

CAPITAL EQUIPMENT NEWS

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MAY 2026



A NEW ERA DAWNS SHARPER CAPITAL EQUIPMENT BUYING CYCLES

CRUSHING AND SCREENING: Pilot Crushtec and Metso bring next-generation crushing to Africa

HEAVY COMMERCIAL VEHICLES: Driving resilience, delivering solutions

COMPACTION: Integrated compaction solutions reshape construction efficiency in Africa

AGRICULTURE: Driving SA's stand-out sector with greater reliability, efficiency

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Capital Equipment News is published monthly by Crown Publications

Managing Editor
Wilhelm du Plessis
capnews@crowm.co.za

Business Development Manager
Elmarie Stonell
elmaries@crowm.co.za

Writer
Juanita Pienaar
jpienaar@crowm.co.za

Design
Ano Shumba

Publisher
Wilhelm du Plessis

Managing Director
Karen Grant

Circulation
Karen Smith

PO Box 140
Bedfordview 2008
Tel: (011) 622-4770

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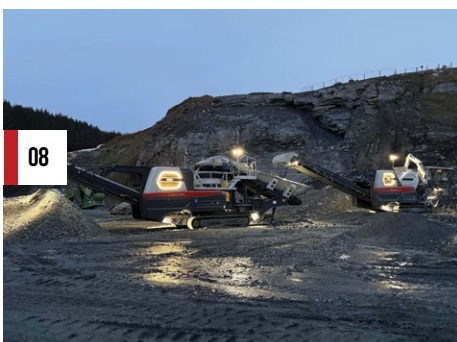


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A SHARPER CAPITAL EQUIPMENT CYCLE



The capital equipment market is entering a more disciplined phase. This is not a collapse in demand, but a tightening shaped by higher interest rates, geopolitical tension, shifting supply chains, and uneven global growth. The effect is straightforward: investment decisions are slower, more selective, and subject to far greater scrutiny than in recent years.

The most immediate constraint is the cost of capital. With borrowing costs elevated, large equipment purchases are being interrogated in detail. Payback periods, utilisation rates, and total cost of ownership have become central to

procurement decisions. Projects that would previously have moved ahead with relative ease are now being delayed, restructured, or scaled back to reduce risk exposure.

At the same time, supply chains are undergoing a structural shift. The move away from single-source global procurement is no longer theoretical. OEMs and end-users are actively diversifying suppliers, regionalising production, and prioritising resilience over lowest cost. This is not reducing demand for capital equipment, but it is redistributing it. Suppliers with a strong local presence, supported by inventory and technical capability, are increasingly favoured over those dependent on extended global supply lines.

In Southern Africa, commodity-linked sectors such as mining, quarrying, and energy remain the backbone of demand. However, investment behaviour within these sectors is changing. Expansion projects are now competing directly with optimisation initiatives, including automation, efficiency improvements, and life-extension of existing assets. The emphasis has shifted from acquiring new equipment to extracting greater value from what is already in operation.

Energy reliability has also become a decisive factor, particularly in South Africa.

Equipment investment is increasingly tied to energy strategies, whether through backup power solutions, hybrid systems, or more efficient machinery. This is creating new areas of opportunity, but it is also redirecting capital away from conventional fleet expansion.

As new equipment purchases slow or are deferred, the aftermarket is becoming more prominent. Maintenance, parts supply, and rebuilds are taking on greater importance as operators extend asset lifecycles and prioritise uptime. For suppliers, this places pressure on service delivery, parts availability, and technical support, turning the aftermarket into a key competitive arena rather than a secondary revenue stream.

What emerges is a market that is not contracting, but becoming more precise. Broad-based demand is giving way to targeted, highly disciplined investment. Suppliers will need to demonstrate clear value in terms of efficiency, reliability, and local support, while buyers will need to balance caution with the necessity of continued investment. Those that navigate this environment with a focus on productivity and flexibility will be best positioned when conditions stabilise. The capital equipment market is not shrinking; it is sharpening.

**Wilhelm du Plessis -
MANAGING EDITOR**

 capnews@crowm.co.za

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Fuel efficiency comparison based on independent tests between the Scania Euro 3 and Scania Euro 3 Super models. Results showed up to a 10% improvement in fuel consumption for the Scania Euro 3 Super under standard operating conditions. Savings equivalent to approximately R8 352 per 10 000 km are indicative and may vary depending on load, route, driver behaviour and prevailing diesel prices.



SCANIA

SEW-EURODRIVE's high IP-rated solutions ensure that dusty or moist environments are not a cause for concern, delivering reliable performance in demanding operating conditions.



DRIVING SA'S STAND-OUT SECTOR WITH GREATER RELIABILITY, EFFICIENCY

With South Africa's agricultural industry breaking export and production records in 2025, preventing unplanned downtime has never been more important - particularly in critical drive and automation systems.

According to Dwane Jacobs, SEW-EURODRIVE's Cape Town Branch Manager, the company's drive technology is playing an increasingly integral role in the sector by helping to improve productivity, reliability and efficiency. Its industrial gear units, high efficiency motors, variable frequency drives and automation software form part of a growing range of solutions being adopted in agriculture-related operations, Jacobs says.

"Agricultural applications range from conveying systems and packhouses used for sorting, grading and packaging, to on-farm material handling equipment such as augers, crushers, grain conveyors and feed processing plants," he explains. "We also support irrigation systems including centre pivots and pump-driven water supply mechanisms as well as automated packaging, palletising and handling solutions used by high-throughput agricultural producers."

Applications like these rely heavily



Agricultural applications range from conveying systems and packhouses used for sorting, grading and packaging, to on-farm material handling equipment such as augers, crushers, grain conveyors and feed processing plants.

Dwane Jacobs, SEW-EURODRIVE's Cape Town Branch Manager.



on robust drive and automation systems to ensure reliable material handling, processing and irrigation.


“From fruit grading lines and grain silos to irrigation pumps and feed processing plants, these operations demand equipment that can run continuously in challenging environments,” he says. “Machinery and components must withstand dust, moisture, variable loads and seasonal production peaks.”

Dusty environments are common in grain




An example of SEW-EURODRIVE’s variable speed drive offering is the MOVITRAC® series, delivering flexible and efficient motor control across a wide range of applications.

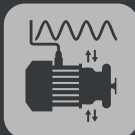
QUICK TAKE




SEW-EURODRIVE’s industrial gear units, high efficiency motors, variable frequency drives and automation software form part of a growing range of solutions being adopted in agriculture-related operations.



Variable loads are common feature of agricultural drive applications.



Using variable speed drives allows a controlled ramp-up of the motor, reducing current spikes and helping lower peak demand charges from the electricity supplier.



SEW-EURODRIVE’s automation platforms support customers in improving productivity and product quality.



From fruit grading lines and grain silos to irrigation pumps and feed processing plants, these operations demand equipment that can run continuously in challenging environments.

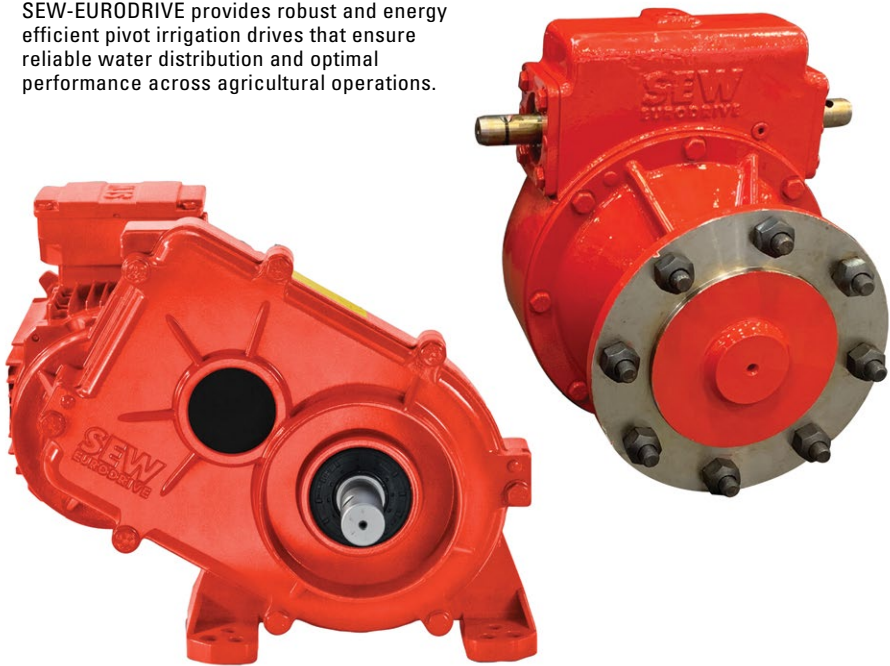
silos and milling facilities, while moisture ingress can occur through outdoor exposure or frequent wash-down cleaning in food processing environments. SEW-EURODRIVE addresses these challenges through a combination of protective design features and specialised motor technologies.

