

TECH NEWS: Transforming the industrial landscape in South Africa

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A new-generation, black-owned, high-energy business driven by innovation, international standards, and service excellence is transforming the industrial landscape in South Africa.

As a manufacturer of HDPE pipes, **BT Industrial** conforms to the local content requirement of the new Mining Charter in South Africa, meaning that every R1 spend translates into in a R1.28 Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (B-BBEE) benefit for its mining clients.

Mining Charter 3 supports supplier development

“Our clients cite this as being crucial for their own B-BBEE scores,” Founder and MD Kgomotso Lekola comments.

BT Industrial recently received a prestigious CEO Circle Entrepreneurs 2019 Award in South Africa, awarded by a panel consisting of Discovery CEO Adrian Gore as Chairman, Investec CEO Fani Titi, Vodacom CEO Shameel Joosub, and Sasol CEO Bongani Ngqababa.

It was selected as one of seven medium-sized black owned and managed businesses, from an initial tally of 140, to be transformed into national champions over the next five years.

The seven businesses selected currently all have revenues between R50 million and R100 million, and will be nurtured over the next five years to have a value in excess of R500 million.

Not only does BT Industrial manufacture its HDPE pipes to the highest standards, but its high-capacity plant in Roodekop, Germiston allows it to achieve unmatched production efficiencies.

As a result, it can offer superior price performance to its customers, which gives it a major competitive edge in the industry.

In terms of track record, BT Industrial has executed a number of critical mining and infrastructure piping projects, and in all cases it has outperformed expectations. BT Industrial is ISO 9001-accredited, and is one of the very few manufacturers with SABS accreditation.

It supplies HDPE pipes to the mining and oil and gas industries, power stations, process plants, and telecoms companies. Applications include fresh water and wastewater conveyance, water and chemicals used in industrial processes, petroleum products, and even fibre-optic ducting.

Ancillary services include HDPE pipe design, installation and commissioning, quantity surveying and project management for the mining industry, engineering project management, and also the import and export of polymers, specialised machinery and chemicals.

With innovation as its key driver, BT Industrial has developed an array of proprietary technologies in collaboration with top universities in the field of engineering.

Its proprietary developments in piping systems and solutions include a unique solution to manage the problem of corrosion at pipe supports in process plants, statistically the most common cause of external piping failure due to corrosion.

“Our solution allows plants to maximise their hours of operation while carrying out critical inspection and maintenance of corroded carbon steel pipes,” Lekola highlights.

These are common components of steel-frame structures at most plants, where pipes are required to be supported on metal I-beams.

Apart from product and technology innovations, BT Industrial has also invested significantly in a sophisticated ERP system that will make it easier to scale-up its operations for future expansion.

This gives it strict control over its production, from the raw materials inputted at the beginning to the rate of production, any issues on the production line, and the quantity of scrap that results.

“Operationally this takes us to the next level, as we have a direct line of sight into our daily operations,” Lekola stresses.

His involvement with the mining industry began with his acquisition and further strategic development of AfricaWeather, a leader in weather-risk management for the mining industry.

Here the key value proposition was safety and work planning according to weather conditions using technology developed to track storms, monitor lightning strikes (cloud-to-cloud and cloud-to-ground), and generating accurate bespoke seven- to 14-day forecasts based on the mine’s unique operational requirements.

This paved the way to develop more technological solutions for mines, and hence BT Industrial was established.

“This gave me direct exposure to the mining industry in terms of both its business risks and opportunities,” Lekola adds, who holds both a BSc and MBA.



Guest Contributor