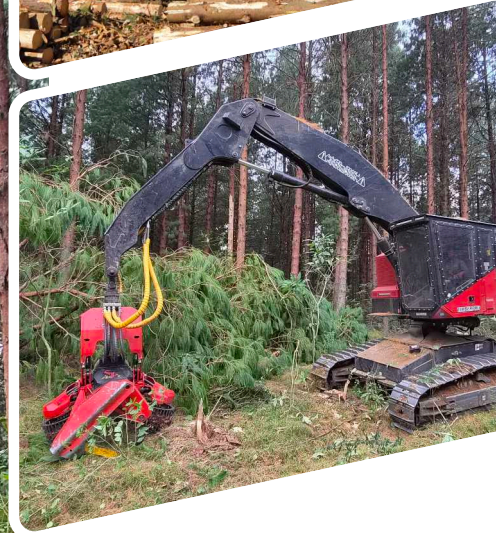


WoodBiz/Africa SA Forestry

JUNE 2026
ISSUE 60

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Raj Sentoo

Quality and Compliance Manager at Vuka Timbers



WoodBizAfrica SA Forestry

WoodBiz Africa & Southern Africa Forestry Online is a digital business-to-business publication serving the forestry, sawmilling, timber processing, wood products and biomass sectors in Sub-Saharan Africa.

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RESILIENCE AND COLLABORATION

The sector faces the same realities. Climate change and El Niño, illegal mining, roadside sawmills, theft, arson, and the wider socio-political and economic pressures on doing business in South Africa don't discriminate between large and small operations.

It is therefore not entirely surprising that resilience and collaboration have emerged as the standout themes of this year's Forestry South Africa (FSA) and Sawmilling South Africa (SSA) AGMs. Both associations are part of the Forestry Sector Master Plan, and when the shared risks are visible, the shared response tends to follow a similar pattern.

BUILDING ON WHAT WORKS

At FSA's AGM, Chairperson Duane Roothman struck a note of confidence, saying: "fixate on our successes and build on them". With significant change ahead for both the industry and the country, he believes FSA's future rests on collaboration within and across value chains, underpinned by ethical principles that don't bend or break under pressure.

NO MILL IS AN ISLAND

That message carried through to SSA's AGM, where Chairperson Craig Rance put it plainly: no single business can tackle industry

challenges alone. Sawmills, he says, face common pressures and opportunities, and their influence depends on members staying united within their association and participating actively rather than from the sidelines.

SSA's AGM also included a dedicated look at what deeper business ties with Finland could mean for local operations, underscoring that collaboration can be as easily achieved across borders as it is across the sector.

COLLABORATION IN PRACTICE

We see this playing out beyond the AGMs, too. This edition reports on Woodex for Africa, where the show floor was a place for technology and service suppliers and visitors to compare notes and form new links.

CONGRATULATIONS WRSM

Congratulations to Willie Stander and White River Saw Mills on their participation in the Crickmay & Associates Intermill Comparison and on attaining the Sawmill Improvement Award for the second time.



Joy Crane
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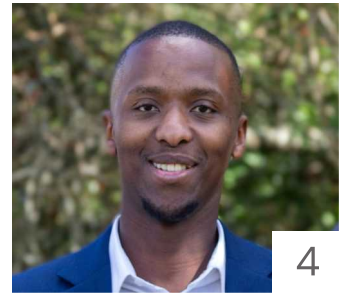
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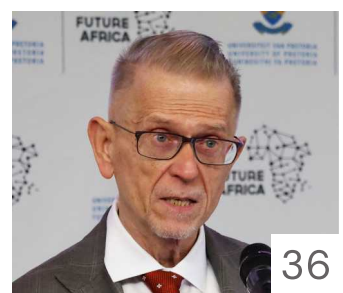
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JP Landman says the FSA punches well above its weight

The jovial political economist JP Landman has never been shy about naming South Africa's problems plainly, and delegates at the Forestry South Africa (FSA) AGM in June were treated to an entertaining talk.

His keynote, titled "From sweet spot to sour spot", traced the country's slide from the fiscal sweet spot of the early 2000s to the present sour spot, where debt is high, GDP growth is lower than population growth, and the 3% inflation target is very tough to achieve.

THE BET WAS LOST

It is the third time Landman has addressed an FSA audience. Delegates who recall his earlier AGM appearance in 2023 remember him saying he would bet "a case of South African wine, not French champagne", that the private sector would eventually break Eskom's generation monopoly.

Delegates were delighted, and he was surprised, when the industry once again demonstrated its moral fibre by paying its dues and presented him with a case of South African wine.

THE DEBT SLIDE

Landman's starting point was government debt. Under Trevor Manuel, debt as a share of GDP fell to around 24% by 2008, a low point that gave the state room to borrow cheaply and invest. That figure has since more than tripled, with the Treasury's own projections placing it at nearly 79% of GDP for the current fiscal year.

GDP VS POPULATION GROWTH

The second leg of the sour spot argument was growth. Average annual GDP growth over the past decade has been well below 1%, and below population growth, so GDP per capita



JP Landman was the keynote speaker.



FSA lost its bet and handed JP Landman a box of SA wine.

has been falling rather than rising. When the economy grows more slowly than the population, poverty, unemployment and inequality worsen.

Growth, he argued, will come not from easy money, such as lower

interest rates, but from higher productivity, which depends on structural reform. Landman listed the sectors where the state still holds the reins too tightly: telecoms, electricity, rail, ports, water and municipalities. In each case, his argument was the same. Growth picks up when state monopolies make way for private-sector participation.

NON-ALIGNMENT

On foreign policy, he reiterated Michael Peter's introductory remarks that the centre of global finance, manufacturing and trade has shifted decisively towards China in recent decades, at the expense of the United States and other traditional manufacturing powers. Landman's recommendation was non-alignment, maintaining the relationship with the US where it still works while building deeper trade ties with the East.

LOADSHEDDING WILL BE BACK

On energy, Landman pointed delegates to the newly approved Integrated Resource Plan, IRP 2025. Eskom is set to retire a significant chunk of its coal capacity in the years ahead, and the plan relies heavily on new gas-to-power capacity to fill the gap. Landman said it will not happen, as the energy landscape has already moved beyond a purely state-led fix. His advice was "take advantage of the gaps and secure your own supply".

He was emphatic that, through Operation Vulindlela, the private sector can partner with the state to improve service delivery. "Organised business has a crucial role to play. Your voice must be heard," Landman asserted. He singled out the FSA for

praise, telling delegates that the organisation “punches well above its weight” in getting the sector’s voice heard.

He also made the case for patience in research and development. Productivity gains from R&D, new technology and innovation rarely

show up in the next quarter’s numbers, but he argued they are the one investment South Africa cannot afford to skip.

SWEET SPOT

Landman concluded by saying that South Africa can return to the sweet

spot if it sustains economic growth of around 3% a year, against population growth of roughly 1.3%, for three consecutive years. Another condition for growth is an open society that enables the economy to adapt and grow. 🌿

SA’s forestry industry advised to focus on its successes

Forestry South Africa’s annual general meeting offers a glimpse into a rural industry that may be small in national agricultural terms, yet its resilience, ability to build relationships within and beyond its value chain, and depth of leadership make it highly influential in national policy and strategy.

By Joy Crane



The outgoing FSA Chairperson Duane Roothman with the new Vice-Chairperson Buhle Msweli and new Chairperson Andy Mason.

JP Landman, the keynote speaker at the AGM in June, aptly described the industry as “punching way above its weight”. In his address, Michael Peter, FSA’s CEO, highlighted some of the many strategic objectives achieved over the past year.

These included:

- The new 100% diesel rebate system, which will be implemented from 1 August 2026, up from the previous 80%, with several additions for forestry, will save FSA’s members about R200 million a year.
- A landmark block exemption from the Competition Commission that allows FSA, its members and Transnet Freight Rail to share commercial information to improve rail services and efficiency.
- FSA was instrumental in securing a greatly simplified and achievable

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Horst Hellberg, Werner Meyer and Roger Johnstone.

European Union Deforestation Regulations (EUDR) compliance framework, ensuring that market access remains secure as the EUDR is implemented.

- FSA and Croplife SA successfully challenged the Pest Control Operator (PCO) Regulations in the High Court and were granted exemptions for their members. They can legally continue to purchase, handle, and apply agricultural remedies without registering as a PCO or having a PCO permanently supervising on-site.
- FSA successfully appealed to the Minister of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development to intervene in the Office of the Registrar to speed up applications for registering chemicals.
- The Sustainable African Forestry Assurance Scheme (SAFAS) achieved full accreditation from the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC) for its Landscape Certification Standard, placing SA among a select group of global leaders.
- FSA and its members intensified engagement with the police and

national defence services to strengthen coordination and improve enforcement outcomes, thereby preventing the high incidence of timber theft, plantation arson, illegal mining, equipment theft, and illegal hunting

that threatens worker safety, investor confidence and rural economies.

- The industry spends close to R172 million a year on research and development, of which the government contributes only 20%.



Philani Ndlovu and Lungani Mvelase of Standard Bank.



Jason Smith, Danny Knoesen, Sean Brown and Themba Vilane.

The industry's investment currently accounts for 1.6% of the sector's GDP (the national average is 0.73%) and includes research to quantify water use, water quality and conservation. It is therefore ridiculous that the Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) wants

to implement a water research levy on the forestry industry.

- The Forestry Graduate Employment Programme is strongly supported by FSA members who host graduates.
- The Performance-Based Standards (PBS) trucks initiative has been

extended to the end of 2027.

- The forestry sector maintains a level 3 B-BBEE rating.

DATA-DRIVEN DECISION-MAKING

Dr Kabir Peerbhay, Sappi's Principal Research Officer, impressed the



Michael Peter – CEO of FSA.



Mike Edwards, Karin Nagel and Ilaria Germiszhuizen.



Olga Bezuidenhout, Sanele Zuma, Pamela Naidoo and Jash Phillips.

audience with a presentation on Sappi's drone programme. He said the programme aims to use advanced Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS) technology and data processing to inform decision-making across the business.

Peerbhay described how useful and strategic automated data gathering beyond visual line of sight (BVLOS), or "out-of-sight" drone data, is. Fixed-wing or hybrid drones can fly kilometres away and run pre-programmed day or night patrol routes for 20 hours or more, streaming real-time thermal feeds of illegal activities such as mining, timber theft, arson and poaching.

Multispectral and thermal sensors can detect compartment-level anomalies such as pest infestations, wood rot, or water stress. Other applications include decision-making data for planning, managing and maintaining forest roads; wetland rehabilitation; indigenous forest management; precision spraying; 3D volumetric forest and harvesting planning; and fire risk management.



