

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **AfriSam makes green waves**

“Greening” its operations is not a nice-to-have for AfriSam, it is a business imperative which has enabled it to forge ahead with innovative, and in some cases, radical environmental initiatives which have left the rest of the industry playing catch-up.

“We focus on every aspect of our activities to conserve and reduce consumption of natural resources, seek alternative fuel and raw material sources, rehabilitate mined and quarried areas and minimise emissions,” Claudene Moorgas, environmental manager at AfriSam, explains. “This is a full and demanding agenda by any standards, with results which remain unequalled in the industry.

“The potential of a water crisis in South Africa has featured prominently in headlines recently,” she continues. “But at AfriSam we have long been implementing measures to reduce water consumption, including re-using and recycling water and minimising any wastage. However, as with all our environmental strategies, we are constantly streamlining existing solutions and examining new possibilities.”

Moorgas points out that AfriSam also benefits from its alliance with Swiss stakeholder, Holcim, which is continuously innovating and has assisted AfriSam to remain abreast of global best practices and trends. "Many of Holcim's leading edge technologies have already been implemented in other parts of the world," she says.

"This is particularly true in the case of alternative fuel and raw materials technology and implementation," she says. "Conventionally, coal is used to fire kilns to the intense temperatures required and in using alternative fuels instead of coal and alternative raw materials instead of some conventional raw materials we have several objectives in mind. Reducing coal consumption is one, and finding alternative uses for industrial by-products or waste is a second."

Extensive research and development have been invested in this drive internationally by Holcim as well as locally by AfriSam itself. "Our Ulco plant in the Northern Cape is now successfully utilising alternative raw materials in the kiln. Furthermore, we have satisfied the rigorous demands laid down by government in utilising alternative fuels and raw materials and we are currently awaiting a decision on an environmental impact assessment that was carried out at our Dudfield plant in Lichtenberg in the North West Province where we plan to utilise a range of alternative fuels."

AfriSam also uses a series of by-products from other industries, such as the energy generation, chemical production and steel industries, to extend the cements it produces and in so doing significantly reduce the CO<sub>2</sub> footprint of its cement products.

To reduce diesel consumption, AfriSam has improved operational efficiencies on mines, designing the shortest haul routes and also successfully decreasing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in the process.

Probably one of the most well known of AfriSam's environmental initiatives is its Eco Build Cement, launched to industry acclaim in May 2010, which halved the world's average carbon footprint for cement without compromising on the quality required by SABS for a cement in this strength class. "The cement is extended by using slag which has a far lower carbon footprint than CO<sub>2</sub> intensive clinker," Moorgas explains. AfriSam is now also introducing Eco Readymixed Concrete.

In 2010, AfriSam was accredited with the Nedbank Green Mining Award in the environmental category for this initiative and for its CO<sub>2</sub> reductions over the years. "We have invested over R1 billion in driving emissions down since 2000," she continues.

Since 2009, AfriSam has been implementing a CO<sub>2</sub> measurement system on all its cement products, assessing the ongoing carbon footprint on all 40 readymix operations and its 16 aggregate plants. This was a world first in the industry.

“Particulate emissions are minimised by using bag house filters, with the plant at Dudfield being the first in the industry to implement this solution. They will also be installed at Ulco in the near future.”

Rehabilitation of land affected by AfriSam’s mining activities is not just a legal requirement, but a moral obligation, according to Moorgas. “We aim to restore mined and quarried land to as close to its original state as possible. In many cases, alternative uses are found for the land, such as turning it into reservoirs, dams, or picnic and recreational facilities or integrating it into various commercial and/or community facilities.” With this intent, AfriSam has established a Rehabilitation Trust Fund to ensure that future rehabilitation projects are adequately funded.

In one exceptional case, when AfriSam discovered significant archaeological and palaeontological finds at its quarry near Sterkfontein, it took the business decision to cease all mining operations there in the interest of preserving our human heritage. It is currently rehabilitating the area and is in the process of donating it to the University of Witwatersrand for further study.

“We have introduced numerous new environmental benchmarks to our industry,” she concludes. “We firmly believe that it’s not just about complying with legislation, but about going the extra mile now to protect and sustain the environment for future generations.”

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