract materials from water, or prepare water for compliant discharge into the environment.

BRINGING DAF'S ADVANTAGES TO AFRICA

Xylem's DAF solutions and services enable more producers to manage wastewater strategically without excessive investment in wastewater infrastructure.

As part of a phased and modular treatment strategy, DAF is often deployed as an entry point into integrated wastewater and reuse solutions, enabling future expansion with biological treatment, filtration, and advanced polishing technologies

Xylem's DAF units provide efficient wastewater pre-treatment and solids separation with three DAF models: RT-50, RT-100, RT-240 (100-1000 GPM flows). The units have durable



stainless steel construction and integrated flocculation tube for enhanced separation. They have an ore-wired control panel for quick setup and operate with continuous support throughout rental terms. Simple operation following site integration, safety review, and commissioning (connection to process lines and 460VAC power required) enables faster deployment.

From running pilots and proofs of concepts for wastewater management plans, to enhancing the efficiency of established treatment systems, and upgrading to cutting-edge treatment methodologies: Xylem Africa and DAF help South African industries and municipalities solve water for all.

Xylem Africa and its partners deliver permanent and rental DAF solutions, calibrated to a customer's requirements and operations, according to Mistry.

"Xylem's expert staff and our experienced partners customise each solution as required. We deliver and manage components such as mixer tanks, weir tanks, pumps, and conveyors, as well as catwalks and accessories. Our skilled technicians can support on-site staff or run the process on behalf of our customers."

Water is humanity's most essential resource. As water stress and costs increase, organisations are intensifying their strategies to ensure supply and compliance. For many, though, this prospect was out of reach because of the cost and cumbersome ownership of industrialised water treatment options.

Backed by Xylem's engineering expertise and service capability, dissolved air flotation expands flexible, resilient options for wastewater pre-treatment and reuse within integrated water management strategies.

Pump manufacturer unveils its revamped headquarters

KSB Pumps and Valves has shown its commitment to sustainable development with the official opening of its newly renovated Green Star compliant head office building in Activia Park, Germiston

Rather than relocate or construct a new corporate office, the company chose to reinvest and repurpose existing infrastructure instead of bulldozing and rebuilding the historically significant property. The company has retained much of its old heritage in a modern building that meets its business needs and complies with the latest Green Star building practices.

According to KSB Pumps and Valves facilities development manager, Terence Barkhuizen, the original property footprint dates back to 1959 when the German pump manufacturer established a local sales company that led to the development of its own manufacturing facility in Germiston a short while later. Over the following decades, the Activia Park site expanded and expanded again each time through the acquisition of adjacent properties which led to operations spreading across multiple buildings.

"As time went by our manufactur-



ing shifted into newer facilities and parts of the original site became underused. Simultaneously the original four-storey administration building no longer met the operational demands of our growing organisation and we were faced with the choice to relocate or redevelop the property to our exact needs.

"We chose history and decided on the latter option. Our old multi-storey stores building was earmarked for conversion into additional administrative space as it was still structurally sound but had become outdated. As can be imagined this presented challenges as it had no passenger lift, no compliant stair access, no ablutions and no physical connection to the existing offices. Floor levels

varied and window proportions were industrial rather than corporate," says Barkhuizen.

He explains that the team committed to redevelopment aligned with Green Star principles. The project targeted a 5-Star Green Star SA rating through the Green Building Council of South Africa which is the benchmark for South African excellence in sustainable building performance. "For a brownfields industrial conversion this was a demanding target".

NEW BEGINNING

"After much planning and careful design, the company started with a new shared core to introduce a link

with the old administration building and the refurbished structure. This core houses a passenger lift and compliant staircases and resolves the challenges of integrating the buildings into a single administrative complex. Simultaneously the external envelope was redesigned with performance glass and a double-glazed façade. This reduces heat gain and loss and improves the internal comfort of occupants. Being right next to the N12 highway it also serves to limit noise intrusion.

"By retaining the original structural frame, we reduced the need for new steel and concrete which also reduced the need for demolition waste to landfill. This saved significant costs and assisted us along the path to achieving our Green Star rating. On the exterior we created new open areas by removing redundant factory floors and replacing them with landscaped garden areas. We also retained some structures like old test bed plinths and other structures that played a big part in the development of the company through the ages.

"Apart from those historic elements we also landscaped the area with the intention to minimise hard surfacing, improve stormwater attenuation

and allow natural ground infiltration. Being a water scarce country, we also decided to harvest our rainwater and have installed harvesting tanks to capture roof runoff for irrigation and landscape features," says Barkhuizen.

SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES

With water being central to KSB Pumps and Valves, the focus was also on water efficiency which is addressed internally through low-flow sanitary fittings and heat pump-based water heating systems with continuous circulation to minimise wastage. Each floor is individually metered for electricity and water with smart monitoring systems providing real-time performance data to occupants with the intention of promoting responsible usage of these resources.

Lighting incorporates individual motion sensors which limit energy use to occupied spaces. HVAC systems also comply with current global efficiency standards, and all finishes were specified as low VOC to enhance indoor air quality. Even the timber products used in the renovation of the buildings is certified to ensure responsible sourcing.



4 Key trends shaping SA's bulk logistics industry in 2026

INFRASTRUCTURE investment, improving economic conditions, and rising trade volumes are positioning South Africa's bulk logistics sector for a more resilient and strategic role in 2026.

As regional trade corridors expand and demand for efficient freight movement grows, logistics operators are under increasing pressure to deliver reliable, cost-effective transport solutions across road, rail, and port networks.

Industry indicators suggest that 2026 will be a defining year for bulk logistics, with several key trends reshaping how goods move across South Africa and into broader African markets.

The team at Reinhardt Transport Group has identified four major trends expected to influence the sector this year.

1. Rising demand for efficient corridor logistics

Increased freight volumes across key export and inland corridors are driving demand for dependable bulk transport solutions. The focus is shifting toward optimising end-to-end logistics - from origin points to ports and cross-border destinations. Efficient corridor management, particularly between industrial hubs and ports,



is becoming critical. Delays, inefficiencies, and bottlenecks in these routes have a direct impact on trade competitiveness, placing logistics providers at the centre of economic performance.

