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AfriSam leads in environmental initiatives

Minimising natural resource utilisation, measurement and minimisation of CO₂, particulate and other pollutant emissions, and quarry rehabilitation are some of the environmental priorities integral to AfriSam's business imperatives. No other company in the industry is as proactive and innovative in finding "green" solutions to reduce consumption of natural resources and minimise carbon emissions.

Exhaustive local research and development enable AfriSam to identify alternative fuel and raw material sources to save on its coal and conventional raw material consumption. "Our Ulco plant in the Northern Cape utilises an alternative raw material in the kiln," Claudene Moorgas, environmental manager: technical services at AfriSam, says. "An environmental impact assessment has been completed at our Dudfield plant in Lichtenberg in the North West Province where we plan to utilise a range of alternative fuels. We are currently awaiting a decision to proceed."

These initiatives are complemented by research and technologies implemented by AfriSam's international stakeholder, Holcim, which has introduced many of them throughout the globe.

"Using alternative fuels instead of coal, and alternate 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 and waste is a second."

AfriSam also uses a range of by-products from other industries, such as the energy generation, chemical production and steel industries, to extend the cements it produces, significantly reducing the CO₂ footprint of its cement and reducing the amount of limestone required. Fly ash and slag instead of CO₂ intensive clinker are also used in manufacturing AfriSam's renowned and popular Eco Build Cement, which halves the carbon footprint relative to the world average benchmark for cement while significantly exceeding the quality required by SABS for a cement in this strength class.

In 2010, AfriSam was recognised by the Nedbank Green Mining Award in the environmental category for this initiative and for its CO₂ reductions over the years, which have seen AfriSam invest over R1 billion in green initiatives since

2000. To complement this “green” cement, AfriSam is also introducing a range of Eco Readymix Concretes and a range of Eco Premixes.

Since 2009, AfriSam has been implementing a CO₂ 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.

“Rehabilitation of quarried and/or mined land is seen as a moral, rather than a legal obligation,” Moorgas says. “We go the extra mile to restore this land as close to its original state as possible. In many cases, alternative uses are found for it, such as turning it into reservoirs, or picnic and recreational facilities or integrating it into commercial or community facilities.”

“AfriSam has established environmental benchmarks in the industry,” Moorgas concludes. “An example is the Rehabilitation Trust Fund we were first in industry to institute to ensure that future rehabilitation projects are adequately funded. All our initiatives demonstrate our firm conviction that we have a responsibility to preserve and sustain the environment for future generations.”

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