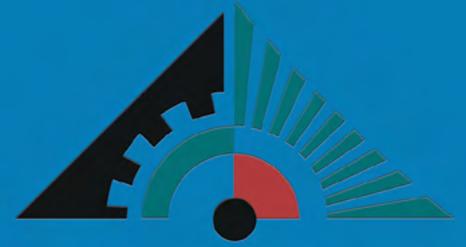


SEIFSA NEWS



JANUARY / FEBRUARY 2020

DIMMED PROSPECTS FOR THE METALS AND ENGINEERING SECTOR IN 2020

INSIDE:

The role of HR Professionals in
navigating the
new world of work

NEW LEAVE ENTITLEMENTS:
WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW



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DIMMED PROSPECTS FOR THE METALS AND ENGINEERING SECTOR IN 2020



INSIDE:

The role of HR Professionals in navigating the new world of work

NEW LEAVE ENTITLEMENTS: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Globally, the intermediate and finished steel market in 2020 is also set to be weighed down by a continuation of last year's weaker end-consumption rates

January / February 2020

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Members – 1 free issue



Greetings, dear readers, and everything of the best in 2020. I can only hope that you, the metals and engineering sector and, indeed, our economy will have a much better year when compared to 2019.

Kaizer M. Nyatumba
Chief Executive Officer

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S DESK

As we start the year, the global picture does not look much promising. Although, at the time of writing, the United States of America and China had finally signed a long-awaited first phase of a trade agreement after the two countries had been locked in an 18-month-long trade war, back home President Donald Trump was facing an impeachment trial for alleged abuse of power and obstruction of Congress. In the United Kingdom, Prime Minister Boris Johnson – who was bolstered by an overwhelming Conservative Party victory in the December snap elections – was getting ready to pull Britain out of the European Union, while in Russia President Vladimir Putin took many by surprise when he appointed Mikhail Mishustin the new Prime Minister, to replace Dmitri Medvedev.

Elsewhere in Asia, unprecedented protests which began last year have continued in Hong Kong and Iraq respectively. In the latter country, the protests – which have been described as “the largest incident of civil unrest since the fall of Saddam Hussein” – began in October 2019 and are against “16 years of public corruption, unemployment and inefficient public services”. They have since escalated into a call to overthrow the government and to stop Iranian intervention in that country.

Then, following the US's assassination of Iranian general Qassem Soleimani, leading European countries which have historically been in a long-standing alliance with the US have made known their differences with President Trump's America. This includes Britain, whose Prime Minister Boris Johnson was believed to be Trump's strongest ally on the continent. Not only did Johnson urge Trump to "dial down" on his anti-Iranian rhetoric, but he also warned him that his threats to target Iranian cultural sites would amount to a war crime.

Media reports say German Chancellor Angela Merkel spoke openly about the declining importance of Europe's traditional alliance with the US: "There has been a shift," she told the Financial Times. "The United States' focus on Europe is declining; that will be the case under any president. We in Europe, and especially in Germany, need to take on more responsibility."

If we, at SEIFSA, come across as being much more vocal this year than we have been hitherto, it will be only because our situation demands that of us. We hope that you will join us, to the extent that you can, in that corporate activism to help save our country.

To all intents and purposes, then, the world appears to be on the verge of a new era. Given this situation, at this stage, the prognosis for the world economy seems to be neutral at best and negative, at worst. The aforementioned global events are certain to have an impact on the global economy.

On top of all of those challenges, we also have our own problems here at home. Not only are we said to be on the verge of a Moody's downgrade to sub-investment grade, but the governing party and its leaders appear to be bereft of any ideas to stimulate the economy, let alone to turn it around. State-owned companies continue to be a drain on our meagre resources, with national carrier SAA reluctantly placed on business rescue towards the end of 2019.

However, our country – which has at times appeared to be on auto pilot – has so far proved to be more resilient than some would have thought. As one has argued before, the times we live in require that everybody with a voice makes himself/herself heard on important matters of state. All of us – business, labour, civil society and individuals – have to get out of our comfort zones, roll up our sleeves and intervene in any way we can to save our beautiful country. The luxury of folding our arms, remaining quiet and focusing on our respective pursuits (survival or making money, if you are in business) is no longer available to us.

If we, at SEIFSA, come across as being much more vocal this year than we have been hitherto, it will be only because our situation demands that of us. We hope that you will join us, to the extent that you can, in that corporate activism to help save our country.

We wish you a happy and successful 2020.

As readers will know, there will be negotiations on wages and conditions of employment in our sector this year. We have arranged a series of roadshows in some parts of the country as part of our preparations for the 2020 negotiations.

More importantly, however, we encourage all companies that are members of Associations affiliated to SEIFSA to become active within their respective Associations and to be part of the process of the formulation of the mandate for our negotiating team which will be led, once again, by Operations Director Lucio Trentini. As always, our pledge to you is that we will ensure that we operate strictly within the mandate given to us by our member Associations, through the assembly of Associations called the SEIFSA Council.

We will again publish regular updates on the process, in a pamphlet to be called the 2020 Wage Negotiations Update, which will be sent out to all member companies and posted prominently on our website. Please do look out for it. ■

Kaizer M. Nyatumba
Chief Executive

SEIFSA Regional Roadshows

We're Coming To You

Attend For Free

21/02 JHB 28/02 JHB 06/03 JHB 18/03 DBN 19/03 CPT



This February and March, Team SEIFSA is bringing its message directly to companies in the metals and engineering industry. Especially now, in a depressed economy, it is the time for industry unity, strength, and a clear focus on business sustainability.

2020, is a crucial year for the industry with wage negotiations taking place and many businesses wanting assurance that stability in the industry will continue, and that the economy shows signs of improvement.

All businesses in the Industry in Johannesburg, Durban and Cape Town are invited for free.

Join us to discuss the future of the Metals and Engineering Industry in South Africa and be part of a highly interactive discussion with SEIFSA experts.

Join us at events on the following dates:

Germiston Golf Club Johannesburg East	Hole in One Golf Club Johannesburg West	Sunnyside Park Hotel Johannesburg Central
21 February	28 February	6 March
Durban Venue to be confirmed	BOOK NOW FOR FREE	Cape Town Medical Research Council
18 March		19 March

Key SEIFSA presenters will be:

- **Kaizer M Nyatumba:**
SEIFSA Chief Executive Officer
- **Lucio Trentini**
SEIFSA Chief Operating Officer
and Lead Negotiator
- **Dr Michael Ade**
Chief Economist

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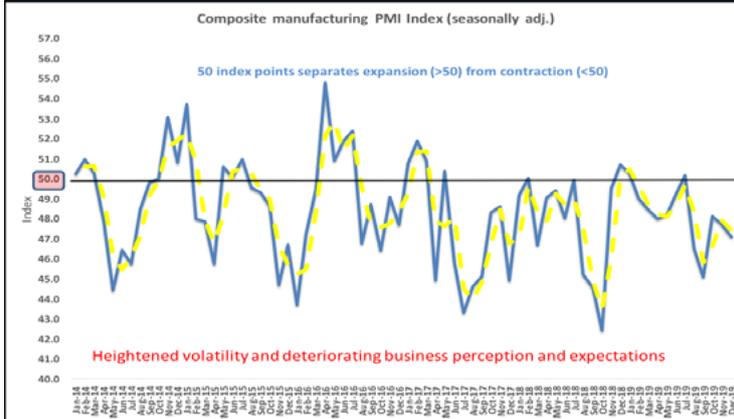
DIMMED PROSPECTS FOR THE METALS AND ENGINEERING SECTOR IN 2020



Preliminary data for 2019 reflects the tough conditions businesses operated under, with global and domestic growth dipping, under pinned by a general contraction in trade in goods, falling commodity prices and manufacturing activity. Global growth is estimated to have slowed to 2.4% in 2019 from 2.0% in 2018, while domestic growth is estimated to have correspondingly slowed to 0.4% from 0.8% in 2018, with extended ramifications for South Africa's Metals and Engineering (M&E) sector including its steel and steel related products sub-component. Following a rare steel recession in 2019, the year 2020 is predicted to be yet another year of slowing finished steel demand and falling prices before a rebound in 2021.

Domestically, except for two months (January and July) in 2019, business activity generally trended in the contractionary zone, also negatively impacting on the M&E sector including the steel manufacturing industry as illustrated by the graph below, highlighting volatility in the composite manufacturing purchasing managers' index (PMI).

Figure 1: Absa Manufacturing PMI (2014 - 2019)



Source: SEIFSA, Jan 2020 and BER, Jan 2020

The downwardly sloping trend as depicted in the graph above during the months of October, November and December of 2019, highlight dimmed prospects for the domestic steel industry in 2020, as continuous load shedding and erratic electricity supply (which is bad for the energy intensive steel sector), policy uncertainty, low business and investor confidence and increasing operational costs affect activity. Moreover, stagnant demand from traditional domestic steel demand drivers, industrial sectors and sub-industries are cause for concern, especially given the poor potential for a sudden turnaround in 2020.

These dynamics including insights to the local steel and steel related product drivers and necessary turnaround interventions needed for growth, are further discussed in our State of the Metals and Engineering Sector Report 2020/21.

Globally, the intermediate and finished steel market in 2020 is also set to be weighed down by a continuation of last year's weaker end-consumption rates, despite prospects for green shoots over the medium to long term remain.

In some ways, 2019 looked very similar to the year before in the world's steel markets as momentum continued to slow from the supercharged year of 2017.

MARKET COMMENTATORS AND FORECASTERS' VIEWPOINTS

From an apparent consumption viewpoint, it was clearly another tale of contrasts between the strong and the weak. After 11 months of provisional data, market commentators and forecasters from the metal bulletin estimate that Chinese steel demand, on an apparent basis, rose by 6.9% year on year or 52 million tonnes to yet another new record level of 806.3 million tonnes. This was actually a slowdown from the year before when over the same period demand increased by 8.0% or 55.8 million tonnes.

In the rest of the world, meanwhile, apparent consumption continued to disappoint. After rising by just 1.2% or 8.9 million tonnes in the first 11 months of 2018 to 786.4 million, last year turned out to be a sporadic steel recession outside of China. Apparent consumption was estimated to have fallen by 1.4% year-on-year to 775.7 million tonnes, a decline of 10.7 million tonnes. Although for the year as a whole, global steel consumption was predicted to have risen by 2.6% last year to a record 1.750 billion tonnes, an increase of 43.8 million tonnes, concerns still remain regarding sustained demand.

