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ANOTHER ENVIRONMENTAL FIRST FOR AFRISAM

AfriSam has extended its CO₂ measurement to all of its aggregate and ready-mixed concrete and aggregate operations. This follows on the industry-first CO₂ rating system, implemented by AfriSam, which indicates the carbon footprint of each of its cement products relative to the world average.

“We believe that as the leading construction materials supplier in southern Africa it was not only a natural progression from measuring CO₂ in cement, but it is a moral obligation too. We do not consider ourselves exclusive owners of the methodology, and are presenting the model to aggregate and sand producers and various other bodies in the industry, such as the Institute for Quarrying and SA Ready-Mix Association, encouraging others to come on board. Our consultants are currently developing a simple and cost effective programme suitable for smaller competitors,” explains Alan Cluett, AfriSam’s environmental manager.

Nor is the company sitting on its laurels. “We are constantly improving and refining the system, including other aspects such as the amount of CO₂ absorption in different biomes in areas which are disturbed by our operations

and subsequently rehabilitated. These, and other considerations, will enable us to remain at the forefront of the industry in ensuring the lowest CO₂ footprint possible.”

Consultants were commissioned to develop a methodology to calculate the CO₂ emissions and reports are now being returned from all AfriSam’s aggregate and ready-mix operations. “Not only is diesel considered, but all greenhouse gas equivalents,” Cluett points out. “This includes gasses generated from explosives, emissions from sewage, those associated with water pumping as well as from electricity – even welding gasses and gasses used for cooking purposes on site. All costs associated with transport of products are also factored in.”

AfriSam was the first cement manufacturer in South Africa to measure its carbon footprint and it has now become arguably the first in the world to provide this measurement across all its activities: cement, aggregate and ready-mix.

“AfriSam has had an ‘environment conscience’ since well before the 1990s,” explains Cluett. “We started measuring our CO₂ emissions in 1990 and that led to our developing our blended Green Cement products to reduce our carbon footprint. It was quite a risk, because as a rule, customers used Portland cement, but they bought into the vision and supported us.”

AfriSam's Green Cement programme hinged on using by-products from other industries which would otherwise go to waste, such as fly ash, slag, limestone and even silica fume, instead of clinker. "The net impact was that we reduced the specific CO₂ per ton of cement by 37% between 1990 and 2008 – 16% below industry average," Cluett continues. "

According to the Cembureau (European cement association), the industrial average for a tonne of cement is 890kg of CO₂. "AfriSam's All Purpose- and High Strength cements are substantially below that," he says.

"The CO₂ rating system we introduced on all our cement products in 1999 indicates the carbon footprint of each relative to the world average calculated by the World Business Council for Sustainable Development. This is printed on every bag so that consumers can make informed and responsible decisions on the products they purchase. We were the first and are still the only company in our industry to do this."

CAPTION PIC 01 : AfriSam's Juskei Quarry

CAPTION PIC 02 : An AfriSam readymix vehicle

CAPTION PIC 03 : One of AfriSam's aggregate operations

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