The topic of Dr Kabir Peerbhay's address was Forestry Flies Beyond Visual Line of Sight.



Julia Rees and Dave Dobson.

FIXATE ON SUCCESSES

The final speaker was Duane Roothman, FSA's outgoing Chairperson. He said that older economic models, such as those by Porter and others, used to drive GDP. "Very little of this still applies. Instead, we must fixate on our successes and build on them to unlock new possibilities. We need less talk and more doing."

Roothman said he is confident there will be significant changes ahead for the industry and the country. He said the future for FSA and its members always depends on collaboration within and across value chains and on maintaining ethical principles and values.

NEW CHAIRPERSON

The FSA has a rotational chair policy across the three constituent groupings (Large, Medium and Small Growers). The 2026 Chairperson is Andy Mason from the Medium Growers, and the new Vice-Chairperson is Buhle Msweli from the Small Growers Group. 🌿



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Siyabonga Cosmos Shoba of Mkhoba Forestry.

Logmech solves Mkhoba Forestry's steep slopes quandary

Harvesting and transport specialist Mkhoba Forestry has invested in the proven TimberPro 725D levelling harvester and SP Maskiner 761LF head combination to address steep-slope cut-to-length operations in south-western KwaZulu-Natal.



Logmech supplies and supports TimberPro and SP products in SA.

Mkhoba Forestry is based in Harding and is contracted by Merensky Timber's Weza Sawmill in the Ugu District to harvest, extract and transport pine to the mill and to the port in Durban. Siyabonga Cosmos Shoba, managing director of Mkhoba, says they ordered the new TimberPro harvester from Logmech last year, with delivery this year. Logmech lent them an older machine for trial and operator training until the new machines arrived.

Shoba says it is a business imperative for the company to have a reliable harvester fitted with a robust head that measures and cuts accurately.

"We specialise in steep-slope harvesting, but our two Hitachi excavators are not well suited to working on slopes. We tried various combinations of carrier and harvesting heads before settling on the TimberPro 725D Leveller fitted with the SP761LF."

"We also found that eucalyptus harvesting heads fitted with measuring in the arm motors are not ideal for pine stems because they cannot consistently deliver the accurate lengths we require. Our trials showed that the calibrated SP 761LF is the most accurate head for pine and best suited to the diameters we work with."

THE SP 761LF HEAD

Ryan Chase, Logmech's technical manager, says the SP 761LF is the largest head in the SP Maskiner range and is purpose-built for pine, although it can be converted to harvest eucs. Chase adds that the SP 761LF delivers peak performance on stands with a diameter of 20 to 56 cm; however, thanks to the LF system, it can cut larger diameters efficiently.

Unlike the design concept of a three-roller head, where the tree is held in the head by two outer arm rollers and a single centre roller, which

closes onto the tree in a triangle configuration and fully supports the tree while it's held in the head, the SP 761LF is a two-roller design, and there is no centre roller.

When the rollers close onto the tree, they clamp onto the sides, providing very good support compared with the three-roller design. The upper and lower delimb knives support and hold the tree in the head.

Another advantage of not having a centre roller is that, when the tree is held in the head, it maintains a gap between the tree and the chassis, so rubbing and friction between the tree and the chassis are kept to a minimum.

LF AND LOGHOLD FEATURES

The LF stands for low friction, and Chase says it's achieved in two ways. An SP patent covers the head's feed roller arm pin position. The pins are positioned in the chassis with a slight



Mkhoba Forestry bought its SP Maskiner 761LF harvesting head from Logmech.

forward rake angle so that the feed rollers form a “V” configuration. When the feed rollers close onto the tree, they support most of the weight, allowing knife pressure to be reduced. This enables the knives to skim lightly along the tree, ultimately producing a higher-quality product.

A second SP patent is a feature known as LogHold. When the head is active, the system constantly monitors the delimb knife position. Trigger points can be set to determine how much the knives are allowed to open before it instantly corrects the knife positioning. It is all about automatic proportional pressure control on the delimbing knives and how tightly the knives hold the tree inside the head, Chase explains.

CUTTING ASSORTMENTS

Shoba's teams are prepared for all eventualities. Weza's assortments vary widely, including saw logs for Weza, other sawmills in the area, and export-grade round wood. They sometimes include 2.4m and 2.5m logs for pulp customers.

The specifications are entered into the harvester's onboard computer, which ensures each log is cut to value lists or preferred length/diameter definitions, thereby reducing waste and increasing profit per log. Shoba uses the Dasa 5 Bucking Prio C system. Chase says that although the touch-screen system is not



The TimberPro 725D levelling harvester has excellent lights for working at night.

Windows-based, it provides all the data needed to analyse their productivity.

The machine can handle up to nine assortments, enabling Shoba to run an entire harvesting operation. Although it can operate automatically, Shoba has opted for a quality-focused operator-assisted approach. When the head picks up and begins delimbing a tree, it sends the dimensions to the operator, who selects the required cutting pattern and stacking process.

THE OPERATOR

“The machine tells the operator what it is cutting, and he makes the

decisions”, Shoba says. “We are not running fully automatically because the system is too fast and the extraction teams would fall behind”.

He is impressed with his harvesting teams. “Harvesting looks easy when you see it happening, but it isn't. We trained two operators from scratch on the TimberPro, and it took them about two months to learn the machine and the head. It is not easy to find people with the dexterity and spatial awareness to operate a harvester safely”.

THE TIMBERPRO 725D

Chase says tracked levellers are at home on steep slopes, and clients



Merensky Timber has contracted Mkhoba Forestry to harvest 14,000m³ of cut to length pine saw logs a month.



The TimberPro 725D and SP 761LF combination is proving to be an ideal solution for Mkhoba Forestry's steep slope harvesting operations.

specify whether they want a fully specified automatically levelling machine or opt to level the machine manually.

Shoba has opted for the manual version, which means the operator monitors the inclinometers in the cab while climbing and navigating rocks and obstacles, and adjusts the cab to keep it stable and level. The cab position can be corrected by 24° forward, 7° rear, and 24° to each side, ensuring the operator can work in extreme conditions with a perfectly level cab.

Significantly, the 725D, like all TimberPros, is ROPS (roll-over protective structure) and FOPS (falling object protective structure) certified. Chase says these are critical safety systems that protect the operator should the machine roll over.

In addition, the cab has three emergency exits, air conditioning, a heated seat, and 30 mm-thick polycarbonate windscreen and windows to protect the operator in the event of a chain shot striking the windscreen.

ADVANTAGES OF TIMBERPRO

Chase says TimberPro harvesters are known for operating on steeper slopes than other machines, and he is proud that Logmech now supports 21 active machines in South Africa.

The D Series has the new 9-litre Cummins Tier 3 engine that works with South Africa's diesel rather than the expensive Tier 4 or 5 engines specified for refined fuel in EU and US markets.

The TimberPro line, available in both tracked and wheeled machines, comes standard with 360° continuous

rotation, allowing the operator to always face the line or the work. This feature also enables the operator to remove and stack timber from 360° around the machine, including the option to work over the front, sides and rear.

When it comes to maintenance, Shoba says there isn't much to do at the end of each day. The TimberPro auto-greases, so they grease the few greasing points on the head, clean the inside of the cab and check the hydraulics and the cutter bar oil.

Chase says that the pins and bushes are over-engineered to reduce wear and tear. "Another reason our customers enjoy low maintenance costs is that we have had input into the design. We watch operations and listen to the contractors to see where improvements can be made".

"When our customers encounter issues, we inform the relevant OEM and suggest design changes. In some cases, the OEM will design the upgrade and send us the parts", he explains.

One of the biggest advantages for fleet owners is that the top ends of the TimberPro 725, 735, 745 and 840 all share the same specifications. Only the bottom differs, depending on the wheeled chassis or track frame size.

All parts are standard, which means there is commonality across the model ranges. This means a single service kit, engine, or hydraulic pump can be kept in the parts store, reducing parts holding and ultimately the financial risk of tying up capital in slow-moving, expensive parts.

Another great advantage of the Timberpro is its well-designed hydraulic system. Each function has its own dedicated hydraulic pump, so there is no drop in machine performance when multi-functioning. This is especially noticeable when handling large timber.

The D series Timberpro can track, swing, boom up, and operate the head with zero lag in any function, thanks to each function having its own dedicated hydraulic pump. The D series Timberpro, paired with the SP 761LF, guarantees peak performance while delivering a high-quality log. 🌲



The proportionally angled feeder rollers of the SP head lessens friction.

Siyabonga Shoba's steep slopes journey

Who do you call when a timber transport and harvesting opportunity arises that requires the skills of an experienced, multi-talented logistics expert? Maxwell Mbelu knew exactly who the right fit would be.

By Joy Crane

In 2021, he approached his former colleague, Siyabonga Cosmos Shoba, with a plan to start a new transport company and asked him to run the operations. For Shoba, coming off more than a decade in Limpopo's mining transport industry, it was the right offer at the right time.

That offer became Mkhoba Forestry, a commercial timber-harvesting and logistics-contracting business based in Harding. Shoba and his business partners launched the company that same year, signing a stump-to-mill contract with Merensky Timber to harvest and transport pine roundwood to Weza Sawmill and onward to port for export to India and China.

Shoba oversees Mkhoba's operations, with Thabiso Dlamini as the harvesting operations manager and Lungisani Mthlane and Cebo Dlamini as fleet controllers.

Mkhoba operates three harvesting machines, including two Hitachi excavators, one of which is fitted with cable yarding equipment purchased from Peter Allpass in George. This year, he added a TimberPro 725D levelling harvester with an SP Maskiner 761LF head, supplied by Logmech and built for the steep ground they work on.

Bell trucks handle infield hauling to the landing, where an excavator loads the logs onto Mkhoba's five MAN timber transport trucks, including a low-bed.

SLIPPERY STEEP SLOPES

"The biggest drawback of working on steep terrain is the weather. We can't work in the rain because the roads are treacherous, and we can't get the harvesting machine to the site. Another issue is extraction, as the skidder does not function well on

slippery slopes," explains Shoba. "That is why we invested in the cable yarder. We send our six experienced chainsaw operators to fell the trees manually, and the cable yarder handles extraction to the landing." The chainsaw teams work in two groups of three, with two people felling and one supervising. Shoba is firm that people come first. "We never cut corners when it comes to the safety of our people."

THE FUTURE

Ask Shoba where the business goes from here, and the answer is straightforward. "I want to grow with the industry and leave a legacy for my children". In practice, that means acquiring another skidder, since extraction is currently the bottleneck.

