

# SOUTH AFRICAN BUILDER®

MAY 2024 | No 1181



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OF CUTTING  
CARBON

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ECO-FRIENDLY  
FOOTBALL STADIUM  
TAKES ROOT  
IN LESOTHO

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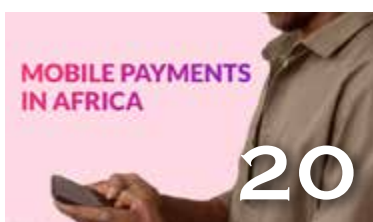
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# MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Following a two-month upswing, headline inflation softened to 5,3% in March from 5,6% in February. The rate has held its ground between 5-6% since September 2023. Nevertheless, economic commentators are suggesting that it will likely hover at the upper end of the SARB's 3-6% range for the rest of the year, missing the key target of 4,5%.

Significant increases in material costs, skyrocketing energy costs and the need to pay more for labour are all inflationary factors and have resulted in a significant number of companies closing down.

The steep recent price increases make it extremely difficult to estimate future costs, which may be several times the original estimates by the time work commences, and even by the time the job is completed. In addition, delays in getting materials on site due to supply chain challenges often mean that the timeline for a project's completion is unclear.

Incorrectly pricing costs into a bid can have catastrophic effects on budgets, particularly for contractors that operate via fixed-price contracts. Some contractors and developers are facing increased challenges to secure funding for projects amid questions about the bankability of projects. In a highly inflationary environment, funders are more cautious when offering funding to projects that are high in value, complex or have long build times. Kelly Outram, contractor development supporter, suggests the following measures:

- **Reviewing project budgets against current pricing.**

Be realistic about the increased costs and make the necessary adjustments in your bidding process, perhaps by adding contingencies into the pricing models.



**Discuss risk-sharing with stakeholders.** Have an open discussion with project-owners about potential challenges and consider sharing the risk of inflation under contract conditions, whether through alliance-style agreements or alternative conditions for both new and existing contracts.

- **Consider supply chain challenges.** Construction materials are not only more expensive, but are also becoming more difficult to secure. This may require changing completion timelines.

**Reassess your material procurement procedures.** Revisit your supply chain and assess its resilience. Consider the benefits of stockpiling essential materials.

**Revisit insurance policies.** Since losses will also lead to more expensive rebuilds, the sum insured may need to be revised to minimise the risk of being underinsured. Your construction insurance broker or advisor can assist you with this.

*Musa Shangase, MBSA president*

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## EDITOR'S NOTE

With almost half the year already behind us and a general election looming, the construction industry remains resilient, preparing itself for the inevitable disruption and economic spin-offs that will have.

Yet exciting and dynamic projects continue apace, as we have showcased in this issue. In our cover story, the Clay Brick Association reminds us that bricks remain a highly durable, economic, aesthetically pleasing and thermally efficient construction material choice, as their long history in SA's cityscapes attests.

We also highlight the ingenuity of Van Dyck,

which – in partnership with the Mathe Group – is producing rubber crumb underlays (long used in the flooring industry) as acoustic barriers to be placed under standard cement screeds and as low-profile solutions for self-levelling ones.

In another highly successful partnership, Kumba Iron Ore and the Northern Cape Department of Co-operative Governance, Human Settlements and Traditional Affairs have delivered 142 Breaking New Ground (BNG) homes to the Siyathemba community in Gamagara Municipality. This is a gratifying and moving example of attending to the needs of underserved sectors of our population and vindication that the construction industry is the backbone of both the present and future South Africa.

We hope you enjoy this issue.

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*Creating Concrete Possibilities*



*The benefits of clay bricks – including its aesthetic appeal – are driving its use in increasingly diverse and new ways.*

# CLAY BRICK AT THE CUTTING EDGE OF CUTTING CARBON

With only 450 of the estimated 350 000 buildings able to meet the 7 December deadline to display Energy Performance Certificates, Mineral Resources and Energy Minister Gwede Mantashe was compelled to grant a three-year extension, with the proviso that building-owners register the type and size of a building and its energy performance within 12 months with the SA National Energy Development Institute. This collective failure belies the many dynamic initiatives, innovations and adaptations pulsing through our construction industry, as the revitalising benefits of finding

creative sustainable solutions are realised by an increasing majority.

## **A FRESH LOOK AT AN ANCIENT ALLY**

Clay brick is proving to many sceptics in our built environment that sustainable construction is far from the rejection of the materials, methods and systems that have contributed so much to the world. On the contrary: sustainability has driven the research, studies, testing and innovation revealing the many benefits of this ancient building material and driving its use in

*Clay brick is a sustainable solution for a multitude of constructions.*

increasingly diverse and new ways, as illustrated with the black brick from Corobrik, the latest edition to their beautiful product range.

Revitalised with a fresh perspective, Claybrick is surprising both committed environmentalists and builders alike with new demands for its products coming from highly diverse markets. From off-grid living enthusiasts to commercial property developers, clay brick is hot property.

### CLAY BRICK AT THE CUTTING EDGE

Johannesburg's Sandton metropole concentrates the energy, wealth, power and diversity of Africa into a mighty, tight space. Forever transforming, its current developments are especially compelling, less for its new buildings as for the significance of what is happening to its older structures.

BlackBrick Sandton is a recently completed conversion that embodies the ethos of sustainability on a scale that integrates

sustainability in just about every aspect of modern living. Its façade screams "visibility – and clay brick was the sustainable solution, achieving far more than this aesthetic demand by bringing its unique mix of thermal properties, adaptive manufacturing advantages and reliable, low-carbon proximity of supply to this ambitious project.

Transforming the older office block into a blend of comfortable living spaces, workspaces and community-fostering facilities leads the growing trend for sustainable, mixed-use lifestyle developments. Designed in the "vertical village" concept, the building's façade posed serious challenges, both in terms of structural demands as well as the demands of a future-centric, sustainable vision.

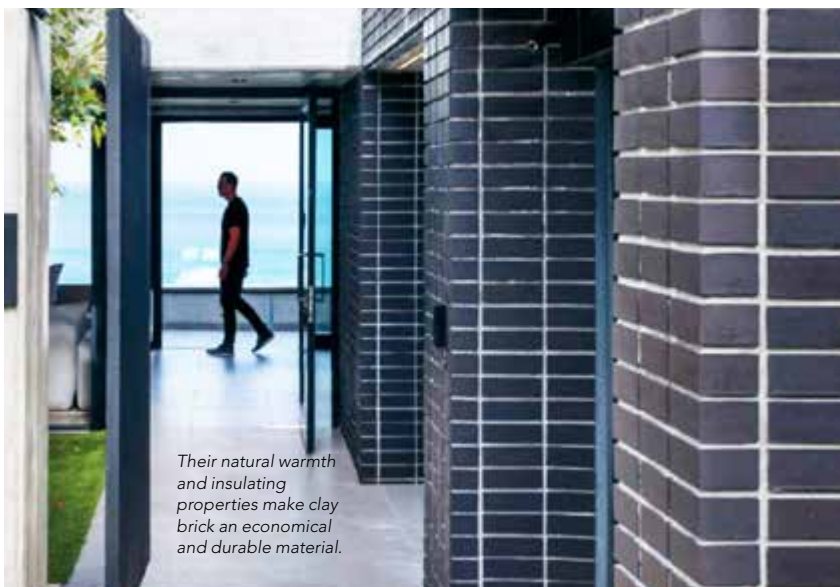
Clay brick members of the Clay Brick Association can meet the demands for more energy efficient buildings, as seen in the Sandton BlackBrick building, the Maxi brick from Federale Stene, has embedded the principles of sustainable energy-efficiency in its manufacturing

**"CLAY BRICK IS PROVING TO MANY SCEPTICS IN OUR BUILT ENVIRONMENT THAT SUSTAINABLE CONSTRUCTION IS FAR FROM THE REJECTION OF THE MATERIALS, METHODS AND SYSTEMS THAT HAVE CONTRIBUTED SO MUCH TO THE WORLD."**

processes, as well as its sourcing of natural, raw materials. The Clay Brick Industry has stringent goals to reduce. The embodied energy and clay bricks are low-carbon at every stage, from fabrication through to building lifespan.

As Mariana Lamont from the Clay Brick Association explains: "Sustainably designed buildings are energy-efficient, resource-efficient and serve the long-term economic, social and environmental needs of communities. Clay brick masonry demonstrates all these qualities during construction, throughout its long operational life."

Not only are these bricks made from a highly durable natural material that offers an exceptional lifespan. but the clay from which it is made is also naturally insulating. "Clay bricks are thermal batteries, using energy from the sun to provide natural thermal efficiency, reducing the need for electricity-guzzling air-conditioners, heaters and humidifiers," explains the company.



*Their natural warmth and insulating properties make clay brick an economical and durable material.*

## COVER STORY

### BENEFITS OF BUILDING WITH CLAY BRICKS:

Durable building material; protection against major weather conditions; aesthetically pleasing; manages insulation well; sustainable green building material; low-maintenance; made from natural raw materials; energy-efficient; low carbon footprint.

### MAXI BRICK SPECIFICATIONS

The clay bricks specified for the high-profile BlackBrick Sandton building conversion are Maxi Bricks.

- Product type: Semi-face.
- Product texture: Satin.
- Product classification: FBA.
- Compressive strength: 25-35MPa.