“One way we deal with these conditions is through high ingress protection ratings, ranging from IP65 up to IP69K,” Jacobs explains. “Dust-ignition-proof motors are also available for applications where combustible dust may be present, such as



Pivot irrigation systems supported by SEW-EURODRIVE products deliver reliable, energy efficient performance to ensure consistent water distribution and optimal agricultural productivity.

SEW-EURODRIVE provides robust and energy efficient pivot irrigation drives that ensure reliable water distribution and optimal performance across agricultural operations.



grain silos or milling facilities.”

Additional protection measures include corrosion-resistant coatings and stainless steel options for equipment exposed to harsh weather or aggressive cleaning processes. Jacobs also notes that SEW-EURODRIVE’s decentralised drives - where control electronics are mounted directly on the geared motor rather than in a central control cabinet - reduce cabling exposure in dusty or wet environments.

“We also offer corrosion protection levels from OS1 through to OS4 to withstand harsh environmental conditions,” he says. “Resin encapsulation can be applied in the terminal boxes, along with tropicalisation of the windings and drain holes for very wet areas.”

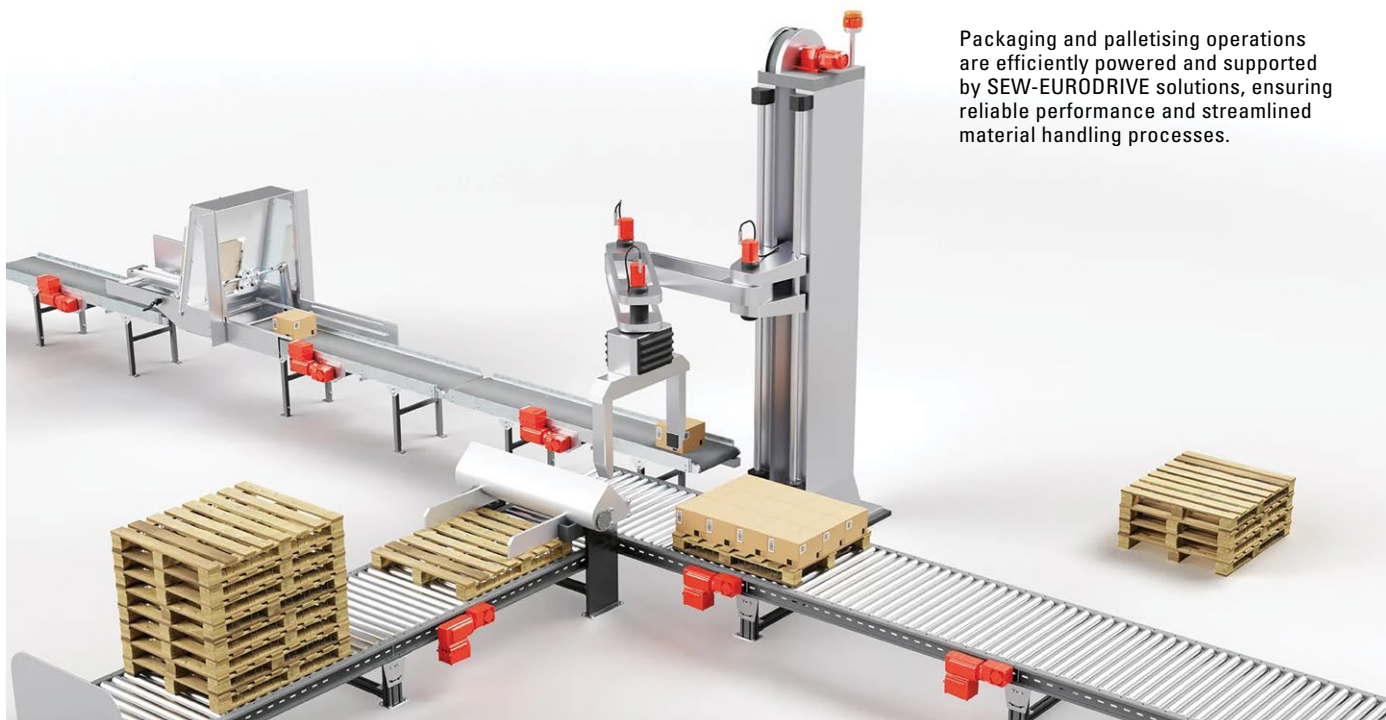
These protective coatings include primer layers and specialised resins designed to prevent corrosion and extend equipment life.

Variable loads are another common feature of agricultural drive applications, Jacobs explains, as the volume of product being conveyed or processed changes with seasonal cycles and production demands. To accommodate these variations, SEW-EURODRIVE’s modular solutions can be customised with heavy-duty gearing and bearings.

“With electricity tariffs rising faster than inflation, players in the agricultural sector are demanding greater energy efficiency from their equipment as a key cost control measure,” he says. “Our variable speed



Resin encapsulation can be applied in the terminal boxes, along with tropicalisation of the windings and drain holes for very wet areas.



Packaging and palletising operations are efficiently powered and supported by SEW-EURODRIVE solutions, ensuring reliable performance and streamlined material handling processes.



SEW-EURODRIVE delivers full turnkey agricultural solutions that support the entire industry, from primary production through to processing and distribution.

“Our solutions go further by enabling energy-optimised operation through intelligent control algorithms,” Jacobs adds. “These can be tailored to agricultural loads to achieve significant electricity savings.”

One example is the option to operate 87 base Hz units which allows the motor to maintain torque up to 87 Hz before torque begins to drop off. This enables a wider operating speed range without sacrificing torque. Another important benefit of VSD technology is its ability to reduce electrical peak demand.

“When motors are started directly on-line, they can draw up to five times their rated current during start-up,” Jacobs explains. “Using variable speed drives allows a controlled ramp-up of the motor, reducing current spikes and helping lower peak demand charges from the electricity supplier.”

Soft starting and stopping also reduces mechanical stress on gearboxes and drive systems, further improving reliability and extending equipment lifespan. At the same time, SEW-EURODRIVE’s automation platforms support customers in improving productivity and product quality.

“This technology enhances users’ ability to synchronise operations across conveyors and processing lines,” he says. “Operators can speed up or slow down equipment depending on the product being processed or the seasonal throughput requirements.”

Real-time control also helps improve throughput consistency while reducing product damage. 🌱



Our variable speed drives (VSDs) and automation systems therefore play an important role in improving the performance and efficiency of agriculture-related equipment.

drives (VSDs) and automation systems therefore play an important role in improving the performance and efficiency of agriculture-related equipment.”

By enabling precise speed control, VSDs allow machinery to match operating speeds to the load requirements of the application, reducing energy consumption and improving overall efficiency.



PILOT CRUSHTEC AND METSO BRING NEXT-GENERATION CRUSHING TO AFRICA

Juanita Pienaar spoke with Pilot Crushtec International Sales and Marketing Director Francois Marais and Janne Lahtela, Product Manager, Lokotrack Quarry, at the South African launch of the Lokotrack LT400J. The event, hosted by Pilot Crushtec, marked the first introduction of Metso's new-generation diesel-electric jaw crusher to the African market. This innovation blends performance, efficiency, and sustainability in a single, robust package.

