

stainless

steel



the journal of the southern africa stainless steel development association

ISSUE 1 2025

STAINLESS HORIZONS 2025

HOLLOWARE TO HARVEST:

**Sassda grows
demand**

CUTTING THROUGH CORROSION

**The hidden risk in laser-cut
stainless steel**



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Contents

1 Sassda Perspective
Forging ahead: stainless steel stands its ground in 2025

2 GPS Roundup
Market intelligence to boost business growth

5 State of the Stainless Steel Nation
South Africa's manufacturing crossroads: A path to revival

9 Sassda News
Holloware to Harvest: Sassda grows local demand

11 Sassda News
A pioneering event in materials engineering

13 Professional Profile
Turning opportunity into impact: A career in motion

15 Technical FAQ
The hidden corrosion risk in laser cut stainless steel

17 New Member Profile
Next-generation glass blasting media combats stainless steel corrosion

19 Projects with Potential
South Africa's new era of development and sustainability

21 Projects with Potential
Namibia's rise as a resource powerhouse

23 Focus Feature
Stainless steel in figures: a global and South African view for 2025

26 Member News Training
Sassda launches enhanced training programmes for industry growth

27 Member News
Eastern Cape Golf Day: A swinging success for industry collaboration

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Forging ahead: Stainless steel stands its ground in 2025

After the volatility of recent years, we have entered the new year with high hopes and a positive outlook. Welcome to the first issue of *Stainless Steel Magazine* for 2025 - we trust it will be the engaging and informative read you have come to expect!



In this edition, we provide insights into the state of the stainless steel industry and share encouraging statistics showing a definitive increase in stainless steel consumption in South Africa during 2024. After a challenging post-Covid recovery period, our industry has returned to pre-pandemic levels and Sassda is optimistic that we can finally put this global upheaval behind us. Our industry has also proven its resilience, navigating persistent electricity challenges with resourcefulness and emerging leaner and more efficient.

However, as one challenge subsides, other risks loom over the South African steel sector. This time, the threat stems from the international stage, where factors such as: diminishing U.S. aid, the spectre of increased US import tariffs and uncertainty surrounding South Africa's continued participation in AGOA, cast a shadow over the industry. To give credence to the importance of sustaining our sector during this crucial time, in this issue, we take a closer look at the risks of de-industrialisation and its potential impact on the country.

Investing in skills and industry growth

Overall, Sassda remains committed to promoting the use of stainless steel and increasing local conversion by adding value to primary stainless steel products. Encouragingly, statistics show strong growth in local, value addition during 2024. We believe that Sassda has played a critical role in this success.

Our training initiatives also continue to drive industry awareness and encourage the more efficient use of stainless steel. In 2024, Sassda saw strong attendance in all its training courses and, through our *Free Training for Members* policy, invested approximately R500 000 in industry training - more than double the R230 000 invested in 2023. Recognising the growing demand for training, we are expanding our course offerings, which you can read more about in this edition.

On a personal note, the *Passionate About Stainless* feature continues to be a highlight of the magazine, shining a well-deserved spotlight on the dedicated professionals shaping the future of our industry and this edition is no exception.

With that, we wish everyone a successful 2025. Remember, Sassda is just a click away as we remain committed to our mission of always being here to support you with all things stainless!

Michel Basson,
Sassda Executive Director

Market intelligence to boost business growth

Welcome to the highlights edition of the Sassda GPS eNewsletter, your go-to source for key developments shaping South Africa's business, industrial, and economic landscape. This selection prioritises the top stories from the latest issues ensuring you stay ahead with the most current insights.

Enjoy the read!

MiningIndaba: The value of synergy between Africa's mining and automotive sectors

Volkswagen Group South Africa MD Martiena Biene highlighted the symbiotic relationship between the mining and automotive industries at the 2025 Mining Indaba. She emphasised how raw material supply from mining underpins Africa's automotive sector and its potential for sustainable growth...[Read more](#)



South Africa's energy and transport reforms could create 500 000 jobs - World Bank

The World Bank's latest economic update indicates that South Africa could increase GDP growth by up to 3% in the medium term by addressing energy and freight logistics constraints. This could lead to the creation of approximately 500 000 new jobs...

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South Africa aims to attract more private investment into infrastructure

South Africa's National Treasury has announced plans to transform its approach to private-sector participation in public infrastructure projects. This includes developing a blended finance risk-sharing platform to build on its independent power-producer programme...

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Government inaction seals ArcelorMittal's fate

ArcelorMittal (Amsa) says it has no choice but to start winding down its long steel plants after failing to extract concessions from the government over the preferential treatment extended to competing scrap mills. These mills can purchase scrap steel at a 30% discount to international prices. The closure of Amsa's steel mills continues the country's prolonged deindustrialisation, which began in the 1980s. Amsa announced its plan to close its long steel business earlier this month but postponed the final decision pending discussions with the government...[Read more](#)



New and cheaper type of diesel coming to South Africa

A collaborative project involving Sasol, Anglo American, and De Beers aims to produce a more affordable renewable diesel using bio-based feedstocks. This initiative, announced at the 2025 Mining Indaba, seeks to lower fuel costs and reduce environmental impact...[Read more](#)

President Ramaphosa hints at New Energy Vehicle demand-side incentives

At SA Auto Week in Cape Town, President Cyril Ramaphosa acknowledged the local automotive industry's need to adapt to increasing demand for new energy vehicles (NEV). He stressed the importance of South Africa remaining part of the global supply chain for EVs...[Read more](#)



Cape Town has a taste for desalination

The City of Cape Town is seeking public input on its first permanent desalination plant in Paarden Eiland. This project forms part of the city's New Water Programme (NWP) aimed at ensuring long-term water security in response to climate change and population growth...[Read more](#)

The Small Business Ministry is a "waste of resources" and needs to be shut down

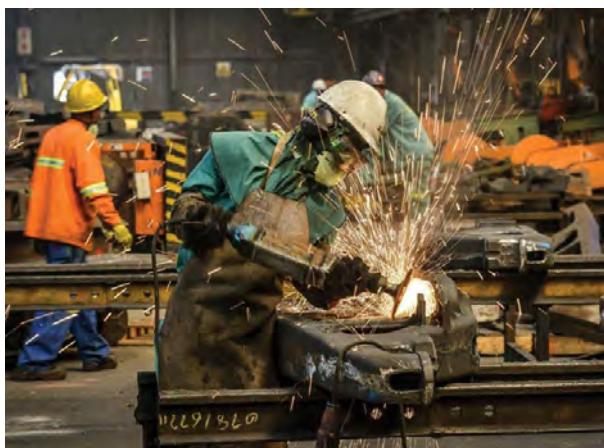
Speaking during a BizNews podcast Ann Bernstein, Executive Director of the Center for Development and Enterprise, critiques South Africa's Small Business Development Department and its lack of measurable impact. She argues that billions of rand are being wasted on ineffective government-run programs, calling for a shift towards private sector involvement in small business support...[Read more](#)



Renewable energy trading heats up in SA business circles

Renewable energy trading is gaining traction in South Africa, with businesses actively integrating clean power into commercial operations. Experts emphasise that while engineering plays a key role, financial and logistical aspects are crucial in making renewable energy a viable alternative...