### TECHNICAL INFORMATION:

- Standard brick size: 285 x 142 x 88mm.
- Brick weight: 4,28kg.
- Pallet weight: 1 072kg.
- Clay bricks per m<sup>2</sup>: 35.
- Bricks per pallet: 250.

### APPLICATIONS:

- Retaining walling.
- Structural wall in single- and double-storey building.
- General unplastered building work.
- General building work below damp-proof course.
- General building in industrial areas where high acid/alkaline discharge occurs.
- General building in damp conditions.
- Work below ground level, where durability is the criterion for selection. ■



*Clay bricks' long history in the cityscapes of SA enhances a connection to the past, even in the most modern buildings.*



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The TOM vehicle used by the instructors.

# TRAINING ON THE MOVE

Training on the Move (TOM) is an initiative which was introduced at MBA North in 2014 as a means of providing mobile multimedia training in the regions in which it operates. In cases where the contractor finds it challenging to provide effective training due to a lack of resources and facilities, TOM assists with site-specific induction training and occupational health and safety (OHS)-related toolbox talks.

The TOM initiative provides

both site induction and toolbox training to contractors and suppliers, home builders and emerging contractors and can be deployed to any site or premises. Contractors are introduced to audio and visual equipment which will contribute to effective transfer of vital OHS information.

The ability to bring expert instruction to members where they are, sparing them the expense and logistical difficulties of bringing teams to the MBA

North premises, is a greatly needed and appreciated innovation which will go a long way towards improving levels of both skills and caution.

The vehicle is branded with the Federated Employers Mutual Assurance Company (FEM) logo as the main sponsor, which initially assisted the association in purchasing the vehicle, with the Building & Construction Industry Medical Aid Fund as the secondary sponsor. OHS Care and the ALVA

Group sponsor the monthly maintenance and operational costs of the vehicle. This enables the association to provide the service free of charge to its members and FEM policy-holders.

TOM provides interactive site induction training to

construction workers within Gauteng, Mpumalanga, North-West and Limpopo provinces. In the past 12 months, the vehicle and its team have travelled to various sites within these provinces, covering approximately 4 279km and training more than 6 500 employees in 2023. In May

that year, TOM visited Polihali village in Lesotho, training more than 800 employees for WBHO Construction. Other members that frequently utilise TOM's services include ENZA Construction, Form-Scaff, Concor Construction, GVK-Siya Zama Building Contractors Gauteng and Tiber Construction.

The induction is conducted by a dynamic presenter and safety officer. TOM has the ability to accommodate a maximum of 30 persons at a time and covers the following topics:

SUBJECTS
HEALTH AND SAFETY ADMINISTRATION
EDUCATION, TRAINING AND PROMOTION
PUBLIC SAFETY AND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS
PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT AND CLOTHING
HOUSEKEEPING
SCAFFOLDING
FORMWORK AND SUPPORT WORK
LADDERS
FALL PROTECTION
ELECTRICAL SAFEGUARDING
FIRE PREVENTION AND PRECAUTIONS
DEMOLITION
EXCAVATIONS
TOOLS
LIFTING MACHINERY AND LIFTING TACKLE
HOISTS
CONVEYORS
SITE PLANT AND MACHINERY
PLANT AND STORAGE YARDS
WORKPLACE, ENVIRONMENT, HEALTH AND HYGIENE

TOM continues to serve MBA North members and FEM policy-holders at no charge, but is also available to non-members at a minimal fee. The MBA North Construction health and safety officers responsible for training employees via the initiative include Duncan Ebersöhn, Manie van As, Mbuya Ramabulana and Sello Tumahole.

For further information on TOM or to make a booking, e-mail: [natalie@mbanorth.co.za](mailto:natalie@mbanorth.co.za). ■

# THE NEXT 120 YEARS OF SUPPORTING THE INDUSTRY

Last month, MBA North reported on its 120th annual general meeting, marking years of serving the construction industry. Mohau Mphomela, MBA North's executive director, said that 2023 was one of the most challenging years the association had ever experienced, with many of its long-standing members continuing to go into business rescue or actually closing their doors.

However, the association looks forward to its bicentenary with a sense of optimism, symbolised by the inauguration of its new president, Liana van der Walt and vice-president, Gavin Morrow.

MBA North dates back to 1894, when the Johannesburg Master Builders Association was founded. In 1996, it joined up with the equally venerable Pretoria Master Builders Association, founded in 1903, to form the Gauteng Master Builders Association. The organisation then expanded to cover the North West Province, Mpumalanga and Limpopo, as well as Gauteng in 2012, which is when its current name, MBA North, was coined. It is an employers' organisation, serving the interests of its members in the building and allied trade industries, and over the years its members have been responsible



for many of the landmarks that represent the region.

Many of MBA North's members have been on its books for decades and a great number of them are smaller, family-owned businesses – an excellent indication of the potential this industry has for intergenerational empowerment.

Mphomela says that these stalwarts have played a role in helping MBA North establish itself as a trusted advisor to its members and achieve the success it has realised in training and skills development, the preparation of standard contracts and manuals and, in particular, the great strides

made in health and safety in the construction industry.

"The challenges continue, but there are some indications that the outlook could be turning more favourable. Word from colleagues in the industry is that there's a noticeable uptick in the number of tenders out there, which is obviously good news for principal contractors and sub-contractors alike. However, we're also hearing that tenders are slow to be awarded," says Morrow.

He believes that demand from the emerging middle class has the potential to drive demand for new construction projects, with a strong focus on residential estates. Other growth drivers

include the logistics sector, which is busy taking up the slack caused by the implosion of Transnet and needs to expand its network of warehouses and depots.

Morrow adds that continuing high demand for student housing is also driving the market. "The private sector's seen the opportunity, with investments also coming from the big pension funds," he says. "In addition, there's a lot of cash in the economy and the potential lowering of interest rates this year could also play a positive role in stimulating new business."

The construction mafia, however, continues to pose an enormous challenge for contractors, with scant protection from the police or

assistance from clients. Recently, this problem has repeatedly made news headlines, with projects in various provinces being terminated as a result. "Clients have put themselves at arm's length from what's quite a messy situation in order to reduce their project risk, so contractors are really on their own as their project risk increases. However, they're learning how to deal with these potentially explosive situations and building genuine community engagement is key," he says. "Dealing with construction mafias adds costs that are difficult to pass on to clients, even though margins are still very thin. At the moment, there seems to be no political will to resolve this crisis, despite the regular promises from



Gavin Morrow,  
vice-president:  
MBA North.

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## MBA NORTH

various political leaders, including our president.”

MBA North has taken up the construction mafia challenge, standing alongside members in the frontline when required. Morrow pays tribute to the active participation of executive director Mohau Mphomela, who often risks his own safety in order to help members.

Looking into the future, Morrow sees a growing need for MBA North to expand its traditional supportive role. A significant focus remains health and safety. Through its annual safety competition and regular training webinars, the organisation is helping even small contractors improve performance in this area.

“We continue to cement our good relationship with the Department of Employment and Labour and we can play a positive role as a trusted third party, particularly

when there’s an onsite accident,” he says.

He is particularly keen to see MBA North taking the lead in getting industry players to engage with each other over issues of pressing mutual concern. “The industry’s become atomised – we need a united voice on many fronts,” he stresses.

These issues include transport and logistics challenges, such as slow transit through ports, the need for integrated training initiatives to counter a persistent skills deficit and the perennial issue of the proper usage of JBCC contracts to protect all parties.

“The future is uncertain, but we must do what we can to shape it. We look forward to helping MBA North play an even more important and constructive role in uniting the whole construction value chain and making its concerns heard,” says Morrow. ■

**“THE CHALLENGES CONTINUE, BUT THERE ARE SOME INDICATIONS THAT THE OUTLOOK COULD BE TURNING MORE FAVOURABLE. WORD FROM COLLEAGUES IN THE INDUSTRY IS THAT THERE’S A NOTICEABLE UPTICK IN THE NUMBER OF TENDERS OUT THERE, WHICH IS OBVIOUSLY GOOD NEWS FOR PRINCIPAL CONTRACTORS AND SUB-CONTRACTORS ALIKE. HOWEVER, WE’RE ALSO HEARING THAT TENDERS ARE SLOW TO BE AWARDED.”**





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# KUMBA AND COGTA BREAKING NEW GROUND



(Above): A housing beneficiary in front of her new home with stakeholders from Kumba Iron Ore, COGTA and Gamagara Municipality.

In an excellent example of a successful public-private partnership, Kumba Iron Ore and the Department of Co-operative Governance, Human Settlements and Traditional Affairs (COGTA), Northern Cape, have delivered 142 Breaking New Ground (BNG) homes to the Siyathemba community in Gamagara Municipality.

Addressing stakeholders at the handover ceremony, Lorraine Scheepers, principal of mineral rights and permitting at Kumba Iron Ore, spoke of the value of the partnership. "This collaboration marks a significant milestone for community development and

empowerment between the private and public sectors. We proudly witness the handing over of 10 out of 142 BNG housing projects, a testament to our collective commitment to community development."

Built by COGTA, the 10 homes were officially handed over to their new owners by the department's MEC, Bentley Vass, alongside Gamagara Mayor Johannes Roman and representatives from Kumba Iron Ore. As a responsible corporate citizen, Kumba has contributed by donating the 142 serviced stands to the Gamagara Municipality and installing electrical infrastructure to the

cumulative value of approximately R27 million.