A different kind of launch

In an industry not typically known for high-profile product reveals, Pilot Crushtec's decision to host a dedicated launch event was deliberate. As Marais pointed out during his address, "Strictly speaking, doing an event like this is not common practice in this industry, but then again, I don't think that anything that Pilot Crushtec does is anything like what anybody else does."

The evening was as much about celebrating partnerships as it was about unveiling new technology. Marais took the opportunity to acknowledge customers, suppliers, and Metso representatives, noting the strength of a collaboration that continues to evolve. "It's really a great partnership that we have with Metso, both of us trying to do things that are different, that are innovative, with the ultimate intention of making our customers' operations more profitable, more reliable, and more stress-free."

That philosophy underpins the introduction of the LT400J. This machine may not be the largest in the global Metso range, but it represents a significant milestone in how crushing equipment is designed and deployed.

Not only bigger but also smarter

While size often dominates discussions around heavy equipment, both Marais and Lahtela were quick to shift the focus.

"It's not about it being big," Marais explained. "You want to know what's unique about it? It's kind of a milestone in the Lokotrack range - the first of their EC range, which is



dual-powered machinery, looking to help our contractors increase their production and save on their cost per ton."

Weighing in at approximately 70 tonnes, the LT400J is undeniably substantial. However, its significance lies in its design philosophy rather than its footprint. Lahtela described it as "a big and robust machine for quarry operations," but emphasised that its transport width of just three metres is "extremely narrow for this size class," highlighting a balance between capacity and mobility.

With a nominal capacity of 250 to 450 tonnes per hour, "it can do more than that as well," Lahtela added. The machine is engineered for high-output environments without compromising operational flexibility.

The electric advantage

At the core of the LT400J is its diesel-



Night operations are enhanced by integrated LED lighting on the Metso Lokotrack LT400J, providing improved visibility and safer working conditions in low-light environments.



The control panel of the Metso Lokotrack LT400J integrates advanced IC process automation, enabling operators to monitor key parameters and adjust crusher settings for consistent, efficient production.

electric powertrain, a defining feature of Metso's new EC range. Unlike traditional fully hydraulic systems, the LT400J relies on electric drives for the majority of its functions.

"The bulk 95% of the machine runs off electric drives," Marais noted. "There are one or two components that are hydraulics, but everything else is electric."

This shift delivers tangible benefits. According to Marais, "the fuel consumption on it is probably going to be 30 to 35% less than a straight diesel hydraulic engine." For operators, this translates directly into reduced operating costs. This is particularly critical in markets where fuel prices and supply volatility can significantly impact margins.

Lahtela expanded on the advantages: "With the electric motor for the crusher, you have a lot of power, and it's really fuel



Strictly speaking, doing an event like this is not common practice in this industry, but then again, I don't think that anything that Pilot Crushtec does is anything like what anybody else does.

Pilot Crushtec International Sales and Marketing Director, Francois Marais.

TALKING POINT

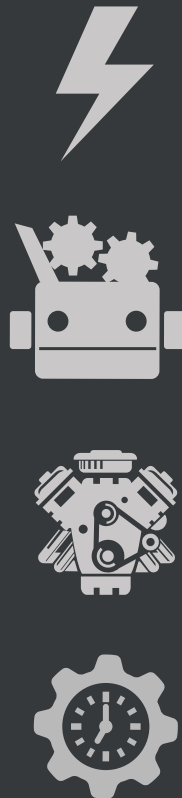


With the electric motor for the crusher, you have a lot of power, and it's really fuel efficient. Basically, this LT400J has 30% less fuel consumption than the LT120 hydraulic jaw crusher.

Janne Lahtela, Product Manager, Lokotrack Quarry.

TALKING POINT

QUICK TAKE



One of the standout features of the LT400J is its dual-power capability.

The LT400J is just the beginning of Metso's EC range expansion.

At the core of the LT400J is its diesel-electric powertrain, a defining feature of Metso's new EC range.

The launch of the LT400J represents more than a new machine; it reflects a broader shift in how the industry approaches performance, efficiency, and sustainability.

efficient. Basically, this LT400J has 30% less fuel consumption than the LT120 hydraulic jaw crusher."

Beyond fuel savings, the electric configuration also reduces maintenance demands. "Having all the process functions electric means less downtime, more uptime, and fewer reliability issues," he explained.



The Metso Lokotrack LT400J introduces a new generation of high-capacity, diesel-electric primary crushing technology to Africa.

Built for flexibility and resilience

One of the standout features of the LT400J is its dual-power capability. This allows the machine to operate either via an onboard diesel generator or by connecting directly to the grid.

“You can run with the diesel if you want,” said Lahtela, “but then if the mains grid is available, of course, that’s the best idea, and if you have a power cut, you can just turn the switch and run with the diesel to always keep producing.”

This flexibility is particularly relevant in the African context, where grid reliability can vary. The ability to seamlessly switch between power sources ensures uninterrupted production, an essential requirement for high-volume quarry operations.

Additionally, the machine’s generator can power auxiliary equipment. “You can actually run a power take-off to power your diesel-electric mobile stacker,” Lahtela noted, effectively enabling multiple machines to operate from a single power source.

Engineering for efficiency

The LT400J’s design reflects a broader shift towards efficiency, not only in fuel consumption but also in maintenance and usability.

A key example is its reduced reliance on hydraulic systems. “Only 80 litres of hydraulic oil,” Lahtela highlighted, a significant reduction compared to conventional machines. “Typically, the more hydraulic oil you have, the more inefficiencies you have. Having all the process functions electric means less downtime.”

Accessibility has also been prioritised. “We really try to make sure that you would have the maximum amount of accessibility for all those daily maintenance tasks,” he said, pointing to features such as movable

components and large service platforms.

Marais echoed this focus on practicality, noting that introducing a machine like this into a new market involves more than just shipping it in. “You need to equip all of your people. The technicians need to learn about the maintenance side, and you need to bring in enough spares so you can support it,” he explained. “It’s a whole long process.”

Digital control and operator safety

Digital integration is another cornerstone of the LT400J’s design. The machine includes Metso’s Remote IC system, allowing operators to adjust settings via a mobile app.

“You can change the setting and the feeder speed from the excavator,” Lahtela said. “Because you don’t have to walk, it becomes safer and improves production uptime.”

For sites where app connectivity may not be available, a handheld control device offers similar functionality, while a remote radio control enables operators to manoeuvre the machine and adjust key components from a safe distance.

“It’s fast and easy and safe,” Lahtela summarised - three attributes that increasingly define modern equipment requirements.

A long-term investment

Both Pilot Crushtec and Metso position the LT400J as more than just a new product. It is part of a broader evolution in crushing technology.

“With the Lokotrack EC range, we are aiming for four things,” Lahtela explained. “Reliable high performance, efficient and sustainable operations, easy and safe to use, and lastly, it’s a long-term investment.”

This long-term perspective is particularly relevant as regulatory and environmental pressures continue to shape the industry.

“Maybe some legislation might change in terms of emissions,” he said, “but with this kind of power transmission, you are good to go for years to come.”

Marais reinforced the commercial angle: “At the end of the day, for customers this should be a big saving on the fuel bill, and also on the amount of maintenance that they need to do.”

From Finland to Africa

The journey of the LT400J from concept to African deployment underscores the complexity behind modern equipment development.

“It took about four years from the start of the project to launch the machine,” Lahtela revealed. Even after its global debut in 2024, additional time was required to bring the machine to Africa. “We wanted to see it working overseas to make sure that it’s a proven piece of equipment,” Marais explained.

Now, with the first unit on the continent, future deliveries are expected to be significantly faster. “You probably look at around three months,” Marais said, noting that the groundwork - training, specification, and support infrastructure - has already been established.

More to come

The LT400J is just the beginning of Metso’s EC range expansion. Lahtela hinted at a pipeline of upcoming innovations, including new models and configurations designed to enhance flexibility and performance.

“Busy, busy times for us,” he said, pointing to developments such as new mobile cone and impactors, which will extend the diesel-electric concept into new applications, including heavy-duty recycling.