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New Scaw steel mill to replace R4bn imports

Scaw Metals has invested R5-billion in the development of a new steel mill in Johannesburg, positioning the company to replace hundreds of thousands of tonnes of steel imports with locally manufactured products. The local manufacturer of long steel products, which competes with ArcelorMittal South Africa (Amsa) and many mini-mills and micro mills across the country, is likely to replace some R4bn worth of products that are currently imported....[Read more](#)

World inflation is at risk of rekindling with Trump's trade war

Moneyweb reports concerns over inflation risks due to escalating trade tensions between the US and China, following President Donald Trump's renewed tariff threats. Economic analysts now question whether global disinflation can hold in the face of potential counter measures....[Read more](#)



Good news for local business travellers

The Department of Transport has confirmed that low-cost airline Safair has been given 12 months to restructure its ownership to comply with aviation regulations. This decision ensures continued service while compliance issues are resolved...[Read more](#)



South Africa's manufacturing crossroads: A path to revival

South Africa's stainless steel and manufacturing industries face a pivotal moment. The potential closure of ArcelorMittal South Africa's (AMSA) long-products division is a major challenge, with the risk of job losses and further de-industrialisation. However, this crisis also presents an opportunity for renewal and strategic action. In fact with the right interventions, South Africa can turn the tide, reclaim its industrial strength, and secure a sustainable future for its workforce. This column from Sassda Executive Director, Michel Basson explores the challenges, the impact of AMSA's potential closure, and the urgent steps needed to revitalise the sector...

One of the most pressing concerns for the steel sector in South Africa is the potential closure of ArcelorMittal South Africa's long-products division, which could lead to the loss of up to 100 000 jobs. The shutdown of this major steel producer would not only impact direct employees but also disrupt supply chains and industries reliant on specialised steel products. Without immediate intervention, the consequences for South Africa's industrial landscape could be devastating. In essence this is an example of de-industrialisation.

De-industrialisation refers to the process of migrating an economy from being manufacturing-based economy to a service-based economy. This normally involves a decline in the importance, wellbeing and contribution of the manufacturing sector to the overall economy, often accompanied by a growth in the service sector. Amongst some there is still doubt that this process is taking place in South Africa. In broad terms de-industrialisation shows the following characteristics:

- 1. Decline of Manufacturing Employment:** This is indicated by a decrease in the number of jobs in the manufacturing sector. Any South African, if asked, would agree that this is true in the country.

- 2. Shift to Service-Based Economy:** An increase in the proportion of jobs and economic output in the service sector. This seems like the logical result of disappearing jobs in the manufacturing sector and this shift is also measurable in South Africa.
- 3. Closure of Industrial Facilities:** The shutdown or relocation of manufacturing plants and facilities. In the case of AMSA, this is exactly what is taking place and has started a number of years ago with the “mothballing” of the Saldanha plant.
- 4. Loss of Industrial Capacity:** A reduction in the ability to produce goods domestically. Many of our white goods were previously manufactured within the country but this position has reversed over the last two decades and is also illustrated very well by the lack of stainless steel finished goods still made in South Africa. Twenty years ago, South Africa still had the ability and capacity to manufacture more than 80% of local demand. This is no longer the case with the hollowware industry teetering on the edge of ruin for many years. The loss of capacity also implies the loss of skills. These skilled people now emigrate and become the competitor of our own industry.

The origins of de-industrialisation

The usual causes of de-industrialisation would be issues such as globalisation where products are now procured from countries with more competitive strategies. This

would be acceptable since honest competition can make one's own industry stronger and more competitive. However, local producers in South Africa need to contend with policies that include dumping and other unethical trade mechanisms.

Another reason for de-industrialisation could be technology which might give competitors an edge. It is sad to realise that investment in upgrading local technology to a competitive level will be slow and reluctant (even for local financiers) due to low levels of economic growth, crime and legislative and structural issues. In the world of stainless steel, we do not see that consumer trends influence stainless steel demand. The product is used for specific reasons that only stainless steel can satisfy. However, government policies still do not stimulate and encourage domestic manufacturing. This is clear from government's inability to solve the de-industrialisation issue, with AMSA being the immediate casualty of regulatory and policy failures at many levels.

A looming crisis or a chance for renewal?

The outcomes of de-industrialisation for the South African economy are already painfully visible when we look at the levels of unemployment and financial inequality in society. The closure of AMSA will have a strong economic impact in a region that cannot afford it. Another example is how South African international policies are now threatening future participation in AGOA. This would be a total calamity for the auto industry and industries such as mining and agriculture. The South African economy and consumers will be forced to rely more heavily on imports.



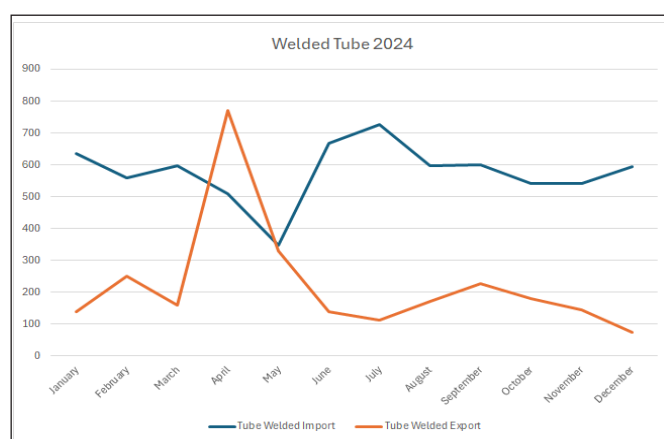
The battle to revive domestic manufacturing

To mitigate these effects, industry stakeholders have been calling for a well considered and all encompassing metals sector industrial policy. In 2018 the Steel Master Plan was devised to address these issues as a strategy to promote local production, increase demand, and encourage investment in the stainless steel industry.

Unfortunately, this initiative, albeit strongly supported and driven by the private sector, is currently suffering from a severe lack of forward momentum. In light of this, some of the industry-related, private sector partners are forging ahead with some good initiatives, not willing to wait longer for direction from government and the relevant ministers.

The industrial partnerships and cooperation between private sector entities contributes vastly to the electricity supply issues of the past few years. Sassta believes that the same can be attained in the stainless steel sector when we surround ourselves with likeminded peer organisations with a will and positive attitude to make things work in South Africa. This attitude seems to be working, since the local consumption of stainless steel that was locally converted and added value to, has grown substantially with 53% in 2024 after a 16% decline in 2023.

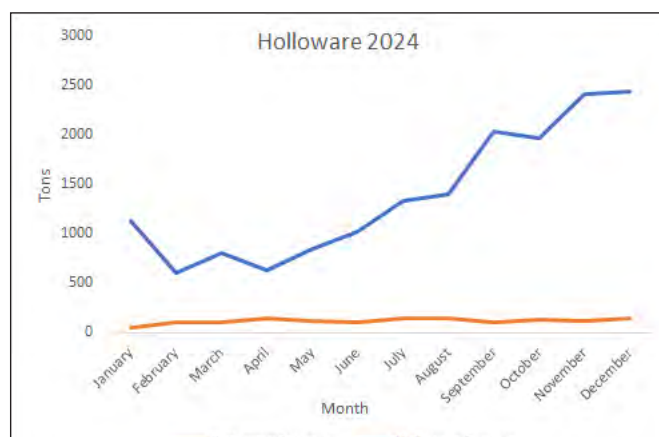
This is slowly putting the local stainless steel industry on a path of recovery after more than a decade of steady decline. This is especially noteworthy since local production is still under constraints due to capped exports to the EU. Some of the import/export statistics for 2024 illustrates some of the areas that can be developed for local manufacturing. Not only finished goods, but semi-finished goods and products that can be seen as secondary product such as tube, pipe and other long products.