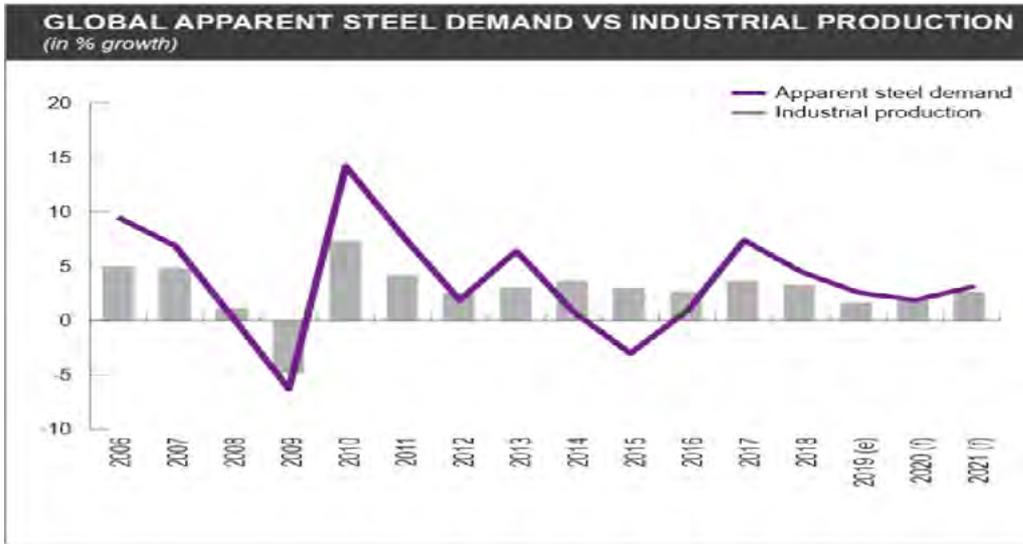
While tonnage changes last year were very much in line with the average recorded by the Worldsteel over the past decade, the predicted growth rate is well below average. Apparent steel consumption rose by 3.3% per year in the 10 previous years (2008-2018), outpacing the world's industrial activity, which according to Oxford Economics' data rose merely 2.8% per year at the same time.

GLOBAL STEEL DEMAND DRIVERS

Looking ahead, steel demand momentum is predicted to accelerate based on improving support from key steel end-user industries in advanced economies, Asia and emerging markets and developing economies, which according to Worldsteel, include construction (by far and away the significant global user of steel), electrical engineering, automotive production, metal goods, other transport, and household appliances. These are the traditional global steel demand drivers and acceleration in demand from these sectors including industrial production,

is forecasted to provide impetus and positively support global apparent steel demand from 2020 to 2021, as illustrated in the figure below.

Figure 2: Global Apparent Steel Demand VS Industrial Production (2006-2021)



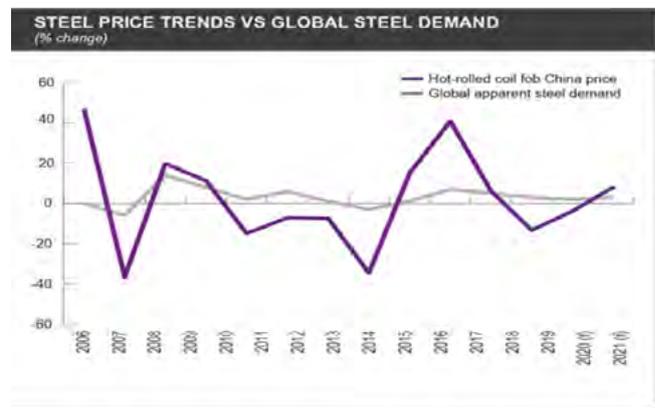
Source: Fastmarkets, 2020

Although the global apparent steel demand outlook (as captured by the thick line) alongside industrial production (represented by the bars), is predicted to improve dramatically from next year, there is belief by market commentators that momentum in steel will slow in 2020. The dip will occur for a third consecutive year, weighed down by a more acute deceleration in China. This, they argue, will offset the more positive momentum expected in the rest of the world, notably in countries such as Turkey, which are forecast to benefit from a revival in construction output after a two-year depression.

Overall, apparent steel consumption is predicted to rise by just 1.9% this year (2020), down from 2.6% in 2019, as a rare steel recession which started in 2019, persist. Dipping apparent global steel consumption is worrisome given its implications for the South African economy and its steel and steel related products industry. Moreover, traditionally, slower growth in steel consumption has a negative impact on steel prices as lower steel demand turn to put a downward drag on prices. The lower trend in steel consumption is expected to continue in 2020, also providing a rational for forecasted lower metals prices as illustrated in the figure 3.

The graph above illustrates an example of the Chinese hot-rolled coil (HRC) export price (in the thick line) and global apparent steel demand (in the thin line). In line with steel demand changes, in China and for the world at large, Chinese and global

Figure 3: Steel Price Trends VS Global Steel Demand (demand-pull for steel)



Source: Fastmarkets, Jan 2020

steel prices began to revive in 2016 and rose spectacularly in 2017, the year steel demand rose more than 7%; more than twice the historical average.

Given the demand-pull for steel and the fact that global steelmaking capacity was being curtailed at the same time, primarily in China, steel prices significantly rose in 2017. Higher prices supported bumper profits at Chinese steelmakers and further gains were recorded in 2018. But given that demand momentum had already begun to contract before the latter part of 2018, prices also began to fall, especially in the second half. ■

LAUNCH:

State of the Metals & Engineering Sector REPORT 2020 -2021

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Desperately Seeking Growth

LAUNCH DATE: 14 February 2020

VENUE: JHB Country Club (Woodmead)

DURATION: The Breakfast Launch will take place between 8:00 till 10:30

**Foresight and Analysis of the Economic trends in the
Metals and Engineering Industry for 2020 - 2021**

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HOW IOT IS REDEFINING THE LANDSCAPE

Schneider Electric is a member of the Electrical Engineering and Allied Industries Association that is federated to SEIFSA

The latest Gartner projections suggest that by 2025, the Internet of things (IOT) will be so prevalent that there will be more than 80 billion connected devices around the globe. Each of these, in turn, requires energy in order to operate, so the key to building a successful IOT world is to ensure everything is as energy efficient as possible, while still providing the capabilities required for these new devices to be effective.

According to Schneider Electric's Pre-Sales Manager for Anglophone Countries George Senzere, today there is not a single aspect of life and business that is not impacted in some manner by IOT, with such technology in use across sectors as diverse as industry, farming, healthcare and wildlife management.

"Our world is becoming more electric and more digital, with the demand for electricity being driven by sustainability, intelligent devices and the evolution of key energy consumers. In turn, this drives a need for more efficiency, and IOT is the disruptor that is providing a golden opportunity to redefine this landscape," he says.

"With an open, interoperable, IOT-enabled system architecture or backbone in place, enterprises are quick to realise the enhanced value this provides around aspects such as safety, reliability, efficiency, sustainability and connectivity."

Of course, continues Senzere, all the IOT does is generate data from its vast network of sensors, and it then falls to the data scientists and analysts to make sense of this information. These experts are able to use the data received to draw conclusions and use this knowledge for predictive analysis. This means providing clients with more informed data and helping them to reduce costs through predictive maintenance. After all, being able to predict failures makes it easier to schedule maintenance and reduces their impact, since one can essentially fix the problem before it occurs.

"A good example here is modern electric cars. Because these have IOT sensors built-in, it is possible for the manufacturer to identify a potential problem and immediately deploy a firmware update to solve it. This means no costly recall of thousands of vehicles, and also means that for the majority of the drivers, the problem is identified and solved before they are even aware it existed.





“Of course, Schneider is aware that as the IOT continues to proliferate, taking real advantage of it also requires other tools, like machine learning and artificial intelligence (AI), as these are necessary to take the information supplied and turn it into useful data. For us, this principle of ‘closing the loop’ is the key to the true benefits offered by the IoT.”

He adds that the one issue with IOT is the skills requirements, which are significant – where in the past, a vehicle with a problem would have to be brought into the mechanic to be checked, today we need an analyst or data scientist sitting between the sensor and the mechanic, to properly interpret the data being delivered.

Senzere further suggests the evolution being driven by the IOT and AI is so rapid that the only way to stay on top of it is to always be learning. Schneider, in fact, encourages employees

to undertake what it describes as ‘continuous learning’. He indicates there are myriad courses available for employees who seek to upskill and plenty of other resources to leverage as well. This includes the Schneider Academy, which also provides additional skills and training to partners and customers.

“For us, the nature of IOT is such that the key to success is to have an all-encompassing framework that addresses all the customers’ requirements. This means having a layer that not only collects all the IOT data and moves it into the cloud, but then also offers analytics as a service that can then do the data-crunching. Once this information is parsed and the insights formulated, it can then provide customers with the data needed to make those critical business decisions that lead to increased efficiencies, reduced costs and enable predictive maintenance,” he concludes.

GYPROC GERMISTON PLANT AWARDED CERTIFICATION FOR HEALTH & SAFETY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM



Gyproc Germiston is the first Saint-Gobain plant in sub-Saharan Africa to receive certification for its health and safety management systems in terms of the new international standard ISO 45001:2018.

Internationally accepted safety standards are paramount to Saint-Gobain, and on-going excellence is underpinned by international safety management systems. In March 2018, a new ISO standard - ISO 45001:2018 – was introduced, replacing the previously used British standard, OHSAS 18001:200. From that date, companies have three years to move from the old standard to the new one.

The new standard follows the same structure as the old one, but differs from it in three important ways. First, occupational health and safety (OHS) management is about more than regulations and governance. It has to be seen in the context of the company's culture and the impact it has on all stakeholders, including workers and customers.

Secondly, the company has to identify all parties with an interest in the OHS management system, such as workers, consumers and regulators, and identify their needs and expectations. Thirdly, it must have a process in place to involve workers and trade unions in the development, implementation and continuous improvement of the OHS management system.

According to Deon Potgieter, Gyproc Isover National SHEAR Manager, this approach is very inclusive and is far removed from the days where top management set goals and objectives for the OHS management system.