"In addition to the serviced stand, Kumba is donating the newly-renovated Siyathemba Flats, comprising 104 units on approximately 2ha of land, to the Gamagara Municipality for renter housing. We're working with the municipality to convert the flats to a sectional title home-ownership scheme, enabling occupants to obtain title deeds to the units," said Scheepers.

Altogether, the partnership between Kumba Iron Ore and government will unlock housing for over 200 families, ensuring that communities are uplifted and afforded the opportunity to play meaningful roles within society.

"We have a backlog of 84 000 units in the Northern Cape, which gives one an indication of the housing development challenges," said Vass.

"We need partners like Kumba and the private sector to help government improve our people's lives. My message for our beneficiaries is to look after your houses, plant trees and paint walls. We greatly appreciate the support our partners have given our communities." ■





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*Anders Friberg, Volvo Trucks SA's new director of new truck sales.*

## VOLVO TRUCKS SA APPOINTS NEW SALES DIRECTOR

Volvo Trucks SA has announced the appointment of Anders Friberg as the company's new director of new truck sales, based at the Volvo Group Southern Africa headquarters in Johannesburg.

With extensive experience across the commercial vehicle industry and various international brands, Friberg most recently served as the director of private importer development within Volvo Trucks International, where he further proved his skill at driving

sales and implementing effective business development strategies.

His career has also spanned pivotal roles within other premium truck brands, including serving as area sales manager, senior sales manager and business development manager in Turkey, as MD in Tanzania and as sales director for Scania SA and Export from 2016-2020.

Friberg says he is excited to be back in SA. "The local transport industry has unique challenges in terms of operating conditions

and logistical pressures. At Volvo Trucks, we're committed to helping our customers overcome these challenges by providing the best products for the job at hand, as well as unrelenting support and quality services. I look forward to serving our customers and driving success, together," he says.

This year, Volvo Trucks SA is celebrating its 24th anniversary in the country. The company has an assembly plant in Durban and currently employs around 900 people at various sites across the country. ■



*WEG Africa's Cape Town branch has grown in its size and its offerings.*

# WEG AFRICA'S NEW CAPE TOWN PREMISES REFLECT 30 YEARS OF GROWTH

Starting out in 1994 to serve the metropolitan area with a range of low-voltage electric motors, WEG Africa's Cape Town branch has grown in its size and its offerings, according to branch manager Marthinus Greeff.

Testament to this is the fact that it has again outgrown its premises and last year relocated to larger, well-equipped facilities in Richmond Business Park – enhancing its service capability,

while making life easier for its customers.

"The branch had humble beginnings 30 years ago, with three staff members – the manager, an administrative assistant and a storeman," says Greeff. "Our dedication and commitment to customers soon put us on a growth path which has continued to this day; the experienced staff complement at Richmond Park now stands at 35."

Another sign of success is the geographical area that the branch now covers – from Cape Town upwards north as far as Upington and east to George. Similarly, a wider range of industrial sectors reach out for solutions from WEG Africa's Cape Town branch. These include mining, cement, petrochemical, water and wastewater, as well as building, food processing, material handling and heating, ventilation

## INDUSTRY NEWS

and air-conditioning. Greeff notes that a particularly exciting recent development has been in agriculture, where the branch serves farmers who want to use more renewable energy.

“Perhaps the most exciting aspect of our growth over the years is that we’ve become a real solution-provider to our customers – not just a supplier of products,” he explains. “We also make an important contribution to reducing our customers’ carbon footprint and energy costs.”

In terms of the company’s comprehensive product range, it covers low-voltage electric motors from 0,18-500kW. These are available in energy-efficiency categories from IE1-IE4. The branch provides high-voltage electric motors up to 11kV and up to 6 000kW for demanding applications such as mill motors on mining operations.

“We expanded into variable speed drives [VSD] quite early on and offer low-voltage VSDs from 0,18-500kW,” says Greeff. “Our medium-voltage VSDs range from 1MW upwards, in 3,3/6,6kV and 11kV.”

Another advance made by the branch was opening an electrical panel division a decade ago. This facility manufactures solutions by combining the wide range of quality WEG components. These are supplied to customers across the Western Cape in enclosures which are electrical type-tested and non-type-tested.

“We’re also able to supply starters, VSD boxes and motor control centres, all custom-made to the required specifications,” explains Greeff. “Our motor workshop facilities allow us to conduct many motor modifications, including fitment of space heaters and temperature monitoring devices such as thermostats, thermistors

optimises cost-effectiveness for the customer, he points out. The branch has its own in-house repair facility for all WEG drives and softstarters, staffed by three dedicated technicians.

“This enables us to do all the repairs locally, without needing to send these products to our head office in Johannesburg,”



*Training remains a key value-add for WEG Africa customers and the new premises include an even bigger training room.*

and Pt-100 temperature detectors, as well as the fitment of special bearings, as required by customers’ applications, ensuring we can deliver a high standard of quality in our value-added offerings.” This in-house capability also reduces lead times and

says Greeff. “Similarly, this gives customers the advantage of fast and efficient turnaround times.”

In the new premises, the sales counter area has been enlarged to facilitate quicker collections; Greeff notes that even the location of the new offices will

please customers, as the road design and planning mean much better traffic conditions.

“Training remains a key value-add for our customers, so we designed our Richmond Business Park building with an even bigger training room,” says Greeff. “With our technology advancing constantly and our range of solutions growing, there’s always considerable demand for us to train our customers’ employees.”

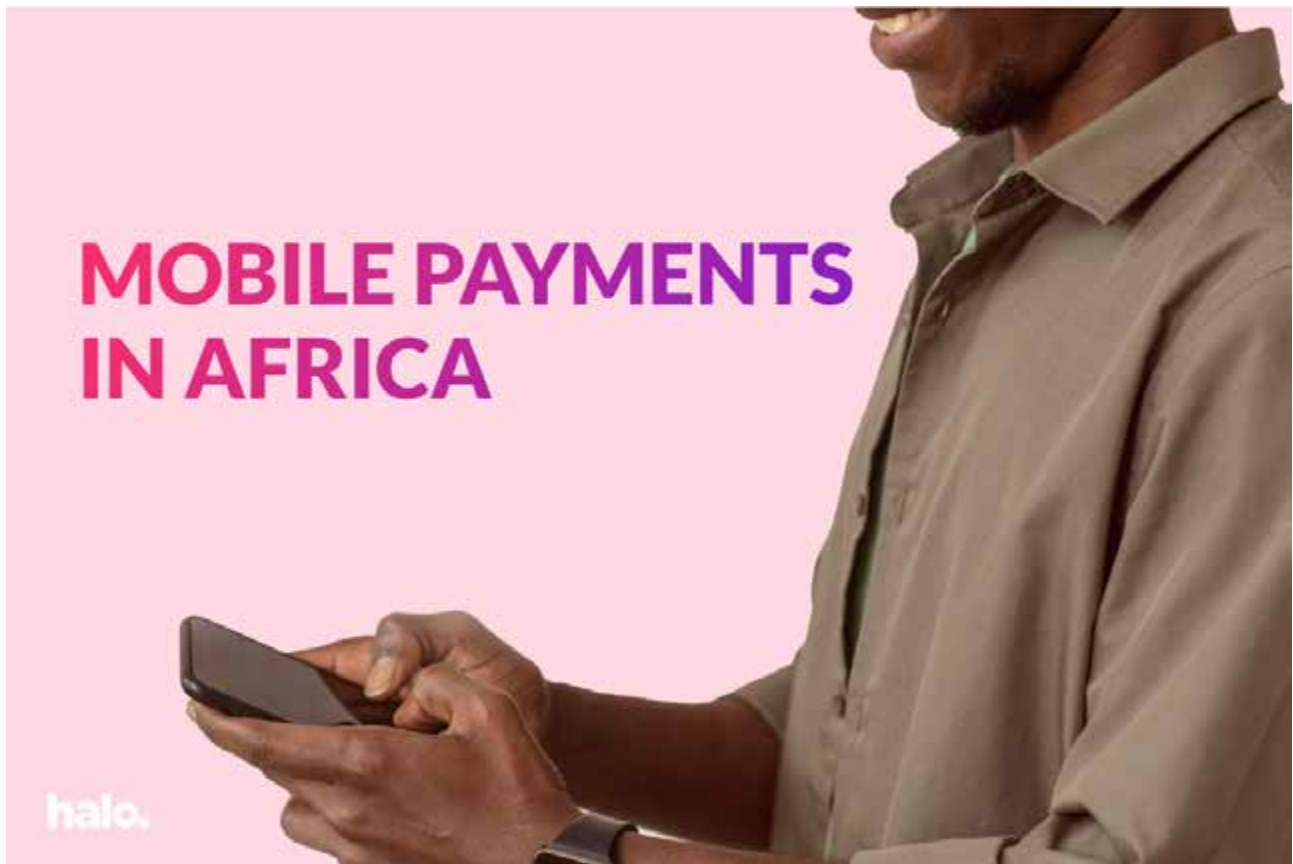
He highlights that the training provided by WEG Africa in Cape Town is fully certified and is presented by the company’s dedicated training officer. Trainees and customers receive this training at no cost, as a service from the company.

“Our new training facility includes training benches for VSD and softstarter training, where we can accommodate 12-18 trainees at a time,” he says. “Training on motors will, of course, continue and we can have 22 trainees per session.”