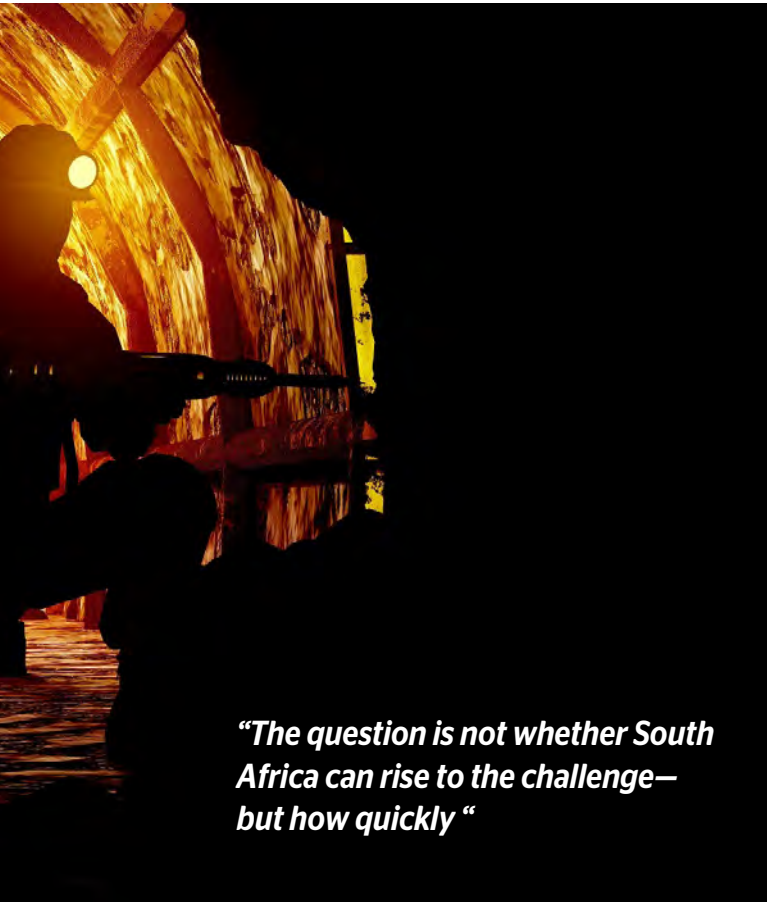


Most of the welded tube made in South Africa is utilised in application such as the auto-industry, food processing and structural. The export of tube is mainly by the auto-industry in the form of exhaust components and the like. The South African auto industry is highly competitive and makes use of modern technology. However, it still cannot compete against



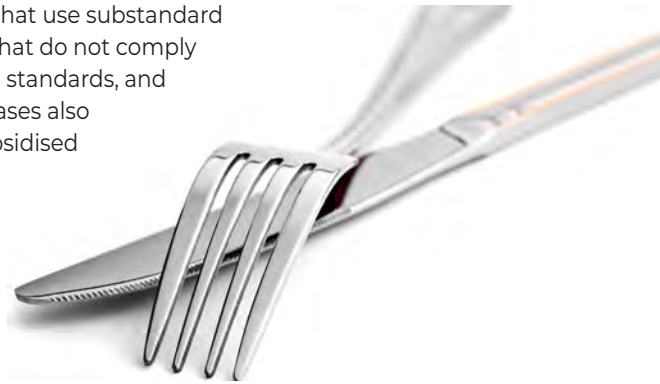
the imported product due to pricing issues. Given a level playing field, these local producers could be competitive with other global competitors. Unfortunately, the playing field is not level at all. When the pricing of imported product is analysed, it becomes clear that the local producers compete against subsidised product from abroad. This trend has been reported to dtic, including ITAC. Unfortunately, there seems to be an atmosphere of general reluctance to address these critical issues for a major foreign currency generator in our industry, and the problem gets kicked around with no solution in sight.





Getting a handle on knives and forks

A similar scenario is playing out in the holloware sector. Holloware includes products such as cookware, pots, pans and other cooking utensils. As mentioned earlier, South Africa had the capacity and technology twenty years ago to be not only a market leader and exporter of these items but had the ability to supply more than 80% of local demand. This is an industry in which around three to five jobs per ton can be created in the value chain thus a critical sector for job creation for skilled and semi-skilled employment. More than 16 000 tons were imported during 2024 compared to 1417 tons being exported. Once again the few local suppliers able to service the market have to compete on another slanted playing surface against products that use substandard material, that do not comply with SABS standards, and in many cases also clearly subsidised in some form or another.



Seizing the opportunity for growth

On the positive side, Sassda has been working with Columbus Stainless and other industry partners to link major retailers with South African producers. The revival of this industry will not take place overnight, but will rather be a slow process focussed on limited items which will allow local producers gain experience and capacity to tackle the broader market. However, it remains outside the Sassda's domain or that of private industry to administrate and initiate regulations to level the playing fields. In the face of this, the need for a sharper focus on import tariffs has never been more important. However, the decision ultimately lies with the government, but unfortunately there has been little movement on the issue. This uncertainty has made it difficult for manufacturers to plan for the future, further hindering growth in the sector

The sector needs to be positive and proactive and as part of this drive Sassda is trying to create new potential markets for local stainless steel. Innovation in the South African stainless steel industry has been in existence since the early years when one of the most notable achievements in the global industry was developed namely 3CR12. This stainless steel grade was pioneered by the local mill, Columbus Stainless as far back as the 1980s. This material is currently used in various industries, including rail, transport, and construction. The full potential of this cost-effective replacement for coated steel products has not been fully developed and rectifying this will be a Sassda key focus during 2025.





Sassda's push to boost local stainless steel

Sassda is ramping up efforts to strengthen South Africa's stainless steel industry, focusing on revitalising holloware manufacturing and supporting vineyards. By collaborating with major retailers and industry players, Sassda aims to boost local production, reduce imports and enforce higher quality standards

"During the past five years Sassda has had a special focus on creating demand for locally made stainless steel products. While its work in terms of localising beer kegs and hollowware is still continuing. During the past good progress on finding agricultural applications for 3CR12 as alternative to coated mild steel products. This process also led to unique and innovative solutions for vineyards and orchards."

Revitalising the holloware sector

South Africa's holloware industry - producing pots, pans, cutlery, and serving ware - has struggled against cheap, low-quality imports. This has led to declining local production and job losses. In response, Sassda Market Intelligence Specialist **Tebogo Nkwe**, is pushing to localise stainless steel manufacturing through strategic partnerships.

Since 2021, Sassda has worked with the Department of Trade, Industry, and Competition (dtic) and retailers such as Shoprite/Checkers, the Lewis Group, and Elite Star Trading Africa. The goal is to connect these retailers with local manufacturers who can produce high-quality stainless steel goods that meet South African Bureau of Standards (SABS) requirements.

One major hurdle is getting the buy-in or support from retailers to localise these products. Sassda is collaborating with many entities such as Proudly SA to ensure we grow the localisation demand in South Africa.

To accelerate this localisation push, Sassda has proposed:

- **Consumer Awareness Campaigns:** Educating buyers on the benefits of local stainless steel products.
- **Retailer Training:** Guiding procurement teams on sourcing quality stainless steel goods locally.
- **Collaboration:** Collaborating with other sectors who share the same vision and mission.
- **Capacity Audits:** These have been completed and have assessed local manufacturers' capabilities to scale up production.

These initiatives aim to revive the holloware sector, boost jobs, and strengthen South Africa's economy.

As a result, the company's product is already in use by major industrial clients, including those in the chemical processing, food-grade manufacturing, and architectural sectors, where the aesthetics and longevity of stainless steel surfaces are critical.

Stainless steel's role in vineyards

While Sassda's engagement with vineyards is more indirect, the association recognises stainless steel's vital role in winemaking. Stainless steel fermentation tanks, storage vessels, and processing equipment are essential for hygiene, durability, and maintaining wine purity.

South Africa's renowned wine regions - Stellenbosch, Franschhoek, and Paarl - rely on stainless steel for top-tier production. Leading estates like Delaire Graff and



Boschendal have embraced modern stainless steel solutions to enhance quality and efficiency.