The new ISO45001:2018 standard requires workers to participate in and be consulted to establish the OHS policy; define OHS objectives and plan how to achieve them; establish, implement and maintain an audit programme and ensure continuous improvement; identify hazards and assess risks and opportunities and investigate incidents and nonconformities, and determine corrective actions.

“Worker participation and consultation played a major role in Gyproc Germiston's transition to the new international health and safety management standard,” says Jacques Mans, safety engineer at the plant. “As this was a new approach, we were challenged to actively involve workers in these matters.”



Gyproc Germiston is the first Saint-Gobain plant in sub-Saharan Africa to receive certification for its health and safety management systems in terms of the new international standard ISO 45001:2018.

Mans and his team arranged several specific feedback interventions with workers including a feedback session where employees gave their opinions on how the safety systems could be improved and provided input on proposed core focus areas for workers and management in 2019 and going forward. Ensuring that all party's voices were heard, the safety reps also participated in the opening and closing meetings of the ISO 45001:2018 audit.

Mans says plant-wide participation was a big factor in successfully moving from one standard to the other, but it was not a once-off event. Now that the ISO 45001:2018 system has been implemented workers remain involved in several key areas

ranging from hazard and risk identification through monthly incident reporting; having the authority to stop any work that they feel is unsafe; incident investigations and general problem solving; giving ideas for problem solving on projects; setting general KPIs for the next year and monthly walkabouts where safety reps raise tags and TF5 issues for a specific area.

“One of the greatest advantages of involving our workers is the sense of purpose and ownership it has created and we now have a workforce that is more aware of and committed to health and safety management,” says Mans.

ARCELORMITTAL SOUTH AFRICA CONCLUDES FIRST PHASE OF ITS STRATEGIC ASSET FOOTPRINT REVIEW

ArcelorMittal is a member of the Iron and Steel Producer's Association of South Africa that is Federated to SEIFSA

As an outcome of the first phase of ArcelorMittal South Africa's (AMSA) strategic asset footprint review, a decision was made to undertake an orderly and commercial wind-down of its Saldanha Works, ultimately placing the operation on care and maintenance.

Speaking at the time of the announcement, last year, AMSA Chief Executive Officer Kobus Verster said the Saldanha operations were founded and built on the premise of low input costs, which gave the operation a competitive cost advantage in export markets. "Unfortunately, over the years, that structural cost advantage has been eroded and Saldanha can no longer sustainably and effectively compete in these markets, mainly due to raw material and regulated prices. Saldanha has incurred substantial losses in the past and the short- to medium-term outlook remains bleak."

The global steel market continues to face significant headwinds. The 2019 downturn in the world steel market has been far worse than could have been anticipated. International steel prices have fallen much faster and steeper than raw material prices, resulting in substantial margin erosion. The global steel industry is experiencing the most challenging time since the global financial crisis. Locally, the situation is exacerbated by continued weak economic growth, especially in steel and steel consuming sectors, with apparent steel consumption at a 10-year low.

Despite the various initiatives that have been successfully implemented by the company to manage costs and optimise efficiencies, AMSA's Saldanha Steel operation remains under extreme pressure. The board and management, which for some time have been considering various options to ensure the longer-term sustainability of the company, formally announced a strategic asset footprint review in September 2019. The outcome of the first phase of the review is to immediately begin the process of winding down Saldanha's steel operations to curb any further losses. The process is expected to be completed during the first quarter of 2020.

"As part of this process, we have continued to constructively engage all key stakeholders around measures that could effectively address the dire situation in the South African steel industry," added Verster.

Realising the importance of Saldanha to the West Coast region, AMSA will make every effort to minimise the impact of this decision on its stakeholders, including the approximately 900 own and contractor employees who work at the operation. Contractual domestic sales orders from Saldanha will now be fulfilled from the Vanderbijlpark Works.

The company will also assess its social commitments in the local communities in a responsible manner.

"While this has been a very difficult decision, particularly at a time when the country is struggling with unemployment and low growth, we believe that it is an absolutely necessary step to ensure the sustainability of our broader business," said Verster. "As the country's largest primary steelmaker, we have an obligation to ensure we play our part in ensuring the sustainability of the South African steel industry, and that means that we have to make tough decisions."

He said progress was being made with the next phase of the strategic asset footprint review, focusing on the Newcastle operations and certain of the long steel products rolling facilities with the objective of sustainably improving their structural cost position and service offering. Exploring the benefits of a concentrated operating footprint will be important during this phase of the review.

In a separate process, AMSA announced a Section 189(3) consultation in July 2019 in relation to the anticipated large-scale restructuring of the business. The company has now concluded the CCMA-facilitated consultation process, and the required steps will now be taken to implement the outcomes of the Section 189 to strengthen the sustainability of the business in the longer term.

"We will continue to constructively engage with all key stakeholders, and we remain committed to working collaboratively with all role players to ensure the sustainability and success of the South African steel industry going forward," concluded Verster at the time.



ArcelorMittal

2020 Business Update

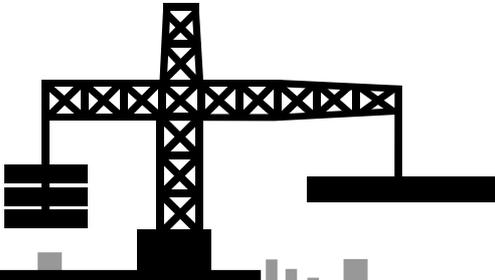
In a recently released trading statement and business update to the Stock Exchange News Services, AMSA said a large-scale employee reorganisation, as announced, last year, has been largely finalised and resulted in a reduction of over a thousand employees. Additionally, a significant repricing and rescoping of sub-contractor services will be completed by the end of the first quarter of 2020.

On the commercial wind-down of Saldanha Works, the company said the process is progressing according to plan and is anticipated to be largely completed by the end of the first quarter of 2020.

The second phase of the Asset Review commenced in November 2019, focusing on Newcastle Works and certain of the long steel products rolling facilities in Pretoria and Vereeniging. The objective of this phase of the review, according to the statement, is to sustainably improve these operations' structural cost position and service offering.

The closure of significant long steel product plants is not anticipated in the foreseeable future, and notably, primary steel making operations will continue at Newcastle Works, although now focused on primarily serving the domestic and Africa Overland markets.

In conclusion, the statement said significant organisational configuration opportunities have been identified to improve both operational effectiveness and controllable cost competitiveness of not only the long steel product business, but that of the overall Company. ■



ACCREDITED LABOUR — BROKERS —



CEA(LBD) Accredited Companies as at 28 January 2020

- Adcorp BLU a div of Adcorp Workforce Solutions (Pty) Ltd
- Adcorp Blu a division of Adcorp Staffing Solutions (Pty) Ltd
- Alos Business Solutions (Pty) Ltd
- AMT Placement Services
- AMT Africa Recruitment
- Babanango Recruitment Services cc
- Bathusi Staffing Services (Pty) Ltd
- CAP Personnel Placements (Pty) Ltd
- CDR Contracts (Pty) Ltd
- Consortium Personnel Consultants cc
- Eduardo Construction (Pty) Ltd
- EFS Labour Consultants cc
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- Themba Njalo Camden
- Tributum Emawi (Pty) Ltd
- Vusithemba Mpumalanga. ■

SEIFSA APPOINTS LOUWRESS SPECHT AS **LEGAL SERVICES MANAGER**

SEIFSA has appointed Louwress Specht as the Federation's new Legal Services Manager. Ms Specht started in her position on 6 January as an admitted attorney with an LLB and right of appearance in the High Courts of South Africa.

She has vast demonstrable experience in compliance, corporate governance, labour law, corporate law and litigation practice related to these fields.

She has recently completed an internationally AMBA-accredited MBA and also has a certificate in Human Resource Management from UCT.

Team SEIFSA welcomes Ms Specht, who will be an asset and add value to the SEIFSA brand. ■



Do you, your company or Association have exciting news you would like to share with SEIFSA News readers? Then send us your story by emailing ollie@seifsa.co.za or zandile@seifsa.co.za

INTERNATIONAL WATCH



CHINA



China virus outbreak a further risk to iron ore, steel outlook, writes Reuter's Columnist Clyde Russell

The risk to commodity demand from the spread of a new flu-like virus in China has so far focused on crude oil and related products such as jet fuel, but the iron ore and steel markets will also be keeping a nervous watching brief.

The effective quarantining of Wuhan, a city of 11 million people where the new strain of coronavirus emerged, sounds like a major step to combat the virus which has so far killed 17 people and infected several hundred more.

That the move comes on the eve of the Lunar New Year holidays, which typically see millions of Chinese travel to visit family and friends, underlines the disease's danger.

It will, however, only become a problem for iron ore and steel demand if it spreads far enough to make an impact on China's construction season, which tends to start in earnest after the Lunar New Year break.

It's still way too early to make an assessment that construction activity may be crimped by the coronavirus, but it is another risk factor for the outlook for iron ore and steel demand.

Both iron ore and steel enjoyed a robust 2019. Iron ore prices reached a five-year high after supply was reduced in the first half because of mine closures in Brazil in the wake of a fatal dam collapse, and a tropical cyclone in Australia.

The price of benchmark 62% iron ore MT-IO-QIN62=ARG, as assessed by commodity price reporting agency Argus, reached a peak of \$125.20 a tonne in July last year amid the supply

crunch, before retreating to a low of \$78.15 by mid-November.

If there is a historical pattern to spot iron ore prices in China, it is one of a rally ahead of winter as steel mills build inventories for the start of the spring construction season, followed by a decline until a usually more modest summer pick-up.

So far this northern hemisphere winter, 62% iron ore has gained 22% from its Nov. 11 low up to the close of \$95.60 recently.

This is about half of the 41% surge the steel-making ingredient enjoyed last winter, when it went from \$64.60 a tonne in November 2018 to a peak of \$90.75 in early February 2019.

This implies that the market is already somewhat more cautious about the outlook for iron ore and Chinese steel demand.

STEEL DRAG?

China's steel output came within a whisker of the 1 billion tonnes mark in 2019, coming in at a record 996.34 million tonnes, up 8.3% from 2018, according to official statistics.

The industry was boosted by strong margins on the back of increased infrastructure and building construction as Beijing boosted stimulus measures to counter the economic drag of the protracted trade dispute with the United States.