A shift in mindset

Ultimately, the launch of the LT400J represents more than a new machine; it reflects a broader shift in how the industry approaches performance, efficiency, and sustainability.

As Marais put it, “Both of us, Pilot Crushtec and Metso, are trying to do things that are different, that are innovative.” In a sector often defined by incremental change, the move towards diesel-electric technology signals a more fundamental transformation.

For African operators, the implications are clear: lower operating costs, improved reliability, and a pathway towards more sustainable operations - all without compromising on performance.

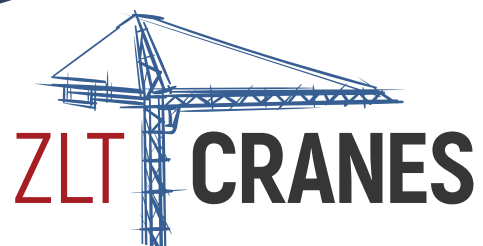
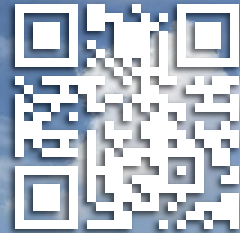
This is a shift that many are ready to embrace. 🌍

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ZOOMLION



An exclusive preview of the two new models that would expand the range of Ultra platform offerings to the South African market was recently revealed.

CONSISTENCY, LOCALISATION AND CUSTOMER-CENTRICITY DRIVE TATA MOTORS' GROWTH IN AFRICA

Juanita Pienaar spoke to Harneet Luther, Executive Director & CEO of Tata Motors South Africa and Head of Manufacturing & Product Management – Africa, about what the rollout of its 12 000th locally assembled vehicle reveals of the company's journey, and how it is positioning itself in a demanding and evolving commercial vehicle landscape.



While the industry continues to explore new technologies, adoption must remain practical and aligned with local operating realities.

Harneet Luther, Executive Director & CEO of Tata Motors South Africa and Head of Manufacturing & Product Management – Africa.

A milestone built over time

Reaching 12 000 assembled vehicles is no small feat in the African context, where market conditions are often anything but predictable. For Luther, the milestone reflects a deeper narrative of resilience and steady progress.

"Reaching the 12 000th vehicle milestone is a meaningful reflection of sustained progress in a market that demands resilience and long-term commitment," he explains. "Growth in Africa is rarely linear, so this achievement speaks to consistency, strong partnerships, and a deep understanding of customer needs."

Central to this journey has been the Rosslyn assembly facility, which has evolved significantly since its establishment in 2011. What began as a production site has developed into something far more integrated.

"It also highlights how the Tata Motors Rosslyn assembly facility has evolved since 2011. Beyond assembly, it has become a centre for skills development, creating opportunities for young talent from institutions such as TUT and TVET colleges to gain practical experience," Luther notes.

This emphasis on local impact is not incidental. It reflects a broader philosophy that manufacturing should extend beyond

output metrics to contribute meaningfully to the surrounding ecosystem.

“There is a strong belief that local manufacturing should contribute to the communities in which it operates, reinforcing the link between industrial growth, skills development, and broader economic impact.”

Understanding what keeps customers moving

At the core of Tata Africa’s growth in Africa is a clear understanding of how customers engage with their vehicles - not as static assets, but as essential business tools.

“Our success is rooted in understanding that these vehicles are critical to our customers’ businesses,” says Luther. “They are not simply assets - they are revenue-generating tools that must perform reliably every day.”

This framing shifts the focus firmly onto operational performance. Reliability, fuel efficiency, and durability are not abstract product features, but essential drivers of business continuity.

“As a result, the focus has been on delivering consistent performance through reliability, fuel efficiency, and durability, while ensuring strong lifecycle support,” he continues. “Uptime is essential. If a vehicle is not on the road, it is not generating value.”

Equally important is proximity to the customer. In a market where operating conditions vary widely, understanding real-world usage is critical to delivering relevant solutions.

“By understanding their operational realities, we are able to respond effectively through our dealer network, parts availability, and service capability,” Luther explains. “Over time, this combination of product performance and support builds long-term confidence in the brand.”

A shift towards total value

The South African commercial vehicle market has undergone a noticeable shift in recent years, particularly in how customers assess value. Where upfront pricing once dominated decision-making, a more nuanced evaluation has emerged.

“Customer expectations have shifted significantly. The focus is no longer only on upfront cost, but on total cost of ownership and the ability to maintain productivity over time,” says Luther.

This evolution reflects broader economic pressures and operational realities. Businesses are increasingly required to extract maximum value from their fleets,



At the core of Tata Africa’s growth in Africa is a clear understanding of how customers engage with their vehicles - not as static assets, but as essential business tools.



Tata Africa in partnership with Tata Motors’ recent milestone was marked by the rollout of the Ultra T.14, a vehicle that reflects the company’s current direction and priorities.



Collaboration with channel partners and suppliers is also critical to delivering and maintaining these solutions in the market.



Tata Africa’s trajectory offers a unique perspective - one centred on consistency, localisation, and a deep connection to customer needs.



From left: Prashant Shukla, Business Head South Africa Distribution business, Tata Africa Holdings with Clive Blechman, CEO East Vaal group, taking delivery of the 12 000th vehicle on behalf of his customer RAM Couriers; Nizam Omar, Regional Head Distribution, Southern Africa, Tata Africa Holdings and Jacques Taylor, MD Tata Africa.



run their businesses with confidence.”

The power of an integrated ecosystem

In a competitive market, differentiation rarely comes from a single factor. Instead, it emerges from how multiple elements work together to deliver consistent value.

“Our differentiation lies in how the full ecosystem comes together to support the customer,” Luther explains. “While the product is critical, its value is ultimately defined by how well it performs over time in real operating conditions.”

This ecosystem approach is underpinned by continuous feedback and refinement. Insights from customers and partners are not treated as static data points, but as inputs into an ongoing process of improvement.

“We focus on delivering a balance of efficiency, durability, and performance, supported by a continuous feedback loop between the market and the business,” he says. “Customer and partner insights directly inform ongoing improvements.”

The effectiveness of this model depends heavily on execution, particularly in areas such as dealer capability, parts availability, and service delivery.

“When this system functions effectively, it reduces disruption and enables customers to operate with greater confidence and efficiency.”

Localisation as a strategic lever

Localisation has become an increasingly important theme across the automotive sector, but in the African context, its significance extends well beyond manufacturing.

“Localisation plays a strategic role that extends beyond production,” Luther notes. “The Rosslyn facility illustrates this well. It is not only an assembly plant but also a platform for developing skills and building local capability.”

This dual role - production and development - is critical in a market where technical skills and industry capacity are still being built.

“Being based locally allows us to remain closely connected to customer requirements and operating conditions,” he adds. “This proximity creates a valuable feedback loop that informs both product development and support strategies.”

In this sense, localisation is not simply about geography. It is about alignment - ensuring that products, services, and capabilities are grounded in the realities of the market.

“Ultimately, localisation strengthens the broader ecosystem by contributing to skills

” **Localisation plays a strategic role that extends beyond production. The Rosslyn facility illustrates this well. It is not only an assembly plant but also a platform for developing skills and building local capability.**

often under challenging conditions.

“Factors such as uptime, fuel efficiency, and maintenance are now central to purchasing decisions, particularly in an environment where operating conditions can be unpredictable,” he adds. “This has reduced tolerance for inconsistency and increased the need for dependable performance.”

For Tata Africa, adapting to this shift has required a more integrated approach - one that aligns product development with robust support structures.

“In response, we have strengthened both our product offering and support structures to deliver greater reliability and operational certainty. The objective is to help customers plan more effectively and

development, job creation, and the long-term sustainability of the industry."

Navigating industry trends

As the commercial vehicle sector continues to evolve, several key trends are shaping how OEMs approach product development and market strategy. Chief among these is the growing emphasis on productivity.

"A key trend is the growing emphasis on productivity. Customers are increasingly focused on how efficiently and reliably vehicles can support their operations over time," Luther explains.

This has led to a more integrated view of performance, where multiple factors must align to deliver consistent results.