The road ahead

Sassda remains committed to fostering a robust local stainless steel industry through key partnerships and

strategic initiatives. The association's main objectives include:

- **Expanding Local Production:** Reducing import reliance and strengthening domestic manufacturing.
- **Ensuring Quality Compliance:** Collaborating with regulatory bodies to enforce strict stainless steel standards.
- **Driving Industry Growth:** Exploring new markets and applications to create more opportunities for local manufacturers.

Through these efforts, Sassda is unlocking the full potential of South Africa's stainless steel sector - driving innovation, quality, and economic growth.



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A pioneering event in materials engineering

Inaugural Root Cause Analysis Conference Africa 2025

Cape Town, South Africa, is set to host a groundbreaking event in materials engineering - the Inaugural Root Cause Analysis Conference Africa 2025. Scheduled from March 11-14, 2025, at the prestigious Vineyard Hotel, this conference, organised by One Eighty Materials Engineering Solutions, will be a pivotal gathering for professionals across engineering, legal, insurance, and asset management industries.

Sasda is excited to partner with this event, reinforcing its commitment to advancing best practices in stainless steel applications. A key highlight will be the focus on laser welding, an essential technique in stainless steel fabrication that ensures precision, strength, and durability while reducing material distortion and contamination.

Why root cause analysis matters

Materials engineering has evolved significantly over the last century, transitioning from traditional materials like steel to innovative composites, polymers, and advanced alloys. These advancements have reshaped industries such as aerospace, marine, and oil and gas. However, despite these innovations, failures in material applications due to improper processing, corrosion, and inadequate quality control remain common.

The conference seeks to address these issues by fostering discussions on failure prevention, materials selection, and regulatory compliance.

Conference highlights

This four-day event will feature keynote addresses, expert panel discussions, interactive workshops, and exhibitions. Some of the key areas of focus include:

- **Advancements in Materials Engineering** - Breakthroughs in novel materials, high-performance polymers, and sustainable materials.
- **Failure Analysis and Investigation** - Effective methodologies for analysing material failures with real-world case studies.
- **Corrosion and Wear Protection** - Strategies to enhance material durability in extreme conditions.
- **Quality Control and Manufacturing Processes** - The role of advanced manufacturing techniques such as additive manufacturing and precision machining.
- **Legal and Insurance Perspectives** - Insights into regulatory frameworks, litigation case studies, and insurance risk management.

Keynote speakers and panellists

Renowned experts in engineering, law, and materials science will share their insights at the conference. Notable speakers include:

- Dr. Robert Ochola, a PhD in Materials Engineering, discussing Africa's industrial landscape and economic integration.
- Eben Snyman, a legal expert specialising in engineering-related litigation and risk assessment.
- Panellists from leading organisations such as ABL Energy and Marine Consultants, Bureau Veritas, and Norton Rose Fulbright Maritime Division will contribute to the discussions.

Specialised workshops

The conference will also feature hands-on workshops to provide attendees with technical expertise:

- **Laser Welding and Cleaning Workshop (March 11, 2025)** - Exploring the benefits of precision welding and environmentally friendly cleaning technologies. Laser welding plays a critical role in stainless steel fabrication, offering superior weld quality, enhanced corrosion resistance, and minimal heat-affected zones, making it a key technology in high-performance applications.
- **SEISS Microscopy Workshop (March 12, 2025)** - Covering advanced imaging and analysis techniques for materials science applications.

Networking and exhibition opportunities

As global industries move towards greener and more. The event will provide unparalleled networking opportunities, with an exhibition hall open to the public and showcasing cutting-edge materials and technology solutions. Companies and industry leaders can also explore sponsorship and exhibition opportunities to maximise brand visibility.

Who should attend?

This conference is ideal for materials engineers, reliability professionals, quality assurance specialists, legal advisors, insurance risk assessors, procurement managers, and students seeking industry exposure.

Registration

Interested participants can register for the conference and workshops, with special rates available for students.

For more information, visit One Eighty Materials Engineering Solutions' website or contact the organising committee. Don't miss this opportunity to be part of Africa's leading materials engineering and failure analysis conference!

To find out more, check pricing, and register here: <https://www.one-eighty-degrees.com/root-cause-analysis-conference/>



Turning opportunity into Impact: A career in motion

Business goes beyond strategy - it involves vision, relationships, and the ability to adapt in a constantly evolving landscape. EMVAfrica Business Development and Marketing Manager **Bradley Klassen**, has built his career by focusing on identifying opportunities, fostering strong client relationships, and supporting sustainable growth. Here, we speak to Bradley about his journey, the lessons he's learned, and his insights into South Africa's stainless steel landscape...

Please provide some background on where you come from, your school and tertiary education and where you first started working?

I come from a strong sales and marketing background, with a passion for strategy and business development. I finished my high school career in the UK and came home to complete my BCom Degree in Marketing and went on to earn a Postgraduate Honours degree in Business Administration through the University of South Africa. My career started in junior external sales, my job was to handle the smaller clients that the senior sales reps could not get to, this is where I learned the fundamentals of customer engagement, problem-solving, and relationship-building -



skills that continue to shape my approach to business today. There is no such thing as smaller clients, I believe in growing with my clients, and that's what I did.

What are some of the key work experiences or projects, that you have worked on that have challenged you but also helped to shape your skills, experience and career advancement?

Over the years, I've worked on several challenging yet rewarding projects that have honed my skills in sales, marketing, and business development. In sales a highlight for me is tapping into new territory or the development of new product lines, watching it go from inception to generating revenue for the organisation. A key focus has been leveraging marketing channels to bridge the gap between prospects and clients, ensuring a seamless customer journey. I've also been involved in strategic growth initiatives, helping expand market share and build brand equity. Leading projects that required creative problem-solving and cross-functional collaboration has significantly contributed to my professional growth. Under the leadership of the senior management team at EMVAfrica, I find there is always opportunity for more experience and to learn. No one man is an island, so having a solid team is what creates success. I love being part of a team, aligning our efforts to culminate in our goals being achieved.



How would you describe a typical day in your current position? What are your key focus areas and areas of expertise?

As a Marketing and Business Development Manager at EMVAfrica, my role is dynamic and multifaceted. A typical day involves developing and executing marketing strategies, identifying growth opportunities, engaging with stakeholders, and ensuring our value proposition aligns with market needs. I also spend time analysing market trends, working on strategic partnerships, and optimising our marketing channels to enhance customer experience.

What would you say are the biggest i. work and ii. life lessons you have learnt thus far in your life?

- Work Lesson: Relationships drive business success. No matter how great a product or service is, strong client relationships and trust are the foundation of long-term success.
- Life Lesson: Adaptability is key. Change is constant, and the ability to pivot, learn, and grow in the face of challenges is essential for both personal and professional success.

How do you hope to take your career to even greater heights - what are your plans for the future?

I am always looking for ways to take my career and company to the next level. My focus is on expanding market reach, leveraging digital marketing for enhanced customer

engagement, and driving strategic growth initiatives. Long-term, I aim to play a pivotal role in shaping the future of EMVAfrica, ensuring innovation and sustainability in the stainless steel industry.

At a more macro level...In your opinion what are the biggest challenges the South African stainless steel industry currently faces and what are some of the innovative ways these can be overcome?

One of the biggest challenges is market volatility due to fluctuating raw material prices and global economic conditions. In addition, the local manufacturing sector faces pressure from imported products. To overcome these challenges, the industry must invest in local value addition, embrace digital transformation, and foster strong supplier-client partnerships to create more resilient supply chains.

What do you consider the most exciting innovations/product developments happening in stainless steel right now and what sectors hold the greatest potential for the use of stainless steel in the future?