2. Strengthening supply chain resilience

Extreme weather events, ageing infrastructure, and ongoing port and rail constraints continue to challenge the sector. Recent disruptions have highlighted the vulnerability of logistics networks and the need for greater resilience. Operators are increasingly investing in in-house technical capabilities, fleet

maintenance, and rapid response systems to minimise downtime and maintain delivery schedules. Control over operations—from vehicle uptime to route planning—is becoming a key differentiator. At the same time, improvements in port performance, rail reliability, and energy stability remain essential to supporting a more dependable national logistics system.

3. Technology driving operational efficiency

Technology adoption is accelerating across the bulk logistics sector, with operators leveraging advanced fleet management systems, real-time tracking, and data analytics to improve performance. Tools such as geofencing, live fuel monitoring, and predictive maintenance are enabling smarter decision-making and reducing operational risks. Artificial intelligence and IoT solutions are also helping optimise routing and improve asset utilisation. In addition, digital trade platforms linked to the African Continental Free Trade Area are streamlining cross-border processes, reducing administrative delays

and supporting faster movement of goods across borders.

4. Sustainability moves into core operations

Environmental performance is becoming a central operational requirement rather than a secondary consideration. Logistics companies are under increasing pressure from regulators, clients, and investors to demonstrate measurable progress in reducing emissions and improving resource efficiency. Practical interventions - such as fuel-efficient technologies, optimised fleet usage, and water-saving initiatives at depots—are being prioritised to deliver tangible results. Sustainability is now closely linked to cost efficiency and long-term competitiveness, making it a key focus area across the bulk logistics value chain. As South Africa strengthens its position as a gateway to African trade, the bulk logistics sector will play a critical role in enabling growth through more efficient, resilient, and technology-driven supply chains.

Precision control and integrated safety drive high-performance forklifts

THE NT-series - which covers the 4.0 to 5.5 tonne capacity range, at load centres of 500 mm or 600 mm - combines automatic transmission, with integrated safety and control systems, to ensure consistent performance. Maximum gradeability reaches 45.8 % and loaded travel speed is 22 km/hr.

These robust machines are available from Criterion Equipment in diesel, petrol and LPG engine configurations, allowing users to match fuel type and performance to site requirements. Each model incorporates a torque-converter automatic transmission with two forward speeds and one reverse speed. Gear changes occur automatically while travelling, eliminating manual shifting and allowing operators to focus on load handling, rather than transmission control. This is important in situations where many drivers share equipment throughout shifts.

Full hydraulic power steering with a synchro-

niser allows precise manoeuvring in confined spaces and reduces operator fatigue during long shifts. The synchroniser keeps the steering wheel aligned with the drive direction, improving control when entering aisles or loading areas. Positive feedback from operators is they are able to reverse safely out of a loading bay, without having to correct the wheel position.

A multi-functional digital display provides real-time monitoring of travel speed, load weight and engine temperature. Operators can identify developing issues, like overheating, overloading and excessive speed, before they cause unplanned downtime.

The solid-tyre configuration provides the traction and ride stability required for outdoor operations on uneven surfaces in timber yards, construction sites and logistics depots. An important feature of these machines is the

2.58 m – 2.94 m turning radius needed for tight areas in yard stacking.

The chassis is engineered for working on sloped terrain and extreme site conditions. The FDM50CNT model copes efficiently with grades up to 45.8 % when loaded, which is critical for timber yards and quarry operations. Drawbar pull power provides the traction needed to move loaded trailers and navigate soft ground.

Diesel units are recommended for heavy outdoor applications requiring sustained drawbar pull and extended runtime. Petrol and LPG versions offer cleaner combustion and smooth throttle response for warehouse and manufacturing environments, where low emissions and reduced noise levels are important.

To ensure Total Cost of Ownership, Criterion Equipment specialists offer fit for purpose, customised forklift trucks, which are enhanced by



the team's technical support. Services include selection of the correct forklift truck for specific requirements, assistance with optimising operator productivity, warehouse efficiency and space utilisation, as well as the implementation of regular forklift maintenance.

Criterion Equipment supplies and supports the full range TCM forklift trucks, covering most forklift classes.

Multi-directional forklift technology drives smarter, space-saving warehousing

SHAMROCK Handling Concepts offers innovative warehouse planning solutions, through advanced multi-directional forklift technology that can double storage capacity, without the need for costly building expansions.

"As warehousing costs continue to rise and available space becomes increasingly scarce, we are demonstrating to customers that the solution to their storage challenges may not require constructing new facilities," explains Kobus Cronje, General Manager, Shamrock Handling Concepts. "Multi-directional forklifts are revolutionising how warehouses operate, by combining the capabilities of three separate machines into one versatile unit. Our Combilift C-series multi-directional forklifts represents a fundamental shift in how businesses are approaching warehouse planning.

"Rather than immediately considering costly building expansions, companies can now maximise their existing footprint through the investment in smarter materials handling equipment. We're assisting our customers achieve double their storage capacity simply by adopting multi-directional forklift technology."

Shamrock Handling Concepts offers a warehouse planning service to customers that includes comprehensive site surveys and detailed visualisations that illustrate how multi-directional technology transforms existing storage facilities.

Our Combilift machines integrate the functions of a side-loader, counterbalance and narrow aisle forklift into a single machine. Advanced technology enables operators to change the direction of travel by 90 degrees at the flick of a switch, allowing even the longest



loads to navigate easily down narrow aisles, through standard doorways and around obstacles.

The engineering behind multi-directional forklifts allows racking to be placed significant-

ly closer together, maximising facility space, whilst reducing the amount of operational area required.

This efficient design minimises operating costs and eliminates the expense and disruption of warehouse expansions.

Multi-directional forklifts offer customisable configurations to suit specific operational requirements, whether handling timber, steel, building materials or other long products. The flexible machines combine counterbalance capabilities with sideloading functionality and narrow aisle performance, creating a versatile solution that adapts to diverse warehouse environments.

As businesses face mounting pressure to improve efficiency whilst controlling costs, the multi-directional forklift offers an efficient alternative to traditional warehouse expansion.



Multi-disciplinary integration is key to the success of green hydrogen projects

THE emerging green hydrogen economy holds significant promise for the global energy transition. However, these developments present considerable challenges – particularly in managing systems complexity and integration risk across disciplines, geographies and regulatory regimes.