It's not always an easy market to work in. "If no pulp customers are asking for the cheaper 2.4 or 2.5m logs, those logs are left behind. We use an average of 3,000 litres of fuel a day to process the stems, and it is a loss for us because we can't salvage the logs later, as the non-pulp market does not want old timber".

THE FAMILY MAN

Shoba's instinct for logistics and machinery developed early. He was born in Donnybrook, KwaZulu-Natal, on 6 March 1984, to Phumlile Julia Shoba and Bhekisisa Antony Shoba. "My father is from Umzimkhulu eBovini under King Sidoyi Dlamini, and my mother is from Donnybrook KwaNomandlovu under King Memela", he explains.

His father worked at Weza as a foreman until the business closed, and his mother found work as a domestic worker on a farm near Underberg, taking Shoba with her. On weekends and holidays on the farm,

he worked in the dairy, milking cattle and learning to drive tractors and other machinery, an early education that would define his career.

He attended Tasvelly Secondary School until Grade 10, then completed matric at Mdingi High School. With no money for further study, he went straight into the job market. That's where his path first crossed with Maxwell's.

In 2003, Shoba was employed by James Tucker as a Bell truck driver, with Maxwell as his supervisor. He learned to operate a TLB, an excavator and a truck, obtained his code 14 licence the following year, and by the age of 21 was running a team of operators himself.

After Tucker sold the fleet, Shoba spent a year at Timber Logistics before moving to Timber 24, where he became the first operator of the company's newly acquired John Deere cranes mounted on trucks. He trained other operators on the equipment and was eventually promoted to supervisor in Greytown.

In 2008, he moved to Burgersfort in Mpumalanga to join Lukas Potgieter Vervoerders, transporting chrome, coal, platinum and limestone between mines and to Richards Bay, Botswana and Maputo.

He worked his way up from truck driver to control officer to fleet supervisor, with the company supporting him in a transport and logistics qualification. He stayed until the business was liquidated in 2017. Four years as operations manager at Sekhukhune Logistics followed, after which he received the call that brought him home to KZN.

Shoba is a family man; his wife is a schoolteacher; their son is training to become a diesel mechanic; and their daughter is writing matric this year. 🍷

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EU's formaldehyde regulation restrictions take effect on 6 August 2026

Under the Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals (REACH) Regulation (EU) 2023/1464, binding formaldehyde emission limits now apply EU-wide for the first time. Suppliers of wood-based materials, furniture and certain other indoor-use products into the European Economic Area must demonstrate that their products meet limits on emissions of formaldehyde into indoor air.

REACH is the EU's central chemicals regulation. It governs which substances may be used in products, under what conditions, and how compliance must be demonstrated. The formaldehyde restrictions will take effect on 6 August 2026.

A key driver of this regulatory shift is formaldehyde's classification under the Classification, Labelling and Packaging (CLP) Regulation, where formaldehyde is classified as a Category 1B carcinogen (carcinogenic to humans).

Although formaldehyde is not currently listed as an SVHC (Substance of Very High Concern), its hazard classification warrants closer regulatory scrutiny. Restricting its emissions under REACH is part of a broader chemical safety framework in which hazard assessment, risk reduction, and market regulation work together.

The focus has shifted from pure substance registration to real-world indoor exposure and actual release under conditions of use.

Whether you're a manufacturer, supplier, processor, or importer, the new REACH formaldehyde emissions limit of $\leq 0.062\text{mg}/\text{m}^3$ applies to:

- Wood and furniture industry: Emissions from adhesives, resins, and coatings must be closely monitored and documented.
- Automotive industry: Vehicle interiors will be subject to the



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same limits from August 2027.

OEMs will require suppliers to provide corresponding proof.

- Construction and building materials: Insulation, flooring, and panelling must comply with the new emission requirements.

The restriction requires companies throughout the supply chain to carefully verify the compliance of the products they place on the market, with particular attention to the:

- Emission characteristics of purchased raw materials and components;
- Control of process changes that may affect formaldehyde emissions;
- Verification of the emission performance of the final product placed on the market;
- Availability of technical and documentary evidence supporting compliance;
- Correct application of the test methods specified in the regulation.

The restriction does not apply to second-hand articles already placed on the market and products

exempted by Entry 77 to Annex XVII of REACH (Regulation (EC) No 1907/2006). It does apply to articles:

- Intended solely for outdoor use, where exposure to indoor air is not expected
- Used exclusively outside the vapour barrier of a building
- Intended solely for professional or industrial use, unless there is likely to be exposure of the general public
- Where formaldehyde occurs only naturally in the material

Under REACH, what matters isn't the raw material or adhesive used, but the actual formaldehyde emission of the finished product. That means even products made from individually "unproblematic" materials can exceed the limits, for instance, through interactions between multiple components.

Enforcement will be handled by individual member state authorities, coordinated at the EU level through the European Chemicals Agency's enforcement framework. 🇪🇺

For more info: <https://www.fagus-grecon.com/en-de/insights>

The real test of localisation is procurement, imports and enforcement

Localisation has become one of South Africa's favourite economic buzzwords. It appears in policy documents, industry master plans and conference speeches. Yet for many manufacturers, the reality on the factory floor tells a different story.

Despite widespread support for local manufacturing, South African furniture producers continue to face significant barriers to growth. Access to procurement opportunities remains limited, imported products continue to flood the market, and compliance requirements are often applied unevenly.

For an industry that supports thousands of jobs and spans a value chain from forestry to textiles, chemicals, logistics, retail and design, the stakes are high.

Greg Boule, CEO of the South African Furniture Initiative (SAFI), says, "The furniture industry has enormous potential to contribute to economic growth and job creation. The challenge is ensuring that localisation commitments translate into real opportunities for South African manufacturers".

SAFI is the national industry body representing and supporting South Africa's furniture manufacturing industry through advocacy, skills development, market access, industry promotion and trade development initiatives.

POLICY VERSUS REALITY

One of the biggest frustrations is the gap between localisation policy and procurement implementation.

While the government continues to champion local procurement, manufacturers argue that many furniture tenders still fail to include meaningful local content requirements.

Procurement processes are often inconsistent, and opportunities are not always visible to local suppliers.

"Localisation cannot simply exist as a policy objective. It must be reflected in purchasing decisions that create sustainable demand for locally manufactured products", Boule asserts.

TRANSPARENCY AND ENFORCEMENT

He says industry stakeholders believe that greater transparency, stronger local-content requirements and improved enforcement could unlock opportunities for South African manufacturers while supporting the objectives of the Furniture Industry Master Plan.

To help manufacturers identify opportunities more efficiently, SAFI members have access to the SAFI Tender Bulletin. It is a centralised platform listing government tenders for the furniture industry, including furniture, seating, office furniture, school furniture and mattresses.

ILLICIT TRADE

The Consumer Goods Council of South Africa (CGCSA), representing more than 9,000 companies across the consumer goods value chain, has identified illicit trade and counterfeiting as one of the most

significant threats to South Africa's economic growth, tax revenues and consumer safety.

These products often enter the market at lower prices, creating an uneven competitive environment for businesses that invest in compliance, skills development and responsible manufacturing practices.

Through its Anti-Illicit Trade Desk, the organisation collaborates with industry, law enforcement agencies and government to combat illicit and counterfeit goods across multiple sectors.

TURN POLICY INTO PROCUREMENT

Jeannine van Straaten of Proudly South African says South Africa already has many of the

ingredients needed to grow local

manufacturing. The focus now should be on implementation.

"Every locally manufactured product supports jobs, skills

development and economic activity across

multiple industries. There is an opportunity to strengthen local manufacturing, but success depends on creating an environment in which local businesses can compete fairly and invest confidently in growth".

The challenge is turning policy commitments into procurement decisions, stronger compliance and measurable market opportunities. 🍷

The government must turn policy into procurement compliance

PVoC programme paused

The South African Bureau of Standards (SABS) has officially paused the roll-out of the anticipated Pre-Shipment Verification of Conformity (PVoC) programme, halting all operationalisation and mandatory enforcement activities pending further industry consultations.

By Joy Crane

Greg Boule, CEO of the South African Furniture Initiative (SAFI), says local furniture and mattress manufacturers have been closely tracking the regulatory framework originally slated to become mandatory in September 2026.

"Local manufacturers invest heavily in compliance, quality control and responsible production practices. Competition should be based on quality, innovation and value, not on products that fail to meet South African standards", Boule explains.

WHAT IS THE PVOC PROGRAMME?

The PVoC is a risk-assessment and compliance system designed to ensure that imported consumer goods meet South African National Standards (SANS) before they leave their country of origin.

For years, domestic furniture manufacturers have faced intense pressure from low-cost, substandard imports that bypass local safety, quality, and environmental regulations. The PVoC programme was introduced to level the playing field.

Under the system, specific imported product categories, including furniture and mattresses, must undergo rigorous technical document reviews, laboratory testing, and physical inspections before being loaded onto ships bound for South Africa.

Once a shipment passes inspection, an authorised verification agency issues a mandatory Certificate of Conformity (CoC). Under the planned enforcement model, South African Revenue Service (SARS) Customs and the Border Management Authority (BMA) will deny entry to any targeted



Image supplied by SAFI.

cargo arriving at domestic ports without this certificate.

PAUSE FOR THOUGHT

The programme is a joint initiative led by the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition (the dtic), the National Regulator for Compulsory Specifications (NRCS), and the SABS. To execute the global inspections, authorities will partner with international verification agencies, such as the China Certification & Inspection Group (CCIC), to audit goods at the point of export.

However, the rapid approach of the mandate sparked widespread concern across the furniture supply chain. Industry stakeholders raised red flags over vague product scope definitions, potential bottlenecks at

foreign ports, and the administrative burden placed on importers.

In response to these friction points, the SABS has placed a temporary hold on the programme. The halt allows regulators and manufacturing associations to refine the implementation guidelines and ensure compliance mechanisms do not inadvertently choke legitimate trade lines.

For local manufacturers, the pause means current import and customs processes remain unchanged for the foreseeable future. However, trade experts urge businesses to use this extra time to audit their supply chains, as the dtic remains committed to standardising import quality once structural concerns are resolved. 🍷

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JOHN DEERE



WoodEX for Africa 2026 was a success

There was a steady stream of visitors through the hall housing the WoodEX for Africa exhibition in June, and one exhibit stopped people in their tracks. Holzbau CPT erected a large exhibit made of curved laminated timber beams, which drew serious attention from visitors and exhibitors and went a long way towards shifting perceptions of engineered timber as a serious construction material.

By Joy Crane



Dirk Gerntholtz, Dirk Vente and Christian Hess of Holzbau CPT at their eye-catching stand.