It may be the case that the 'Phase 1' trade truce signed by the two countries this month actually cuts the amount of spending Beijing will pump into the economy in 2020, which may act as a drag on steel demand.

Another factor to watch is the ongoing weakness in China's vehicle sales, which dropped 8.2% in 2019 from the prior year, and are forecast by the country's automobile manufacturers'

association to slip another 2% this year.

Benchmark steel rebar futures in Shanghai are flat so far this year, ending at 3,521 yuan (\$510) a tonne on Wednesday. That's little changed from 3,558 yuan at the end of last year, but also 3.5% weaker than the eight-year high of 3,647 yuan reached on July 1 last year.

There already appears to be a fair degree of caution being built

into the price of iron ore and steel in China, which is currently justified given the concern over the spread of the new virus and a somewhat softer outlook for the key construction and auto sectors. ■

Source: Reuters

CANADA



Canada Forges \$130,000 Development Deal for Steel-Tracking Blockchain

The Canadian government has awarded enterprise blockchain startup Mavennet a procurement contract for the development of an on-chain steel-tracking platform.

Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada (ISED), a government agency with the mandate to foster technology innovation, published a procurement award that will fund the research and development project for six months with CD\$169,427 (about US\$130,000).

The goal, as set out by ISED, is for Mavennet to build a blockchain proof-of-concept prototype that can track and share real-time data across the supply chain in the Canadian steel industry, which regularly produces well over 10 million metric tons a year.

Mavennet CEO Patrick Mandic said in an interview that with a blockchain to trace live data points and AI to make those patterns meaningful, the system could have ripples across the multi-billion-dollar industry.

"Ultimately, you're collecting a lot of data with new levels of granularity," he said. "If you're able to collect information in real time and in a way that you can trust, you're opening up a world of possibilities for analysis and providing insights to the government."

If Phase 1 proves successful, Mavennet may be able to receive additional two-year government funding of up to CD\$800,000 to continue building a deployment-grade system. It's already pursuing similar government contracts around the world, including an oil-tracking platform for the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

"The adoption of new digital technology into Canadian industry will help ensure our firms strengthen their competitive advantage," said Hans Parmar, a media relations manager for ISED.

Tariff concerns

Canada's steel industry is a major international exporter, especially to the U.S. But that heavy reliance was rocked by President Trump's 2018 steel tariffs and the ensuing market uncertainty. Last year, exports were down 22 percent.

Mandic said the tariffs provide a context for Canada's search for a blockchain-based steel supply chain solution. Asserting Trump's decision was motivated, in part, by fears of tariff dodgers who route their exports through untaxed markets, Mandic said blockchain's immutability can verify claims of product origin.

"What the blockchain provides is the ability to have a specific set of records in specific points of time," he said. "You cannot go back in time and change the path."

ISED's Parmar refuted the idea that the project was launched in response to the Section 232 steel tariffs. But in a statement to CoinDesk he also explained the platform could have blockchain-specific benefits.

"The technology solution may facilitate trade and domestic policy adjustments, including aligning country of origin marking regimes, certification and labelling if implemented," he said. ■

Source: CoinDesk



Cengiz on standby to buy British Steel if Jingye bid fails

The government is holding talks with the Turkish conglomerate Cengiz Holdings about stepping in to buy British Steel in the event that a planned sale to the Chinese industrial firm Jingye falls through.

Officials remain confident that Jingye's £50m purchase of British Steel, including the Scunthorpe steelworks, will go ahead in the next few weeks, saving about 4,000 jobs in the ailing industry.

But the Guardian understands that the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) has also been examining a back-up plan involving Istanbul-based Cengiz, which enjoys close ties to the Turkish regime.

A spokesperson for BEIS declined to comment on whether discussions had taken place.

Jingye's preferred bidder status affords it the sole right to negotiate a deal with the official receiver, the government employee managing the sale alongside the accountancy firm EY.

But BEIS is not bound by the exclusivity arrangement and is keen to limit the amount of time it continues to own a business that collapsed into insolvency eight months ago and is losing about £1m a day.

A sale to Jingye still faces several obstacles, including fraught negotiations with suppliers to British Steel and concern among trade unions at the prospect of cuts to jobs and employment benefits.

The French government's approval is also required for the sale of British Steel's Hayange plant near the border with Luxembourg.

While BEIS officials are confident that these hurdles can be overcome, they are still exploring alternative options, mindful of the fact that one potential buyer has already walked away.

Jingye, led by the former Communist party official Li Ganpo, only became the preferred bidder after a deal with Ataer Holdings, a unit of the Turkish military pension fund Oyak, disintegrated.

While Oyak has links to the Turkish government and military, the regime is understood to favour a deal involving Cengiz, which also has connections to the state.

Its founder-owner, Mehmet Cengiz, is a close ally of President

Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and his companies have won a host of major infrastructure projects.

The company is overseeing the Black Sea coastal highway, Istanbul's new airport, a high-speed rail project, as well as work on dams and power generation.

Any further discussions involving Cengiz could benefit from friendly relations between the UK's steel minister, Nadhim Zahawi, and the Turkish government.

The register of MPs' interests reveals that Erdoğan's AK party paid for Zahawi to visit its party conference in Ankara in 2012, funding £338.85 in hotel costs and transport. Zahawi's flights, worth £625, were underwritten by a "non-registrable source".

The Conservative MP also enjoys strong ties to Turkey's allies in the Kurdistan regional government that runs the semi-autonomous region of northern Iraq.

The Ankara-backed Kurdish regime sends most of its lucrative oil through pipelines across the border between the two countries.

Zahawi, whose family are Iraqi Kurds, earned about £850,000 in less than three years as "chief strategy officer" for the Kurdistan-based oil firm Gulf Keystone Petroleum, a position he gave up in 2017 to focus on Brexit negotiations.

A BEIS spokesperson said: "The government remains completely committed to getting a good solution for British Steel's valued employees at Scunthorpe, Skinningrove and on Teesside.

"In November the official receiver accepted a bid from Jingye for British Steel, which is an important step towards securing the future of the steelworks and its employees in the UK.

"The sales process is ongoing and we will continue to work with the official receiver as he seeks to finalise a sale."

The Guardian has approached Cengiz Holdings for comment.

One other potential buyer, Liberty Steel, is also keeping close tabs on the situation and is waiting in the wings in case Jingye's bid falls away.

The group, owned by the UK-based steel magnate Sanjeev Gupta, wants to convert part of the Scunthorpe steelworks from a blast furnace operation producing steel from scratch into an electric arc furnace plant that uses scrap steel. ■

Source: The Guardian

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THE ROLE OF HUMAN RESOURCE PROFESSIONALS IN NAVIGATING THE NEW WORLD OF WORK

by Deseré Koko

Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) technologies have a profound impact on humans in both the social and organisational spheres. Throughout human history, technological advances have brought about social change; impacting the ways in which humans live and work. This is no different for 4IR. Although it is not clear how the various 4IR technologies will influence the future world of work, it is imperative that organisations and specifically human resource professionals, prepare for the way forward (Schwab, 2016).

From a human resource perspective, human-work interaction has been irrevocably altered by digitalisation and virtualisation. Even more profound is the fact that 4IR technologies enable wider connectivity where devices and machines communicate continuously and in ever-increasing numbers. 4IR technologies have morphed from the Digital Revolution (or the Third Industrial Revolution) of the 1970s, where people and information technology (IT) interacted to a complex, inter-connected system of devices that is transforming production processes and business models on a global scale. No country or industry will be left unaffected by these sweeping changes.

4IR AND THE GENERAL BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

Technologies associated with 4IR are likely to become even more pronounced in the future as they proliferate and become more advanced. As the technologies associated with 4IR are aimed at making organisations more effective and efficient, it is projected that tasks, especially repetitive tasks, will be replaced rather than jobs. The types of jobs humans will perform will subsequently evolve to reflect this new reality.

In this sense, the general business environment, has already been altered by especially Artificial Intelligence (AI), Robotics and the Internet of Things (IoT).

Artificial Intelligence (AI) involves software systems that are able to make appropriate decisions without being programmed to do so. AI encompasses human intelligence simulated by machines. This implies that machines can learn, reason and self-correct. Companies can use AI to collect and make sense of big data (e.g. extracting usable information from large data sets, computationally) which can for example assist them in understanding the broad behavioural patterns of consumers.

As AI is continuously changing the ways in which tasks are performed, it implies that individual employees would need to be re-skilled in order to perform augmented jobs. This does not mean humans will be excluded from the workplace, rather that there will be a more prominent emphasis on performing important, non-repetitive and creative tasks. This will place a greater emphasis on the soft skills of individuals, specifically interpersonal skills, communication skills and inter-cultural skills. Managers and leaders also need to cultivate these skills in addition to cognitive flexibility and emotional intelligence (Bolick, 2019). This implies a different perspective on work in a diverse, interconnected and highly technological environment where individual employees need to engage with each other and with machines on a continuous basis. AI has changed the ways in which tasks are performed and it is projected to create new jobs in its wake.

SOME ORGANISATIONAL CHALLENGES RELATED TO AI INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:

- It can aggravate the already pertinent skills gaps, especially if highly skilled gig workers (individuals that work on a part-time basis) are brought in to assist organisations (Deloitte, 2018).
- It is likely that middle/lower level jobs will be most affected. Management needs to be proactive in dealing with this issue.

Robotics are programmable machines used to perform repetitive and often dangerous tasks. Advanced robotics involve devices that act largely autonomous, while it can interact with people and the environment by means of interconnected sensors.

Some projected future jobs that AI and robots are able to create include the following:

- Data detectives – complex clerical and administrative work involving data such as investigative analysts and records technicians.
- AI assisted healthcare technicians – systems that analyses healthcare data to predict ICU transfers, clinical workflows and patient's risks of infection.
- AI business development managers – managers that will assist organisations in understanding the adoption of AI and the challenges it poses. It also involves being able to interact with various stakeholders (such as internal teams and customers) about the adoption of AI.

Internet of things (IoT) implies the interconnection of computing devices that send and receive data to and from everyday objects via the internet (ranging from coffee machines to security systems).