According to Stuart Heather-Clark, SLR Consulting's power sector lead for the Middle East and Africa, a large-scale green hydrogen development differs fundamentally from a standalone wind or solar project.

"A typical green ammonia export scheme, for instance, is a complex chain of interdependent infrastructure, with elements that can stretch across 300 to 500 kilometres," he explains. "Each element carries its own technical, environmental and social risk profile which must be managed by specialists across multiple disciplines working in close collaboration."

He notes that some proposed schemes involve renewable energy

capacities at a scale not yet realised elsewhere in the world. Once projects move into the 5 to 7 GW range, they exceed the benchmark of most existing wind or solar installations.

"Scale alone multiplies risk," he says, "as land take expands dramatically, transmission distances increase and cumulative impacts become more difficult to predict and manage."

The integration challenge begins at the engineering level. Wind farm designers, transmission line engineers, electrolyser specialists and ammonia process engineers must align their respective approaches. In addition, port designers, marine engineers and desalination experts introduce further technical assumptions and constraints.

"Environmental consultants cannot operate independently of these engineering teams," he emphasises. "Infrastructure footprints may be determined by engineering logic – such as proximity to substations or optimal wind regimes – but without



early interrogation, those decisions can inadvertently embed environmental and social risk."

A technically ideal flat site near a grid connection for a solar installation may support subsistence farming, contain cultural heritage resources, wetlands or key biodiversity features. Transmission corridors may intersect bird migration routes while coastal intake structures can affect sensitive marine ecosystems.

"Green hydrogen projects operate

simultaneously across multiple ecological domains," he notes. "A single development can involve terrestrial biodiversity – birds, bats and vegetation – alongside freshwater systems and marine ecology while also introducing air emissions, noise impacts and industrial safety risks."

Heather-Clark describes this convergence as a "perfect storm" for environmental practitioners. Baseline studies for wind components may require one to two years of bird

and bat monitoring before layouts are finalised. Marine assessments demand specialist surveys, while industrial hydrogen and ammonia plants introduce hazardous materials whose risk must be assessed alongside ecological considerations. The geographical dispersion of assets further compounds coordination risk.

"Renewable generation may be located inland, desalination on the coast and export facilities at a port," he explains. "Infrastructure corridors connect them, so impacts are not confined to a single footprint. They can accumulate across regions and even across jurisdictions."

In cross-border contexts, developers must navigate and apply different regulatory frameworks while aligning local environmental legislation with international lender standards.

"The consequence is that green hydrogen developments cannot be managed as linear projects," he says. "They are systems projects where decisions in one subsystem ripple through others."

Road transport decarbonisation in focus at National Transport Conference

SOUTH Africa's transport sector is under increasing pressure to decarbonise, with road transport responsible for an estimated 97% of the sector's emissions. This challenge took centre stage at the inaugural National Transport Conference 2026, where policymakers and industry leaders positioned transport reform as a critical lever for economic growth, job creation and long-term sustainability.

Electric Mission Executive Director Hiten Parmar highlighted that South Africa is not alone in confronting the transition to low-carbon mobility, noting that global markets are already advancing targeted interventions to reduce transport emissions.

"Decarbonisation of transport is a global imperative, with countries implementing a range of measures to accelerate the transition. South Africa must now move with similar urgency," Parmar said.

In his keynote address, President Cyril Ramaphosa underscored the need for a transport system that supports both economic efficiency and environmental objectives.

"South Africa needs a modern, inclusive and efficient transport system that reduces the cost of transport to the economy," he said.

From a technology perspective, Parmar pointed to zero-emission vehicles as an immediately deployable solution to reduce tailpipe emissions. He noted that South Africa's existing electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure compares favourably to the current size of the EV fleet, positioning the country for accelerated uptake.

While fuel cell electric vehicle development remains limited locally, battery electric vehicles are gaining traction across multiple segments, including passenger vehicles, buses and, increasingly, heavy-duty transport.

However, industry stakeholders emphasised that technology adoption must be supported by enabling regulation. Parmar identified supply-side interventions—such as fleet mandates, fuel efficiency targets and vehicle emissions standards—as critical tools to drive innovation and establish clear performance benchmarks across the sector.

Energy security also emerged as a key con-



cern. Parmar warned that continued reliance on imported fossil fuels exposes South Africa to global geopolitical risks and price volatility.

"South Africa will remain vulnerable to global dynamics until it achieves greater energy sovereignty. Creating an enabling environment for private sector participation will be critical to reducing reliance on imported oil," he said.

Transport Minister Barbara Creecy reinforced the sector's dual role as both an economic enabler and a contributor to environmental pressures, stressing the need for alignment between transport planning and climate commitments.

Recent geopolitical tensions in the Middle East and associated volatility in global oil markets were cited as a reminder of the risks facing South Africa's fuel-dependent economy. Rising fuel costs continue to place pressure on businesses and consumers, with potential knock-on effects for inflation and economic stability.

Against this backdrop, the transition to electric mobility is increasingly viewed as both an environmental and economic strategy.

"A shift to electric mobility can reduce exposure to external shocks, strengthen domestic value chains and unlock new investment opportunities," Parmar said.

With access to critical energy transition minerals, a sizeable labour force and established industrial capabilities, South Africa is well positioned to attract investment into the evolving mobility ecosystem. For regions such as the Eastern Cape—home to a significant portion of the country's automotive manufacturing base—the transition presents both a challenge and an opportunity to remain competitive in a rapidly changing global market.

Gqeberha mall undergoes R75m transformation

THE redevelopment of the Edgars premises at Walmer Park Shopping Centre in Gqeberha stands to reinforce the centre as the city's leading retail destination by introducing a new internal link mall and expanding the variety of retail offerings.

The R75 million investment by Growthpoint Properties advances the company's strategy of reinvesting in high performing South African retail assets and aligns with Growthpoint's broader retail strategy to increase exposure to assets and regions positioned for sustainable long term growth, particularly in key coastal regions, including KwaZulu Natal and the Western Cape.

The redevelopment focuses on optimising the retail mix, improving circulation, unlocking value from existing space, and enhancing the overall customer experience.

