

NEWS&INSIGHT

BUILDING MATERIALS

'Green' Cement

Cement giant launches first ecocement in SA

Cement producer Afrisam has launched its first ecocement in South Africa, Eco Building Cement, which has an overall carbon footprint of 401 g/kg, less than one-half of the world average of 890 g/kg as set out by the Cem-bureau and the World Business Council for Sustainable Development.

Afrisam acting CEO **Stephan Olivier** tells *Engineering News* that this carbon footprint was achieved without compromising on the quality set down by the South African Bureau of Standards. Eco Building Cement, which has less than one-half the world's average carbon footprint for cement, is a blend of high-performance cement and mineral components, which makes it extremely durable.

The launch forms part of the company's continuing efforts to

measure the carbon footprint of all its cement products, ready-mix operations and quarries, as well as its commitment to support green building initiatives.

Sales in the first month that Eco Building Cement was launched surpassed the company's forecasts by 23%.

Olivier says that this is a strong indication that the market is certainly ready for this type of product.

"Although it may appear that the green building initiative has only gathered momentum in the last few years, AfriSam started its green cement project in 2000. It was as far back as then that we started producing composite cements, effectively using less-carbon-intensive materials."

Being involved in green building initiatives necessitates a large investment. "But far more



STEPHAN OLIVIER
Eco Building Cement is a blend of high-performance cement and mineral components

importantly, it requires a consistent commitment and cannot be a reactive response to the market," he continues. This product, Olivier explains, is the result of extensive research and development.

Afrisam reports that it was the first cement producer to develop

an environmental policy and this was introduced in 1994. Besides the time and effort expended over the years, AfriSam has invested in excess of R1-billion, since 2004, in upgrading its operations with initiatives such as reducing the use of nonrenewable resources, such as coal, reducing dust emissions, improving energy efficiencies and introducing technologies that have increased the company's ability to produce composite cements.

"The reduction of our carbon footprint is an important environmental target for AfriSam and, since 1990, we have managed to reduce the carbon dioxide footprint per ton of cement by more than 34%," Olivier says.

Afrisam has long recognised the need for a drive towards sustainable development and is involved in two green building initiatives, one of which is the AfriSam-SAIA (South African Institute of Architects) Awards for Sustainable Architecture.

This awards programme is aimed at recognising outstanding achievement in sustainable architecture.