The use of stainless steel in renewable energy, particularly in solar and hydrogen applications, is an exciting development. In addition, industries like food processing, medical, and water treatment are showing increasing demand for high-performance stainless steel solutions. The future lies in sustainable and high-tech applications that enhance efficiency and durability.



The hidden corrosion risk in laser-cut stainless steel



There is no such thing as a bad question - only opportunities for deeper understanding. In Sassda's training sessions, participants from all levels of the industry regularly raise insightful queries, some of which may seem simple at first but often lead to a clearer grasp of complex, technical concepts. These questions not only benefit those in the immediate training environment but also provide valuable learning for students and professionals across the stainless steel value chain. Over time, we've noticed that certain questions come up repeatedly during and after our courses. In this new series we aim to explore some of the most common and thought-provoking questions we receive...

The question? *Why do the shiny cutting edges of laser-cut parts corrode preferentially?*

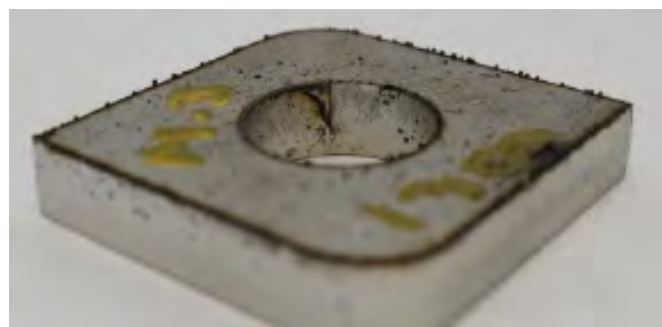
The answer...

This is not only a frequently asked question during our training courses but a common topic when assisting the industry with technical issues. In this particular instance, the question arose from repeated instances where stainless steel signage for outdoor applications in coastal areas - ordered from reputable laser-cutting service providers - began to show localised corrosion near and around laser-cut surfaces.

In all cases, the material used was the austenitic Grade 304, which generally has high corrosion resistance. While Grade 304 might not be the best choice for coastal environments, the fact that corrosion occurs preferentially near the cutting surfaces, is an interesting phenomenon.

The returned pieces were tested, and the material grade was confirmed. A photo sent later, by the student who first raised the question, showed a smooth (2B) finish, eliminating surface finish as a contributing factor to corrosion. This is not an isolated problem; it occurs because the cutting surfaces are not passivated, making them more prone to corrosion. The student countered that the surfaces must have been passivated because they appeared shiny upon receipt of the finished product.

When stainless steel is laser-cut, it undergoes a thermal process. The laser beam heats the material to its melting point, although in a highly localised area. This creates a narrow Heat-Affected Zone (HAZ), which is difficult to detect with the naked eye but follows the same principles as



broader heat-affected zones - such as those seen in welding. Typically, areas that exhibit discoloration have been heat-affected and covered by a heat oxide layer. These oxide layers reflect light differently, creating the colourful bands sometimes seen on welds.

The heat oxides are depleted in chromium, which can reduce the chromium content in affected areas below the critical 10.5% threshold required for stainless steel to remain corrosion-resistant. As a result, these areas behave more like carbon steel and become susceptible to rust. While welding typically makes heat-affected zones more visible, the rapid movement of a laser beam makes this effect less noticeable.

In addition, the laser-cutting process employs pressurised cutting gasses to assist with dross removal and enhance cutting quality. When an inert gas, such as nitrogen, is used, the cutting takes place in a protected environment, preventing oxidation. This explains why no visible colour band appears. However, not all material escapes chromium depletion, making the affected areas vulnerable to corrosion. As corrosion sets in, iron oxide deposits on the surface, causing discoloration.

Dross formation and its role in corrosion

Another factor influencing corrosion in laser-cut stainless steel is dross formation. Cutting gasses help to minimise dross formation, but some dross is always present, even if it is not visible to the naked eye.

Dross refers to the oxidized metal residue that forms on the cut edge due to the heat generated by the laser beam interacting with the atmosphere. It consists of partially melted metal debris that solidifies on the cut edge, often appearing as a rough, oxidized layer.

During laser cutting, intense heat melts the metal along the cutting line. If the molten material is not fully ejected, it resolidifies as dross. Similar to the HAZ, dross formation can contribute to corrosion through chromium depletion. The dross layer can become enriched in chromium oxides, reducing the chromium content in the underlying stainless steel and compromising its corrosion resistance.

Dross also creates surface irregularities, increasing the exposed area for moisture and corrosive agents. Some of the dross expelled from the cutting surface may adhere to adjacent areas while still in a liquid state. This penetration of the passive layer can create galvanic corrosion cells, accelerating corrosion.

Optimising laser-cutting parameters - such as cutting speed, laser power, and assist gas pressure - can help to reduce dross formation. Proper mechanical removal of dross after cutting further minimizes the risk of corrosion.

Key takeaways

- Not all shiny surfaces are truly stainless. Do not assume that any heat-treated surface is fully passivated, if it has not received the proper treatment.
- Minimise dross formation and remove any dross present to eliminate chromium-depleted areas that could trigger corrosion.
- Prevent unnecessary costs associated with removing, re-cutting, or treating affected products by taking proactive measures immediately after cutting.
- The moral of the story...this question was not ridiculous - it was Simply Brilliant!

Did you know?

The Southern Africa Stainless Steel Development Association (Sassda) supports industry growth by providing expert technical advice on fabrication, material selection, corrosion resistance, and failure analysis. Members have access to a comprehensive reference library, technical seminars, and training courses. This service is free for queries requiring less than half a day, with additional support available if needed. Sassda also maintains strong links with national and international technical institutions to stay at the forefront of global stainless steel advancements.

Click here to make use of this service
<https://sassda.co.za/about-stainless/technical-enquiry/>
 OR email mankabe@sassda.co.za to find out more about our training courses.

Next generation glass blasting media combats stainless steel corrosion

Pure Glass Media joins Sassda to drive sustainable innovation in stainless steel surface preparation

South African company Pure Glass Media has recently become a member of the Southern Africa Stainless Steel Development Association (Sassda), marking a significant step in its mission to promote sustainable surface preparation solutions within the industry. As the sales and distribution arm of Reclite SA, which specialises in recycling electronic waste into industrial materials, Pure Glass Media aims to use its Sassda membership to engage with key industry players, drive awareness, and advocate for the adoption of locally manufactured, recycled glass-based blasting media.

Pure Glass Media Operations Director **Louise Cousins** says, "Many in the industry are still unaware that glass media can be sourced locally and that it provides a viable alternative to traditional abrasives. By joining Sassda, we hope to bridge this knowledge gap and encourage more businesses to consider sustainable options for their stainless steel surface preparation needs."

A shift in stainless steel blasting practices

Stainless steel finishing often relies on abrasive blasting methods using materials such as imported glass beads and steel shot as well as chemicals to clean surfaces following blasting. However, the supply chain for these materials can be unreliable, with disruptions caused by shipping delays, rising costs, and environmental concerns.

Cousins adds, "Glass media for blasting has traditionally been imported, making it both expensive and subject to logistical delays. By manufacturing it locally, we ensure greater availability while significantly reducing the carbon footprint associated with transport and mining."

Manufacturing from electronic waste

One of the defining features of the Reclite SA product, is its origin. The glass used in the blasting media is sourced from electronic waste, including materials such as old light bulbs and, glass used in electronics. This process



aligns with the principles of the circular economy, reducing landfill waste and creating a closed-loop recycling system.

The recycling and reprocessing of electronic waste into industrial-grade glass media is an emerging sector in South Africa, addressing one of the fastest-growing waste streams globally.