"This means that fuel efficiency, durability, and performance must work together, rather than being considered in isolation," he says.

At the same time, the range of applications continues to expand, placing new demands on vehicle versatility.

"There is also a need for versatility, as vehicles are expected to perform across a wide range of applications from urban distribution to regional transport."

While global trends point towards the adoption of new technologies, Luther is clear that implementation must remain grounded in local realities.

"While the industry continues to explore new technologies, adoption must remain practical and aligned with local operating realities," he notes. "Our approach is to develop solutions that are fit for purpose today while supporting future requirements across South Africa and the broader region."

Practical innovation moving forward

Tata Africa in partnership with Tata Motors' recent milestone was marked by the rollout of the Ultra T.14, a vehicle that reflects the company's current direction and priorities.

"The Ultra T.14, which marked the 12,000th vehicle milestone, is a strong indication of our direction," Luther says. "It reflects our focus on delivering solutions that combine efficiency, durability, and consistent operational performance."

The Ultra platform itself is set to expand, with additional models already in development.

"We are also continuing to expand the Ultra platform, with additional models previewed at the event," he reveals. "The emphasis is not only on introducing new products but on ensuring they are aligned with real-world customer requirements."

This alignment remains central to Tata



Performing at the event was a choir performance, songs and gumbboot dance from Tata Motors SA, Rosslyn employees;

Motors' product strategy, with ongoing feedback playing a critical role.

"Ongoing market feedback remains central to how the portfolio evolves, ensuring that future developments are both relevant and practical."

Building long-term partnerships

Beyond products and platforms, Tata Motors' approach is ultimately anchored in relationships - particularly in a market where trust and reliability are paramount.

"Customer relationships are fundamental to our approach," Luther emphasises.

"Customers define the requirement, and our role is to translate that into effective, practical transport solutions."

This requires sustained engagement and a clear understanding of how fleets operate in real-world conditions.

"This means staying closely engaged with how fleets operate and ensuring that the necessary support structures are consistently in place," he says.

It also highlights the importance of collaboration across the value chain, from channel partners to suppliers.

"Collaboration with channel partners and suppliers is also critical to delivering and maintaining these solutions in the market."

Importantly, Luther views this as an ongoing process rather than a fixed outcome.

"We view improvement as a continuous process. Feedback is actively incorporated into both product and support enhancements, which helps build long-term trust," he concludes. "Customers value knowing that their input is heard and that they are supported in a meaningful and consistent way."

Tata Africa's trajectory offers a unique perspective - one centred on consistency, localisation, and a deep connection to customer needs.

The 12 000-vehicle milestone is not positioned as an endpoint, but as a marker along a longer journey. One that continues to be shaped by the realities of the African market, and by a clear focus on enabling the movement of goods, supporting businesses, and strengthening the ecosystems in which those businesses operate. 🌟



DRIVING RESILIENCE, DELIVERING SOLUTIONS

Juanita Pienaar spoke to Stuart Potter, MD of Volvo Trucks South Africa, about the realities shaping the local heavy truck market, the shift towards sustainability, and how partnerships are becoming central to fleet success.



Adjustments are needed to enable operators to run electric trucks in their fleets without significant limitations on payload capacity, including both weight and dimensions.

Stuart Potter, MD of Volvo Trucks South Africa.

A market under pressure

South Africa's heavy truck industry is navigating a complex and often unforgiving operating environment. According to Stuart Potter, fleet owners are contending with a convergence of pressures that go beyond the usual cost considerations.

"For fleet owners, the current environment is one where fuel volatility, infrastructure constraints, and security risks add constant pressure," he explains.

These challenges are not isolated. They form part of a broader global context marked by geopolitical instability and supply chain disruptions. Yet, in the South African context, they are often amplified by local realities, placing operators under sustained strain.

Against this backdrop, the traditional transactional relationship between OEMs and customers is shifting. Increasingly, operators



are looking for more than just a vehicle – they are seeking long-term value and operational support.

“Volvo Trucks is committed to helping fleet operators stay profitable. And profitability comes from partnership,” says Potter. “Our role is not just to supply a truck, but to support their business.”

This shift reflects a deeper industry evolution. Fleet operators are no longer evaluating trucks purely on acquisition cost, but on their ability to contribute to overall business resilience.

Beyond the purchase price

One of the most persistent misconceptions in the truck-buying process, Potter notes, is an overemphasis on the initial purchase price.

“A common mistake that buyers make is to focus on the sticker price when first buying a truck,” he says. “There are more considerations, such as fuel efficiency, maintenance, and, more importantly, the resale potential of the brand.”

This broader perspective is encapsulated in the concept of total cost of ownership (TCO), which is gaining increasing traction among South African operators. However, even within TCO calculations, critical factors are sometimes overlooked.

“There are other parts of the TCO

calculation that are not always measured by all transporters, such as uptime,” Potter adds. “The cost of waiting for parts to be available for repairs is often underestimated.”

In a country where long-haul routes can stretch across vast distances and infrastructure reliability can vary significantly, downtime can have a disproportionate impact on profitability. As such, uptime solutions, parts availability, and service support are becoming key differentiators.

Built for tough conditions

South Africa’s operating environment presents unique challenges that set it apart from many other markets. From demanding terrain to extended long-haul routes, trucks must be engineered to withstand conditions that are often described as among the toughest globally.

“It is a well-known fact that South Africa has some of the toughest long-haul conditions globally,” says Potter.

To address this, Volvo Trucks places significant emphasis on local testing and adaptation. New models are not simply introduced into the market – they are rigorously evaluated and optimised to meet local requirements.

“When we introduce new models into the country, we carry out extensive local testing to optimise vehicle productivity and ensure they meet the benchmark standards required for South Africa’s demanding conditions,” he explains.

This localisation extends to vehicle configurations, ensuring that fleets have access to solutions tailored to different terrains and operational needs. It is a strategy that underscores the importance of aligning global innovation with local realities.

The rise of the complete transport solution

As operational complexity increases, so too does the demand for integrated solutions. Fleet operators are increasingly seeking partners who can deliver a holistic approach to transport.

“Customers are also increasingly looking for a transport partner that can deliver a complete transport solution,” Potter notes.

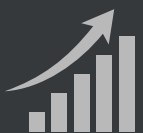
This encompasses not only the vehicle itself, but also a suite of services designed to enhance efficiency, safety, and profitability. From connected services and fuel-saving technologies to uptime solutions and support packages, the focus is on creating a seamless ecosystem



In a country where long-haul routes can stretch across vast distances and infrastructure reliability can vary significantly, downtime can have a disproportionate impact on profitability.



While the global shift towards electric vehicles is well underway, the transition to electric heavy trucks in South Africa presents a unique set of challenges.



As operational complexity increases, so too does the demand for integrated solutions.



For South African fleet operators, the message is clear: success will depend not only on the trucks they choose, but on the partners they choose to work with.

TAKE

QUICK



With the geo-positioning services and connected fleet support, customers can use this to follow everything from the position of the truck to detailed information about the driver, load, and type of vehicle.

around the truck.

“The most effective way we do this is by working side by side with our customers, understanding their operations, priorities, and pain points, and tailoring the right mix of products and services to support them,” he adds.

This collaborative approach reflects a broader industry trend towards co-creation, where OEMs and customers work together to optimise outcomes.

Connectivity and safety at the forefront

Digitalisation is playing an increasingly central role in the evolution of the heavy truck industry. Connectivity, in particular, is unlocking new opportunities for improving efficiency and safety.

“With the use of advanced analytical methods and AI, we can analyse large amounts of data and use the findings in our product development,” says Potter. “We can develop new products and services that benefit our customers, and make transportation more productive, more sustainable, and safer.”

In the South African context, the potential impact on road safety is especially significant. Despite the availability of advanced connected solutions, adoption has not yet reached its full potential.

“With road safety being a major issue in South Africa, a missed opportunity could be the full adoption of connected solutions that contribute to improving

driver behaviour and overall road safety,” Potter points out.

These systems provide fleet operators with real-time visibility into vehicle performance and driver behaviour.

