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cover story

Nedbank environmental award for CO_2 emission reduction – the winner is

Leading black-controlled construction materials group, AfriSam, has won the environmental category of the Nedbank Capital Green Mining Awards for taking a definitive lead in managing down carbon emissions in the cement production process and for its world leading cement CO_2 measurement and rating system.

At an awards ceremony held at Nedbank's head office in Sandton on 20 October 2010, AfriSam was recognised for its concerted efforts over the past 10 years to reduce specific CO_2 emissions.

The awards programme aims to acknowledge and celebrate the invaluable contribution that responsible mining and mineral beneficiation make to the economic development of Africa. Only initiatives that went beyond statutory compliance, clearly contributed towards sustainability and incorporated activities to address known operational impacts were eligible for entry.

Receiving the award, AfriSam acting Chief Executive Officer, Dr Stephan Olivier, said that the organisation assumes a responsible attitude towards the impact of its actions on the community and the environment.

"The reduction of our carbon footprint is a vitally important environmental target for us and we are constantly looking for ways to improve on our achievements in this regard," Olivier said.

The company officially implemented its CO_2 reduction programme in 2000 but can track its CO_2 emission monitoring programme back to pre-1990; and the monitoring of other gaseous pollutants back to 2002.

"We have over the years installed various energy efficient equipment at our operations to improve and reduce electrical energy consumption. We improved our electrical energy consumption per ton of cementitious product by 19% between 2000 and 2009. AfriSam also reformulated its products to produce much more energy efficient and less CO_2 intensive products. In so doing, we have managed to reduce the average emissions per ton of cement by 22% between 2000 and 2008," Olivier said.

At the end of 2009, AfriSam introduced a "CO_2" rating system on all of its cement products which indicates the carbon footprint of each product relative to the world average as calculated by the World Business Council for Sustainable Development.

The company now prints this on each and every bag to enable consumers to make informed and responsible decisions on the products they purchase. "Following the introduction of this rating system and as part of our commitment to developing eco-friendly products we launched our Eco Building Cement this year, which has a carbon footprint less than half the world's average for cement without compromising on the stringent quality required by SABS for cement in this strength class," Olivier said.

Based on the success of the CO_2 emission reduction initiatives at its cement operations, AfriSam recently completed a process to assess the Carbon Footprints of each and every one of its 40 readymix concrete operations as well as its 16 quarries and aggregate processing plants, an initiative which the company believes is also a world first in the industry.

AfriSam won the environmental category of the Nedbank Capital Green Mining Awards for its CO_2 emission reduction initiative. From left - Mike McDonald, AfriSam's cement product manager, Stephan Olivier, AfriSam's acting CEO and Claudine Moorgas, AfriSam environmental manager

The company has recently introduced a range of application-branded Eco Readymix Concretes as an extension of these environmental initiatives. These are aimed at promoting green building in order to make a sustainable difference to the environment.

"AfriSam recognises the universal right of present and future generations to an environment that is not harmful to human well-being. Our commitment is to continuously improve our environmental performance and to provide a positive contribution to sustainable development. We therefore conduct our operations in such a way that we minimise any potential adverse effects of the cement, aggregate, readymix and slagment processes and products on the community, the environment and ourselves," Olivier concluded. ■

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