In keeping with WEG’s global commitment to sustainability and a low-carbon future, the WEG Africa Cape Town office has been recognised by the Green Buildings Council SA as achieving Level 1 building emissions. Rooftop photovoltaic panels reduce the carbon footprint and energy costs, while keeping operations powered during load-shedding. ■



*A larger stockholding of WEG products facilitates ready access for customers.*



# HARNESSING THE POTENTIAL OF MOBILE PAYMENTS IN AFRICA

*By Dalene Deale, strategic consultant: Halo Dot*

Financial inclusion remains a critical barrier across Africa. A considerable segment of the population remains alienated from basic banking services. However, the arrival of mobile payment technologies like Halo Dot promises to bridge this gap.

Halo Dot's innovative approach turns mobile devices into secure, encrypted payment terminals,

allowing for instant card payments without the need for a traditional point-of-sale device. This technology enables businesses to swiftly adapt to market demands, focusing on expansion and customer service, rather than the logistics of payment processing.

Construction companies operating across South African borders will find it an invaluable aid in making and receiving payments (eg to suppliers and workers) without the administrative delays which often

beset such transactions. Informal traders, a significant economic force in Africa, are also set to gain from such mobile solutions. The shift to digital payments not only streamlines their operations but facilitates financial visibility, enabling these traders to establish credit histories and participate more fully in the formal economy.

## **GOING MOBILE**

Take the M-Pesa mobile phone-based money transfer service

that was launched in 2007 as an example. Now available in seven countries in Africa, it has more than 50 million active monthly customers.

Its impact in Kenya has been especially significant. A study found that access to M-Pesa increased per capita consumption levels and lifted 194 000 households (approximately 2% of Kenyan households) out of poverty. The success of M-Pesa in Kenya and the rest of Africa shows how mobile payments can empower informal traders with the means to improve their financial stability, while still growing their businesses.

**DRIVING FINANCIAL INCLUSIVITY**

At a time when 45% of Africans still do not have a bank account, the user-friendliness and innovation of mobile payment technologies such as Halo Dot become game-changers for financial empowerment.

Halo Dot converts mobile devices into secure, encrypted PoS systems, cutting through the need for conventional payment infrastructure. This is significant for the sizeable informal trader market in Africa that contributes significantly to countries' GDP. It provides a convenient payment mechanism, as well as a digital trail of their business transactions. By transitioning from cash to digital payments, these traders can demonstrate verifiable income, building a financial

footprint that lays the foundation for a credit history.

Enabling businesses to accept card payments without the need to purchase or rent a POS device increases the merchants' ability to accept payments sooner.

**ESTABLISHING TRUST**

Naturally, people must trust mobile payment solutions if they are to be successful. One of the ways providers can help build this trust is by ensuring that their systems implement comprehensive security measures.

In the case of Halo Dot, the organisation has implemented extensive fraud prevention and security mechanisms that comply with global standards, such as PCI mobile payments on commercial

**"CONSTRUCTION COMPANIES OPERATING ACROSS SOUTH AFRICAN BORDERS WILL FIND IT AN INVALUABLE AID IN MAKING AND RECEIVING PAYMENTS."**

off-the-shelf devices. Halo Dot can also easily integrate into existing financial infrastructure to benefit from investments already made.

Fundamentally, mobile payment solutions like Halo Dot will help bring further economic growth in Africa and build trust in digital commerce solutions. ■



# CALL TO ACTION FOR A RESILIENT AND SUSTAINABLE ENGINEERING FUTURE

The recent Infrastructure Indaba, hosted by Consulting Engineers South Africa (CESA) in Cape Town, kicked off with fervent discussions, aimed at steering the engineering landscape towards a future of resilience and sustainability. Leaders and experts from various sectors converged to deliberate on pressing issues and chart a course towards robust infrastructure development.

One of the key discussions focused on the scarcity of engineers in South Africa. The challenge persists, underscored by terms such as “brain drain”, “mass exodus of engineers” and the broader “skills shortage”, as outlined by Darren Pillay, principal bridge and structural engineer at Knight Piésold, during his presentation. Clearly, this topic has a direct impact on the South African construction industry, as

the dearth of engineers in the country effectively reduces both its operational capacity and the quality of projects on which it embarks.

Pillay disclosed statistics revealing a troubling trend: engineers aged 30-50 are either leaving the country or transitioning to different fields, posing challenges for transformation and capacity-building, while raising



*Christie Viljoen, Prof Marianne Vanderschuren, Logashri Sewnarain, Chuene Ramphele and Refiloe Mokoena at the conference.*



questions about underlying reasons and global impacts on the engineering profession. "Addressing this phenomenon requires a multi-faceted approach, encompassing global trends, emigration motivations and strategies for retaining and nurturing engineering talent within the country," he said.

Further, Lindiwe Madonsela, senior manager of compliance at the B-BBEE Commission, shed light on the pervasive challenge of fronting within the construction sector, emphasising its extreme prevalence across all sectors and construction's substantial share of fronting complaints. Tumelo Thothela, director at ROMH and Themba Mhambi, Chairperson of SANRAL, stressed the importance of intentional transformation for fostering meaningful growth among SMMEs, enhancing skills and competency, generating sustainable employment opportunities and improving service delivery.

Transitioning to a discussion on infrastructure upgrade, investment and development in an era of climate change, facilitated by Logashri Sewnarain, a CESA board member and the CEO of SMEC SA, the discourse delved into the intersection of infrastructure development and climate change mitigation.

Dr Christie Viljoen, senior economist at PwC, highlighted

**"THE CHALLENGE PERSISTS, UNDERSCORED BY TERMS SUCH AS 'BRAIN DRAIN', 'MASS EXODUS OF ENGINEERS' AND 'THE BROADER SKILLS SHORTAGES', AS OUTLINED BY DARREN PILLAY, PRINCIPAL BRIDGE AND STRUCTURAL ENGINEER AT KNIGHT PIÉSOLD, DURING HIS PRESENTATION."**

the interconnectedness between today's disruptions and the megatrends shaping society's long-term trajectory, of which one critical trend is climate change, which he believed presented opportunities for engineering solutions through mitigation and adaptation efforts.

Chuene Ramphela, group executive: IDD at the Development Bank of Southern Africa, emphasised the importance of co-operation and shared responsibility in infrastructure delivery, urging stakeholders to leverage emerging best practices to mitigate climate risks effectively. Presenting groundbreaking research on climate change impacts in infrastructure development, Refiloe Mokoena, Dr Njabulo Siyakatshana and Vuyo Ndayi, from the CSIR, underscored the critical role of innovation in adaptation, advocating collaborative efforts to engineer a sustainable future.

Prof Marianne Vanderschuren, deputy dean: transformation and social responsiveness at the University of Cape Town, explained that overall, the City

of Cape Town faced a risk of R20 billion to its transport infrastructure. "If we factor in hospitals, schools and major workplaces, this figure escalates to R53 billion. The City of Cape Town needs to scrutinise the details and commence planning for the impending climate change risks. There's an urgent need to establish a contingency fund to ensure it possesses the financial resources to manage disasters effectively," she said.

A discussion on "Engineering the Future – Protecting Lives and Livelihoods" was facilitated by Naomi Naidoo, a CESA board member and founder of Pink Africa Consulting Engineers, who set the tone for the day's proceedings.

David Leukes, CESA president and MD of BVi Consulting Engineers, Dr Nelson Ogunshakin, CEO of FIDIC, Alderman Eddie Andrews, executive deputy mayor of the City of Cape Town and Michael Hendrickse, chief engineer and acting senior manager at the Western Cape Department of Infrastructure, participated in the robust discussions of this session. ■



# FROM WHEELS TO FLOORS: RUBBER REINVENTS ITSELF

Mathe Group's Hammarsdale facility, which recycles approximately 1 000 radial truck tyres per day to produce 45 tons of rubber crumb, is a pivotal export hub. Although many of its products are distributed internationally, the innovative rubber flooring solutions which helped establish this growing company in the first place continue to highlight its global reach and position it as a local leader in green building solutions.

Dr Mehran Zarrebini, CEO of the Mathe Group, points out that strategic partnerships have helped the company spread its wings, while also helping reduce South Africa's hazardous build-up of used tyres.

He explains how, in 2013, sister company Van Dyck embarked on a strategic initiative to enhance the sustainability of its product range by incorporating recycled content. However, the availability

of rubber crumb - a key component offering significant benefits - was limited. Initially, Van Dyck resorted to importing. "This was paradoxical, given the abundance of local waste tyre material. This prompted us to engage with the Mathe Group, a firm based in New Germany with a nascent operation constrained by its waste management licence's capacity. Our growing demand soon outstripped

**"PARTNERING WITH DR ZARREBINI OF THE MATHE GROUP AND VAN DYCK (PFE) WAS A NATURAL CHOICE. OUR PARTNERSHIP'S GROUNDED IN OUR SHARED GOAL OF GREENING THE FLOORING INDUSTRY."**

the group's supply capabilities, compelling us to invest in the development of a new facility. This not only secured Van Dyck's supply chain, but also presented an opportunity to cultivate the local market for rubber crumb," he explains. To date, Zarrebini has been instrumental not only in increasing the Mathe Group's production capacity six times, but in developing new products.

The collaboration with The Flooring Connection (TFC) – which brings together Instafloor SA, Instafloor UK and Van Dyck – now spans several years. Van Dyck manufactures the acoustic products at its Hammarsdale production facility.

"Our initial engagement involved providing acoustic underlay products. Through our partnership with Instafloor SA, it's also procured advanced acoustic solutions. Given the specialised nature of these products, TFC plays a critical role in liaising closely with end clients and offering essential technical support," he explains.