Show organiser Stephan Jooste was pleased with the turnout, as a show is only as good as its exhibitors and the audience they attract. He says it met his objective of helping to grow South Africa's forestry and furniture manufacturing sector, strengthening value chains and increasing commercial opportunities for local businesses.

FLOW OF VISITORS

Co-location with Big 5 Construct continued to pay off for both shows. This time, WoodEX wasn't tucked away in its own hall on a limb; it sat

within a shared space that let visitors move naturally between the two shows rather than making a deliberate detour.

The Rubio Monocoat build-off was a constant crowd-puller, and the appeal of hi-tech, traditional and portable woodworking machinery kept visitors moving from stand to stand across all three days. The floor plan helped too, encouraging a flow past every exhibitor.

INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITORS

Last year's edition landed a month after most of the exhibitors and

visitors had returned from a busy and costly run of the biennial German trade shows, Interzum in Cologne and Ligna in Hanover. Several South African and international exhibitors said this year's WoodEX was noticeably more energetic.

The international flavour ran deeper than the exhibitor list alone shows. Most South African exhibitors, including CMC, Almotech, NewSaw, Geerlings, Nukor, FIT, Wood Industry Supplies, Rhino Wood and Universal Plywood, used their stands to showcase their international principals' brands.



SAWPA's Bruce Breedt and Nellie Berrington were kept busy explaining preservative treated timber to visitors.



Lillian Molele and Jacky Mosima of CMAS Trading & Projects showcased the quality of their upholstery.



Junaid Hartley of CMC Woodworking at the company's busy WoodEX stand.

Not every drawcard on the floor was a machine. Kleiberit's stand drew its own steady stream of interest, with Ireland-based general manager Brady Larkan and Southern African sales manager Marnus Ferreira-Netto fielding questions from visitors. The company used the show to launch its new HotCoat product for external applications into the market.

DTIC SUPPORT FOR SMMEs

The Department of Trade, Industry and Competition (the dtic) hosted four small businesses on its large stand: CMAS Trading and Projects, Seltech Cupboards, Consolidated Roof Brands and Truss Master. The exhibition gave them an unforgettable trade show experience, a platform to showcase their products, explore new business opportunities and strengthen their presence in local and international markets.

The dtic is an active participant in the Forestry Sector Master Plan and the Furniture Industry Mast Plan. It facilitates wider industrial policy goals: industrialisation, stronger local manufacturing, sharper business competitiveness, value-added production, market access, SMME support and job creation.



Almotech brought their machines to WoodEX. With the team at the stand were Heiko Almoneit (left) and Ahren Almoneit (centre).

Two of the participating SMEs spoke to WoodBiz Africa on the floor. Amanda Vongayi of Consolidated Roof Brands and Lillian Molele of CMAS Trading and Projects were both grateful for the opportunity to take part, and both pointed to the networking as the real value of the week. For SMEs still building a customer and supplier base, that kind of direct, face-to-face access is hard to come by any other way.

INDUSTRY MEETS INDUSTRY

Away from the machinery and product stands, the industry body and information exhibitors carried out some of the quieter but important work of the show. The Institute for Timber Construction South Africa (ITC-SA), the South African Wood Preservers Association (SAWPA), Sawmilling South Africa, Safcol and WoodBiz Africa / SA Forestry Online were kept busy explaining how the industry is structured and what each organisation does.

The SAWPA and ITC-SA stands drew a lot of interest from construction visitors wanting to know more about preservative-treated timber and roof trusses.



Scott Sargent of Rhino Wood and Angus Fleming CEO of the Sustainabuild Group at the Rhino Wood stand.



Stuart Byrch, Henry Mavuso and Warren Harrison at the friendly FIT Sales booth.

AN INTERNATIONAL REACH

That international reach manifested in unexpected ways. Barry Muller, formerly a lecturer at Nelson Mandela University, brought a group of furniture manufacturers from Tanzania to the show, giving them direct exposure to South African suppliers and technology.

At the same time, Sawmilling South Africa's AGM, held in Pretoria during the expo, drew sawmillers and members of a Finnish investment and technology delegation who had presented at the AGM, adding another layer of cross-border engagement to the week. 🌲



The owner of Wood Industry Supplies Volker Bächle and his son Chris represented Mohringer, Haas & Jenz at the show.



Erik Soderlund of the Institute for Timber Construction (ITC)-SA with the SMME truss suppliers hosted on the dtic stand.



Tracey Beek of Sawmilling SA was assisted by Wezi Chalamba and Livingston Banda at WoodEX.

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Max Cutting Width	360mm
Max Cutting Length	4.2m
Main Drive Motors	2 x 18.5Kw
Variable Feed Speed	0-30m/min
Electric Width Adjustment	60 - 360m
Approximate Weight	2000kg

Includes Electrical Switchgear Panel & Infeed Table

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Max Cutting Width	200mm
Max Cutting Height	100mm
Bottom Head	Ø160 x 210mm x 7.5kW
Right Head	Ø160 x 110mm x 7.5kW
Left Head	Ø180 x 110mm x 11kW
Top Head	Ø160 x 210mm x 11kW
Variable Feed Hydraulic	0-50/min x 11kW
L x W x H	3250 x 1100 x 1400mm
Total Weight	3850kg

Includes infeed belt conveyor 4m long x 250mm wide

NEW HAAS DRUM CHIPPER HTH 200x600

Max Infeed Height	200mm
Max Infeed Width	600mm
Chip Size	25 to 30mm
Rotor Diameter	600mm
Capacity input	8/12/18m/h
Main Drive Motor (optional)	37/55/75 kW

NEW WEIMA SHREDDER TYPE WL4

Hopper Opening	800 x 600mm
Hopper Volume	0.6m³
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Rotor Length	600mm
Rotor Diameter	252mm
Rotor Speed	90rpm
Rotor Knives	28
Screen Hole Size	15/20mm
Connection Ø	160mm
Air Speed	28m/s
Machine Dimensions	1.8 x 1.14 x 1.64m

NEW HAAS SHAKER CONVEYOR WITH SCREENING LANE

8500mm long • 500mm wide
Screen Section
500mm wide x 2500mm long with 40 x 40mm holes
3kW Main-drive Motor
Feeding Height – 870mm

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LOG CARRIAGE	Fully Hydraulic
Type	SWh
Track Width	980mm
Clamp Opening	800mm
Clamp Turning	360°
Feed Speed	100m/min
AUXILIARY CARRIAGE	kW1
Track Width	980mm
Height	430mm

Free Bird Adhesives are now in South Africa

Free Bird edge-banding hot-melt adhesives are now available in South Africa.

The adhesives are manufactured by Tianjin Shen-Wang Electronic Chemical plant in China and are represented locally by Glenn Maclean.

Free Bird Adhesives offers a range of products engineered for continuous edge banding on manual and automatic machines. Maclean says they provide excellent adhesion and cost performance. They are thermally stable and form an invisible bond line on dark-coloured edge bands.

The range includes a reactive polyurethane, PUR6818, with a processing temperature of 130–150°C and viscosity of 40–60,000mPa.s at 130°C. 🍷

Contact Glenn Maclean at 083 325 6461.



Geerlings marks 61 years with a strong WoodEX showing

This year, Geerlings is celebrating 61 years in business and pulled out all the stops at WoodEX, where it exhibited its services and a selection of its vast range of woodworking machines.

Speaking of South Africa's appetite for machinery, the company's third-generation owner, Arnold Geerlings, said, "Last year, we had the best Ligna ever for sales to South Africa.

Despite socio-economic issues and political uncertainty, our furniture, kitchen and shopfitting manufacturing customers remain positive, and business continues". Geerlings' three hands-on company directors,

Martiens Bezuidenhout, Cornelis Rostoll and Henk de Vries, were also at WoodEX. Their enthusiasm for the current and future outlook of South Africa's woodworking industry was palpable.

Their confidence was echoed by that of their company's principal European supplier, SCM. The Italian OEM is 65 years old this year and is the largest producer of woodworking machines and solutions in Italy and the second-largest in the world.

"SCM is very committed to us, to the point that Ahmed Najem, SCM's Area Manager for the Middle East and Africa, arrived from Italy this morning to be at our stand and meet customers, and is flying back tonight," Arnold said. 🍷



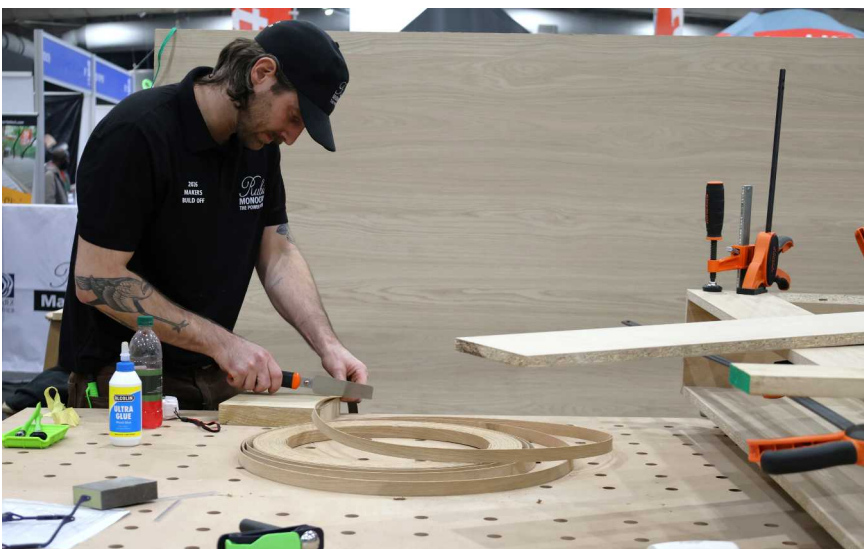
Arnold Geerlings, Tristan Geerlings, Ahmad Najem of SCM and Cornelis Rostoll at WoodEX for Africa.

Brandon wins the 2026 Rubio Monocoat Makers Build-off

Brandon Scheepers from Made. Dot won the 2026 Rubio Monocoat Makers Build-off with his twin pedestals. Greg Stock of Stock Woodworks took second place with his cabinet, and Warren Turnbull of Hutch Custom's was the runner-up with his coffee table.



Brandon Scheepers from Made. Dot won the 2026 Rubio Monocoat Makers WoodEX Build-off.



Greg Stock of Stock Woodworks took second place in the Rubio Monocoat WoodEX 2026 competition.

Meeting a tight project deadline when working with solid wood is always challenging. Imagine doing it in a distracting exhibition space, under the curious, and at times critical, scrutiny of trade show visitors, while using tools and equipment that are not your own.