Applications in stainless steel and beyond

While glass-based media is already well known in the stainless steel sector for its role in creating a clean, non-contaminated surface, the availability of locally produced media could encourage wider adoption. The angular shape of Reclite's blasting media differentiates it from traditional glass beads; offering greater efficiency in surface profiling while maintaining a non-hazardous working environment for operators.

Reclite SA MD **Steffen Schröder** says the key advantage of the company's product, is that it does not embed contaminants into stainless steel surfaces - a common concern when using steel shot. The non-reactive nature of glass ensures that stainless steel surfaces remain corrosion-resistant, reducing the need for chemical passivation processes after blasting.

"In stainless steel applications, one of the biggest concerns is contamination. Traditional steel shot, for example, can lead to microscopic deposits that increase the risk of corrosion. Our product eliminates that risk while maintaining the high-quality finish industries expect," explains Schröder.

As a result, the company's product is already in use by major industrial clients, including those in the chemical processing, food-grade manufacturing, and architectural sectors, where the aesthetics and longevity of stainless steel surfaces are critical.

Future growth and expansion

With South Africa's industrial sector placing increasing emphasis on sustainability and cost efficiency, Pure Glass Media sees potential for further expansion, including into filtration media for swimming pools and industrial water treatment. The company is also exploring export opportunities, though its current focus remains on establishing a strong local market presence.

"In the long run, we aim to make glass media a standard in the industry, rather than an alternative," says Cousins. "By proving its effectiveness and economic benefits, we believe we can shift industry perceptions and contribute to a more sustainable manufacturing landscape."

Meanwhile, Reclite SA continues to refine its glass processing technology to further optimise production efficiency. According to Schröder, the company has developed specialised machinery that allows it to process large quantities of e-waste glass with minimal energy consumption, reinforcing its commitment to innovation in sustainable materials.

"We've gone through several iterations of our glass processing equipment to make it as

efficient and precise as possible. We now have a system that can process high volumes while maintaining the specific grain sizes required for different industrial applications. The goal is to keep improving and expanding our capabilities to support more sectors in need of sustainable alternatives," he says.

Turning waste into a valuable resource

As global industries move towards greener and more cost-effective solutions, the development of locally sourced, recycled blasting media could mark a turning point for South Africa's stainless steel industry. Through its membership with Sassda, Pure Glass Media is positioned to educate, engage, and drive awareness within the sector, helping manufacturers and processors explore more sustainable and efficient surface preparation solutions.

By collaborating with industry partners and leveraging innovative recycling technologies, Pure Glass Media and Reclite SA are paving the way for a more circular economy in industrial manufacturing - one where waste becomes a valuable resource, rather than a burden.





South Africa's new era of development and sustainability

South Africa is witnessing an unprecedented wave of infrastructure and energy projects, with investments spanning luxury real estate, renewable energy, and industrial development. These projects aim to reshape the country's urban landscapes, strengthen energy resilience, and enhance economic growth...

Olympus Sandton: redefining urban living

In the heart of Sandton, Johannesburg, the Olympus Sandton is emerging as a landmark mixed-use development. Valued at over R2-Billion, the project will feature two grand towers housing more than 400 luxury apartments, alongside premium office and retail spaces. This visionary project is set to transform Sandton into South Africa's premier neighbourhood, integrating residential, commercial, and leisure spaces seamlessly. Designed by a collaboration between Clarke Hopkins Clarke (Australia) and South African architects, Olympus Sandton focuses on sustainability and modern design, positioning itself as a future-forward urban destination.

"Olympus Sandton is redefining urban living in Johannesburg, setting a new standard for mixed-use luxury developments."

Riversdale Solar Energy Project: powering a greener future

The Riversdale Solar Project, backed by the Western Cape Government, is another major stride toward sustainable energy. This 10 MW solar photovoltaic (PV) system will generate approximately 15 million kilowatt-hours annually, supported by an advanced Battery Energy Storage System



projects with potential

Suiso's Mega Coal-to-Fertiliser Plant: industrial expansion in Mpumalanga

Suiso Company is making a massive \$1.7-Billion investment in a coal-to-fertiliser plant in Kriel, Mpumalanga. Set to begin operations in 2029, this 900-hectare facility will produce 1.5 million tons of nitrogen-based fertilisers annually. Additionally, the project will generate 234 000 tons of zero-sulphur blue methanol per year, promoting cleaner industrial practices. With the feasibility study completed, the construction phase is expected to commence in February 2025, positioning Mpumalanga as a key player in the global fertiliser market.



(BESS) capable of storing 10 MW-hours of energy. By reducing reliance on Eskom, the project promises affordable, renewable energy to the Riversdale region, fostering economic growth and job creation. The initiative aligns with South Africa's national drive to diversify its energy mix and increase renewable power generation.

“The Riversdale Solar Project marks a significant step towards South Africa’s clean energy future, reducing reliance on Eskom.”

Source: AfricaHouse www.africainfo.co.za



Namibia's rise as a resource powerhouse

Namibia is experiencing a surge in mining, oil, and renewable energy projects, each playing a crucial role in the country's economic transformation...

Uis Andrada Mining Lithium Project: a step toward global lithium supply

The Uis Lithium Mine, operated by Andrada Mining, is one of Namibia's most significant mining ventures. Located in the Erongo region, this scalable project is strategically positioned near Walvis Bay, facilitating efficient exports. Holding approximately 138 million tonnes of lithium ore at a 0.73% Li_2O grade, the mine is set to become a key supplier in the global lithium market. However, the environmental impacts of lithium production - water depletion, habitat loss, and carbon emissions - remain critical concerns that will require sustainable management.

Naingopo Oil Exploration: unlocking Namibia's energy potential

In a groundbreaking move, Recon Africa has initiated drilling at the Naingopo exploration well, located within the Damara Fold Belt. The project aims to uncover 3.1 billion barrels of oil or 18 trillion cubic feet of natural gas, making it one of Namibia's most promising hydrocarbon ventures. Drilling commenced in July 2024 and concluded in November 2024, reaching a depth of 4 184 meters. The next phase involves analysing subsurface data and assessing hydrocarbon presence. While this project could significantly impact

Namibia's energy sector, environmental concerns such as ecosystem disruption and water contamination necessitate responsible exploration and regulatory oversight.

"The Naingopo oil exploration project has the potential to unlock over 3 billion barrels of oil, reshaping Namibia's energy landscape. competitive manufacturing future."





projects with potential

Sagittarius-1X, the latter having already yielded a hydrocarbon discovery by Rhino Resources. This discovery marks a pivotal moment for Namibia's energy industry, positioning the Orange Basin as a key oil and gas hub for future development.

High-Grade copper and gold discovery at K17 prospect

Great Quest Gold Ltd. has reported exceptional copper and gold assay results from the K17 prospect in Namibia. Test results indicate 4.47% copper, over 10 g/t gold, and 13.4 g/t silver, pointing to a promising Iron Oxide Copper-Gold (IOCG) mineralizing system. This discovery further strengthens Namibia's position as a globally competitive resource-rich nation.