Jonathan Bodley, head of TFC, says the organisation is dedicated to helping transform the African construction industry, promoting flooring products that align with the circular economy for

renovations and new building projects.

"Partnering with Dr Zarrebini of the Mathe Group and Van Dyck (PFE) was a natural choice. Our partnership's grounded in our shared goal of greening the flooring industry," he says.

Bodley adds that because all Van Dyck's products are tested to international specifications, his company can market and export products made locally that can compete against less sustainable alternatives on both quality and cost.

He points out that product development is a key shared goal. "TFC has seen progression in our offerings in terms of innovative uses of our products and new developments. We take pride in the way the versatility of these products showcases African creativity and innovation."

InstaCradle rubber crumb sub-flooring cradles were initially used for raised acoustic flooring in the sports and office environment to absorb impact force and sound. Decking applications followed, specifically in situations where waterproofing needed to be protected. With support from PFE, the

EcoPaver Cradle was developed for external, permeable paving, allowing for easy water run-off and the creation of water reticulation systems. This has since been used in several water-wise buildings.

"Our rubber crumb underlays, long used in the flooring industry, are now being used as acoustic barriers under standard cement screeds and as low-profile solutions for self-levelling screeds," says Bodley.

"These products have proven remarkably versatile, with contractors finding unexpected ways to utilise them. For example, InstaCradles are now used in acoustic recording studios, to install wall cladding and even support roofing joists. In addition to rooftop decks, the cradles are used to hold the feet of solar geysers."

Zarrebini adds that ongoing research and development continue to yield innovative products that are nearing completion, including acoustic solutions for high-performance gymnasiums and adhesive-free flooring systems.

Bodley and Zarrebini believe that, although SA is still relatively new to the modern green building wave, demand for and awareness of green building products such as these are growing.

"The South African market exhibits a promising trajectory for the adoption of our products, particularly within the built

## FEATURE

environment, where there's a noticeable shift towards sustainable building solutions. However, the pace of adoption in SA typically lags behind markets like the UK, where legislation and regulatory frameworks more actively drive sustainable innovation," explains Zarrebini.

He is nevertheless confident that integrating recycled rubber into flooring solutions offers multi-faceted benefits, including a significant reduction in the dependence on imported raw materials like virgin rubber which, ultimately, contributes to a more sustainable manufacturing ecosystem.

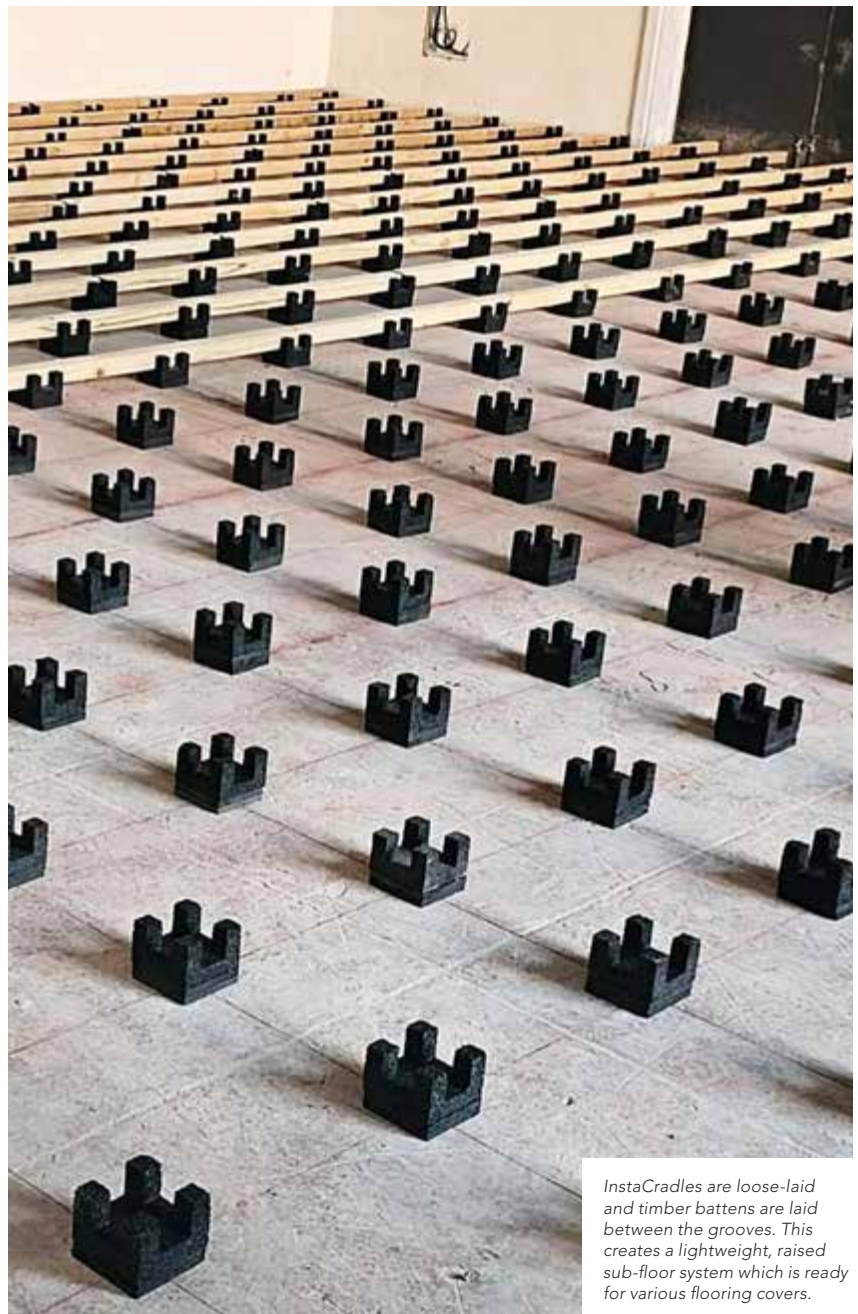
This sustainability goal is prized by both parties.

"Our future expansion plans will accommodate the dual objectives of supplying rubber crumb to external customers and leveraging it for valorisation in our locally manufactured acoustic products. This strategy aligns with our commitment to sustainability and the optimisation of resource use within our production processes," says Zarrebini.

"The recycled rubber crumb product range attains the highest acoustic performance standards, while having

a positive environmental impact. Looking ahead, sustained collaborations with PFE are anticipated. We've seen much potential in the SA sports flooring market. Above all, we aim to increase

demand for recycled rubber crumb products, stimulate government support for recycling efforts and foster a sustainable solution to environmental challenges," says Bodley. ■



*InstaCradles are loose-laid and timber battens are laid between the grooves. This creates a lightweight, raised sub-floor system which is ready for various flooring covers.*

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# BUILDINGS THAT INTELLIGENTLY SUPPORT WELL-BEING



(Above): Thabang Byl, buildings segment lead: Schneider Electric.

Buildings are gathering places for humans – and for their inhabitants to prosper, they need to be sustainable, resilient and people-centric. For that reason, they also need to be healthy. In fact, studies have consistently shown that healthier buildings result in fewer sick days.

While outbreaks of seasonal influenza and other infectious diseases cannot be avoided, buildings can still maintain an overall healthy and productive environment.

To this end, building health certifications have gained traction

over the years, emphasising the importance of creating healthier indoor environments that promote well-being. For example, the WELL Building Standard, developed by the International WELL Building Institute, focuses on enhancing human health by encompassing categories such as air, water, nourishment, light, fitness, comfort and mental calm.

Building management systems (BMS) and related smart building technologies have an important role to play in putting an end to the colloquial “sick building syndrome”. Building controls can assist in simplifying, improving and automating safe and healthy buildings.

## MAKING BUILDINGS SMARTER AND HEALTHIER

In South Africa, smart buildings can simplify compliance with both legislative frameworks and voluntary certifications aimed at improving building health and safety. Together with WELL, the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design rating system also considers indoor environmental quality.

Connected devices track everything from room comfort parameters to indoor air quality,

## HEALTH AND SAFETY

such as CO<sub>2</sub>, volatile organic compounds (VOC) and daily people movement. Every aspect of power conditions and energy consumption is also accurately measured and analysed.

Driven by these inputs, building health and performance can be automatically optimised in a responsive and unified way.

For example, if a rise in CO<sub>2</sub> and/or increased density of people is detected, the BMS will respond by increasing ventilation in that zone. The opposite will also be true; a low occupancy zone will trigger the BMS to reduce ventilation

as well as reduce heating, cooling or lighting to save on energy.

Here, indoor health is balanced with buildings' efforts to run more efficiently and be environmentally sensitive.

The same network of VOC and occupancy sensors can ensure that building maintenance crews clean the right places at the right time, helping to ensure safety.

In addition, the latest integrated employee engagement apps can keep employees informed of "safe" areas to help avoid overcrowding, give them touch-free control over room comfort and enable efficient meeting

room-booking. These and other convenient functions can all translate to gains in productivity.

Beyond these capabilities, the newest smart building solutions use continuous data collection and analytic tools to simplify building health and performance reporting. Reports can be regularly shared with third-party testing and building certification organisations.

Schneider Electric's EcoStruxure Building collaborative Internet of Things solutions help drive greater visibility and improvement of all aspects of building operations to help owners' facility managers realise healthier operations. ■







*Pratliperl® is an eco-friendly and lightweight building material which is both fireproof and thermally-insulating and can be used in conjunction with cement.*

# PRATLEY PROMOTES SUSTAINABILITY

A mere 16mm of Pratliperl® plaster on each side of a wall provides the same thermal insulation as a double-brick (220mm-thick) wall, which essentially means that the wall's thermal insulation is doubled.