THE ROLE OF HUMAN RESOURCE PROFESSIONALS

Based on the above, it is clear than human resource professionals have a pertinent role to play in being change agents for the future world of work. The following issues are relevant:

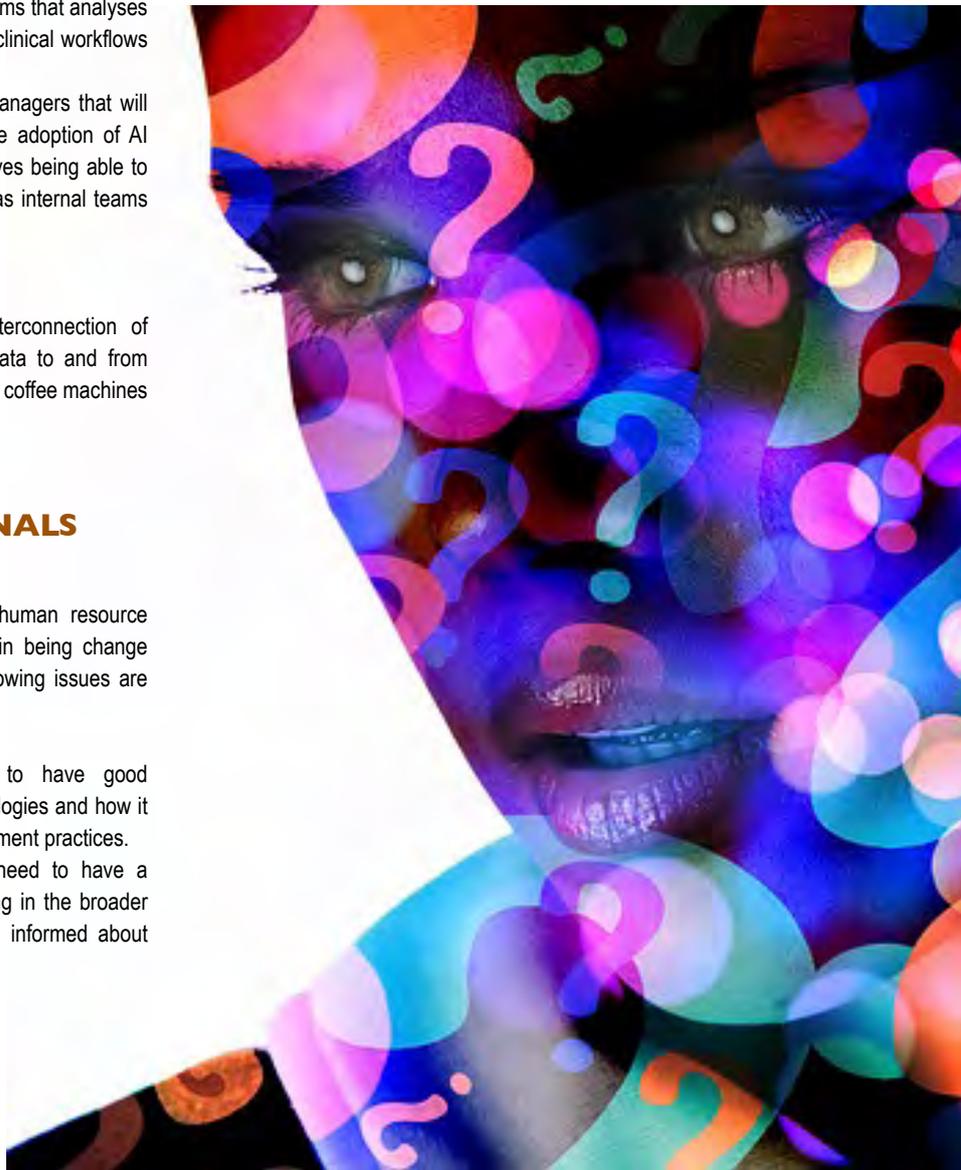
- Human resource professionals need to have good comprehension of the various 4IR technologies and how it is likely to impact on future talent management practices.
- Human resource professionals further need to have a macro view in terms of what is happening in the broader business context. They need to be well informed about

trends and challenges likely to influence their organisation/ industry/country. Having a silo mentality is not an option in the new world of work.

- Apart from managing the impact of massive technological change, human resource professionals also need to manage enhanced diversity at all organisational levels, which is a consequence of increased globalisation.
- In the face of massive technological change, human resource professionals need to provide stability and a people-centered approach, with a pertinent focus on developing the soft skills of employees to enable them to work in an augmented, inter-connected and flexible environment.
- Human resource professionals need to guide managers and leaders to develop their own skills and abilities in accordance with new expectations.

Although the real impact of 4IR is difficult to gauge, organisations and specifically human resource professionals need to be proactive in planning for the future. ■

Deseré Koko is the Associate Professor: Human Resource Management Faculty of Management Sciences at the Central University of Technology, Free State



INCOME DIFFERENTIALS – WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO THE METALS AND ENGINEERING SECTOR?



When the 2019 income differential reporting requirements changed, companies in the metals and engineering sector were overwhelmed with concern that they did not know where to start closing an income differential gap that is not clearly defined. Individuals tasked with spear heading transformation in such companies were equally overwhelmed by the impossibility of closing such a “perceived” gap. The anxiety, however, vanished after their submissions were finalized.

The changes in a nutshell required a clear reporting on highest and lowest remuneration earned by individuals within the organisations. Also required was a breakdown of fixed income, which predominantly covered guaranteed income inclusive of guaranteed benefits, guaranteed bonuses and variable income which included income that is not guaranteed, but which was received by employees within the reporting period. Including the variable income paints a clearer picture of employee’s earnings for the reporting period.

Exclusions were related to subsistence payments and any payments made from the company related to getting the job done such as travel allowances.

Where disproportionate income differentials or unfair discrimination are reflected in the form, a designated employer is obliged to take measures to progressively reduce such differentials. As can be clearly seen, there was no requirement to once off increase salaries but to review the companies' remuneration process.

This is easier said than done with many employers not having remuneration policies that clearly indicates how they intend to close the vertical income differential gaps, but feeling they are following a fair process by linking their remuneration to grading systems like Hay and Patterson among others, which value jobs according to the value they add to the business.

According to a PWC Report, approximately 31% of companies use Paterson, 34% Hay and 15% Peromnes. There is a need for HR professionals to, at all times, be mindful in their compensation strategy of an employee's performance, competence and retention in the case of scarce skills, as a traditional compensation method will need to be revisited to ensure that the company's compensation strategy speaks to the changing business environments. There is a need to go back to the drawing board.

There is also a need for fair remuneration given the fact that South Africa is one of the most unequal countries in the world. Within the metals and engineering industry, employees are separated into scheduled and unscheduled workers with an overlap sometimes between the skilled artisans and the professionals due to the red ring skills sets that make up the sector's technical workforce.

The good news is half of the work has been done. The broader manufacturing industry has been closing the historical income differential gap through collective bargaining for over 30 years.

The wage table contained in the collective agreement generally covers blue collar workers across a number of

occupational levels depicted as skilled semi-skilled and unskilled.

Collective bargaining has significantly closed the wage gap vertically between skilled versus unskilled employees in the Industry, for example, in 1990, the wage differential between skilled (factory workers) versus unskilled (factory workers) was 44%, which means an unskilled labourer earned 44% of what a skilled worker (artisan) earned.

Three decades later the same wage differential between a skilled (artisan) versus an unskilled employee (labourer) sits at 58 %, which means a labourer currently on rate H earns 58% of a qualified artisan's salary.

It is also important to note that the minimum wage rate in the metals industry main agreement for a labourer is R49.00 versus the national minimum wage (excluding domestics and farm labourers) which is R20.00 an hour. These numbers are not the total cost of employment for these employees. These numbers are only the basic rate per hour.

If one had to do the same analysis and take into consideration the total cost of employment one can easily add on an additional 38%.

Over the 30 years the jobs never changed. It is, therefore, undeniable that collective bargaining has in as far as minimum rate of pay closed the earnings wage gap. Over the 30 years conditions of employment has become more onerous particularly for small, medium and micro enterprises to comply with and ultimately remain competitive and profitable.

In the final analysis, in order for the country, industry and individual employers to meet the goals and objectives of the Employment Equity Act, when it comes to income inequality and discrimination, we need economic growth. Without economic growth and companies prospering, growing their profits, transformation will remain an extremely difficult goal to attain. Companies also have to remain relevant and growth in technology further widens the gap and causes job losses at all skill levels. This situation is becoming the Achilles Heel of transformation and stifles the eradication of inequality.

Where disproportionate income differentials or unfair discrimination are reflected in the form, a designated employer is obliged to take measures to progressively reduce such differentials

NEW LEAVE ENTITLEMENTS: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

On 27 November 2018 the President signed the Labour Laws Amendment Act (LLAA) into law. This amended the Basic Conditions of Employment Act in a number of areas, such as parental leave, adoption leave and commissioning parental leave, but was not effective in law as no commencement date for the legislation was announced. However, on 23 December 2019, the President announced the commencement date for parental leave, adoption leave and commissioning parental leave as 1 January 2020.



Below, we summarise the nature of these new leave entitlements and we provide some advice to employers as to what is required following the introduction of the new leave entitlements.

WHAT ABOUT THE MAIN AGREEMENT?

Of particular consideration is how to treat scheduled employees, namely employees who are governed by the Main Agreement and not the Basic Conditions of Employment Act, such as your office workers. This we will address in more detail below.

WHAT ARE THE NEW LEAVE ENTITLEMENTS?

The LLAA introduces three new Leave Entitlements for employees:

- Parental leave,
- Adoption leave and
- Commissioning parental leave.

The LLAA provides that these leave entitlements are unpaid and qualifying employees are eligible to apply to the Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF) for income benefits during the leave period.

The new leave entitlements are found under sections 25A, 25B and 25C of the Basic Conditions of Employment Act 75 of 1997 (BCEA).

A number of commentators have erroneously suggested that these provisions came into force during 2019, when, in fact, the commencement date had yet to be proclaimed by the President. The reason for the delay in implementation is to allow the UIF the opportunity to put in place the necessary forms, regulations and processes to allow spouses to claim the new leave benefits from the Fund.

The draft UIF Regulations were, in turn, published for comment on 2 September 2019 with the commentary period set to expire on 15 October 2019. It was then expected that the new leave provisions will, thereafter, be signed off by the President and become effective shortly thereafter.