Damara Copper Project: advancing Namibia's mining sector

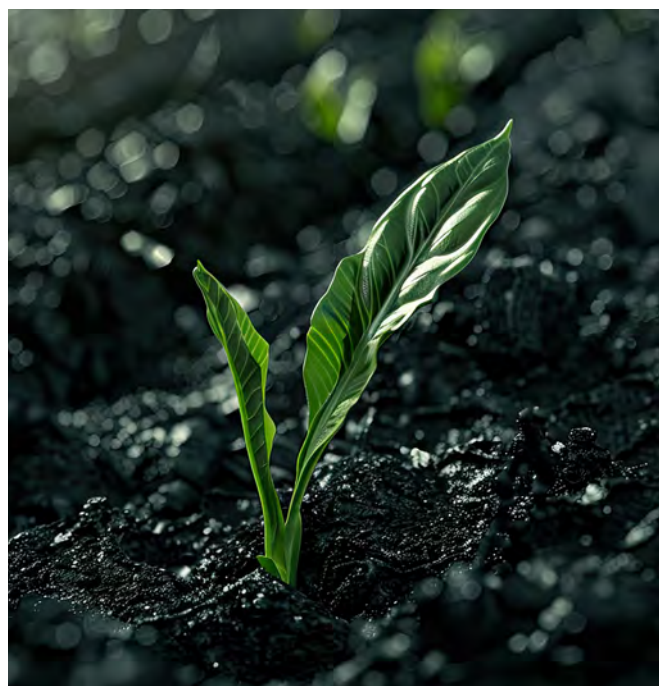
The Damara Copper Project, situated in the Kalahari Copper Belt, is progressing through crucial early-stage developments. South32 and Noronex have partnered to explore the area, with initial drilling having taken place in October 2024. The project is structured in phases:

1. Exploration Phase (2024): Geological surveys and drilling begin.
2. Feasibility Studies (2025-2026): Economic viability assessments.
3. Regulatory Approvals (2026-2027): Government permits and clearances.
4. Construction (2027-2029): Mining infrastructure development.
5. Production Start (2030): Full-scale copper extraction begins.

“With high-grade copper and gold discoveries, Namibia strengthens its position as a global resource powerhouse.”

Orange Basin: a new frontier for oil exploration

Namibia's Orange Basin is set to experience 10 high-impact exploratory wells in 2025, solidifying its status as a major oil prospect. Noteworthy wells include Olympe-1X and



Skorpion zinc mine's renewable energy expansion

To boost renewable energy adoption, Namibia's Mines Ministry has approved the implementation of a 330 MW solar photovoltaic (PV) project. This includes a 100 MW solar plant dedicated to Skorpion Zinc Mine, ensuring a sustainable energy supply independent of the Eskom grid. The project is expected to create 2,000 jobs during construction and 800 permanent positions post-completion, marking a significant step in Namibia's commitment to cleaner energy solutions.

Source: AfricaHouse www.africainfo.co.za



Stainless Steel in figures: A global and South African view for 2025

Stainless steel has become an integral part of modern society, and a future without it is impossible to imagine. It is used in the provision of food, clean water, pharmaceuticals and medical care, chemical products, transport, and safety. It is therefore no surprise that stainless steel has maintained a strong growth curve since its inception just under 120 years ago.

The demand for stainless steel remains positive, resulting in an annual compound growth rate in the world's melt shop production of 5.72%. The remarkable characteristic of the global growth of stainless steel is that it has remained between 5% and 6% annually, and has been constant since the late 1950s.

Most of this material is being produced in China. The Chinese share of world production has increased steadily from 12.9% in 2002 to 51.9% in 2015, with the current Chinese production share standing at 62.8%. The European Union's share was 34.8% in 2002 but halved to around 17.3% in 2015. Currently, production in the EU accounts for approximately 10.1% of world production.

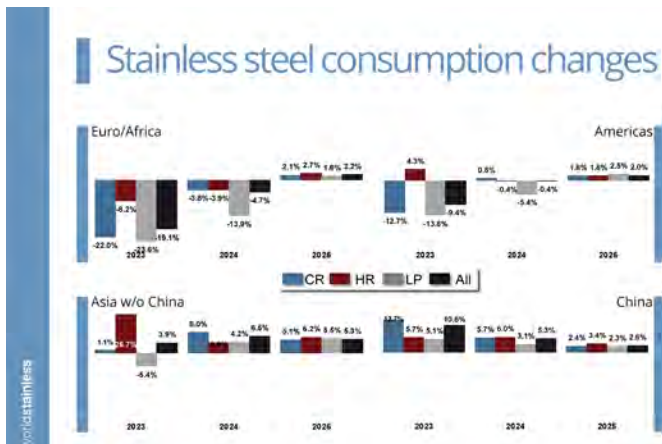
Stainless steel continues to outperform the rest of the major competitor metals, growing at a rate of more than 5% annually, which is more than double the growth of carbon steel, lead, and zinc individually.

There is also always higher demand for stainless steel than the tonnage used or consumed, however, the forecast for demand in the Americas remains flat for the future. Fortunately a slightly higher demand is expected for the Europe and Africa regions during 2025. The actual rate of projected consumption in these regions also appears stronger than that of the Americas for the next few years.

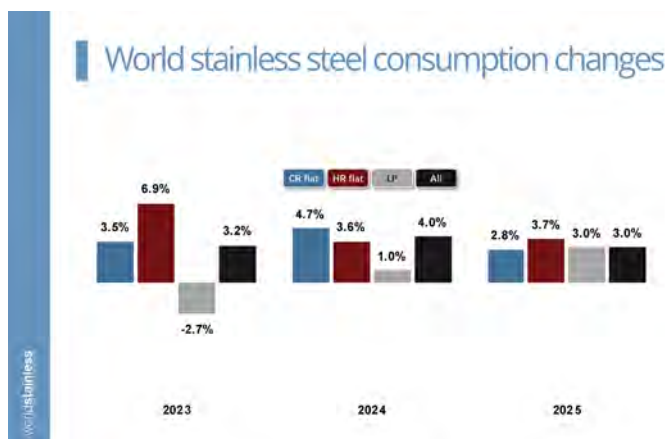
There is a strong similarity in the demand and expected consumption of Asia (excluding China) and the Americas.

The expected rate of demand and consumption in China will be double that of other regions over the next two years. This alters the global forecast into a positive global outlook, but might be unattainable for regions outside China.

The following graphics provide more detail on the forms of stainless steel being consumed at a global level. Global consumption figures highlight the decrease in hot-rolled flat products, with a forecast of lateral movement for 2025. Long products are making a good recovery from a slump in 2023. The overall consumption of all forms at a global level remains stable within the 3% to 4% range.



Across global regions, there was negative growth in all forms during 2023, except in China. During 2024, all regions except China saw an improvement in consumption across all forms. It is also forecasted that this trend will continue at a reduced rate into 2025.

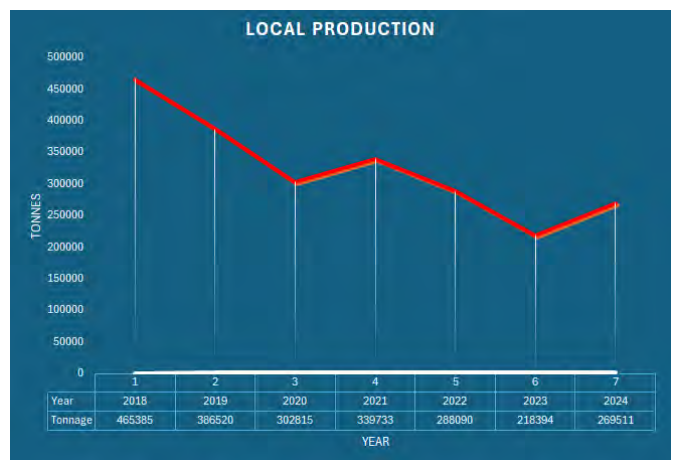


The European and African regions can expect reasonable growth across all forms. While South Africa's contribution to stainless steel consumption in the Euro/Africa region is marginal, it is hoped that this trend will be reflected locally. The statistics for the region up to 2024 correlate well with local statistics, giving Sassda good reason to believe that consumption growth will continue in 2025. This is underwritten by the fact that Sassda sources its data from

various organisations, including the South African Iron and Steel Institute, the South African Revenue Service (SARS), and Columbus Stainless.