Rubio Monocoat hosted the Makers Build-off competition at the WoodEX for Africa expo in Johannesburg in June. The three competing woodworkers were tasked with building and finishing functional furniture pieces over three days.

The sponsors, including Blum South Africa, Vermont Sales, Hardware Centre, Pearlman Veneers, Upper Edge, Klingspor, Maple Street Timbers and Bostik, supplied the white oak timber, veneer, small woodworking machines, hand and power tools and consumables.

The surfaces of the assembled products were cleaned with RAW wood cleaner before applying Rubio Monocoat's Oil Plus 2C hardwax oil, that colours and protects in a single layer. The trio chose Rubio's Light Roast and Cortado colours, which enhanced the natural character of the wood and gave each piece its own unique personality.

Their furniture items will be auctioned by Rubio in September, with all proceeds benefiting the charity Abby's Angels. 🙏



Warren Turnbull of Hutch Custom was the runner up.

interzum 2027: Beyond boundaries, elevating strategic resilience

Cologne, Germany, will host the world's leading trade fair for furniture production and interior design, interzum, from 11 to 14 May 2027. This time, the spotlight falls on how international suppliers are weathering the challenges of a dynamic market environment.

The theme for the 2027 event is "Beyond boundaries: elevating strategic resilience". It provides exhibitors with a shared lens for presenting their solutions.

Geopolitical tension, volatile markets, rising energy costs and tighter regulation are squeezing companies across the supply chain. But it's not all headwinds. New technology, cross-border cooperation and fresh business models are opening doors too, and interzum wants to capture both sides of the coin.

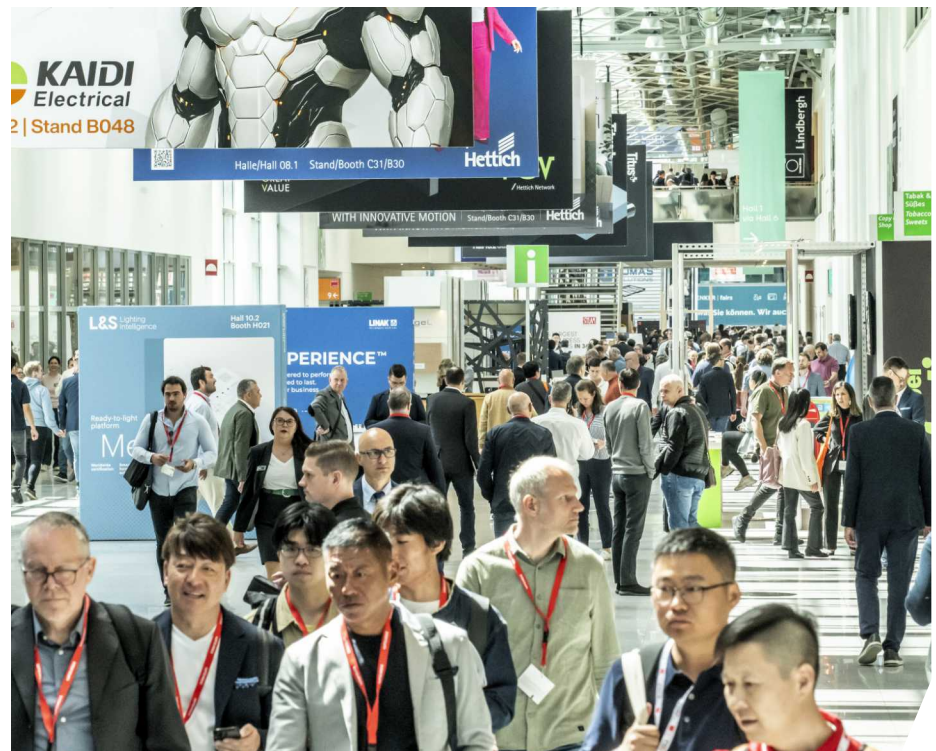
Maik Fischer, Director of interzum, presents resilience as a competitive necessity rather than a buzzword.

"Strategic resilience has become a decisive competitive factor for the international supplier industry. With the key theme of interzum 2027, we create a common framework that provides orientation, promotes international industry dialogue, and makes future strategies and innovations visible", Fischer says.

"Interzum brings together leading companies, high-profile experts, and a premium trade audience, and showcases the materials, components, technologies, and concepts through which the industry is actively shaping the transformation".

STRATEGIC RESILIENCE

Strategic resilience is the ability of companies to adapt flexibly to changing market conditions and align their business models and value-creation chains for long-term competitiveness. It is not only about being crisis-proof. It's about continuous adaptation and building supply structures that hold up under pressure.



A scene from interzum 25. Pic supplied by Koelnmesse.

THREE TREND AREAS

Under the umbrella of strategic resilience, interzum 2027 is focusing on three developments:

- **Collaboration:** New partnerships and networks spanning the entire value chain, as companies pool resources to drive joint solutions, leaner production, and faster delivery. Digital product passports and digital twins are adding momentum.
- **Regionalisation:** Production and supply are shifting closer to end markets. Local facilities in strategically important growth regions enable faster response times, better-tailored products, and shorter transport routes.
- **Sourcing optimisation:** Building

supply chains that can withstand disruption. Diversified procurement, digital processes and long-term partnerships help companies manage risk, while regulatory know-how becomes a competitive edge.

The theme stays open beyond these three, with room for circular economy thinking, automation, miniaturisation and other resilience-linked ideas to surface on the show floor.

For trade visitors, the promise is orientation: a structured view of where the international furniture supplier industry is heading, and a look at how the whole value chain, from raw material to finished product, is responding to the pressure to adapt. 🍷

Sawmilling gives a former DRC auditor a new career

A successful career in finance wasn't enough to keep auditor Julian Kakule in banking after he saw a Wood-Mizer sawmill in action.

By Wood-Mizer Africa



Fred Kapenda, Wood-Mizer's DRC Country Manager on the left with Julian Kakule Wood-Mizer's authorised dealer for Kinshasa. Julian is also MD of Scierie Jules Fie.



A Wood-Mizer LT15 WIDE cutting a large diameter hardwood log at Scierie Jules Fie.

“was an auditor at a large commercial bank in Kinshasa and was successful and comfortable in my job. A timber trader friend took me to a sawmill in 2018, where I saw a Wood-Mizer cutting timber. The speed and precision of the mill were amazing. My professional background immediately saw a business opportunity”, Julian says.

“To take a log and produce sawn timber from it that you can sell at a profit has many advantages. Locally produced sawn timber builds our economy. Exporting finished timber products rather than raw logs that are processed elsewhere creates jobs, grows the timber sector, builds people's lives, and protects our forests. People will protect and grow trees if timber is their business”.

Three months later, in 2018, Julian bought his first Wood-Mizer LT15. Five years later, Julian owned six Wood-Mizers and ran a successful sawmilling

business, Scierie Jules Fie, in Kinshasa's Kinkole district.

His sawmilling success attracted Wood-Mizer's attention. In 2020, Julian was appointed as a Wood-Mizer representative in the DRC. Wood-Mizer has representatives in Kinshasa, Lubumbashi and the Eastern DRC who work with Wood-Mizer's Country Manager, Fred Kapenda. They form a service support network in the to support sawmillers and develop the sector.

A TOUGH BALANCING ACT

“When I decided to go into sawmilling, my friends and bank colleagues thought I was mad. I took a risk because there's a saying in French, ‘if you don't take risks, you'll never make it’. I took the risk, and today I am where I am because of Wood-Mizer”, Julian says.

Running a successful sawmill and managing a Wood-Mizer dealership in the heart of Kinshasa's busiest

sawmilling district, Kinkole, is a tough balancing act. But the experience Julian has gained from running two businesses is helping both improve.

Julian developed his sawmilling business to do general and artisanal cutting. The general side cuts are popular sawn sizes sold daily, and the artisanal side cuts are custom sizes according to customer specifications.

Scierie Jules Fie has seen exceptional growth, with general and custom cutting overlapping. “The cutting accuracy, durability, and recovery that my Wood-Mizer gives me have also grown my business,” Julian says.

Customers spend more to get accurately sawn timber. Wood-Mizer's thin-kerf, narrow-bandsaw blade technology also results in less waste, so there is more sawn product to sell. The thin-kerf blades use less electricity, resulting in greater savings.

“Wasting less and having more timber to sell is very important during



Julian Kakule and a customer.

the dry season. When the river is low logs don't reach Kinshasa. Because I waste less, customers know I always have sawn timber in stock. I also don't need to pay more for logs when the river dries and log prices rise".

Wood-Mizer's bandsaw blade sharpening and setting equipment also save time and money. "Sending blades away for resharpening takes longer and costs more. I resharpen, set, and check the quality of my blades in-house to ensure the best cut quality and straightest timber" he says.

Julian has made these lessons part of Wood-Mizer's dealership, which he now manages. "Because I am a sawmiller, I know the frustration of waiting for blades or spare parts, or of having to wait when sawmills break down".

With easy access to Wood-Mizer's two branches in Kinkole and Kingabwa and technical service support teams visiting sawmills to service machines, train staff, and provide advice, sawmillers now have the convenience and trusted partnership of an experienced sawmiller and Wood-Mizer dealership on their doorstep.

"Selling a Wood-Mizer is easy", Julian says. "The durability of a Wood-Mizer, its year-on-year dependability, proven large-log cutting capacity, and its reliability as a source of income make it easy for sawmillers to choose Wood-Mizer".

Wood-Mizer's services support the reliability and availability of genuine spare parts and blades across the DRC. 🌳

CLICK through to video - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QDIa5YxyGn8>



DRC's tropical hardwoods are no match for Wood-Mizer.



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Wood-Mizer's blade maintenance machines make it easy for sawmillers to save money by sharpening and setting their own blades.

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BUILT TO WORK
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White River Saw Mills wins the 2026 Sawmill Improvement Award

Congratulations to White River Saw Mills on participating in the Crickmay & Associates Intermill Comparison (IMC) and on attaining the Sawmill Improvement Award for the second time.



Craig Rance shows the agm attendees the award the winners get to keep.

Andrew Crickmay announced the winner of the 36th annual competition at the Sawmilling South Africa (SSA) annual general meeting in Pretoria. The Sawmill Improvement Award recognises the sawmill that improved its productivity and competitiveness over the past five years (2021 v 2025).

The weighted criteria are improvements in net margin, labour productivity, recovery, net average selling price and total costs, including administration. The focus is on improvement, with the winning mill not necessarily being the most profitable.



Andrew Crickmay explaining how the Intermill Comparison works.