Employers must consider a number of aspects to ensure they are compliant with the new legislation:-

THE AMENDED BCEA PERMITS:

- Fathers to take ten consecutive days of unpaid parental leave after the birth of their child,
- It also provides that adoptive parents are entitled to ten weeks of unpaid adoption leave or ten days of unpaid parental leave and
- A commissioning parent is entitled to ten weeks of unpaid commissioning parental leave or ten days of unpaid parental leave.

For the adoption leave and commissioning parental leave, spouses can elect which spouse will take the parental leave and which spouse will take the adoption leave or the commissioning parental leave.

HOW DO THESE NEW PROVISIONS AFFECT EMPLOYEES COVERED BY THE MAIN AGREEMENT, ALSO KNOWN AS SCHEDULED EMPLOYEES?

PATERNITY LEAVE:



- As a result of the Main Agreement negotiations that occur every three years and result in a three year wage deal, it must be noted that the Main Agreement in clause 42, still states that paternity leave is part of the three days an employee receives for family responsibility leave, and this will remain unchanged until the provisions in the Main Agreement are changed, which may occur only during the course of the industry wage negotiations.

Until then employees would be allowed to use the 10 consecutive days (not working days) paternity leave as per the new amendments in the BCEA, the reason for this is that the wording in the amended legislation states that the new changes are core / non-variable rights which may not be amended by a collective agreement such as the Main Agreement.

It is important to note that the 10 days from the BCEA are unpaid and are consecutive days (not working days) and that the employee must make application to the UIF. The UIF benefit is not 100% of pay but is 66% of pay with a ceiling.

If the employee also requests the three days paternity leave provided for in the Main Agreement, these three days are paid by the employer at 100%.

MAIN AGREEMENT CONSIDERATIONS:

However and of importance, if the employee does elect to use the three days offered by the Main Agreement, it would mean that they will then have no days left if they need them for other occasions provided for in the Main Agreement under the family responsibility leave section, such as sickness of a child or spouse, and the death of an immediate family member as defined by the Main Agreement.

It is also important to note that the employee will not accumulate shifts for leave pay and enhancement pay (also known as the leave bonus) during this leave period.

ADOPTION LEAVE:



- Adoptive parental leave entitles one of the parents to 10 weeks consecutive unpaid adoption leave, of a child who is below the age of two years. If an adoption order is made in respect of two adoptive parents, only one may apply for

adoption leave and the other for parental leave. Parental leave entitles an employee to 10 consecutive days leave (not 10 working days), after:

- o the employee's child has been born,
- o an adoption order has been granted by a competent court, or
- o a child has been placed in the care of the prospective adoptive parent.

As indicated, such leave will be unpaid, and employees will, therefore, have to submit claims to the UIF to qualify for payment during the periods of absence from work.

In terms of the Labour Laws Amendment Act, an employee is entitled to 66% of his or her regular earnings subject to the maximum income threshold as per the Unemployment Insurance Act. Contributors will not be entitled to be paid from the UIF for parental leave if they were not employed and contributing to the fund during the 13 weeks prior to applying for such benefit. The same will be applicable for adoption leave.

It is important to note that in order to qualify for the payment of parental leave benefits from the UIF, a male employee will have to provide proof of him being the father of the child by virtue of a birth certificate with his name and surname appearing on it.

A further requirement in terms of the Amendment Act is that an employee must notify his or her employer in writing of the date that such leave is to commence and when the employee will return to work. Such notice must be given one month before:

- o the child is expected to be born or,
- o the date that the adoption order will be granted, or
- o when the child is placed in the care of a prospective adoptive parent.

MAIN AGREEMENT CONSIDERATIONS:

It is important to note that the Main Agreement in clause 9 allows an employee with more than one year's service to take up to 26 unpaid weeks of maternity leave. The employee in this instance can claim from the Sick Pay Fund, who pay a benefit of 100%. It must be noted that the adoption must be in terms of the Child Care Act and the child must be under the age of two years.

COMMISSIONING LEAVE:



- The commissioning parent who will primarily be responsible for looking after the child (primary commissioning parent) will be entitled to commissioning parental leave.

If there are two commissioning parents, they can choose: if the one takes commissioning parental leave, the other can take normal parental leave. The one who takes commissioning parental leave will be entitled to 10 consecutive weeks' commissioning parental leave. The other parent would be entitled to 10 consecutive days' normal parental leave.

In both cases leave can commence on the date of the birth of the child.

The amendments do not make provision for any leave that may be taken by the surrogate mother. While she would probably not be entitled to the normal four months' maternity leave, she would in all likelihood be entitled to at least six weeks' maternity leave envisaged by section 25(3) of the BCEA.

NOTIFICATION:

The employee must give at least one month's written notice of –

- o the expected date of birth, as well as when the leave is due to commence and when the employee will return to work; or
- o in the case of adoption, the date on which adoption order is granted or the day that a competent court places the child in the care of a prospective adoptive parent.

If, for some reason or other, it is not possible for the employee to give such notice, the employee must notify the employer as soon as is reasonably practicable.

The Main Agreement would need to be amended to include the Commissioning Leave provisions as these are not to be amended by a collective agreement.

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE BENEFITS

PAID OR UNPAID?

All three of the new categories of leave above are unpaid, as is the case with maternity leave. However, employees that take this leave may claim benefits from the UIF. In order to qualify an employee has to have been employed for at least 13 weeks.

HOW MUCH?

The benefits payable will be 66% of their earnings, subject to the maximum income threshold - for benefit claims it is currently R17 712.00 per month. (The contribution ceiling remains at R14 872.00)

OTHER UIF BENEFITS

Payment of parental benefits, adoption benefits, commissioning parental benefits and maternity benefits, do not reduce an employee's claim to the payments of other unemployment benefits. So - for example - if a mother loses her job, she will still have access to all the other unemployment benefits that she has accrued.

FOREIGNERS

Foreign nationals and employees employed in terms of learnership agreements will be able to claim benefits.

WHEN TO CLAIM?

Claims for parental benefits must be made within 12 months after the date of the birth of the child, adoption order, or court order that places the child in the care of a prospective adoptive parent.

UIF CLAIM FORMS

Forms can be obtained at the following link <http://www.labour.gov.za/parental-leave-forms>

IMPORTANT EMPLOYER CONSIDERATIONS:

- o Because parental leave will be subsidized through UIF benefits and will not be paid for directly by employers (as was formerly the case with family responsibility leave). Where companies have employment contracts, these would need to be aligned with the new provisions, to avoid any misunderstanding in relation to what, when and how much employees can claim;
- o be able to advise on and assist employees with UIF claims;
- o the need for leave policies to stipulate the notice period required to be given to the employer prior to the commencement of parental leave, adoption leave or commissioning parental leave. Leave application forms should also be amended to provide for the new types of leave;
- o the need for leave policies to stipulate the level of proof required where one spouse elects to take parental leave and another spouse elects to take adoption leave / commissioning parental leave;
- o the need to stipulate whether employers will be flexible in relation to when parental leave may commence, the amendments state that paternity leave may be taken on the birth of the child, so not before the child is born. It will however be up to companies as to how long after the birth of the child may the employee take paternity leave.

Companies leave policies may entitle male employees to commence paternity leave any time from the birth of their child up until the expiry of their wives' maternity leave. This could also apply to paternity leave taken after the expiry of adoption leave and/or commissioning parental leave taken by the other spouse;

To note that the maternity leave provisions of the Main Agreement and the BCEA remain unchanged.

For more information on these matters See advert on the opposite page

WORKSHOPS:

SEIFSA is conducting workshops during the months ahead, and the upcoming, Key Aspects of Labour Law and the Main Agreement workshops will cover the subject material above, in addition to numerous other important matters.

Please contact either: Natalie Fourie, Thabiso Lebea or Michael Lavender of SEIFSA to make a booking.

The training is being conducted in: Boksburg and the SEIFSA office (Johannesburg).

In-house training and consultation is also available.

Queries

Should you have any queries please contact SEIFSA Industrial Relations & Legal Services on 011 298 9400.. ■



25 February
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24 February
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SEMINAR
THE NEW LEAVE AMENDMENTS: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW.



Parental Leave, Adoption Leave and Commissioning Parental Leave

We answer the question – how do these new amendments work with the Main Agreement?

- The Main Agreement's provisions on these areas is currently different
- How must we treat scheduled employees, namely employees who are governed by the Main Agreement compared to employees who are governed by the Basic Conditions of Employment Act, such as your office staff?

Who Should Attend?

- Executives
- Managers
- Supervisors
- Legal Advisors
- Company Lawyers

The Programme will include the following:

- What about the Main Agreement?
- What are the new leave entitlements?
- Unemployment insurance benefits
- Important employer considerations:
- Brief overview of the sick leave requirements:

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THE BUSINESS CASE FOR TRAINING ARTISANS IN A DEPRESSED ECONOMY

Profits are down, unemployment is high and costs of doing business, including input costs, are forever on the rise. This is the picture that reflects most sectors of the South African economy. How do you, as a Director or a Senior Manager, justify and make the case for sustaining or increasing your company's training initiatives in such an operating environment?

To make it even harder for managers to justify continuous upskilling in the workplace is the fact that, artisan training is expensive. In some cases, training an artisan over a four-year period is more expensive than paying University tuition fees over the same period. Is a business case even possible for the training of artisans and apprentices in the currently stagnant South African economy?

SEIFSA believes that the business case exists.

In the book *Perfecting Your Pitch*, author Ronald M. Shapiro states: "That gap – between preparing and presenting, between thinking and speaking – is the Bermuda Triangle of human interaction. And, scripting, I believe, is the best tool to bridge it."

To prepare Human resources and Skills Development Practitioners in making the business case effectively, SEIFSA suggests using the F.I.S.E. framework to pitch the business case for continuing a Skills Development regime within their companies.

F.I.S.E. is a four-pronged approach and stands for Focus, Incentives, Stewardship and Expertise.

FOCUS

The objective here is to aim high with reason and have a good rationale.

Most companies today should have a continuous improvement programme at the heart of their operations. This should be especially true in South Africa's metals and engineering (M&E) sector. If continuous improvement is not part of the organisational and management culture, then long-term success becomes tenuous at best. Training is, of course, part of this process.

Fostering an "innovative learning culture" and developing life-long learning is going beyond training people how to do their jobs, but to coach and mentor, which helps in sustaining the momentum of benefits of training.

The message must be that: training cannot become an 'ad-hoc exercise that is easily cut in bad times.