"This incredible insulation value translates into significant energy- and cost-savings in support of sustainability," says Eldon.

"The use of a product such as Pratliperl® is the ideal simple step to reduce costs, save energy and ultimately unify our collective commitment to help protect the planet." ■

Pratliperl® has been developed by Pratley to promote sustainability in the construction industry. "We've always been committed to sustainability and energy-efficiency, especially in terms of infrastructure development and energy-savings," says the Pratley MD Eldon Kruger.

Pratliperl® is a naturally occurring mineral aggregate for plaster and screeds that can help contractors and developers meet standards such as SANS 204, which specifies the design requirements for energy-efficiency in buildings. The product is a perlite-based, lightweight, cement aggregate used instead of ordinary building sand.

Unlike ordinary perlites which are brittle and friable, Pratliperl® has a stronger surface structure

and can be used in conjunction with cement. "The end result is a unique, eco-friendly and lightweight building material that's both fireproof and thermally-insulating," notes Eldon. A major benefit is a reduced requirement for air-conditioning, as structures can be kept naturally cool in summer and warm in winter.

Applications for Pratliperl® range from plaster (internal and external thermal insulation) to lightweight floors for high-rise buildings, roof decks, fire barriers, precast mouldings, fireproofing for tunnels in mines, screeds, bathtubs, underfloor heating, tile adhesive filler, bricks and boards, pizza ovens, cryogenic tanks, loose fill, a paint texturing agent, aggregate for refractory cements and as an insulating surface for molten metal.



*(Above): Pratliperl® is derived from a volcanic glass called perlite.*

# ACTION NEEDED TO RESTORE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY



Confidence in the construction industry has been erratic since 2020, compelling several industry players to close their doors. Those that remain are exposed to risk, vigilante action (the construction mafia) and skills shortages due to mass emigration. Government's stated commitment to making regulatory changes and spending on infrastructure do, however, provide some light at the end of the tunnel.

"The industry needs a major boost to regain the prosperity of a decade ago," says GVK-Siya Zama CFO John de Sousa. "Much needs to be done to improve

investor confidence and boost the industry. Here, government has a major role to play. The finance minister's announcements in his recent Budget Speech bode well for the industry – if they play out according to plan."

De Sousa's comments come as GVK-Siya Zama's marks its 30-year anniversary since inception in 1994, coinciding with the birth of democracy in South Africa. Since then, it has evolved into one of the largest privately-owned construction companies in the country.

Its roots, however, can be traced

**"IT'S NO SECRET THAT IN RECENT YEARS, MUNICIPALITIES HAVEN'T BEEN GREAT AT MANAGING FINANCES AND DELIVERING PROJECTS. ANY FOCUS ON MUNICIPAL GOVERNANCE AND THE ERADICATION OF CORRUPTION AND INEPTITUDE WILL GO A LONG WAY TOWARDS ADDRESSING THESE CHALLENGES."**

back to the 1960s, when it operated as a painting and restoration company focused on smaller projects. Over the years, it grew into a significant player in the construction industry, successfully taking on larger and more complex projects.

Today, GVK-Siya Zama's work has shifted from the highly aesthetic restoration projects of the past to being part of the construction machinery involved in creating healthcare and education facilities in response to a considerable backlog, underpinned by a growing and shifting population.

De Sousa says the advent of a democratic SA held much promise three decades ago, albeit with many unknowns for investors at the time. "It also presented an opportunity to address and redress inequality in terms of infrastructure and services – and, along with that change, shift the emphasis in public spending.

"In those early days, there was a major drive by government to invest in infrastructure, hospitals, education facilities and the type of projects that would cement the leadership's foothold in the country. This focus was unfortunately at the cost of unseen infrastructure such as pipelines and reticulation, roads, bridges, water and electricity: challenges that the country's now having to deal with – 30 years on," he adds.

**GOVERNMENT'S PROPOSED REGULATORY AMENDMENTS FOR PPPS WELCOMED**

De Sousa says the state needs private-sector participation

to accelerate projects. "Any relaxation of rigid structures and requirements – such as government's intention of amending the public-private partnership (PPP) regulatory framework – will help to reduce procedural complexity of undertaking PPPs and contribute to more streamlined delivery of projects."

In addition, the announcement in the Budget Speech that government plans to invest more than R943 billion in the refurbishment and maintenance of existing assets and the building of new public infrastructure is welcomed by GVK-Siya Zama.

De Sousa says the company applauds government's plans to transform municipalities into engines of growth through the tightening of budget processes, ramping up of oversight, increasing skills and capacity of municipal employees, and driving investment in maintaining and building infrastructure.

"It's no secret that in recent years, municipalities haven't been great at managing finances and delivering projects. Any focus on municipal governance and the eradication of corruption and ineptitude will go a long way towards addressing these challenges," he notes.

**DECISIVE ACTION NEEDED**

De Sousa points out that there is enormous pressure on the private sector to finance and move projects forward. "On the flip side of the coin, there's



John de Sousa, chief financial officer: GVK-Siya Zama.

counter-pressure from labour as government considers the privatisation of state-owned entities. Government's in a bind. It knows what needs to be done, but dealing with these opposing forces on the ground inevitably slows the process down. However, decisive action's needed to ensure a sustainable industry," he says.

He says economic growth, population growth, increasing unemployment and shrinking public sector spend place even the most reputable contractors in a precarious position.

"At GVK-Siya Zama, we'll continue to strive for a sustainable company that provides employment, trains and develops employees, contributes meaningfully to the built environment and turns a profit," he says. ■

# THE FRAMEWORK FOR CONTEMPORARY ARCHITECTURAL INNOVATION

We live in an age when technological advancements have revolutionised architecture from design to construction. Whether it is 3D printing models to prove design concepts, developing highly engineered materials fit for purpose or adopting modular building as the next step in efficiency, the built world around us is becoming more creative and adaptable.

Modern buildings need to meet a variety of criteria that were not concerns, historically: from stringent safety standards to environmental friendliness and low energy requirements, the key is not simply design, but the application of new materials that meet these diverse needs.

Eva-Last's Lifespan hybrid aluminium architectural beams are an example of a highly engineered building material that meets all traditional norms, while allowing

for a diverse range of aesthetic applications.

Featuring a specialised aluminium core for easier installation at height and which is resistant to biodegradation, UV exposure fading, corrosion, biological pests (such as termites, fungi and bacteria) and even the harshest weather, Lifespan provides the look of timber beams without the upkeep of wood or susceptibility to the elements of alternative metal options.

Lifespan's reinforced bamboo composite beam (a tri-extruded lightweight aluminium core and bamboo polymer composite cap) forms the basis of its extreme versatility and durability. With increased span capability, Lifespan is ideal for decorative architecture of all types, including pergolas, privacy screens, shutters, façades, gates, cladding and soffits.

*Lifespan's extreme versatility and durability make it ideal for decorative architecture of all types.*



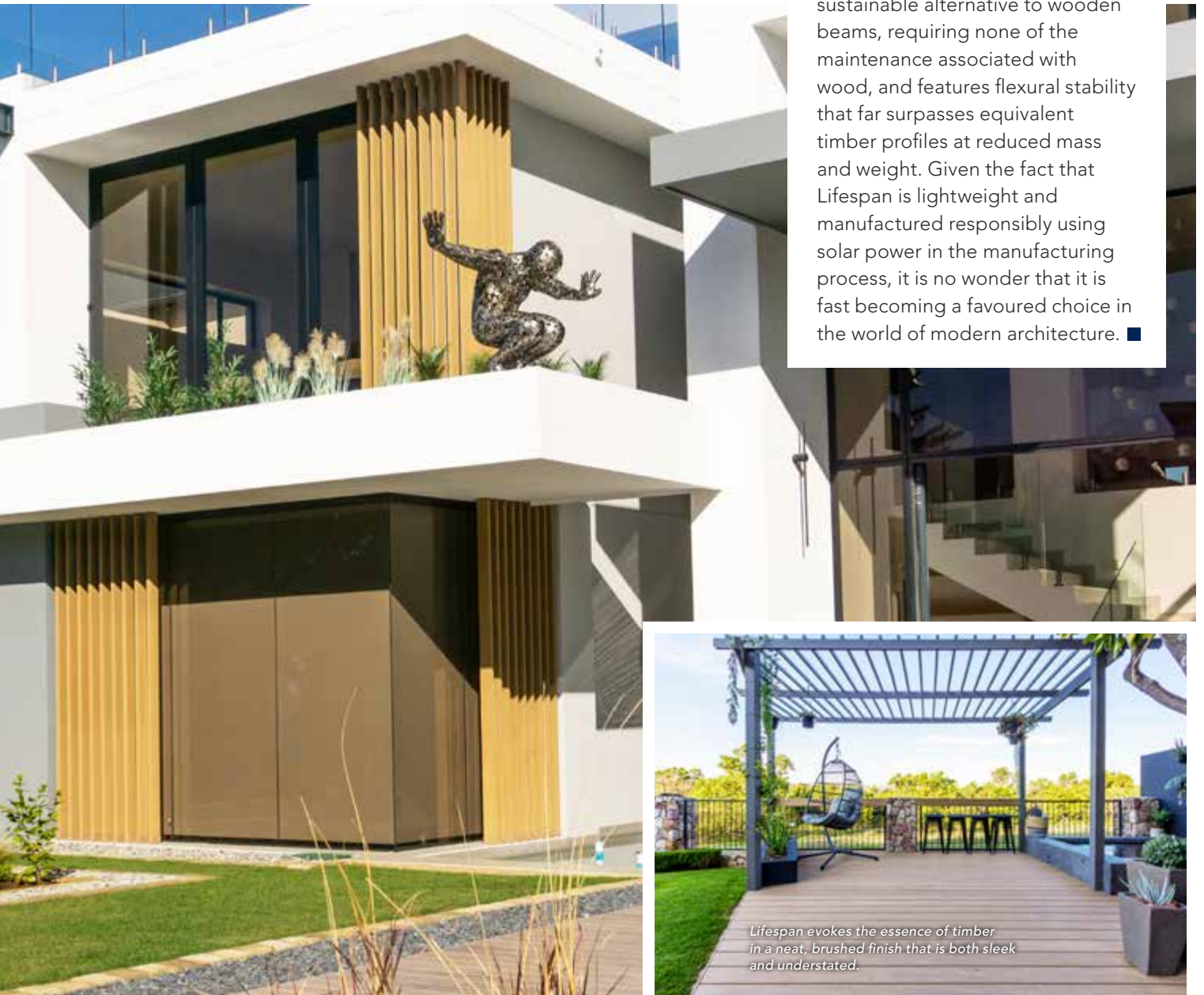
The range of Lifespan profiles – some weighing as little as 0,78kg per metre – makes Lifespan suitable for every application, from lightweight non-structural features such as screening to decorative trussing and oversized pergolas. Lifespan posts can even be used to create durable vertical railing and