Local production is driven by exports to the European Union but remains severely restricted by the protective measures imposed by the EU on steel supply into the region. In 2022, local production was recorded at 288 090 tons, which declined to 218 394 tons in 2023. It is encouraging to report that local production ended 2024 on a positive note, yielding a total of 269 511 tons for the year. However, this still represents only about 30% of production capacity.

Local Production



In 2022, imports were recorded at 202 578 tons, declining to 147 886 tons in 2023. There was a substantial increase in imports during 2024, with a total of 176 025 tons. However, this figure still falls short of the 2022 level and remains significantly lower than the 353 093 tons imported in 2018.

Imports



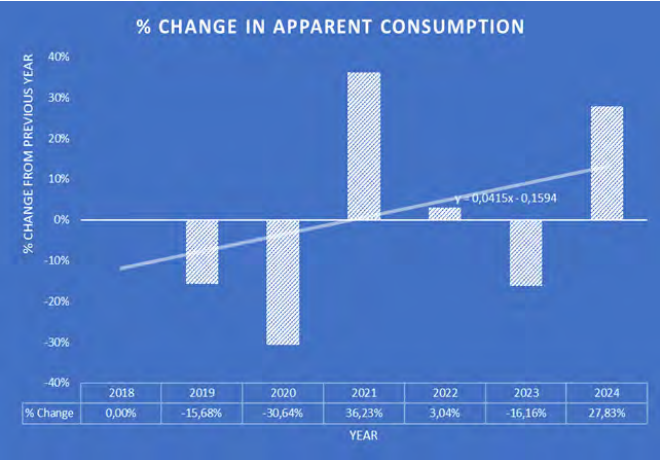
The export tonnage for 2022 was recorded at 42 884 tons, declining to 37144 tons in 2023. The total export volume for 2024 was 44 124 tons, which is close to the 2018 figure of 44 102 tons.

Exports



The 2018 figure represents a very low baseline for the graph, reflecting the state of the industry after the so-called “nine wasted years” on the political front, which impacted the economy. This downward trend continued into 2019, with the effects of the pandemic and electricity supply shortages evident in the figures up to 2023. The upward swing in 2021 can be attributed to the industry restocking after COVID-19. The subsequent growth in 2022 was welcomed, as it was triple that of South Africa’s GDP growth. However, the industry was disappointed to see yet another decline of 16% in 2023. In 2024, the tables finally turned, with strong growth to 137 610 tons, exceeding the 2019 figure of 131 870 tons. There is good reason to believe that this growth will continue, albeit at a potentially lower rate.

Apparent Consumption



It is interesting to note that although local production is declining due to exports, the local consumption of stainless steel materials has shown a good recovery. The higher local demand, especially during the latter part of 2024, was met by increased imports. Sassda is excited about the prospect of increased local consumption, as the association’s mandate is to promote and grow local stainless steel conversion. While the full picture for 2024 is showing an increase of nearly 28%, Sassda is confident that 2025 will also be a year of positive growth after the 16% decline in local consumption from 2022 to 2023. It is expected that growth in local consumption will significantly outpace national GDP growth for South Africa in 2025 as it did during 2024.

Drive your business forward at the Western Cape Golf Day

Opportunities are forged on the fairway! Don't miss your chance to connect with key industry players at the Sassda/SAIW Western Cape Golf Day on 10 April at the Kuils River Golf Club.

This exclusive event offers more than just a round of golf; it's a platform to build strategic relationships, exchange ideas and strengthen your industry network in a relaxed yet professional setting.

Whether you're a seasoned player or a casual golfer, this is your chance to engage with like-minded professionals and expand your circle of influence.

Secure your place today - because in business, success is all about the connections you make!

For more information contact [Kim Stevens](#) or call 082 855-4070

Sassda launches enhanced training programme for industry growth

The South African stainless steel industry has been at the forefront of innovation, providing solutions to various industrial challenges since the 1960s when the local sector began to grow in earnest. During the past 60 years, a wealth of industry knowledge, particularly in fabrication, has been accumulated.

Retaining this knowledge is crucial for the industry's continued growth, ensuring that South Africa remains a global leader and remains competitive in the international stage.

Recognising the importance of preserving this expertise, Sassda has taken on the responsibility of systematically collecting and packaging this information into valuable resources that will benefit the broader industry.

One of the biggest threats to retaining industry knowledge is the so-called "brain drain," which occurs due to retirements and the passing of key figures in the South African stainless steel sector. To address this, Sassda has initiated a process of engaging expert members to ensure that their knowledge remains accessible and well-documented. As part of this effort, Sassda is working to standardise existing literature and technical materials, with the goal of officially registering them with International Standard Book Numbers (ISBNs). An ISBN is a unique 13-digit identifier assigned to books, e-books, and other published materials, making it easier for publishers, booksellers, and readers to find and manage these resources.

Bespoke training initiatives

In tandem, Sassda is enhancing its existing courses with newly acquired industry insights and developing new training programs to enrich current educational offerings. For example, the issue of material and fabrication process traceability remains a challenge in the industry. Traceability begins when materials are delivered to a fabrication facility and continues through to the final delivery to the end user. Given its significance, Sassda has integrated this critical information into its Shop Floor Education Program, recognising that shop floor staff play a pivotal role in maintaining traceability throughout various processes.

Historically, the Sassda Shop Floor Education Program consisted of three modules. The first, a compulsory introduction, familiarised students with stainless steel, its various grades, and its applications. After completing this foundational module, students could choose between

two additional modules: Handling Stainless Steel in the Warehouse or Fabrication with Stainless Steel.

A fresh focus

Now, Sassda has introduced a second compulsory module focused on Traceability during Stainless Steel Fabrication. In today's competitive global market, traceability is an essential part of quality management systems and plays a critical role in executing world-class projects. Sassda believes this addition will provide significant value to its members and the broader industry.

Looking ahead, Sassda aims to consolidate this and other valuable industry knowledge into a comprehensive guideline for fabricating stainless steel for hygienic applications. This guideline will serve as a tool to help the local industry meet global fabrication standards while maintaining profitability and market leadership. Sassda firmly believes that enhancing education and industry knowledge will lead to more efficient and proper use of stainless steel.

Free training for members

To support this vision, Sassda maintains a policy of free training for its members, ensuring that membership fees are reinvested into the workforce and the broader industry. This initiative began in 2023, with Sassda reinvesting R230 000 in education programmes benefiting members, government departments, and state-owned enterprises (SOEs). In 2024, this investment more than doubled to R500 000.

Through these initiatives, Sassda continues to strengthen the South African stainless steel industry, ensuring its sustainability and competitiveness for future generations.

To find out more about Sassda's training initiatives please email mankabe@sassda.co.za



Sassda Eastern Cape Golf Day: A swinging success for industry collaboration

The Sassda Eastern Cape Golf Day in partnership with the Southern African Institute of Welding (SAIW) was a resounding success, bringing together industry leaders and businesses to strengthen relationships and foster collaboration. The event highlighted the power of unity in the sector, demonstrating that strength truly lies in numbers.

A heartfelt thanks goes to our generous sponsors: Columbus Stainless, Innov-X-Africa, Pferd, Ptsa, NDE, TÜV Rheinland, Welfit Oddy, Grinding Techniques, SJM Flex and Macsteel VRN. Their support ensured an exceptional day of networking and industry growth. The event showcased the ongoing commitment to excellence within the stainless steel and related industries.





Stainless steel always
gives more than it ever takes

Stainless steel is 100% recyclable,
without any loss of quality.
By using stainless steel, its beauty, strength,
versatility and longevity
makes it worthwhile at every level.

Stainless Steel. It's Simply Brilliant.

Call 011 883 0119 or see sassda.co.za. Your complete stainless information source.

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