Training must be approached as business-like operations and demonstrate a real return. The outcome must be that

staff must be motivated and have deep-seated loyalty to the company – and that is reflected in performance.

INCENTIVES

You have help. The South African government has incentives in place to help companies keep training during tough economic conditions. These incentives are implemented through Manufacturing, Engineering and Related Services Sector Education and Training Authority (merSETA), and include both Mandatory Grants and Discretionary Grants.

It is likely that you will get most, if not all, your training spend back.

Therefore, it is incumbent on Human Resource and Skills Development Practitioners to familiarize themselves with – and commit to memory – the working of these grant programmes.

The purpose of Mandatory Grants is to provide an incentive to employers to plan and implement training for their employees and provide data to the SETA on their workforce and skills needs. Data must be accurate and well prepared in order for the SETA to use the information to establish skills needs in the sector for inclusion in the Sector Skills Plans. All training, whether included into the previous financial year's Workplace Skills Plan or not, must be reported on in the Annual Training Report.

SEIFSA, through its Human Capital and Skills Development Division can easily support companies through training and consulting in this area.

Requirements for the approval of Mandatory Grants follow below:

- The merSETA must allocate Mandatory Grants to merSETA's levy-paying employers who submitted their application by 30 April of the financial year and met the criteria;
- Submitted and implemented a Workplace Skills Plan (WSP) and Annual Training Report (ATR), PIVOTAL Plan (PP), Non-PIVOTAL Plan (NPP) and a PIVOTAL Report (PR), where applicable, in the required format;
- Registered for the first time in terms of the Skills Development Levies Act and submitted an application for a mandatory grant within six months of registration;
- Levy payments are up-to-date;
- Submitted a WSP in the previous financial year;
- Employers who have recognition agreements with a trade union or unions must provide evidence in the form of minimum of two meeting minutes that the WSPs and ATRs have been subject to consultation with the recognized trade

unions and the WSPs and ATRs must be signed off by the labour representative appointed by the recognized trade union, unless an explanation could be provided.

- The Mandatory Grant application must be electronically signed off by the appointed labour representative where a recognition agreement exists between the employer and labour, irrespective of the size of the company.

The second intervention is Discretionary Grants. The purpose of Discretionary Grants is to encourage stakeholders to contribute towards the achievement and objectives of the NSDS III, the merSETA's Sector Skills Plan (SSP), Strategic Plan (SP) and Annual Performance Plan (APP). Discretionary Grants are allocated at the sole discretion of the merSETA's Accounting Authority to achieve its objectives in relation to the development of the sector.

- A maximum of 7.5% of the allocated discretionary grants may be utilized by the merSETA for administrative costs for the delivery and implementation of the merSETA's Discretionary Grant initiatives.
- Discretionary Grants could be paid to legal entities, inclusive of public education and training institutions and public community education and training centres, as defined in the definitions in Section 2 of the Policy;
- An employer or enterprise within the jurisdiction of merSETA, including an employer or enterprise not required to pay a skills development levy in terms of the Skills Development Levies Act,
- Non-profit Organizations (inclusive of NGOs), and co-operatives that implements programmes within the merSETA sector that meet allocation criteria.

STEWARDSHIP

Stewardship is a social goal, and should be a goal for all companies within the M&E and manufacturing industries.

Do socially responsible activities lower a company's economic performance?

Bolster your answer with examples of success. For example, you could research the outcomes of South African Breweries' widely acclaimed Owner-Driver Programme as a social responsible initiative that adds to the bottom line.

The majority of studies in this area show a positive relationship between social responsibility and economic performance. The logic underlying this positive relationship



is that social involvement provides a number of benefits to a company that more than offset their costs. These include a positive consumer image, a more dedicated and motivated workforce, and less interference from regulators/government.

In fact, building a successful businesses is by definition being socially responsible. The benefits of this action alone cannot be divorced from society's challenges as a whole:

- South Africa needs successful businesses to create jobs;
- South Africans need skills to become better at their jobs; and
- The manufacturing industry needs artisans and apprenticeships.

Today companies and managers, especially in the South African context, are responsible to any individual or group that is affected by the organisation's decisions and policies. These stakeholders are any constituency in an organisation's environment: Government agencies, unions, employees, customers, suppliers, host communities and interest groups.

EXPERTISE

SEIFSA exists to provide the best advice and services to the industry it serves, specifically the M&Esector as part of the broader manufacturing sector. This is core to why SEIFSA made the decision to develop and establish the SEIFSA Training Centre (STC).

Located near the heart of Johannesburg's industrialized belt, the Centre has been recognised as a "Centre of Excellence" by the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO) and merSETA. SEIFSA is proud that the STC has received accreditation by the (merSETA), the Chemical Industries Sector Education Training Authority (CHIETA), the Energy and Water Sector Education Training Authority (EWSETA) and the QCTO for Training and Trade testing.

The STC is primed to offer companies and their employees opportunities for career path development, mentorship, coaching and trade test proficiency. The focus on the holistic aspects give students the opportunities to develop as people, not only to be better employees. Our trainees are prepared to meet the demands of the industry, including an understanding of productivity, problem solving and the imperative of safety in the workplace.

The STC will be your partner in developing your Artisan Development Programme and help with:

- Recruitment and selection of candidates;
- Indenture apprentices on training contracts;
- Institutional training of 26 weeks at the SEIFSA Training Centre according to SETA qualification requirements;
- Placement of candidates for practical training at employers; and
- Final training and trade testing at the SEIFSA Training Centre.

The staff at the STC and the Human Capital and Skills Development Division at SEIFSA will ensure that you understand and apply the directives of merSETA's grant Programme and safeguard the return on investment for the following areas:

- Recruitment and selection of candidates;
- Institutional and final training costs;
- A monthly stipend for candidates for the duration of training programme;
- A toolkit and PPE needed during formal training phases;
- Monitoring of candidates' progress at employer sites; and
- Administration and reporting of candidates' progress.

The SEIFSA team will show you step by step how to sustain your training programme – even in the current depressed economic environment. ■

QUICK WINS REQUIRED TO PREVENT FURTHER JOBS LOSSES IN SOUTH AFRICA'S GRADUALLY SINKING STEEL INDUSTRY, WRITES MICHAEL ADE



Commercial activity in the strategic steel industry of South Africa's diverse metals and engineering (M&E) sector has literally gone soft, with both steel production and consumption generally deteriorating over a nine-year period spanning 2010 to 2018. Moreover, 2019 proved to be very difficult for local companies which found themselves in the doldrums, despite valiant attempts to navigate several curve balls and remain resilient. Disconcertingly, the steel industry's performance during the year contributed to the slowdown of the broader M&E sector, which is estimated to have contracted by 0.7%.

Following a rare global steel recession last year (with the exception of China), the bends in the local steel industry

have deepened alarmingly, urgently warranting a need for a consensus between relevant stakeholders and the government on how to structure short-term incentives, in order to revive the strategically important industry. This is important since the steel industry is again set to be weighed down in 2020 by a continuation of last year's weaker demand momentum.

As the economy expands, so does the need for steel to complete social and economic infrastructures, or increased demand from key steel end-user industries like construction, electrical and mechanical engineering such as cranes, automotive production, metal goods such as tools, other transport such as ships and airplanes, as well as electrical equipment such as generators and household appliances.

Therefore, it is imperative that South Africa does not become a net steel importer, which would leave it exposed to the vagaries of the exchange rates or imports inflation, with further negative implications on the current account, estimated at -3.9 for 2019.

Although arguably not yet at a tipping point, the steel industry is in very serious difficulties and is doomed for even more trouble. Ongoing efforts to address the challenges faced by the steel industry, including Trade and Industry Minister Ebrahim Patel's reconstitution of the Steel Committee and the development of a Steel Master Plan, are laudable. However, invariably administrative bottlenecks may delay the implementation of key recommendations, while fresh ideas expounded in the Steel Master Plan may only become effective with a lag of over five years after finalisation. As a result, the gap requires implementation of fundamental short-term interventions, since waiting is detrimental to the sinking steel industry, which currently provides roughly 150 000 jobs.

The Government can ensure that companies capitalize on quick wins emanating from designation requirements for State procurement, which holds good potential in the short term, by rigorously enforcing designation on steel products – including on end-users doing business with the State – and allocating more funds for real capital spending. It is to be hoped that, in addition to an encouraging rebound in real gross fixed capital formation to 4.5% in quarter three of 2019, increased budgetary allocations will boost spending by general government and public corporations to support private business enterprises' real capital spending, thereby boosting local demand.

A plethora of challenges confront the steel industry, and these include constricting infrastructure spending, as outlined in our latest State of the Metals and Engineering Sector Report for 2020/21. Invariably, these have led to two distinct unwanted outcomes for the steel industry. Firstly, the supply or production of steel for exports was negatively affected, resulting in a deceleration in year-on-year steel exports of 7.4% in 2019 and, secondly, domestic steel demand or consumption was greatly diminished.

Steel production and consumption in recent years have been dismal. From a steel production point of view and based on revised cross-sectional data, it was clearly a very volatile output trend for the local industry from 2010 to 2018. South Africa's steel production capacity dipped from a supercharged output of 7.6 million tonnes in 2010 to 6.3 million tonnes in 2018, underpinned by a stagnant local economy and constricting industrial production, as well as decreasing global trade and manufacturing activity. Over a nine-year period, South Africa's steel production declined by roughly 17% (roughly 1.3 million tonnes) to yet another nondescript level in 2018.

Contemporaneously, from a steel consumption viewpoint, as proxied by apparent consumption, it was another tale of contrasts between a stronger period spanning 2010-2013 and

a weaker period spanning 2014-2018. Over a nine-year period, South Africa's steel consumption declined by roughly 7%, dipping from 5.5 million tonnes in 2010 to 5.1 million tonnes in 2018, also underpinned by nondescript economic performance and low demand from key local steel-consuming industries.

The data are more concerning when viewed from the heights attained in 2013, with steel consumption declining by roughly 18% or 1.1 million tonnes from 2013 to 2018. Moreover, the poor provisional data in 2019 for both steel production and consumption have reinforced the stance by stakeholders who pontificate – correctly so – that the steel industry may be fast approaching a tipping point.