Gavin Jones, head of retail asset management at Growthpoint Properties, says: "Walmer Park is a well established, dominant regional centre with consistently low vacancies and strong tenant demand. With vacancies at approximately 1.5%, this redevelopment offers a rare opportunity for new tenants to enter an otherwise fully let centre."

Situated in the heart of suburban Walmer, the centre is recognised for its high quality retail and customer experience, as well as its

ongoing evolution in response to changing shopper needs. This redevelopment marks the centre's eighth upgrade in 38 years and underscores its commitment to contemporary, market relevant retailing.

A key component of the project is the reconfiguration of the existing 4,680sqm Edgars store into a refined, 1,982sqm format supported by a refreshed tenant mix. The introduction of a new link mall will accommodate nearly 10 additional stores, bringing the total offering to almost 170 retailers, supported by free customer Wi Fi.

"Shoppers can expect an enhanced range of fashion, homeware and national brands,"

adds Jones.

The new link mall has been designed to improve internal flow and provide seamless visual continuity with the centre's modern aesthetic. The project includes upgraded energy efficient lighting and integrates Walmer Park's rooftop solar installation and existing standby generation system.

The centre continues to supply filtered bore-hole water to customers and tenants, a service it has maintained for more than three years.

Construction will commence in March this year, with completion scheduled for November 2026, ahead of the festive trading period.



Results-driven industrial water treatment closes the gap

THE onus is on businesses to carefully manage their industrial water ecosystems. Water restrictions and unreliability are daily risks. Companies must evaluate their water sources: municipal, rainwater, borehole or river, ensuring that water is suitable for its intended use and that it is being used efficiently. When water leaves the plant, should it be recycled for further use or treated prior to discharge?

These are critical considerations highlighted by and his team at industrial water treatment specialist G-Chem Aquacare: "In today's context of national water scarcity, ageing infrastructure and increasing regulatory pressure, we help industries do more with less water, protecting critical assets and supporting environmental compliance," Golding explains.

TRUSTED PARTNERS

Collectively, the founders and shareholders of G-Chem Aquacare represent decades of hands-on experience in industrial water treatment, providing deep insight into the shifts and challenges within the current water treatment landscape.

Golding notes that many water treatment organisations have reduced investment in technical training, research and development. This has contributed to a broader industry

shift toward transactional chemical and equipment supply models - rather than fully integrated, results-driven water management partnerships.

G-Chem Aquacare counters this trend through a highly skilled, results-driven approach. The company prioritises long-term relationships built on technical accountability, operational understanding and trust.

This approach also ensures effective client education, encouraging them to become part of the water treatment process, as success depends greatly on commitment from both parties.

"Our founders recognised a growing gap in the provision of results-driven, technically accountable water treatment solutions which specifically meet our clients' needs. Too often, clients were sold products rather than client-driven solutions, with limited technical understanding of their processes, risks and long-term objectives.

"We invest in strong, committed and technically well-trained water technologists who understand our clients' operational needs, and are accountable for their water quality, efficiency and risk reduction," Golding says.



Shaun Golding
CEO, G-Chem
Aquacare

GROWTH IN WATER

Since its establishment in 2016, G-Chem Aquacare has evolved into a multi-regional industrial water treatment business servicing complex and exacting operations across South Africa.

Managing director Kevin Naidoo outlines the company's key achievements, including long-term service partnerships

with major industrial, manufacturing and processing clients, successful implementation of boiler, cooling, effluent and HVAC water-treatment programmes in high-risk environments and consistent performance in operations where uptime, compliance and reliability are critical.

"G-Chem Aquacare embraces practical, field-proven innovation which improves control, reduces risk, and delivers measurable outcomes. At G-Chem Aquacare, technology is implemented where it adds operational value, never for novelty.

"This includes the increased use of online monitoring and automation, adoption of modern treatment chemistries and the continuous refinement of technical standards across boiler, cooling and effluent systems," says Naidoo.

Furthermore, the company works

closely with international technology partners and original equipment manufacturers (OEMs), aligning its solutions with global best practice, while using performance data to proactively optimise water, energy and chemical efficiency.

It is also a member of the Association of Water Technologies (AWT), a leading international body representing water treatment professionals and companies. Golding emphasises the importance of staying aligned with global developments in industrial water treatment and maintaining connections with leading innovation markets such as the United States, China and India.

The company focuses on four critical operational areas of water treatment where performance, risk and impact are highest: boiler water treatment, cooling water treatment, effluent water treatment and clarification water treatment.

"This focused approach enables deeper technical training, targeted innovation and disciplined service delivery, resulting in more reliable and sustainable outcomes for clients," Naidoo notes.

Within this framework, G-Chem Aquacare supports multiple industries, including food and beverage, dairy, poultry and fisheries, packaging and plastics, timber and wood processing, general manufacturing, automotive, pharmaceutical, com-

mercial buildings and data centres, HVAC, refrigeration, sugar and agri-processing, steel, mining and mineral processing.

"By specialising in defined water treatment services across these industries, G-Chem Aquacare develops a deeper understanding of process-specific risks, regulatory requirements and operational priorities. This enables the delivery of practical, results-driven industrial programmes that protect assets, optimise water use, reduce downtime and support compliance," he continues.

Golding explains that the company's values are built around people, performance, technical excellence and delivering results to clients.

It fosters a results-driven mindset where performance is measured, reviewed and continuously improved, supported by deep technical expertise and strong team cohesion.

The company has further strengthened its capability by incorporating highly experienced technical specialists who provide leadership, mentorship and strategic guidance across its core disciplines of boiler, cooling, effluent treatment and clarification.

Through structured development pathways, continuous skills upliftment and a strong culture of safety, accountability and ownership, the company maintains consistent service quality and long-term organisational resilience.

Real-time modelling is the key to a resilient, bi-directional energy future

OPINION | UTILITIES and municipalities are facing a pivotal challenge as the country's legacy power grid - engineered for one-way energy delivery from centralised suppliers to end-users - must rapidly evolve to meet a new paradigm. According to Nishandra Baijnath, systems architect, digital automation at Schneider Electric.

South Africa's electrical grid is a classic example of a traditional power system, designed for one-way energy flow. Historically, generation was located close to the fuel source, which saw coal-fired power stations concentrated in Mpumalanga. These stations fed power into high-voltage (HV) yards, which then connected to the national transmission network. This network transported electricity across the country, eventually stepping down the voltage through distribution infrastructure to serve consumers and large power users.