“With the geo-positioning services and connected fleet support, customers can use this to follow everything from the position of the truck to detailed information about the driver, load, and type of vehicle,” he explains.

“The safety service also allows fleet controllers to monitor truck speed, harsh braking, and unsafe driving behaviour. This allows the owner to intervene and to coach and correct the driver’s behaviour.”

Such capabilities not only enhance safety but also contribute to improved fuel efficiency and reduced wear and tear, further reinforcing the value of connected technologies.

Advancing sustainable transport

Sustainability is another key driver of change in the industry, with OEMs and operators alike seeking ways to reduce environmental impact without compromising performance.

Volvo Trucks has taken a significant step in this direction with the local



Enabling the transition

For electric trucks to gain wider traction, several enabling factors need to be addressed – particularly in the regulatory space.

“One area that requires attention is road traffic legislation,” Potter explains. “Adjustments are needed to enable operators to run electric trucks in their fleets without significant limitations on payload capacity, including both weight and dimensions.”

These limitations stem from the physical characteristics of batteries, which can impact vehicle weight and, consequently, payload capacity. Addressing these constraints will be essential to making electric trucks commercially viable for more operators.

Looking ahead, Potter sees a multi-technology future for South Africa’s transport sector.

“All the possible technologies have potential in South Africa,” he says. “In the shorter term, we will see ICE still dominant in longer-haul operations. We could also expect to see a rise in biofuels and natural/biogas-powered trucks.”

Battery electric vehicles (BEVs), meanwhile, are expected to play a growing role in shorter-haul and regional applications.

“An increase will be seen in BEVs for short-haul and regional work. The BEV share will start to grow faster once legislation is adapted to accommodate the physical weight and dimension limitations imposed by the physics of batteries,” he adds.

A steady path forward

While the pace of change may vary, Volvo Trucks remains committed to driving progress across all fronts.

“Volvo Trucks is fully committed to our sustainability ambitions, while recognising that leading in this space comes with its own challenges,” Potter concludes. “Every market progresses at its own pace, with sustainability maturity influenced by local conditions. However, this does not lessen our determination.”

In a market defined by complexity and constraint, the path forward is unlikely to be linear. Yet, through a combination of innovation, localisation, and partnership, the industry is steadily building a more resilient and sustainable future.

For South African fleet operators, the message is clear: success will depend not only on the trucks they choose, but on the partners they choose to work with. 🌱

assembly of Euro 6 and FH Aero trucks.

“Earlier this month, Volvo Trucks announced the local assembly of Euro 6 and FH Aero trucks, reinforcing Volvo Trucks’ leadership in sustainable transport solutions while continuing to support the development of the local manufacturing sector,” says Potter.

The introduction of the FH Aero range marks a notable milestone for the South African market.

“This revolutionary product was launched globally in 2024 and is seen by the company as the ideal long-haul truck,” he explains. “Its aerodynamic extended cab is designed to save fleet owners energy and reduce their carbon footprint.”

Customers have the flexibility to choose between electric and diesel models, with technologies such as I-Save further enhancing fuel efficiency.

At the same time, the local assembly of Euro 6 trucks brings advanced emissions technology closer to home.

“This technology offers fleet operators the synergy of sustainability, efficiency, and performance that underscores Volvo Trucks’ commitment to offering cleaner, more sustainable transport solutions,” Potter adds.

The reality of electrification

While the global shift towards electric vehicles is well underway, the transition to electric heavy trucks in South Africa presents a unique set of challenges.

“I’ve seen first-hand how challenging it can be for some operators to visualise this transition,” Potter admits.

A key barrier is the need for a fundamental shift in how fleets approach their operations. Unlike conventional trucks, electric vehicles require careful planning around routes, charging infrastructure, and energy management.

“The first step is to be realistic about your operational setup and long-term sustainability vision, supported by the right EV partner,” he says.

This is where the concept of partnership becomes particularly critical.

“This is not a ‘sell a truck and watch it leave the yard’ scenario – successful EV adoption requires a genuine, ongoing partnership that is tailored to each unique operation,” Potter emphasises.

Despite the challenges, there are encouraging signs of progress.

“Adoption is happening with real-world operational successes in South Africa, proving that the transition is not only realistic but entirely achievable,” he notes.



FAW RAISES THE BAR WITH PREMIUM J7 LAUNCH

Juanita Pienaar spoke with **Joshua Fourie, General Manager: Commercial Operations; Ricqui Alexander, National Service Manager at FAW Trucks South Africa; and Chunming Jian, Sales and Marketing General Manager at FAW Trucks SA, at the recent launch of the FAW J7.**

TALKING POINT



The JH6 has been a wildly successful product, selling over 5 420 units within the last three years alone.

Ricqui Alexander, National Service Manager at FAW Trucks South Africa.

A market under pressure

South Africa's transport sector is operating under sustained pressure, with rising costs, constrained infrastructure, and ongoing global volatility shaping fleet decisions. Against this backdrop, FAW Trucks South Africa has introduced its flagship J7 model - a move the company positions not simply as a product launch, but as a strategic response to evolving market demands.

Reflecting on the broader operating environment, Fourie noted that the industry has had to absorb multiple shocks in recent years. "South Africa has seen the impacts of COVID, shortages in terms of diesel, and border and port congestion," he said. "All of these things have obviously impacted on the cost of transport."

These pressures are clearly reflected in the numbers. "Over the last 10 years, transport CPI has increased 60%," Fourie added, highlighting the difficulty transporters face in passing these costs on to customers.

This reality has shifted focus sharply

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On the capital costs, it really comes down to how much truck are you getting for every rand you invest in.

TALKING POINT



At a retail level, the potential savings are sitting around R750 000 per unit over the life of that unit.

**Joshua Fourie, General Manager:
Commercial Operations FAW Trucks
South Africa.**

“The JH6 has been a wildly successful product, selling over 5 420 units within the last three years alone.”

Instead, the J7 is designed to complement the existing line-up. “The J7 comes in as a premium offering - when nothing but the best will suffice,” he said.

Developed through collaboration between China and Europe, and manufactured in a dedicated facility, the J7 represents a significant step forward for the brand. “Ultimately, this vehicle is positioned to be the premium offering for transporters in South Africa,” Fourie noted.

Importantly, FAW is taking a measured approach to market entry. “We want to scale at a steady pace to make sure that the parts holding within the network and the development within the customer base happen over a period of time,” he said. Initial targets sit at around 500 units within the first year.

Driving down total cost of ownership

A central pillar of the J7’s value proposition is its potential to significantly reduce TCO. According to Fourie, the numbers are compelling.

“At a retail level, the potential savings are sitting around R750 000 per unit over the life of that unit,” he said. “When you scale this within a large fleet, the average saving moves from R750 000 to R7,5-million.”

Engineering for reliability and efficiency

From a technical perspective, the J7 has been engineered with a strong emphasis on reliability, efficiency, and durability - key considerations for operators running increasingly long asset lifecycles.

Alexander highlighted the extensive testing programme behind the vehicle. “The product was tested across 200 units, accumulating 18 million kilometres worth of testing,” he said. This included a 20 000 km route from China to Italy, covering “99,9% of global operating scenarios”.

The result is a truck designed for longevity. “The J7, if maintained correctly and maintenance practices are adhered to, achieves a peak end service life of 1,5 million kilometres,” Alexander explained.

Efficiency has been addressed through what FAW terms its “golden powertrain”. “We have achieved up to 10% fuel savings compared to previous models and competitors,” he said. The drivetrain combines an in-house engine with a ZF Traxon gearbox and FAW-developed differential, delivering high transmission

towards total cost of ownership (TCO), where both capital and operational efficiencies are critical. “On the capital costs, it really comes down to how much truck are you getting for every rand you invest in,” he explained. “On the variable cost side, it’s about fuel consumption, driver performance, and how that impacts your business ecosystem.”

A premium positioning for the J7

Within this context, the J7 enters the market as FAW’s premium offering, sitting above the established JH6 range. “The J7 will not be replacing our JH6 range,” Fourie clarified.