showstopping outdoor features requiring a high degree of tensile strength.

A benefit which is often unnoticed by casual observers is that Lifespan’s colour-matching end caps provide a finished look, while protecting the hollow chambers of the aluminium core.

The Lifespan range is available in the full Eva-Tech colour palette, offering classic and timeless natural shades in a matte finish to suit any design and colour scheme. Each colour evokes the essence of a particular timber application in a neat, brushed finish that is both sleek and understated.

Unlike the timber which its external appearance imitates, Lifespan is an environmentally friendly and sustainable alternative to wooden beams, requiring none of the maintenance associated with wood, and features flexural stability that far surpasses equivalent timber profiles at reduced mass and weight. Given the fact that Lifespan is lightweight and manufactured responsibly using solar power in the manufacturing process, it is no wonder that it is fast becoming a favoured choice in the world of modern architecture. ■



*Lifespan evokes the essence of timber in a neat, brushed finish that is both sleek and understated.*

# WATERFALL'S NEW OFFICE PARK

Abcon Development has announced the commencement of a new building site at Hertford Office Park that will further enhance the thriving business landscape in the Waterfall node.

The office park is strategically located at the busy corner of Allandale and Bekker Rds, just off the Allandale/N1 interchange. This prime location forms part of the Waterfall node, making it a highly sought-after destination for businesses seeking premium office space.



*Views of the envisaged Hertford Office Park, which will offer flexibility and versatility to accommodate business needs in Midrand.*

This latest development will be a modern three-storey office block, offering an impressive 5 823m<sup>2</sup> of gross lettable area. This addition will further elevate the park's status as a premier business hub in Midrand, providing much-needed office space to meet growing demands.

Upon completion, Hertford Office Park will boast approximately 75 000m<sup>2</sup> of premium office space, catering to both smaller enterprises and larger corporations.

Views of the envisaged Hertford Office Park, which will offer flexibility and versatility to accommodate business needs in Midrand.



(Above): Lloyd Wallace, technical director and expertise lead: Infrastructure Advisory, Zutari.

Designed with a phased approach, the park offers flexibility and versatility to accommodate diverse business needs, reflecting Abcon's commitment to fostering a vibrant and inclusive business community.

"Beyond its functional appeal, Hertford Office Park is designed to offer a holistic workplace experience. With amenities such as a coffee shop and a Planet Fitness signature gym, along with award-winning gardens, the park creates an environment where work-life balance can thrive," says Abcon MD Bryce O'Donnell.

"We're proud to play a role in shaping the future of commercial real estate in our community." ■

**"UPON COMPLETION, HERTFORD OFFICE PARK WILL BOAST APPROXIMATELY 75 000M<sup>2</sup> OF PREMIUM OFFICE SPACE, CATERING TO BOTH SMALLER ENTERPRISES AND LARGER CORPORATIONS."**



# USING POST-CONSTRUCTION METRICS TO IMPROVE BUILDING EFFICIENCY

By Evelyn Long

Construction professionals have become increasingly concerned about sustainability and energy-efficiency. While these principles are essential in building, how can you use them once construction is finished? Post-construction metrics are imperative to continue improving operations as new technology emerges. With each innovation, you can lower a building's carbon footprint and support the environment. Here is a guide to using post-construction metrics to improve building efficiency:

## WHAT POST-CONSTRUCTION METRICS IMPROVE BUILDING EFFICIENCY?

The job is not necessarily complete once your crews leave the site. Post-construction metrics are a crucial step to improve building efficiency and help your sustainability goals. Here are six performance metrics to use when evaluating efficiency:

### 1. Energy usage

Energy usage is among the top priorities for construction crews today. Drawing from renewable energy sources and using just enough power for a building's needs is crucial for its carbon

footprint. The International Energy Agency (IEA) says buildings are responsible for 30% of the world's energy consumption, so using post-construction metrics to track energy usage is vital to meet sustainability goals.

Tracking energy usage post-construction can come from numerous modern tools. For instance, meters and sub-meters are valuable tools because they track how much energy your buildings use once the occupants move in. While these devices are helpful, you can also use advanced technology to optimise





facilities for modern standards.

For instance, building automation systems are becoming more commonplace as construction professionals integrate automation and energy-efficiency. These mechanisms collect data on power consumption and dive deeper into the details to provide valuable insights. With these post-construction metrics, construction professionals are more equipped to improve future project-efficiency.

## 2. Emission generation

Energy consumed has a direct relationship with the emissions

generated in a structure. In addition to power consumption, the IEA says buildings account for 26% of energy-related missions, with 8% being direct and 18% from electricity and heat production. As sustainability standards have strengthened, tracking emissions generated from buildings has become a crucial benchmark for your post-construction metrics.

Tracking your post-construction can utilise numerous sources for accurate data. For instance, use emissions calculators to estimate your buildings' historical and future greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. These metrics will tell you how much emission production derives from energy usage, waste management and other critical factors.

The general rule for tracking emissions in a building is to add the emissions from each GHG, such as carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) and methane (CH<sub>4</sub>). Convert any non-carbon gases back to CO<sub>2</sub> to find your carbon footprint and what your construction team needs to do, moving forward.

Having this baseline information will guide your organisation to improved post-construction metrics.

## 3. Thermal performance

Thermal performance falls under the umbrella of energy consumption due to the high demand for efficient heating systems in winter. With a rising

population, heating needs will rise even higher.

The International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) says residential and commercial buildings account for 95% of global heating demand, so improving on this post-construction metric is essential for future generations.

While there are a few ways to gauge thermal performance, energy use intensity (EUI) is among the most critical data points. Calculating EUI includes dividing the building's annual energy consumption by the gross floor area, producing a measurement of energy per square metre per year. This metric will tell your leadership team how current buildings perform and what changes are necessary for improving thermal comfort.

When calculating thermal performance, you need to be as comprehensive as possible in each corner of your building. Small sections of the structure can contribute to heat loss, thus compromising comfort. To quantify performance, your construction team should track thermal resistance and thermal transmittance. With these metrics, you will better understand the building's thermal performance and insulative properties.

## 4. Financial performance

Meeting deadlines and coming in under budget is essential in modern construction – even with

## PROJECT MANAGEMENT

sustainability standards becoming mainstream. Gauging the financial performance of buildings post-construction is valuable because of their link to sustainability.

Structures consuming less energy and water will have lower financial liabilities, thus becoming more appealing to clients for long-term success. Studying past buildings' financial performance is critical for quantifying your expenses and savings. Additionally, you can use your financial data for future projects by accurately estimating the effects of renewable energy systems, water conservation devices and more.

One post-construction strategy construction companies should consider for improved financial prospects is value optimisation. This approach focuses on optimising budgets by adjusting

the project's scope, thus helping teams avoid exceeding their budgets. Value optimisation chooses cost-effective materials and streamlines projects by finding options for labour, techniques and more.

### 5. Indoor air quality

An occupant's comfort is essential to their health inside a building and indoor air quality (IAQ) is another post-construction metric you should prioritise. IAQ accounts for numerous factors, such as temperature, pollutants, ventilation, etc. Achieving high-quality air while maintaining low costs can be challenging, especially with outdoor conditions being a significant factor.

For instance, a building may need to run its air-conditioning unit or dehumidifier constantly to keep the interior air comfortable. Air-

conditioners need about 25 British thermal units (BTUs) per square metre, so the energy consumed can become a liability for your sustainability goals.

Monitoring post-construction can come from a few different sources. First, you can install air quality monitors around the building to track air pollutants and their concentrations. These devices are critical for controlling volatile organic compound (VOC) levels and improving occupant health. With this information, your team will better understand what materials – such as high-efficiency particulate-absorbing AIR filters and natural ventilation – have worked to improve IAQ.