This linear model, from generation to consumption, worked well for decades. Today, however, it is being fundamentally disrupted, as South Africa's ongoing energy crisis has sparked large-scale investment in distributed energy resources (DERs), including rooftop solar, wind farms, and microgrids.

As a result, households and businesses are no longer just consumers; they are becoming energy generators, often producing more electricity than they consume, and they require the ability to feed the excess back into the grid. This evolution challenges the original design of our grid, which was not built to handle bi-directional flows, and without adaptation, we risk instability and inefficiency.

VULNERABILITY IN MODERN GRIDS

However, while DERs are essential for decarbonisation, they introduce volatility. Sudden changes, like load drops or solar PV disconnections, cause power swings that disrupt voltage and frequency balance.

In South Africa, Eskom Transmission monitors system frequency closely. When demand exceeds supply, load shedding is triggered to prevent a total blackout. Frequency is directly affected by voltage fluctuations, and DERs can amplify these effects if not properly managed.

That is where real-time grid mod-

elling becomes critical. It allows utilities to track, predict and manage these dynamic energy flows, ensuring grid reliability even as Eskom's supply fluctuates. By integrating DERs intelligently, we can offset generation shortfalls and maintain a stable, resilient energy system.

Real-time modelling gives utilities and municipalities early visibility into potential power system anomalies, such as voltage dips, frequency swings and load imbalances, before they escalate. This faster detection enables quicker response and targeted intervention, helping prevent outages and protect critical infrastructure.

Voltage and frequency fluctuations can severely damage equipment like transformers and motors. By using real-time modelling, grid operators can simulate these conditions and anticipate these swings, act proactively and maintain system stability, even as DERs add complexity to the network.


At the same time, grid reliability can also be improved by deploying digital twin technology, which cre-

ates a real-time virtual replica of the physical grid and its assets, such as transformers, cables and overhead lines, complete with electrical characteristics. This enables operators to simulate, monitor, and compute power flows dynamically, not just theoretically.




When integrated with Geographic Information Systems (GIS), the model gains spatial intelligence, such as asset location, load concentration and environmental factors like cloud cover. This allows for more informed decision-making and predictive grid behaviour.







Nishandra Baijnath,
Schneider
Electric.




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Reasons for SA manufacturers to outsource boiler operations

SPECIALIST boiler operations and maintenance service provider, Associated Energy Services (AES). Says it improved energy efficiency by 35% at a large FMCG manufacturer's site and followed up with a 21% improvement at a second. A soya mill struggling to generate sufficient steam to operate its processing facility - using two 20 tonne-per-hour boilers - ultimately needed only one to exceed nameplate capacity, according to AES.

In another case study, a frozen foods manufacturer - and longstanding client - recorded a 15% operating cost saving once AES had injected skills, de-risked its boilers and completed repairs to increase steam availability and uptime. Today, this client is working closely with AES on decarbonisation solutions.

"While these examples and numbers speak for themselves, boardrooms and boiler rooms are not always aligned - and balance sheets do not always reflect the true benefits of outsourcing to a specialist service provider such as AES," says commercial director Dennis Williams.

Misconceptions emerge when prospective clients question the perceived discrepancy between oper-

ating a boiler as a savings-based cost centre, versus AES operating it as a value-adding profit centre: "The answer is that the client's focus is purely on managing costs - while ours is on adding value," Williams explains.

He believes the fixation on cost reduction arises when companies are not invested in finding a different or better way: "The most comfortable solution is maintaining the status quo - but that is not necessarily right. A substantial opportunity is completely missed. Revisiting the entire premise of how manufacturers are generating and using steam usually identifies structural improvements, different operational interactions and how metrics can be adjusted to improve sustainability and risk mitigation. By doing this, we ultimately achieve what we set out to do: deliver a quality, effective energy supply to production facilities, which improves production and efficiency."

A short-sighted focus on cutting costs might benefit the bottom line but could have detrimental longer-



Dennis Williams, commercial director, AES

term consequences: "Reducing your maintenance spend or asking suppliers to bring down costs for statutory inspections increases the risk of suppliers using sub-standard consumables - or reducing time spent on key activities, increasing the risk of outages. Apart from demotivating the boiler room staff who are inevitably blamed for break-

downs and outages, supplier trust could also be eroded. Money may be saved, but zero value is created."

THE CORE BUSINESS OF ENERGY

Whether canning dog food, producing paper or making conveyor belts, manufacturers cannot be energy specialists. It is not their core business. AES, which has concluded more than 50 outsourcing contracts (28 currently active) with over 75 boilers under its management, has expertise and skills spanning operations, maintenance - as well as the critical risk mitigation associated

with energy and combustion vessels under pressure.

"That is our core business," notes Williams, adding that through outsourcing, companies have access to specialists with specific capabilities as part of the package delivered by the company.

Additional benefits include AES's procurement and logistics capabilities, guaranteed operating efficiency that can be measured against a pre-agreed price for steam delivered, removal of day-to-day operating risk, staff training and management, an in-house laboratory for fuel and ash testing, advice about repairs and access to the AES projects division for expansions, changes and future projects.

"Clients should not be focusing on the rand per ton of fuel delivered to their site - but on the steps in between this and the delivery of steam used in the production of each unit. The plant must diligently and effectively use that energy. This happens when it gets quality steam at the right pressure with the right dryness factor, and pressure fluctuations are managed within a tighter band than the client could themselves. This should result in the

lowest-cost energy requirement per unit of product."

According to AES, the company saves clients, on average, 10% on what could be achieved via their own in-house operation.

An hour's downtime is an hour's worth of product that can never be sold - so the incremental benefits can be substantial: "For example, in a paper mill, operating speed is where money is made or lost. To run at maximum speed, every heat transfer surface must be working perfectly, and the incoming steam must be at the right pressure. If pressure drops too far, there is an outage and the mill shuts down. Even if the shutdown lasts just 15 minutes, the added start-up time means hours could be lost."

Another key concern is product safety: for example, raw material wastage at a canning facility experiencing a steam outage can be very dangerous: "During a critical temperature hold stage, all material must be scrapped - as it no longer meets process safety requirements or quality specifications. If product was headed to a designated client, lead times are impacted," Williams points out.