For context, total steel production in Egypt, a comparator country, overtook that of South Africa in 2017 and peaked in 2018 at 7.8 million tonnes. Retrospectively from 2010 to 2018, Egypt's steel production increased by 1.1 million tonnes or roughly 17%. Alternatively, Egypt's steel consumption increased impressively by 2.5 million tonnes (approximately 27%) between 2010 and 2018, consuming a whopping 11.8 million tonnes in 2018, accounting for 30% of the continent's share.

Apart from dearth in demand, other constraints to the steel industry include intermediate input and raw materials costs, operational, logistics and electricity expenses. Erratic energy supply or galloping electricity costs, compounded by Eskom's R27.3 billion 2019 revenue clearing account submission currently before NERSA, is a significant albatross on businesses, inhibiting competitiveness or nibbling into operational profits, with negative extrapolated effects on the steel industry's sustainability and employment.

In these tough times of stagnant domestic growth, heightened uncertainty and fragile business activity, the government should focus beyond just creating an enabling environment and collaborate closely with stakeholders in the steel industry in seeking and implementing targeted solutions. The challenges to South Africa's strategic industry are multi-faceted. It is dying slowly, with companies closing down despite key government departments' best efforts to assist.

Time is of essence. Broader support is needed to boost demand, production and exports in order to attract investment. Importantly, South Africa Inc. (including DFIs) should identify and deal with blockages that are inhibiting the private sector's ability to engage in projects and develop a common platform on African projects or intra-African trade prospects. This is important before the launch of the operational phase of the African Continental Free Trade Area agreement in July 2020.

Dr Michael Ade is a Chief Economist at the Steel and Engineering Industries Federation of Southern Africa

SAFETY AWARENESS – IN THE YEAR 2020

By AA Makotose

Throughout the world, there is a large number of countries that have scheduled and structured days where safety awareness topics are tabled and discussed. In 2020, companies operating within the metals and engineering sector need to continually focus on issues paramount to the wellbeing of their most valuable stakeholders; their employees, through safety awareness bulletins and regular face-to-face interactions, among other initiatives. Centred on Risk Based Thinking (RBT), the points below will help companies identify actual and potential hazardous risks and opportunities as they prepare themselves to not only meet their health and safety targets but to also ensure that they provide a safe and incident-free work environment for their employees.

POSITIVE CULTURE FOR A SAFE WORK ENVIRONMENT

Strategies must be developed to demonstrate our commitment to safety and health by learning how to be safe, getting visibly involved and being more accessible to employees.

The need to set a positive example to employees by following all safety requirements in the workplace, gives a positive indication of safety culture maturity within organisations.

Entities, and their subsidiaries should implement accident prevention programs. This will help ensure employees feel safe and also help avoid costly injuries and illnesses.

Implementing a training tracking system for new and seasoned employees to ensure they are getting knowledge needed to do their job safely, will bolster a positive health and safety culture.

We Must Practice what we preach when it comes to safety and health in the workplace.

1. Substance Abuse - Alcohol and Drug Addiction at the workplace

The workplace must be free of drugs. Dependency on

alcohol and drugs can victimise anyone regardless of education, position and occupation. The impact is enormous, affecting just about every area of the victim's life. He or she may lose family, home, friends, savings, job, and physical and mental health. On the job, poor work performance and unreliability can jeopardize the safety of fellow workers, the integrity of products and services, and the organization's reputation. The following are examples of the impact of substance dependency on major life areas – :

- Work performance and poor work attendance record at work, quality and quantity of work may decline, and lack of attention to work can cause on the job injuries and result in problems with customers and co-workers.
- Financial problems - spending more than you earn, social tensions and embarrassment at social functions,
- Health can be greatly affected – with over 400 illnesses and diseases attributed to substance abuse.

2. Workplace eye wellness

Industry statistics and experts show and believe respectively that correct eye protection can lessen the severity or even prevent 90% of eye injuries in accidents at the workplace.

One in 10 eye injuries require one or more missed workdays to recover from.

All employees should wear safety eyewear whenever there is a chance of eye injury. Anyone working in or passing through areas that pose eye hazards should wear protective eyewear.

The right tone and safety involvement must be set from top management and it must transcend downwards – safety is everybody's business. ■

Admire Makotose is a Founder and Managing Director of ISO - Serve Consultancy

LEADING THE WAY IN OCCUPATIONAL INJURIES AND DISEASES

Our clients work in one of the most important industries that drive the country's economy while ensuring that many families who depend on it can eat and afford basic needs. We are also aware of how much they love and care for their work and how they go out of their way to perform with the highest standard of safety to avoid injuries. However, accidents can happen even where all the precautions have been adhered to. So, what will happen should a worker get injuries that are detrimental to their ability to do their job and earn further income? What happens to their families?

That is where we come in. Rand Mutual (RMA) is the administrator of choice for injury on duty claims in South Africa for the mining, iron, steel, metal and related industries. For the past 124 years, we have made sure that any worker who gets injured while at work can receive payments to cover medical costs, disabilities, pensions and ongoing income in case of death.

This is in terms of the compensation for Occupational Injuries and Diseases Act (COIDA) 130 of 1993 as amended under license from the Minister of Labour.

Beyond COIDA requirements, we have also developed other innovations to assist with the recovery of our beneficiaries, like our mobile prosthetic clinic, funeral and top up covers to add value to the quality of life of our members. All claims for medical expenses, temporary disability, and pensions are processed speedily and efficiently.

Let RMA protect your employees needs 24/7 with our additional insurance products that cover beyond COID.

GET A QUOTE:

Email us at sales@randmutual.co.za

RMA

Caring | Compassionate | Compensation



www.randmutual.co.za | 0860 222 132
email: sales@randmutual.co.za

2020

Upcoming SEIFSA Workshops / Events

February 2020

DIVISIONS: Economics and Commercial (EC), - Health, Safety, Environment & Quality (SHEQ), - Industrial Relations (IR) and Legal Services (L) Human Capital & Skills Development (HC&SD) SEIFSA Training Centre (STC) - Small Business Hub (SBH)

MONTH	DATE	DURATION	REGION	PRICE	PRICE	DIVISION	WORKSHOP/ EVENT
				(Member)	(Non-member)		
FEB	3-Feb	½ Day	BOKSBURG	R 2 393,27	R 3 530,07	EC	Theory and Calculation of Contract Price Adjustment
	3-Feb	½ Day	SEIFSA	R 2 393,27	R 3 530,07	EC	Theory and Calculation of Contract Price Adjustment
	3-7	5 Days	SEIFSA	R 6 500,00	R 7 000,00	HCS D	Assessor – Conduct Outcomes Based Assessment
	4-5	2 days	Fourways	R 900,00	R 1 125,00	SHEQ	First Aid Level 1 - Day 1
	5-Feb	1 Day	BOKSBURG	R 3 015,52	R 3 769,40	IRLS	Key Aspects of Labour Law
	6-7	1 Day	Fourways	R845.00	R 1 056,25	SHEQ	Firefighting
	10-Feb	½ Day	CENTUR	R 2 393,27	R 3 530,07	EC	Theory and Calculation of Contract Price Adjustment
	10-Feb	½ Day	SEIFSA	R 2 393,27	R 3 530,07	EC	Theory and Calculation of Contract Price Adjustment
	11-Feb	1 Day	BOKSBURG	R 3 015,52	R 3 769,40	IRLS	The Protection of Personal Information (POPI) Act
	11-Feb	1 Day	SEIFSA	R 2 991,59	R 3 733,50	HCS D	Introduction to Skills Development
	12-Feb	½ Day	BOKSBURG	R 2 273,60	R 2 853,97	IRLS	Retrenchments, short-time and lay-offs, the do's and don'ts
	14-Feb	½ Day	BOKSBURG	R 2 393,27	R 3 530,07	EC	Theory and Calculation of Contract Price Adjustment
	14-Feb	½ Day	SEIFSA	R 2 393,27	R 3 530,07	EC	Theory and Calculation of Contract Price Adjustment
	17-Feb	½ Day	SEIFSA	R 2 393,27	R 3 530,07	EC	Theory and Calculation of Contract Price Adjustment
	17-Feb	½ Day	W Rand	R 2 393,27	R 3 530,07	EC	Theory and Calculation of Contract Price Adjustment
	17-19	3 Days	SEIFSA	R 6 500,00	R 7 000,00	HCS D	Facilitation Skills (Train the Trainer)
	18-Feb	½ Day	BOKSBURG	R 2 345,40	R 2 931,75	IRLS	How to Tender Successfully - Beginners Course
	18-20	1 Day	Fourways	R910.00	R 1 137,50	SHEQ	H&S Representative
	20-Feb	1 Day	JHB	R 2 991,59	R 3 733,50	HCS D	Towards a Quantum Leap in SD in the Next Decade
	21-Feb	½ Day	CPT	R 2 393,27	R 3 530,07	EC	Theory and Calculation of Contract Price Adjustment
	21-Feb	½ Day	SEIFSA	R 2 393,27	R 3 530,07	EC	Theory and Calculation of Contract Price Adjustment
	21-Feb	1 Day	Fourways	R845.00	R 1 056,25	SHEQ	Firefighting
	24-Feb	½ Day	BOKSBURG	R 2 273,60	R 2 853,97	IRLS	The New Leave Amendments: what you need to know."
	25-Feb	½ Day	SEIFSA	R 2 273,60	R 2 853,97	IRLS	The New Leave Amendments: what you need to know."
	24-Feb	½ Day	BOKSBURG	R 2 393,27	R 3 530,07	EC	Theory and Calculation of Contract Price Adjustment
	24-Feb	½ Day	SEIFSA	R 2 393,27	R 3 530,07	EC	Theory and Calculation of Contract Price Adjustment
	26-Feb	1 Day	BOKSBURG	R 2 961,67	R 3 703,58	IRLS	Water-tight dismissals - chairing disciplinary hearings
	26-27	2 Day	SEIFSA	R 4 488,78	R 5 606,76	HCS D	Supervisory Training Workshop (unit standard aligned)
28-Feb	½ Day	BOKSBURG	R 2 393,27	R 3 530,07	EC	Theory and Calculation of Contract Price Adjustment	
28-Feb	½ Day	SEIFSA	R 2 393,27	R 3 530,07	EC	Theory and Calculation of Contract Price Adjustment	

ALL PRICES EXCLUDE VAT

To book, please contact Thabiso Lebea (011) 298-9442
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or make an online booking www.seifsa.co.za

Dates and duration of workshops is subject to change