### 6. Maintenance costs

Maintenance costs are among the most important metrics because they are an all-encompassing data



point for your building's efficiency. This gauge will tell you how often the occupants experience downtime with the building's systems, how much they pay in repair costs and the overall health of the structure. Understanding metrics for maintenance costs increases sustainability by increasing uptime and ensuring efficiency with each building system.

**"FOR INSTANCE, METERS AND SUB-METERS ARE VALUABLE TOOLS BECAUSE THEY TRACK HOW MUCH ENERGY YOUR BUILDINGS USE ONCE THE OCCUPANTS MOVE IN."**

Technology allows for easier tracking of maintenance costs, especially if you use computerised maintenance management systems. This software streamlines data by having it in one place for all parties to see. Here, you can track what issues have occurred, the required labour and the materials necessary for repair. You can improve future projects by tracking each equipment's performance and equipping preventive maintenance schedules for each system.

**HOW TO USE POST-CONSTRUCTION METRICS TO IMPROVE EFFICIENCY**

Data is critical for construction companies because it can show your post-construction

performance. What changes can you make for the future? These three strategies demonstrate what questions your team should ask when evaluating metrics:

**Identify common denominators**

First, your team should identify the common denominators in past projects. What metrics across various buildings demonstrate areas of improvement? For instance, your buildings may need optimisation in the HVAC units. Inefficient systems could lead to higher utility bills and reduced thermal comfort, so your team can mitigate the issue by scrutinising HVAC maintenance or utilising more efficient brands in your installations.

**Set measurable goals**

Improving future projects is more manageable when you set goals and use key performance indicators. Set reasonable metrics that you want your team to achieve with your specified deficiency and emphasise them to your team. For instance, your buildings' energy usage may exceed your sustainability standards. This opportunity lets you focus on decreasing power consumption until you reach your desired point.

**Find employee improvements**

Finding room for improvement in post-construction metrics also lets you identify specific growth areas for your employees. How can your team improve their skills sets and contribute


to sustainability? You could incentivise your crew to attend workshops and take classes on sustainable construction. They will then be better prepared to tackle sustainable building and make more informed decisions while improving future projects.

**Using data for sustainability**

Data goes a long way towards telling the story of sustainability. Incorporating post-construction metrics into your company's workflow will identify weaknesses and demonstrate what you can do to improve future projects. Energy-efficiency, thermal performance and other data points are crucial for the industry's future, so staying updated with these metrics will help your company leverage data for good. ■



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One cubic metre of eucalyptus wood captures 880kg of atmospheric carbon dioxide, while releasing some 640kg of oxygen back into the atmosphere, making it an ideal material for environmental responsibility.

# ECO-FRIENDLY FOOTBALL STADIUM TAKES ROOT IN LESOTHO

Lesotho is poised to welcome a groundbreaking 1 280-seat football stadium constructed primarily from sustainably sourced timber, dubbed the Stadium of Life. Located in the country's capital of Maseru, this innovative project, which harnesses timber's renewability and carbon storage properties, stems from a collaboration between local charity and football club Kick4Life

(K4L), non-profit organisation Relationships Inspiring Social Enterprise (RISE International), the Forest Stewardship Council® (FSC®) and international certification body DNV. It will effectively unite sports and sustainability to drive social change.

The Stadium of Life represents a pioneering venture in several

respects. Not only will it be Africa's first FSC-certified timber stadium, but it also marks the first FSC-certified project (FSC®-P001979) in southern Africa and the third on the continent. A €75 000 sponsorship by FSC International has secured the naming rights for the next five years.

The structure, which DNV has certified as an FSC project, sets

**"THE PROJECT FEATURES A NEW GRASS PITCH FOR 11-A-SIDE GAMES, PLUS A RESURFACED FIVE-A-SIDE PITCH THANKS TO DONATED ARTIFICIAL TURF FROM SIS PITCHES. SPECTATORS WILL ENJOY WOODEN SEATING ON TWO SIDES, WITH SEPARATE AREAS FOR COACHES AND TEAMS NEAR THE HALFWAY LINE."**

new standards for sustainable construction and environmental responsibility (DNV-PRO-002776).

"Project certification is vital because it verifies that the forest materials for a project come from FSC-certified forests, recycled or controlled sources. Project certification also ensures the responsible sourcing of timber, supply chain and the promotion of environmental stewardship and community development," says FSC Southern Africa marketing and communications manager Gerard Busse.

"Aligned to the shared aim for a long-term, positive impact on the environment and local communities, DNV inspectors rigorously examined the sustainable methods used,

providing useful insights on how to improve the project's environmental and social impact."

The wooden poles chosen for construction are being sourced from MTO Forestry's FSC-certified plantations in Mpumalanga. Choosing FSC-certified products directly enshrines conservation into the project's legacy, ensuring supply chain integrity and responsible forestry for future generations.

Steve Fleming, co-founder of K4L, explains the stadium's significance as a platform for social change. "The new facility will extend the impact of K4L's existing centre, providing space for daily football-based and social impact programmes and serving as a home ground for football teams."

"The stadium's designed a multi-purpose facility that extends beyond sport, but also acts as a hub for diverse activities, including climate change education, gender empowerment, academic tutoring, health testing and entrepreneurship training," adds Motlatsi Nkhahle, country director of K4L.

The existing centre's social enterprises, including a restaurant and conference centre, generate income to support community programmes and create employment opportunities for youth.

The Stadium of Life aims to foster a connection between football

and nature, encouraging visitors to consider the sport's impact on our natural environment. The concept was developed in collaboration with construction industry graduates from RISE's flagship design and build training programme, In Loco, as part of a 10-month fellowship in 2023.

After various design options, timber won, with 8 584 treated eucalyptus poles forming the west and south stands and a 160m perimeter fence. "As the construction sector increasingly seeks materials with a lighter environmental footprint, lower greenhouse gas emissions and better energy-efficiency, eyes are turning towards forest products sector to meet these goals," explains Pedro Clarke, In Loco programme director and project lead architect.

Wood serves a long-life carbon storage mechanism. When trees are sustainably harvested, the wood continues to store carbon even when turned into another product such as sawn timber, poles and even pulp and paper. One cubic metre of eucalyptus wood captures 880kg of atmospheric carbon dioxide, thanks to photosynthesis that takes place while a tree is growing. Some 640kg of oxygen are released back into the atmosphere, while safely locking away 240kg of captured carbon. Furthermore, new saplings take up carbon dioxide faster than the older trees they replace.

The project features a new grass pitch for 11-a-side games, plus a

resurfaced five-a-side pitch thanks to donated artificial turf from SIS Pitches. Spectators will enjoy wooden seating on two sides, with separate areas for coaches and teams near the halfway line. Locally sourced sandstone from Lesotho will add a natural touch to the seating. A canopy of thin wooden beams will provide shade, while a timber fence enhances security. Importantly, the project minimises concrete use, only employing it for the foundations of the wooden poles.

The natural tones of timber are complemented by the more industrial look of repurposed shipping containers for changeroom and restroom facilities. This is further complemented by solar-powered lighting and indigenous plantings.

A biodiversity stand, designed by Park Associati in Italy in collaboration with RISE, will incorporate an array of indigenous plants from across Lesotho, enhancing K4L's work around climate education and action. "As such, the 'Biodiversity Stand' takes on a double meaning – a stand in the sense of football, but also as a representation for the protection and promotion of biodiversity in the Mountain Kingdom," says Fleming.

Despite challenges, including funding constraints and a pandemic, the project signifies a triumph of perseverance and commitment to social change.

"It's a dream come true to see this new evolution of the K4L Centre finally come to fruition," notes Daniela Gusman, founder and executive director of RISE International. "Having worked on the master plan in 2009, it's especially rewarding to partner with our In Loco fellows on a project that will have a long-term positive impact on the community."

"It exemplifies a paradigm shift in sports infrastructure, combining sustainability, social impact and cultural representation. As construction progresses, the stadium aims to inspire communities and set a new benchmark for environmentally responsible practices in sports development," adds Gusman.

Construction began in August 2023 and the stadium is set to open in December this year. ■

**"THE WOODEN POLES  
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INTO THE PROJECT'S  
LEGACY, ENSURING  
SUPPLY CHAIN  
INTEGRITY AND  
RESPONSIBLE  
FORESTRY FOR  
FUTURE GENERATIONS."**





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# CAPTAINS OF CONSTRUCTION



**Mariana Lamont,  
executive director:  
Clay Brick Association**

Lamont graduated with a degree in marketing and sales management and began her career in publishing, but then made a quantum leap to the construction industry.

"I found my love for construction when I joined Ocon Brick in 2003 to lead the sales force in Gauteng as its sales and marketing manager. I enjoyed building relationships with both large and small construction companies, as well as identifying and assisting with bulk on-site brick deliveries.

"At that time, I was the marketing director of the Clay Brick Association and joined it in 2018 in my present position," she says.

"I've always found the construction industry very rewarding. Meeting the professional team on site at the beginning, when the project's still only a vision, and seeing it become a reality is beautiful. I love learning about the demands on site and delivering to expectations, as clay bricks play a vital role in the longevity of a building.

"Construction and the built environment have a huge impact on both the environment and our communities, so I'm proud to play a role in continually improving the economic and environmental sustainability of the clay brick sector."

The aspects of her job Lamont enjoys most are visiting factories and engaging with government in sustainability initiatives to educate and provide independent research, so that people can make informed construction decisions. ■



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