New tool enhances bearing installation precision and efficiency

THE SKF TMFT 36/PRO delivers a durable, fast and safe solution for professional bearing installation. Designed for ease of use, this professional tool kit ensures correct mounting across shaft, housing and blind applications, making precision fitting simpler than ever.

"The design innovations of this professional fitting tool set the benchmark for long-lasting, quick-to-fit bearing installation devices," says Eddie Martens, SKF Product Manager - MaPro. SKF has engineered the optimal combination of impact ring and sleeve to ensure effective transmission of mounting force to the bearing. The impact ring's diameter precisely fits the inner

and outer bearing dimensions, while its click-fit connection with the sleeve delivers stability and durability, minimising the risk of damage to bearing raceways or rolling elements.

Built for durability, the TMFT 36/PRO features components crafted from high-quality materials, enhancing operator confidence through resilience under demanding conditions and ensuring safe, efficient bearing installation.

The impact rings are manufactured from high-impact resistant, glass-fibre reinforced polyamide for exceptional longevity and can also be used under a press. Moreover, clear markings on each ring facilitates size identification, speeding up



selection.

The PRO-version sleeve is crafted from durable aluminium with an anodised coating. In addition to enhancing durability, this smart design also ensures a secure grip and efficient mounting.

The heavy-duty dead-blow hammer incorporates a nylon dou-

ble-sided head that provides impact strength, minimises wear and prevents component damage. Due to its powerful strike, only a few blows are required to seat the bearing or seal, while the ergonomic handle and integrated handguard provide excellent grip while protecting the operator's hands from injuries during use.

The fitting tool accommodates bearings with bore diameters from 10-55 mm and thanks to its versatile design, is equally suited for mounting other components such as bushings, seals, rings and belt pulleys.

The TMFT 36/PRO kit includes 36 impact rings of various sizes, three aluminium impact sleeves, a heavy-duty dead-blow hammer and

a set of instructions, all conveniently packed into a sturdy, lightweight, portable tool case with storage inlays. Clear, easy-to-read instructions printed inside the case lid provide quick reference at a glance.

Designed to install thousands of bearings and seal rings over its lifetime, the TMFT 36/PRO provides operators with an intuitive experience, delivering unmatched durability and performance. "By combining long-term reliability with superior results, it offers ultimate value for money, making this fitting tool a smart investment that empowers customers with efficiency and safety, reinforcing confidence in every installation," concludes Martens.

Revolutionising industrial substations, solving clients' problems

AT process plants, manufacturing facilities and mines, substations are not afterthoughts. They are the site's heartbeat, forming part of core infrastructure and managing the power supply to critical equipment, such as the motors driving conveyors, pumps, and processing machinery.

During construction, substations often emerge as late-stage bottlenecks that stall otherwise well-managed projects. When diverse teams converge - from design houses and consulting engineers to equipment vendors and construction crews

- the risk of confusion and delay rises sharply. Misaligned technical standards, fragmented communication, and procurement holdups ripple through to testing and commissioning, amplifying risk exposure and operational strain.

Gerhardt van Rooyen, projects manager at WEG Africa, notes that these problems often escalate during the construction and commissioning phases.

"Typically, on-site construction begins with a brick-and-mortar substation building. Once completed, all the equipment is installed, followed

by extensive interconnecting cabling and testing. It's at this stage that delays often set in. Multiple disciplines need access at the same time, schedules overlap, and frustrations inevitably start to build," says Van Rooyen.

This conventional approach now has a better alternative: the WEG E-house.

E-houses are modular, prefabricated units manufactured and fully tested at WEG's South African facilities. Each E-house is designed, assembled, fitted with equipment sourced from WEG and other vendors, and

tested to client and International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) benchmarks. Once completed, the E-houses are shipped to the site for rapid installation and commissioning, drastically shortening project timelines.

WEG has helped numerous projects avoid the above bottlenecks through modular, factory-built substations. In one recent project, the WEG E-house team reduced substation construction, deployment, and commissioning to under a year; not just for one substation but seven, including a central control room pow-

ering a complete gold concentrator plant.

E-house innovation helped create the momentum, yet their entrepreneurial mindset toward solving clients' challenges deserves much of the credit.

"Multiple contractors trying to all be in the same space can create complete chaos. E-houses relieve the customer of that pressure. It's a one-stop integrated solution provider. We take on all the risks as a single contractor," says Tyrone Willemse, senior manager at WEG Africa.



Lubrication-free belt hoist keeps lifting environs clean and compliant

KEEPING cleanrooms free of contamination and compliant with regulations is a top priority for industries such as food and beverage, pharmaceuticals, laboratories, electronics, and other industrial sectors, particularly as these sectors are predicted to grow annually through to 2030 in South Africa. The Konecranes belt hoist, specifically designed for applications within cleanroom environs, is lubrication-free with completely sealed pulley bearings thereby minimising the risk of cross contamination.

"The Konecranes belt hoist is fast becoming a preferred choice for these specialised environs, and indeed, any area where abrasive dust, powder or flour is present as these will not adhere to the unlubricated belt. The hoist's featured white Dyneema belt helps in the quick identification of dirt particles and equipment emissions on the belt enabling corrective action to be undertaken "said Ian Grobler sales manager for Konecranes, South Africa.

"The belt hoist was recently introduced to the market and is now being chosen as a replacement to the previous chain and wire hoists of up to SWL 2000kg. With the belt being lubrication-free, it eliminates oil or grease contamination concerns, is resistant to aggressive and harsh environments, including acids, bases, mineral salts, solvents and oil, and can assist in the protection of the customer's equipment and processes" said Grobler.

Easy to install on various lifting systems such



as overhead traveling cranes, Konecranes KBK workstation lifting systems, jib cranes, monorails and stationery applications, the hoist can support up to 6.3 tons. It offers the highest UV and chemical resistance, and the hoist has as standard high-strength polyamide guiding pulleys that are fully corrosion-free. The pulleys and belts don't produce any metal particles that can become detached or contaminate products.

The Konecranes belt hoist's electromagnetic self-adjusting brake delivers reduced maintenance requirements and has optional stainless-steel hooks, hook blocks, wheels, frames and cubicles. The bearings are securely sealed making the belt hoist easy to clean. The belt hoist is available in two frame sizes: BH2 from 125 kg up to 2 tons and BH5 up to 6.3 tons.