PAST WINNERS OF THE CRICKMAY & ASSOCIATES INTERMILL COMPARISON SAWMILL IMPROVEMENT AWARD

- 1991 Lomati
- 1992 Swaziland Plantations
- 1993 Nicholson & Mullin
- 1994 Tweefontein (closed)
- 1995 Lusaba (closed)
- 1996 Cape Sawmills (closed)
- 1997 Northern Timber
- 1997 Densa Sawmill
- 1998 Bracken Timbers
- 1999 Thesen & Co.
- 2000 Stevens Lumber (closed)
- 2001 R F Gevers
- 2002 Stevens Lumber
- 2003 Bracken Timbers
- 2004 Swaziland Plantations
- 2005 Rance Timber (Kubusi)
- 2006 Kusel Saw Mills
- 2007 Newington
- 2008 MTO George
- 2009 York Timbers (Jessievale)
- 2010 Swaziland Plantations
- 2011 PVT Timber Products
- 2012 Thornville Sawmill
- 2013 York Timbers (Sabie)
- 2014 White River Saw Mills
- 2015 Kusel Sawmill
- 2016 MTO George
- 2017 MTO George
- 2018 PG Bison (Thesen Sawmilling)
- 2019 R F Gevers
- 2020 Merensky Timber (Langeni)
- 2021 Thornville Sawmill
- 2022 Merensky Timber (Langeni)
- 2023 eMpuluzi Sawmill
- 2024 Guy Payn Sawmills
- 2025 UCL Glenside Sawmill



Andrew Crickmay is flanked by WRM's sawmill manager Carel Jacobsz on his left and WRM's Densa sawmill manager, Metsing Maloka.

Crickmay said the Runners-up that met the criteria and showed improvement were, in no particular order: AC Whitcher, White River Sawmills (Densa), Iswepe Timbers, Singisi Forest Products (Langeni), Lawa, MTO, Tekwani (Piet Retief), RF

Gevers and Tekwani (Thornville). White River Saw Mills also won the award in 2014, and CEO Willie Stander says it is all down to teamwork.

"This recognition belongs to every employee whose hard work, expertise and commitment continue to drive us

forward", Stander said. "We extend our sincere gratitude to Crickmay & Associates and the IMC programme for creating a platform that encourages benchmarking, learning and excellence within the South African sawmilling industry".

YOUR BLADE IS ONLY AS GOOD AS THE SHOP BEHIND IT

In a modern sawmill, performance isn't lost in the cut — it's lost long before the blade touches the log.



Worn equipment.



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WAVEY CUT



HEAT BUILD-UP & TENSION LOSS



PREMATURE FAILURE



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SA and Finland talk business: A first for Sawmilling South Africa

For the first time, South African sawmillers attending the Sawmilling South Africa AGM had a dedicated look at what doing business with Finland could mean for their operations.

By Joy Crane



Andre Odendaal of Hewsaw.



Camilo Ramada of Finnvera.



Christo van der Hoven, Architect and Technical Director of MTT.

Finland's Ambassador, His Excellency Pekka Metso, opened the morning session of this year's Sawmilling South Africa (SSA) AGM with a call to build partnerships between local sawmillers and Finnish technology and funding suppliers. Over the next few hours, a line-up of Finnish government officials, financiers and equipment manufacturers set out how that partnership could work.

WHO'S BACKING THE DEAL?

Minnamari Marttila, chief administrative officer and deputy CEO of Finnfund, explained that the organisation is a Finnish development financier and impact investor. It finances responsible, commercially viable companies in developing countries by investing in businesses that address global development challenges.

"To become a Finnfund investee, a company does not need to be

technology and consulting company, which specialises in optimising smart forestry operations. The company is keen to do business in SA. "I want to engage with companies seeking a strategic partner for joint business development, early adopters of new technologies, and established businesses seeking innovative solutions and scientific collaboration for joint R&D projects," Sarasto said.

Another company mentioned was Ponsse. The Finnish company manufactures forestry harvesting and extraction machinery and is a well-established brand in SA. In 2020, it appointed Chris Odendaal and his company, MTS Parts, as its local distributor and support agent.

SAWMILLING TECHNOLOGY

Theo Churchill, a South African and director of Important Products, discussed the advantages of Finnish secondary wood-processing technologies. His company facilitates

partnerships between Finnish and South African companies, and he added that "Finland is a good place to do business."

Churchill said his company works with Raumaster, Raute, ThermoWood and Indufor, among others, to ensure that not a single wood chip is wasted. "It is all about using technology to harness collaboration and utilise every stick in the ground," he commented.

The Finnish manufacturer, HewSaw, is at home in the SA sawmilling industry, producing chipper-canter sawing machines and saw lines. Andre Odendaal, an experienced South African sawmiller, established HewSaw's SA subsidiary in 2010. In 2023, Odendaal moved to the company's European headquarters in the Netherlands as technical manager, and Stephen Potgieter took his place at HewSaw SA in Mbombela. "We build a personal relationship with each customer and ensure that we



Johan Sarasto of Forest Key.

customise our products to suit their needs," Odendaal said.

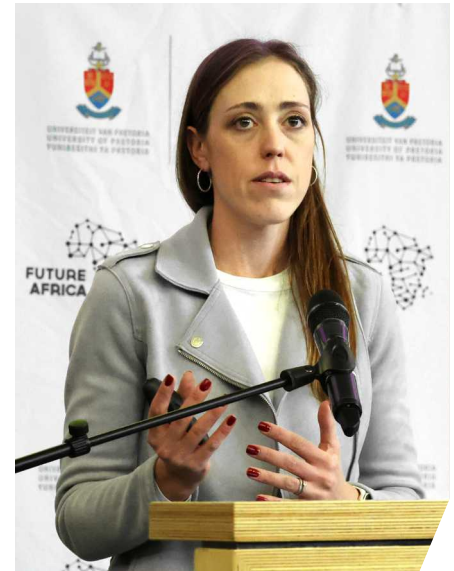
Staying with sawmilling, Simo Kurki, sales manager at **Jartek**, introduced the company's lumber-handling solutions for green- and dry-sorting lines and thermal-modification



Leo Lahtinen of Lunawood.

systems. Thermal modification is a high-value-added process for wood, modifying it at the cellular level to improve durability, resistance and dimensional stability.

"Jartek has delivered over 100 thermal modification kilns globally



Lyndall Mulock of VZLR Attorneys.

and is the market leader. It is a highly lucrative business for sawmills and other wood processing companies with access to good quality sawn timber," Kurki said.

The business development manager at Lunawood, Leo Lahtinen, spoke



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Koop Design (architects); Roger Jardine (photographer)

Discover the Wood App

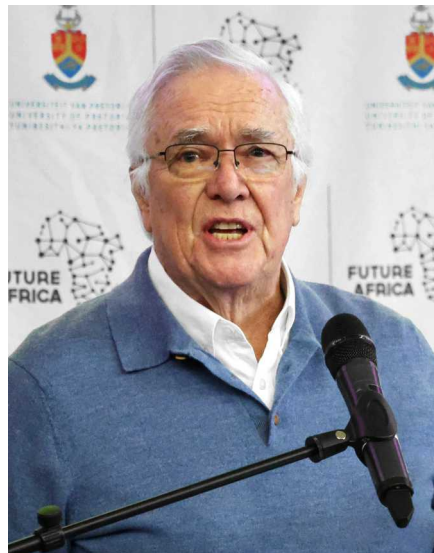
A collaboration between Sawmilling South Africa and Stellenbosch University, the Wood App is South Africa's leading online platform for learning how to design and build with timber. Visit thewoodapp.com.



**SAWMILLING
SOUTH AFRICA**
We saw the future



Minnamari Marttila, Chief Admin Officer and Deputy CEO of Finnfund.



Theo Churchill of Important Products.



Simo Kurki of Jartek.

about the company's trademarked ThermoWood brand of thermally modified pine and spruce. It has been available in SA for over ten years, and southern African architects are using the product in tourist lodges, shopping malls, luxury housing estates and private homes. Lahtinen surprised the audience by noting that the AGM venue, the Future Africa Campus at the University of Pretoria, incorporated ThermoWood.

GETTING TIMBER TO MARKET

Teemu Korhonen, CEO of Valasaha Group, discussed the international market opportunities available to SA sawmillers. Waltors operates in South Africa as part of the group's international forestry and wood-trading network, specialising in sourcing and exporting logs, lumber and semi-finished wood products from sustainably managed areas, and in importing value-added wood products into the Finnish market.

THE SOUTH AFRICAN ANGLE

In his presentation, Roy Southey, SSA's executive director, discussed the challenges and needs of the SA sawmilling industry. He said SA's sawmilling capacity is 4,250,000 m³ of logs, with output of 2,100,000 m³. "This highlights the biggest challenge," Southey said. "The average national recovery is 49.5%, which is no longer acceptable."

He explained that sawmilling is a labour-intensive industry that



SSA's Executive Director Roy Southey.

supports rural employment and economies. Since COVID-19 in 2020, the industry has made a slow recovery, shaped by economic pressure, socio-political shifts and geopolitical conflict.

"The focus now has to be on modernisation, including recovery, productivity improvement and product development.

At the same time, we must remember that job creation is a fundamental requirement," Southey said.

He said SA sawmillers would like to form strategic alliances to support technology, access to international markets, skills development and upgrading, research, innovation, product development, and the financing of a field officer.



Teemo Korhonen of Valasaha.



Theo Steyn of VZLR Attorneys.



Ville Jokinen of Finnpartnership.

PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

One example of the modernisation Southey called for is already taking shape, a short walk from the AGM venue. Christo van der Hoven, an architectural lecturer at the University of Pretoria, is also co-founder and technical director at **Mass Timber Technologies** (MTT).

He discussed the progress of mass timber construction in SA. MTT operates from a 3,000 m² facility that produces 100–200 m³ of engineered

products per month and has achieved breakthroughs on 40 projects across 10 countries, using SA pine and eucalyptus cross-laminated timber (CLT). He also gave a brief introduction to the York Timbers Chair at UP and to the annual colloquium and timber construction conference.

STRUCTURING THE DEAL

The morning session concluded with Theo Steyn and Lyndall Mulock Houwer of VzlR Attorneys providing an

overview of South Africa's business and taxation structures. They discussed the Finland–South Africa Double Taxation Agreement (DTA), which is the most important element in structuring a business for investment and growth. It protects individuals and businesses from double taxation, determines tax residency, allocates taxing rights, and sets out who qualifies for tax credits or exemptions.

They presented an investment-ready checklist for structuring an SA–Finnish forestry business:

- Establish a private company with a clean capital table.
- The holding structure should separate international ownership, assets and operations.
- The land should be ring-fenced, with a clean title and valid, transferable water-use licences.
- Build broad-based black economic empowerment (B-BBEE) into the structure from day one and align it with the Forest Sector Code targets.
- Carefully draft the memorandum of incorporation (MOI) and the Shareholders' Agreement.
- Use the DTA to optimise exchange-control-compliant repatriation routes to Finland.