South Africa’s transport sector is operating under sustained pressure, with rising costs, constrained infrastructure, and ongoing global volatility shaping fleet decisions.



The J7, if maintained correctly and maintenance practices are adhered to, achieves a peak end service life of 1,5 million kilometres.



Durability, particularly in harsh operating environments, has been a key focus area.



Recognising the importance of cash flow, FAW Financial Services has introduced tailored financing solutions for the J7.

QUICK TAKE



“Stock holding is scaled proportionately in line with the growing number of J7 trucks on the road. Each dealership is required to maintain a predetermined level of stock, and this is actively monitored.”

efficiencies and improved performance.

Range is another standout feature. “With a 1 200-litre tank, we have achieved 3 000 km ranges on our test units,” Alexander noted.

Comfort, safety, and driver performance

Recognising the growing importance of driver wellbeing, FAW has also prioritised comfort and ergonomics.

“Comfort no longer is considered a luxury; it’s considered a necessity,” Alexander said. “If you have a comfortable driver, you have a good driver.”

The J7 features a spacious cab, advanced noise suppression, and modern in-cab amenities, including a 10-inch display, refrigeration, and enhanced storage. Noise levels have been reduced to “54.4 decibels at idle and 63.2 decibels at 80 km/h”.

Safety is equally comprehensive. The vehicle includes adaptive cruise control, automatic emergency braking, lane departure warning, and forward collision warning as standard. “The vehicle complies with collision regulations to make sure that in the event of an accident, the occupants will be safe,” Alexander said.

Built for African conditions

Durability, particularly in harsh operating

environments, has been a key focus area. Coastal corrosion, in particular, has been addressed through enhanced material treatments and testing.

“Plans have been made, and tests have been done to ensure that they will stand up to 10 years of corrosive resistance,” Alexander explained, referencing extensive salt spray testing and thicker protective coatings.

This focus is echoed in FAW’s broader development approach. “The requirement was identified both globally and locally,” Alexander added. “The result is aimed at enhanced long-term durability and improved lifecycle value for customers.”

Strengthening aftersales support

A premium product requires equally robust support, and FAW has invested heavily in its aftersales infrastructure.

“We have a 24-hour in-house call centre linked to a live breakdown platform,” Fourie said. The company also maintains over R200 million in parts inventory at its Isando distribution centre, with additional regional hubs.

The dealer network - now 40 strong across the SADC region - has undergone significant upgrades. “We’ve done upgrades over the last five years extensively within our dealer network,” Fourie noted.

Parts availability for the J7 has been

carefully planned. “Stock holding is scaled proportionately in line with the growing number of J7 trucks on the road,” Alexander explained. “Each dealership is required to maintain a predetermined level of stock, and this is actively monitored.”

Digital integration and fleet intelligence

Telematics and data-driven fleet management form another key component of the J7 ecosystem. Zhang outlined FAW’s OEM telematics platform, which connects millions of vehicles globally.

“We serve over 200 000 vehicles and process 220GB of daily data,” she said.

The system addresses key fleet pain points, including safety, cost control, and visibility. “Drive behaviour analysis helps you move from gut feeling to data-driven,” Zhang explained. Features include driver scoring, remote diagnostics, video monitoring, and fuel management.

In high-risk environments, technology also plays a role in asset protection. “We can limit speed or reduce torque to help protect your assets,” she said, noting that local partnerships for recovery services are part of future plans.

Financing for resilience

Recognising the importance of cash flow, FAW Financial Services has introduced tailored financing solutions for the J7.

“In times like this, it is crucial to keep your cash flow steady,” said Liu Xiao, CEO of FAW Financial Services SA. “Cash is king.”

The company’s balloon payment structure reduces monthly instalments significantly. “Your monthly payment is as low as R41 000 - 34% lower compared with traditional products,” she explained.

Flexibility is built into the model, allowing customers to refinance, settle, or trade in at the end of the term. “No rigid rules - we adapt to your business needs,” Liu said.

A strategic step forward

Ultimately, the J7 represents more than just a new model - it signals FAW’s intent to compete at the top end of the market while maintaining its value-driven DNA.

“The J7 will offer significant value to our transporters,” Alexander concluded. “We know that they’re stretching their assets, and we believe our J7 is what it takes to do that.”

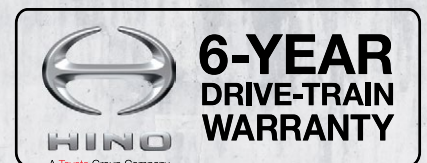
The J7’s combination of efficiency, durability, and support may prove to be a decisive advantage. 🌟

A lot can change in 6 years our warranty promise won't



6 years of change and our warranty protects your investment

A lot can change in 6 years. Our 6-year drivetrain warranty promise protects your investment against the test of time. Built to keep your business moving, supporting uptime, growth and daily operations, all the way. Ts and Cs apply.



HINO ALL THE WAY



INTEGRATED COMPACTION SOLUTIONS RESHAPE CONSTRUCTION EFFICIENCY IN AFRICA

In an environment where downtime, rework, and fragmented supplier networks continue to erode margins, integrated compaction solutions are no longer a luxury, they're a necessity.

The 2017 acquisition of Wirtgen Group by John Deere marked a decisive shift in the global construction equipment landscape - one that continues to influence project delivery in markets such as South Africa. By integrating Wirtgen's five

specialist road-building brands into its portfolio, Deere effectively created a full-line construction offering without internal product overlap. The result is a complementary ecosystem of technologies, strengthened global reach, and streamlined distribution and support capabilities.

In the African context, this global integration finds practical expression through the partnership with AFGRI Equipment. The collaboration brings together advanced compaction technologies and a robust local support network, offering contractors a single, integrated supplier. For an industry often constrained by fragmented supply chains and inconsistent aftersales support, this alignment delivers tangible value: improved access to equipment, faster service response times, and dependable parts availability across South Africa and



Beyond telematics, innovations such as oscillation compaction and digital monitoring systems are reshaping how contractors approach quality assurance. Oscillation technology reduces the number of passes required while minimising the risk of over-compaction, particularly near sensitive structures.

into the broader continent.

The implications for project delivery are significant. A broader, well-aligned equipment range enables smoother transitions between construction phases - from earthworks through to final asphalt compaction. This continuity reduces downtime, enhances operational efficiency, and supports consistent achievement of compaction specifications. In an industry where delays and rework can quickly erode margins, such efficiencies translate directly into improved project timelines and cost control.

At the centre of this offering is HAMM, widely recognised for its precision engineering and durability and the benchmark in compaction performance. Its equipment is designed to perform reliably across both asphalt and soil applications, even under demanding site conditions typical of many African projects. The

HAMM HD Series tandem rollers, for instance, prioritise versatility and operator usability, with compact designs for easier transport, intuitive controls, and strong visibility - features that contribute to both productivity and safety on site.

For more demanding earthworks, the HAMM HC Series delivers high line loads and adaptable drum configurations, enabling effective deep compaction across varied soil conditions. This flexibility is particularly relevant in large-scale infrastructure projects where material variability and site complexity are common challenges.

Technology integration is another defining feature of the modern compaction landscape. Machines such as the HAMM HC 110 G incorporate John Deere engines alongside JDLink™ telematics, providing real-time insights into machine performance, utilisation, and location. This level of visibility supports proactive maintenance and improved fleet management - critical factors in maximising uptime and controlling lifecycle costs.

Beyond telematics, innovations such as oscillation compaction and digital monitoring systems are reshaping how contractors approach quality assurance. Oscillation technology reduces the number of passes required while minimising the risk of over-compaction, particularly near sensitive structures.

Meanwhile, systems like Smart Doc and Smart Compaction provide real-time data and documentation, enabling contractors to verify compaction quality and streamline project handovers. In a regulatory environment that increasingly demands measurable compliance, these tools are becoming essential rather than optional. The shift is clear: compaction is no longer just mechanical. It's becoming a data-driven discipline where every pass is

measured, verified, and optimised in real time.