SAFETY FEATURES

It features Ingress Protection (IP) compliance for water and dust protection to IP66 for the motor, IP65 for the pendant and IP55 or IP66 for the hoist control panel, electrically isolated hook block, self-adjusting brake and a geared limit switch for upper and lower hook positioning. The belt hoist maximises safety no matter where it is used via its hoisting motor and thermal protection and overload device which protects both the equipment and operators from potential hazards associated with overheating and overloading.

VERSATILE CONFIGURATIONS

Versatile hoist configurations include the 'stationery hoist' suited to applications where no horizontal travel is needed, the 'normal headroom hoist' where every centimetre of lifting height is crucial, and the 'articulated hoist' with manual or motorised operation for smooth movement upon curved tracks (BH5 version only).

"Konecranes recognises the critical importance to minimise contaminants in the cleanroom environment and the need for quick corrective action to eliminate contaminant particles so that the required standards can be achieved. We believe our belt hoist successfully meets the criteria set-down by our customers "concluded Grobler.

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Easy bar helps extend rotary kiln and dryer lifespan

ROTARY kilns and dryers operate under extreme heat and heavy continuous loads, often with persistent vibration. Inside the kilns, the interface between the kiln tyre and the shell is one of the most critical lubrication points on the machine – a key piece of machinery in cement production, lime calcining, mineral processing and chemical manufacturing. This means that finding the right lubricant and application method for kilns is essential.

To help meet this need in the local market, lubrication specialists Lubrication Engineers (LE) South Africa have introduced Easy Bar – a high-viscosity solid lubricant specifically designed for the conditions found at the kiln tyre bore and shell interface.

WHAT IT IS AND HOW IT WORKS

Easy Bar is a solid lubricant bar that is placed directly into the gap between the kiln tyre bore and the shell. As the kiln rotates, the bar slowly melts and distributes a protective lubrication film across the contact surfaces, preventing metal-to-metal contact without leaving residue.

Application is straightforward. The bars can be manually placed into the small gaps between the tyre bore and shell – typically at the 5 o'clock or 7 o'clock position along the incline of the roll. However, LE also supplies an Easy Bar Tool to make it easier to safely position the bar. The tool is an extended rod with a slotted holder and trigger-operated injection pin that allows operators to apply the



bar from a safe distance.

THE ROLE OF ALMASOL

Easy Bar contains LE's proprietary Almasol additive, which is central to how well it works in the intense conditions of a kiln. Almasol is a solid wear-reducing additive that can withstand temperatures up to 1038 oC and is formulated to cling to metal surfaces, forming a microscopic protective layer without building up or affecting clearances.

"In a kiln, the concern is always that extreme heat and load will simply push lubrication out of the contact zone," says Trevor Wentzel, sales rep at LE. "Almasol changes that. It allows the lubricant to stay in place and maintain a film under conditions that would displace most products."

A STEP UP FROM GRAPHITE

Dry graphite has historically been the default lubrication choice for kiln tyre applications. While graphite performs fine at high temperatures, it has limited adhesion and is easily displaced by vibration, shell movement

and dust contamination. Maintenance teams typically have to reapply it multiple times in each shift. The fine particles of graphite dust that are produced can also contaminate nearby equipment and surfaces.

Easy Bar, however, sticks to the contact points and has a high film strength, meaning it has much longer lubrication intervals than graphite. It also melts cleanly into a film, so it doesn't contaminate surrounding surfaces. "A common mistake when customers first use Easy Bar is over-applying it," says Wentzel. "Because maintenance teams are used to using graphite, which needs to be reapplied constantly, they think it's the same with Easy Bar. But Easy Bar lasts much longer and doesn't have to be replaced nearly as often. This means far less product is used overall."

The LE team conducted a technical assessment of the Easy Bar product at a cement production site, and Wentzel says that they saw better lubricant retention, a stable and visible lubricating film, reduced evidence of metal surface distress and more consistent tyre movement behaviour when compared to the previous lubricant that was being used.

Poor lubrication at the tyre and shell interface of a rotary kiln or dryer can lead to fretting corrosion, kiln ovality growth, alignment instability and, in severe cases, shell cracking – all of which are expensive to repair and disruptive to operations. By maintaining a consistent lubricating film, Easy Bar helps reduce these risks and extends the service life of kilns and dryers' mechanical components.

To book email

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Progressing towards a renewable future in SA and beyond

SOUTH Africa's transition to alternative energy has become increasingly urgent as the country grapples with the dual pressures of energy insecurity and climate commitments. With abundant solar irradiation, strong wind corridors and growing interest in green hydrogen, the country is well positioned to expand its renewable energy capacity. However, real progress will depend on whether infrastructure development, investment flows and policy alignment can keep pace with this potential.

Globally, the energy transition is accelerating. The International Energy Agency forecasts that more than a third of global electricity generation will come from renewable sources this year, led by wind, solar and hydropower. While this marks a significant milestone, translating global momentum into local resilience requires solutions tailored to South Africa's unique energy landscape, particularly its reliance on coal and the ongoing challenges of

supply instability.

THE STATE OF RENEWABLE ENERGY IN SOUTH AFRICA

Locally, the renewable sector has made notable strides over the past decade, largely driven by the Renewable Energy Independent Power Producer Procurement Programme (REIPPPP). Large-scale solar installations in the Northern Cape and wind farms across the Eastern and Western Cape have contributed meaningfully to diversifying the country's generation mix. Policy reforms, including the unbundling of Eskom and the removal of licensing thresholds for private generation, have further opened the door for businesses to invest directly in renewable capacity.

Despite this progress, significant structural challenges remain. Grid constraints and transmission bottle-

necks continue to limit the integration of new renewable projects, particularly in provinces with the highest generation potential. Load shedding highlights the complexity of shifting from a centralised, coal-dominated system to a more flexible and decentralised energy model. Long-term success will require coordinated infrastructure expansion and consistent regulatory frameworks to support investor confidence.