"My advice is to invest early in SA legal counsel and to structure your B-BBEE and land arrangements correctly from the outset, because it is far cheaper than fixing them later," Steyn concluded. 🍷



Pekka Metso, Finland's Ambassador in SA opened the first session of SSA's AGM.

Sawmillers weather a tough year, but roadside mills raise the stakes

Roy Southey, executive director of Sawmilling South Africa (SSA), says the depressed local market made 2025/26 an extremely tough year for sawmillers, yet they have shown resilience that many rural communities appreciate.

By Joy Crane

Southey made the comment during SSA's AGM at the Future Africa Campus of the University of Pretoria in June. The morning session of the AGM was hosted by the Embassy of Finland, during which several Finnish government and private-sector representatives informed the sawmillers of the advantages of doing business with them.

The afternoon session was dedicated to SA sawmilling matters. Presenting the executive director's report at the SSA AGM, Southey said that sawmills currently employ over 35,000 people, which in turn supports an estimated 300,000 family members and dependents.

"There are about 250 sawmills in SA, including large corporate mills, owner-run formal mills, and small mills that may not yet have boilers and kilns. Many of these are SMMEs (informal mills). However, we still struggle to recruit the majority of SMME mills because they prefer to operate 'under the radar', so to speak," Southey said.

ILLEGAL SAWMILLS

"Added to this is the recent proliferation of 'roadside sawmills'," Southey continued. These are mills that do not register with any local authority, do not contribute to workers' compensation, do not pay tax, and sell ungraded, inferior products chiefly to vulnerable consumers.

"While some of the roadside mills operating illegally could be classed as potential SMMEs with a bona fide desire to be incorporated into the formal sawmilling sector, many of them are nothing short of



Schalk Grobbelaar of the York Timber Chair helped organise the Doing Business with Finland event. He received a gift from Ambassador Pekka Metso.

opportunists who take advantage of the availability of stolen or illegal logs", Southey said.

"This is a worrying development and one that SSA is attempting to bring to the notice of the relevant authorities, while addressing those mill owners who would like to and have the potential to become registered informal sawmillers".

IMPACT ON PROFIT

The numbers support these statements. Southey reported that "It is immediately evident that the formal structural timber sawmills are struggling to keep their heads above water, while smaller mills supplying industrial grade timber are faring a little better, mainly because their input costs are much lower". (See Estimated Sector Profitability Figures 1 and 2).

YEAR	VOLUME (m³)	PROFIT (%)
2023	1,528,114	1,49
2024	1,571,722	0,42
2025	1,616,286	2,55

Figure 1. Structural softwood.

UNITED WE STAND

Delivering his last chairperson's report at SSA's AGM, Craig Rance, said no single business can effectively tackle industry challenges alone.

"There is collective strength in our industry. As members of a sector that faces common challenges and opportunities, sawmills must continue to remain united through their industry association. The industry's influence and effectiveness depend on the commitment and active participation of members".

Southey explained how collaboration is helping SSA achieve its key focus areas in the Forestry Sector Master Plan. These include the highly successful online WoodApp educational platform, Talking Timber Webinars, and the promotion of timber use in the built environment and in research and development.

YEAR	VOLUME (m³)	PROFIT (%)
2023	608,713	18,95
2024	608,713	5,22
2025	684,769	7,25

Figure 2. Non-structural softwood.



SSA office bearers, from left Graham Hansel, Oscar Tait, George Johnson, Willie Stander, Niel Gouws, Frans Metz, Fritz Ernst, Jaco Oosthuizen and Sean Brown.

NEW OFFICE BEARERS

The AGM delegates thanked Craig Rance and Sean Hoatson for their service to the industry. After years of service, both had decided to step down from the SSA executive committee.

The new SSA Executive Committee members are:

- Fritz Ernst of Busby Sawmill (Chairperson)
- Frans Mentz of Tekwani Sawmills
- George Johnson of Bracken Timbers

- Graham Hansel of CJ Rance Sawmill
- Jaco Oosthuizen of MTO
- Niel Gouws of Safcol
- Oscar Tait of York Sawmills
- Sean Brown of Merensky Timber
- Willie Stander of White River Sawmills



His Excellency Ambassador Pekka Metso presents a gift to Roy Southey.

POST AGM GATHERING

At the end of an interesting day, the SA sawmillers joined their Finnish counterparts at a networking reception hosted by the Finnish Ambassador at his residence in Pretoria. 🇫🇮



Willie Stander of White River Sawmills discussing chipper canters with Andre Odendaal of Hewsaw.



George Dowse and Ben Boule discuss timber.



Michael Peter and Roy Southey at the reception held at the Finnish Ambassador's residence.



Norman Dlamini of Forestry South Africa asks a question of a Finnish speaker at the SSA AGM.

LIGNA.Builds debuts at LIGNA.27

A full-scale wood-frame home will be erected on the open-air site of LIGNA.27, the world's leading trade fair for the woodworking and wood processing industries. The new LIGNA.Builds format is taking shape with scientific guidance of Holzbau.tech of Rosenheim University of Applied Sciences.

The build will take place at Deutsche Messe in Hanover, the home of LIGNA, from 10 to 14 May 2027. LIGNA.Builds brings the entire building process to life. From initial concept development – including defining structural elements and selecting materials and components – to production planning and engineering, industrial prefabrication, and on-site assembly, visitors will experience firsthand how modern timber construction works in practice. The focus is on the machinery and technologies provided by exhibiting LIGNA participants, and how they interact across the entire value chain.

What makes the project unique is that the structure being built during the trade show is not a demonstration model, but a full-scale, fully functional home. When LIGNA concludes, it will be dismantled, transported to its permanent location, and reassembled on the homeowner's property.

"The idea of building a house during LIGNA emerged early in the planning process for LIGNA.27," says Stephanie Wagner, Head of LIGNA at Deutsche Messe AG.

"As we explored which themes and highlights would be most relevant to the event, the idea of building a house quickly evolved from an ambitious concept into a clear vision. We wanted to create something that every LIGNA exhibitor and visitor could relate to. It needed to have a tangible, highly visible connection to the industry while also leaving a lasting legacy", Wagner says.

"That led to the idea of constructing a house live during the trade show, bringing together the expertise of multiple technology and material partners. We call the project LIGNA.



LIGNA.Builds Visual – Source holzbau.tech.

Builds, and with Prof Andreas Heinzmann's team at Holzbau.tech in Rosenheim, we found the perfect partner to bring this vision to life".

Timber construction is emerging worldwide as a key solution to the demands of sustainable building. Short construction timelines, a high degree of prefabrication, resource-efficient materials, and digital manufacturing processes are making modern timber construction a key driver of innovation across the construction industry.

"We are pleased to be a project partner of LIGNA.Builds. The initiative impressively demonstrates the capabilities of modern timber construction today. It combines digital processes, industrial prefabrication, and skilled craftsmanship into a holistic experience that visitors can directly follow and experience on-site during

LIGNA at the exhibition grounds", says Heinzmann.

"For us at Holzbau.tech, this represents full-circle project delivery, which aligns perfectly with our core corporate philosophy," Heinzmann adds.

It is precisely this level of integration that makes LIGNA unique worldwide. Another key aspect that sets this project apart is that LIGNA exhibitors are actively involved on-site throughout the trade show. They will supply materials, tools, and even manufacture individual components on their machines in the exhibition halls.

LIGNA has been held every two years since 1975. It showcases the complete range of technology and services for the primary and secondary timber industries. For more information on LIGNA, visit www.ligna.de 🌲

A "living" digital twin lands on a Mpumalanga plantation

A forestry plantation outside Sabie, Mpumalanga, has become the test site for one of South Africa's first attempts at a living digital twin: a continuously updated digital model of a working landscape, built from ground sensors, edge computing and satellite data.

By Joy Crane

The pilot, LiveTwin, is developed by Somerset West-based Reama AI Technology, a deep-tech research and deployment lab specialising in industrial AI for sectors across Africa. The company previously built AssetLayer, a predictive maintenance solution for the renewable energy sector, and is now applying the same approach to forestry.

REAL-TIME DATA

LiveTwin will detect changes in tree canopy condition, track vegetation encroaching on transmission lines, and flag early signs of smoke to support wildfire prevention. Reama AI calls the underlying concept a Living Digital Twin (LDT) that updates itself as conditions on the ground change.

"Asset managers face growing pressure to make faster decisions

across increasingly large and complex operations," says Tebogo Mohlahlana, CEO and Product Architect at Reama AI. "Advances in AI, edge computing and earth observation are enabling real-time intelligence at a scale previously unattainable".

THE TECH STACK

The LDT deployment runs on Intel Core Ultra 9 288V processors, Intel

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Illustration by ChatGPT.

NPU 4.0 and Arc Graphics 140V, paired with an Intel RealSense D456 depth camera hardware. By doing the heavy processing locally via Intel Edge AI and OpenVINO software, Reama's setup works reliably in rugged, deep-plantation environments with poor cellular coverage, so it doesn't depend on a live cloud connection to keep working.

On the Earth observation side, the stack draws on Google DeepMind's AlphaEarth Foundations model alongside other satellite data sources, layering that view from above onto what the ground sensors detect. Instead of just taking a picture from space, the AI translates earth observation data into highly granular environmental maps.

PRECISION FORESTRY

This isn't happening in isolation because digital fire and lightning monitoring are not new to South African plantations.

FireHawk, the locally developed fire detection system built around rotating digital cameras, has protected forestry land since the 1990s and now covers well over a million hectares across Africa, South America and Australia. Dtect, a web-based lightning alert tool, came later and was built specifically around the risks foresters face, warning infield teams to clear the area before a storm arrives.

By combining edge AI, ground sensors and satellite imagery, LiveTwin can detect what any single-

layer system might miss on its own and do so closer to real time.

SA's large corporate forestry companies, such as Sappi and Mondi, use science and technology to inform their operations and strengthen environmental and ecosystem stewardship, including silviculture and harvesting management, as well as monitoring and verification systems.

Precision forestry is enabled by a range of technologies, including drones and unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), laser scanning (lidar), soil sensors, satellite imagery, geographic information systems (GIS), web-based platforms and mobile applications. It also involves using data management and analytical tools to support site-specific economic, environmental, and social decision-making and actions across the forestry value chain.

Precision forestry has been building momentum in SA for over two decades, most visibly through the recurring Precision Forestry Symposium hosted by Stellenbosch University.