Local industry dynamics are accelerating this shift toward advanced technology. South African contractors face a combination of challenging ground conditions, stricter quality requirements, and a shortage of highly skilled operators. As a result, there is growing demand for equipment that can standardise outputs, assist operators, and deliver verifiable results.

Equipment selection itself is evolving accordingly. While upfront price remains a consideration, contractors are placing greater emphasis on total cost of ownership - factoring in fuel efficiency, maintenance costs, reliability, and aftersales support. Specifications such as vibration frequency, centrifugal force, and drum width are no longer abstract technical details; they are critical determinants of productivity, influencing how quickly and effectively compaction targets can be achieved.

Equally, operator experience is gaining prominence. Ergonomics, visibility, and ease of use are now central to equipment design, reflecting the reality that machine performance is closely tied to operator capability. Well-designed machines reduce fatigue, enhance safety, and enable consistent results - even in environments where highly experienced operators are in short supply.

Ultimately, the convergence of global manufacturing strength, local support infrastructure, and advanced technology is redefining compaction in Africa. The John Deere-Wirtgen-AFGRI ecosystem illustrates how integrated solutions can address longstanding industry challenges - improving efficiency, ensuring quality, and delivering long-term value in a sector where margins are tight and expectations continue to rise. 🌱



Sustainability and circular economy remain a key focus for Weir and this includes reclaiming and re-melting worn components from customers.

WEIR UPGRADES EASTERN CAPE HEAVY BAY FOUNDRY TO MEET GLOBAL DEMAND

In the Eastern Cape port city of Gqeberha, Weir's Heavy Bay Foundry (HBF) is undergoing unprecedented expansion, establishing itself as a central manufacturing hub within the group's global supply network.

The foundry produces large high performance cast components used in Weir's extensive range of pumps, screens, and crushers. Following major infrastructure and process upgrades, the facility has doubled its production capacity to meet rising demand from the global mining sector. Coenie de Jager, Head of Operations at Weir HBF, notes that the foundry's installed capacity for heavy castings exceeding 500 kg has increased to 600 tonnes, with further optimisation and investment expected to push this figure to as much as 1 000 tonnes.

"This expansion is driven by a series of targeted projects including casting pit extensions, melt shop upgrades and the integration of advanced pattern development systems," De Jager says. "Each of these initiatives is aimed at removing bottlenecks and enabling higher production throughput."

Weir HBF is among the few foundries in South Africa capable of producing exceptionally large castings - up to 4 metres by 4 metres in size. The installation of new four tonne and six tonne induction furnaces is currently in progress, with

commissioning scheduled for early 2026. Complementing these are new heat treatment furnaces, fettling booths, automated grinder and paint booths nearing completion.

A major milestone in the foundry's evolution has been the acquisition of Xmeco Heavy Engineering, a fully equipped machining facility that significantly extends Weir HBF's capabilities. This addition allows the foundry to deliver a comprehensive end-to-end manufacturing solution. "

We now machine components weighing up to 13 tonnes each, with hardness levels between 650 and 750 Brinell (HB) - a capability matched by very few facilities worldwide," De Jager says.

"By consolidating our operations into a vertically integrated manufacturing facility, we have gained full visibility and control over every stage of production," he says. "This allows us to strengthen delivery reliability and minimise dependence on external suppliers. With in-house capabilities spanning design, R&D, foundry, machining and assembly - supported by recent upgrades and process refinements - we are driving higher levels of efficiency, precision and product quality.

"The extension of the foundry's casting pit has created additional space for



The upgrades at Weir HBF allow for faster turnaround times with exceptional and consistent quality.

casting-cooling, enabling higher production throughput,” De Jager explains. “At the same time, the melt shop is being upgraded with advanced technologies to support faster more efficient melting cycles and reduce material transport times, while the new pattern development systems give us the flexibility to serve a wider range of global markets.”

He adds that alongside operational growth, sustainability remains a key focus. “As we expand our capacity, we are also improving our environmental performance,” he says. “We are sourcing renewable power from regional solar and wind farms, wheeled through the Eskom grid and the Nelson Mandela Bay network.”

By mid-2026, one-third of Weir HBF’s total annual electricity consumption will be derived from renewable sources, with a target of 80% within the next five years. The facility is also advancing its circular economy initiatives by reclaiming and re-melting worn components from customers, significantly reducing waste and resource use.

“The expansion also carries strong human-capital benefits,” De Jager continues. “It is creating new local employment opportunities, developing critical technical skills and reinforcing the regional supply chain.”

He adds that Weir HBF collaborates closely with the Nelson Mandela Bay Business Chamber to identify skilled tradespeople and participate in training and development programmes that uplift the local workforce. ♻️



The extension of the foundry’s casting pit has created additional space for casting-cooling, enabling higher production throughput.

Coenie de Jager, Weir HBF Manager of Plant Operations.



It is creating new local employment opportunities, developing critical technical skills and reinforcing the regional supply chain.

FOUR INFRASTRUCTURE PILLARS SET TO DEFINE AFRICA'S NEXT DECADE

While infrastructure remains one of Africa's most compelling long-term investment themes, deployment has consistently lagged ambition. But the continent does not suffer from a lack of interest or capital, it faces a shortage of bankable, repeatable projects where risks are clearly understood and appropriately priced.



This is according to Lungile Mashele, Sector Specialist for Energy & Infrastructure at the Public Investment Corporation (PIC), who recently participated in a panel discussion at SAVCA's Private Equity in Southern Africa Industry Conference. The engaging session explored why Africa's infrastructure investment has struggled to move from promise to performance, despite strong underlying demand. Mashele pointed to a fundamental disconnect in the market. "The promise has fallen short not because of one single issue, but a confluence of structural bottlenecks, largely linked to risk and reward," she explained. "There's a perception that there isn't enough capital, but in reality, there's significant capital available. The issue is that projects are

not sufficiently bankable, and expectations around returns are often misaligned with the realities on the ground."

Powering the data economy

“We are going to see hypergrowth in digital infrastructure, with capital requirements for data centres across Africa expected to double by 2030.”

"We are going to see hypergrowth in digital infrastructure, with capital requirements for data centres across Africa expected to double by 2030," said Mashele. "And the capital requirement here is twofold, because as the demand for data centres accelerates, so too does the need for sufficient and reliable power to support it."

She added that regulatory developments, particularly around data sovereignty and privacy, are likely to shift where this infrastructure is built. "We've traditionally seen a concentration of data centres in South Africa, Kenya

and Nigeria, but as data and privacy laws tighten in these regions, we may see other emerging jurisdictions begin to attract investment."

Transmission and distribution

The second pillar is transmission and distribution – an area increasingly recognised as a key constraint in Africa's energy transition.

"Transmission presents a significant opportunity," said Mashele. "For the first time, we are seeing private transmission projects coming to market, with deals already closing in countries like Mozambique and Kenya, and strong interest in South Africa."

This shift is critical to unlocking renewable energy capacity and addressing grid constraints, which have historically limited the ability to scale generation. The introduction of private capital into transmission marks a structural change in how infrastructure is funded and delivered, creating new avenues for investment.

Enabling movement at scale

Logistics and trade infrastructure form the third pillar, particularly as Africa seeks to deepen regional integration and improve the movement of goods across borders.

Mashele pointed to South Africa's biker delivery boom as an example of how quickly infrastructure needs can shift and why investors need to remain adaptable. "If you had told me to invest in scooters back in March 2020, I would have laughed in your face and lost a lot of money."

Water, waste and social infrastructure

The final pillar lies in water, waste and social infrastructure – areas that are both foundational and increasingly urgent. "There is a significant amount of work to be done in water and waste infrastructure," Mashele noted. "These are not just service delivery issues; they have direct economic implications and affect the functioning of entire cities and industries."

From water treatment and sanitation to healthcare and municipal services, these sectors represent both a critical need and a major opportunity for private capital. However, they also require more innovative funding models, particularly where user-pay mechanisms are not viable.

"Private capital can play a catalytic role here, but if we are going to unlock infrastructure at scale, we need to be more honest about risk, more realistic about returns, and more deliberate in how we develop and prepare projects for investment," she concluded. 🌍




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