Veronica Maxted, EMEA Industry Sector Director, RS Group

Veronica Maxted, EMEA Industry Sector Director, RS Group, says South Africa's opportunity is clear, but so too are the challenges. "South Africa is uniquely positioned to accelerate its renewable transition, with world-class solar and wind resources and a growing private sector appetite for clean energy investment. Unlocking this potential, however, requires sustained investment in grid infrastructure, streamlined permitting

processes and long-term policy certainty to attract both local and international capital." Beyond wind and solar, green hydrogen is emerging as a strategic growth area. Through initiatives such as the Hydrogen Valley project, South Africa aims to decarbonise heavy industry and transport while positioning itself as a competitive exporter in global clean energy markets. If successfully scaled, hydrogen could become a significant contributor to industrial expansion and job creation. However, barriers including financing gaps, skills shortages and regulatory fragmentation continue to slow momentum. Rising electricity tariffs and supply instability are placing increasing pressure on manufacturers, mining operations and small businesses. For many organisations, renewable energy adoption is no longer solely about sustainability, but about operational continuity, resilience and cost predictability. Strategic coordination will be

essential to overcoming these hurdles. The Just Energy Transition framework underscores the importance of collaboration between government, industry and international partners to balance decarbonisation with socio-economic priorities, particularly in coal-dependent regions. Greater alignment across stakeholders can reduce administrative friction and accelerate deployment timelines.

As the renewable sector expands, the role of reliable supply chain partners is becoming more critical. Companies such as RS South Africa support businesses across the energy value chain, from project development and installation to ongoing maintenance, providing the components, tools and technical expertise needed to improve efficiency, reliability and safety. Ultimately, South Africa's renewable energy future will depend on sustained investment, innovation and collaboration to turn strong potential into lasting energy security.

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Global disruption is a wake-up call for local manufacturing

GLOBAL disruption is no longer something we read about - it's something businesses are navigating daily. From unpredictable pricing to ongoing delivery delays, the effects of global instability are no longer distant, they are now part of everyday business reality.

We are constantly exposed to what's happening in the world through headlines, feeds, broadcasts, and conversations, but simply seeing it doesn't mean we truly understand its impact. As global pressures intensify, their impact runs deeper than we often realise, creating a growing sense of uncertainty marked by stress, concern, and doubt.

At the same time, global trade remains fundamental. Different countries offer different products, skills, and specialisations, and for economies to function effectively, the exchange of goods and services across borders is essential. However,

recent geopolitical tensions and disruptions to global supply chains are highlighting the risks that come with heavy reliance on imports.

Shipping delays, rising logistics costs, and uncertainty across key trade routes are no longer isolated challenges, they are becoming part of a broader global pattern. For South Africa, where many industries depend on imported goods and components, these disruptions can quickly translate into higher costs, supply constraints, and added pressure on both businesses and consumers.

"Global trade disruptions show just how interconnected modern economies have become," says Ruan Cowley, Managing Director at KNUTH South Africa. "They reinforce that reactive decision-making is no longer sustainable. A more strategic, long-term approach is now essential."

Although global events may seem

removed from daily life, their impact is far-reaching. The steady flow of goods that businesses rely on is no longer as predictable as it once was, and the assumption that imports will always be readily available at competitive prices is increasingly being challenged.

Amid these shifts, a clear message is emerging.

Recent disruptions are prompting renewed focus on the role of local manufacturing and its ability to support economic stability. While importing has often been the most cost-effective option, the current environment is highlighting the importance of balancing global sourcing with stronger domestic capability.

"These disruptions highlight the importance of local manufacturing capacity," Cowley explains. "Strengthening domestic production reduces reliance on imports and



builds resilience in the face of ongoing uncertainty."

Strengthening local manufacturing carries broader economic benefits. It supports job creation, strengthens local value chains, improves supply reliability, and reduces exposure to exchange rate volatility and rising transport costs. It also allows businesses to respond more quickly to changing demand, without being entirely dependent on international lead times.

"Economic resilience is increasing-

ly defined by a country's ability to produce and adapt locally," Cowley adds. "A stronger industrial base provides the foundation for improved navigation of disruptions and supporting future growth."

As global trade continues to evolve under pressure, South Africa is

being presented with an opportunity to reassess its position - not by stepping away from international markets, but by strengthening what can be produced closer to home.

For Knuth Machine Tools South Africa, playing a part in the manufacturing landscape means standing alongside our partners in times of change. With reliable machinery, expert support, and a global legacy behind us, we are committed to strengthening local industry for the future.

NDT, inspection company changes to SA ownership

DEKRA Industrial RSA has sold its South African operations to Raysonics Investment (Pty) Ltd, a consortium of highly experienced South African NDT and industrial inspection professionals.

The transaction marks a new chapter for the company, as it transitions to local ownership rebranded as Raysonics Industrial. Raysonics is a name long respected in the South African non-destructive testing (NDT) and inspection sector. The sale was finalised on 26 November 2025.

According to Lothar Weihofen, country manager of Dekra Industrial RSA, the decision to sell forms part of Dekra's global strategic focus on Europe, Asia and North America.

"By transferring ownership to a highly capable and experienced local consortium, we ensure continuity for employees and clients. The rebranding to Raysonics Industrial reflects the company's roots and ensures the business continues to thrive locally as a powerful brand synonymous with quality, safety expertise and

credibility in the NDT and inspection sector," Weihofen states.

Raysonics Investment (Pty) Ltd is a shareholder consortium with decades of combined expertise across NDT, inspection, industrial services and South Africa's broader operational landscape. The consortium's deep understanding of the industry and its technical challenges positions the company for long-term sustainability and growth.

"Our vision is to build on the foundation and reputation established by

Raysonics - which was the local NDT and inspection market leader, with an excellent reputation, when Dekra Industrial acquired it in 2013. That reputation remains strong today. Through this acquisition, the company will proudly return to its original name and legacy, while transitioning into an exciting new era under committed South African ownership," says Bennie Groenewald, who the board has appointed as chief executive officer of Raysonics Industrial. Groenewald was due to assume

leadership of the company within months, taking over from Interim CEO Maree de Bruin.

In line with the stated vision, the company will retain its skilled staff, management team and service portfolio, ensuring uninterrupted delivery to clients in critical sectors such as energy, petrochemical, mining and construction.

"Clients can expect the same trusted teams and service excellence, supported by local ownership and decision-making," says Groenewald.