The 2025 edition, themed "At the Dawn of AI," drew 85 delegates from local and international organisations, academia and industry to examine exactly this kind of technology, from nursery through to logyard.

Mondi's Louis van Zyl and Remsoft's Pablo Asiron told delegates that Mondi is already building cloud-connected planning models that, as Asiron put it, create "a digital twin of both the planning and operational activities" across the supply chain, continuously refined with real-time data from field operations.

The takeaway from that gathering, as we reported at the time, was that human information management in forestry is steadily shifting towards AI, with autonomous execution the logical next step.

In June this year, Dr Kabir Peerbhay, Sappi's Principal Research Officer, presented the company's drone programme at the FSA AGM. He described how useful and strategic automated data gathering beyond visual line of sight (BVLOS) or "out-of-sight" drone data is. Fixed-wing or

hybrid drones can fly kilometres away and run pre-programmed day or night patrol routes for 20 hours or more, streaming real-time thermal feeds of illegal activities such as mining, timber theft, arson and poaching.

FIRE AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Reliable data is vital for understanding and combating illegal activities in and on the boundaries of plantations. Eskom and the CSIR have run the Advanced Fire Information System (AFIS) since the mid-2000s, a satellite-based tool that alerts users, including forestry clients, whenever a fire burns within a set distance of transmission infrastructure.

On the response side, FireWeb, an incident management platform used by fire protection associations, including the KwaZulu-Natal FPA, coordinates resources and reporting once a fire is confirmed. Forestry SA's 2025 Annual Report notes that it organised a demonstration of the new FireWeb mobile application for its members. The new app allows users to capture incident information offline and complete the reporting process in the field, even in areas with limited network coverage.

Another South African tech company, Swift Geospatial offers silviculture and forest inventory and assessment services, drawing on information from drones and satellite imagery.

WHY IS LIVETWIN IMPORTANT?

Commercial plantations cover roughly 1.2 million hectares in SA, which is less than 1% of the total land area. Growers must use precision technology to maximise yield while maintaining their commitments to sustainable development goals on a restricted footprint. The only way to do so is to invest in high-end technology tools.

The Reama AI solution uses Agentic AI and Embodied AI, which means it could take the technology a step further: Could the digital twin model eventually command autonomous drones or field robotics to detect and verify an anomaly without human intervention?🔥

JOB POSTING

JOB TITLE: MANAGER: TECHNICAL (D2)
DEPARTMENT: MANUFACTURING
REPORTING TO: GM MANUFACTURING MANAGER & ENGINEERING MANAGER



POSITION OBJECTIVE

ABOUT US

We are a leading sustainable forestry and manufacturing enterprise managing thousands of hectares of commercial timber plantations. Our sawmilling operations are central to converting this resource into high-quality lumber and other value-added wood products. We are seeking an ambitious Manager: Technical to lead our technical and facilities teams across our manufacturing operations.

THE ROLE

The ideal candidate is a strong technical leader with proven experience in engineering, maintenance management, and operational support in a manufacturing or industrial environment. You will lead preventive maintenance programmes, oversee technical teams, and ensure the reliability, safety, and compliance of machinery, vehicles, plant, buildings, and infrastructure to support efficient, cost-effective operations.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

- **Maintenance Leadership:** Maintain, drive, supervise and implement the Maintenance Strategy, including technical standards, systems and processes.
- **Capability Building:** Establish guidelines to develop and ensure the competencies and skills required by the Manufacturing Technical Department to meet the maintenance challenges of implementing new equipment and technology.
- **Continuous Improvement:** Coordinate general maintenance requirements within the maintenance planning system to improve uptime and the overall reliability and safety of equipment, plant, structures and machinery.
- **Statutory Responsibility:** All responsibilities under the Responsible Person appointment, GMR 2(7).
- **Regulatory Compliance:** Provide direction and support to ensure compliance with relevant legislative specifications and standards.

QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

- National Diploma in Engineering Sciences (Mechanical or Electrical).
- More than 6 years of relevant experience in a similar supervisory or managerial position.
- Appointment as a GMR 2(7) or GMR 2(1) responsible person (advantageous).
- Working knowledge of preventive maintenance planning systems and spares inventory.
- Knowledge and experience of sawmilling equipment and processes (advantageous).
- Knowledge and experience in fixed asset management, including buildings and infrastructure.
- Knowledge of biomass and biomass processing and beneficiation processes (advantageous).
- Working knowledge of vehicle and construction vehicle maintenance.
- Knowledge of engineering principles, practices, and methods.
- Working knowledge of budgets and cost management.
- Ability to ensure growth in turnover by focusing on effective efficiency measurements and control.
- Experience in determining maintenance specifications, quality control of delivered services, and Contractor/Supplier management.
- Working knowledge of the General Machinery Regulations (GMR 2.1/2.7).
- Working knowledge of environmental management (NEMA).
- Actively participate in developing new business opportunities.
- Computer literacy.
- Sound labour management and employee development are essential.
- Knowledge of legislation required:
 - General Machinery Regulations (GMR 2.1).
 - Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHS Act).
 - National Environmental Management Act (NEMA).
 - Building Regulations.

TRAVEL & LICENCES

- Valid driver's license
- This position may require travel from time to time.

Housing: For discussion

Closing date: 24 July 2026

Please complete and submit the application to the HR Department or fax or email it for the attention of Johan Dekker, Fernau Conway or Armand Burger.

Mail to johand@mto.co.za / fernau@mto.co.za / armand@mto.co.za

Filling this position will be in accordance with the requirements of the Company's Employment Equity Policy and Plans. If you do not receive a response from us within 21 working days of the closing date, your application will be unsuccessful.

JOB POSTING

JOB TITLE: MAINTENANCE MANAGER FORESTRY OPERATIONS (C5)
DEPARTMENT: FORESTRY
REPORTING TO: ENGINEERING MANAGER



POSITION OBJECTIVE

ABOUT US

We are a leading sustainable forestry enterprise managing thousands of hectares of commercial timber plantations. We are seeking an ambitious Maintenance Manager to lead our technical and facilities teams across our forestry operations.

THE ROLE

The ideal candidate has strong leadership skills and maintenance experience with LDV vehicles, mobile forestry plant equipment, infrastructure and buildings. You will lead preventive maintenance programmes to ensure operational efficiency in a demanding environment.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

- **Equipment Upkeep:** Develop and execute preventative maintenance schedules to minimise downtime.
- **Budget and Compliance:** Prepare and manage the annual maintenance budget; improve productivity through innovation and optimisation of cost efficiencies.
- **Safety:** ensure strict compliance with Environmental and OHS-Act regulations.
- **Team Leadership:** Supervise and mentor mechanical technicians, artisans, and third-party service providers.
- **Continuous improvement:** driving continuous improvement in reliability and performance standards

QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

- National Diploma in Engineering (Mechanical or Electrical) or relevant Trade Test certification supported by a tertiary qualification.
- More than 6 years of relevant supervisory/managerial experience.
- **Legislation**
 - General machinery regulations GMR 2(1)
 - Occupational Health and Safety Act.
 - National Environmental Management Act.
 - Local and national atmospheric emissions inventory system
- Working knowledge of FSC Audits will be an advantage
- Maintenance management experience, ideally in forestry, agriculture, or heavy industrial operations.
- Experience of preventive maintenance systems: implementation and utilisation of CMMS (Computerised Maintenance Management System) software
- Ensure H&S audits to ensure legal compliance
- Experience in maintaining vehicles, forestry and construction plant and machinery.
- Strong financial acumen and knowledge of budget planning, implementation, and control
- Management of a multi-disciplinary maintenance team.
- Sound labour management and employee development are essential.
- Knowledge of forestry operations will be an advantage
- Computer literacy

TRAVEL & LICENCES

- Valid driver's license
- This position may require travel from time to time.

Housing: For discussion

Closing date: 24 July 2026

Please complete and submit applications to the HR Department or email it for the attention of Johan Dekker or Jacques Watermeyer.

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Not to be missed events

6 AUGUST 2026

She is Forestry South Africa (SIFSA) Webinar

The Power of Words

Please register now to be inspired, connected and part of the movement growing women's leadership in forestry.

[Register >](#)

6 – 8 AUGUST 2026

Biomass Fair:

Powering Namibia's Bioeconomy

6 August: Biomass Industry Conference + Exclusive Buyers & Sellers Networking Event

7 – 8 August: Biomass Technology & Industry Expo featuring 120+ exhibitors, field demonstrations, and technology.

Where: Otjiwarongo

Contact: Julian Nakanyala on info@n-big.org / (+264) 061242949

8– 11 SEPTEMBER 2026

ISCHP26 – 9th International Scientific Conference on Hardwood Products 2026

This will be a joint conference with the **Wood Quality Modelling Working Party (IUFRO 5.01.04)**, featuring parallel sessions on wood quality modelling.

Where: Stellenbosch University in South Africa.

Contact: ischp@sun.ac.za

27 – 29 OCTOBER 2026

Green Building Convention 2026 Cape Town

The Green Revolution

This Convention will focus on the ideas, tools, and partnerships that transform "green" from an aspiration into the organising principle of our built environment. From whole-life carbon and regenerative design to circular materials, water security, and climate-smart finance, we will highlight what is already possible and ask what more is required of us.

[Register >](#)

14 SEPTEMBER 2026

Growing Timber Connections Colloquium & Timber Lab visit

The Timber Construction Events bring together researchers, students, industry leaders, designers, engineers, policymakers and partners to advance the role of timber in South Africa's built environment. The Colloquium on 14 September focuses on research, innovation and the development of new knowledge, including a visit to the Engineering 4.0 Timber Lab.

[Colloquium Registration >](#)

[Timber Lab Registration >](#)

15 SEPTEMBER 2026

Growing Timber Connections Conference

Connected by Timber: From Forests to Future Cities

The Timber Construction Events bring together researchers, students, industry leaders, designers, engineers,

policymakers and partners to advance the role of timber in South Africa's built environment. The conference focuses on industry collaboration, investment, policy alignment and the practical pathways needed to grow timber construction from forests to future cities.

[Conference Registration >](#)

24–26 NOVEMBER 2026

Forestry Science Symposium

Green horizons: Advancing science and innovation for sustainable timber resources

Stellenbosch University

[Registration >](#)

23 FEBRUARY 2027

16th Annual Wood Conference

Turning South Africa's Timber Potential Into Reality

Cape Town

www.woodconference.co.za

11 – 14 MAY 2027

Interzum 2027

Beyond boundaries: Elevating strategic resilience

Cologne, Germany

www.interzum.com

10 – 14 MAY 2027

Ligna 2027

Hanover, Germany

www.ligna.de

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