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WRITERS/ JOURNALISTS
Rudairo Mapuranga
rudairomap@gmail.com

Ryan Chigoche
rchigoche@gmail.com

Namatirai Ruzvidzo
email hello@rlcounsel.co.zw

SALES & ADVERTISING

Kelvin Sungiso
kelvin@miningzimbabwe.com
Cell/Whatsapp: 0775523000

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INSIDE MINING ZIMBABWE

Building a mining industry that puts Zimbabwe first


Keith Sungiso

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K Sungiso

Every Mine Entra arrives with a sense of anticipation. New technologies are unveiled, investment opportunities are explored, and the industry's biggest players gather to discuss the future. But beyond the exhibition stands and business meetings lies a more important question: What kind of mining industry are we building?

Over the past year, Zimbabwe has made some of its boldest policy decisions in decades. The Government reserved the small-scale gold mining sector strictly for Zimbabwean citizens, reinforcing the principle that the country's mineral wealth must create meaningful opportunities for its own people. The decision has been widely welcomed across the industry because it seeks to formalise ASM while protecting indigenous participation.

Yet policy is only the beginning. Its true value lies in implementation and enforcement. Strict and consistent enforcement will determine whether these reforms deliver the intended benefits. Illegal fronting, proxy ownership, environmental abuse, and non-compliance must be addressed without exception. Rules that apply only sometimes quickly lose their credibility. Rules that are enforced fairly build investor confidence, strengthen institutions, and create a level playing field for everyone.

The Government also directed mining companies to ensure that 98% of senior and middle management positions are occupied by Zimbabweans, reflecting a commitment to developing local skills and leadership within the sector. At the same time, Statutory Instrument 71 of 2026 introduced a mandatory minimum 12-month employment contract for mine workers, providing greater job security across the industry. The recently announced minimum wage of US$418 per month for the lowest-paid Grade 1 mine worker further signals an effort to improve livelihoods while recognising the critical contribution made by mining employees. Yet mine workers continue to report that some mines are paying as little as US$9 per day. A clear message needs to be sent to offending mines. Where violations are proven, jail terms and deregistration should also be considered.

This does not diminish Zimbabwe's attractiveness to international investors. On the contrary, investors are more likely to commit capital where regulations are clear and compliance is consistently upheld. Responsible investment flourishes where certainty exists. The Minister has done exceptionally well thus far. Responsible authorities must complement his efforts by fearlessly enforcing these new laws. **EMA, Ministry inspectors, and the Ministry of Labour,ITAI BASA SEBASA, SEBENZANI, DO YOUR JOBS!**

Mine Entra has always been a showcase of equipment, innovation, and opportunity. This year, it should also be a celebration of responsible mining, good governance, and partnerships built on trust. Every exhibitor, supplier, investor, miner, regulator, and policy-maker has a role to play in shaping an industry that is productive, competitive, and inclusive.

Zimbabwe possesses extraordinary mineral resources. Turning that geological advantage into lasting national prosperity will depend not only on what we mine, but on how we govern, invest, employ, and enforce.

If we uphold these principles, Zimbabwean mining will deliver lasting prosperity for generations.

MINISTER OF MINES AND MINING DEVELOPMENT

DR POLITE KAMBAMURA

• STATEMENT FOR MINE ENTRA 2026 •

It is my distinct honour and privilege to welcome exhibitors, investors, mining executives, equipment manufacturers, service providers, development partners, researchers and delegates from Zimbabwe and beyond to the Mine Entra Exhibition and Conference 2026.

Mine Entra has evolved into Zimbabwe's premier mining exhibition and conference, a strategic platform bringing together Government, industry, investors and technology providers to showcase innovation, strengthen partnerships and shape the future of the country's mining sector.

This year's edition takes place against the backdrop of an industry that continues to demonstrate remarkable resilience amid a dynamic global economic environment. Mining remains one of the strongest pillars of Zimbabwe's economy, contributing approximately 14.5% of Gross Domestic Product and over 70% of export earnings. Mineral exports have grown from around US$2.7 billion in 2017 to more than US$7 billion annually, while gold deliveries exceeded 46 tonnes in 2025. Zimbabwe remains a globally significant producer of platinum group metals, chrome, lithium, diamonds, coal and other critical minerals.

These achievements reflect the sustained commitment of the Second Republic, under the visionary leadership of His Excellency, the President of the Republic of Zimbabwe, Cde Dr. E. D. Mnangagwa, to build a globally competitive mining sector that creates lasting value for the nation. Government continues to implement bold reforms to ease the doing of business, strengthen investor confidence and modernise mining administration, including the digitalisation of mining title administration, improved geological mapping, enhanced regulatory efficiency, and stronger environmental, social and governance (ESG) standards.

Central to this agenda is the shift from exporting raw minerals towards value addition and beneficiation, ensuring Zimbabwe derives maximum benefit from its abundant resources. Significant progress is already visible: investments in lithium processing, platinum refining, steel manufacturing, chrome processing and gold refining are positioning Zimbabwe as a regional hub for mineral processing. Flagship projects, including the integrated steel plant in Manhize and new lithium beneficiation facilities, demonstrate growing investor confidence in this vision. Government remains committed to policies that encourage investors to establish downstream industries, stimulating manufacturing, building local supply chains and creating sustainable employment for Zimbabweans.

Mine Entra 2026 is therefore an ideal platform to showcase these opportunities and Zimbabwe's vast mineral potential. The country is endowed with more than 60 commercially exploitable minerals, including gold, platinum group metals, lithium, chrome, diamonds, nickel, copper, coal and rare earth elements, drawing growing international interest.

Over the course of the exhibition and conference, delegates will engage in high-level discussions on investment opportunities, mineral exploration, digital transformation, mine safety, environmental stewardship, financing, equipment innovation, local content development and emerging technologies shaping the future of mining. The exhibition floor will showcase cutting-edge equipment, processing technologies and digital innovations designed to improve productivity, safety and efficiency across the mining value chain. The Ministry will also use this platform to engage stakeholders directly on policy developments, licensing reforms, investment facilitation and service delivery,

continued on page 08>>

engagements that remain critical to strengthening collaboration between Government and industry.

As we implement the National Development Strategy 2 (NDS2) and advance Vision 2030, our collective responsibility is to build a modern, sustainable, inclusive and competitive mining sector. Responsible resource utilisation, environmental stewardship, community development, occupational safety, innovation and beneficiation remain central to this vision. I encourage all participants to make the most of Mine Entra 2026 by forging new partnerships, sharing knowledge and embracing the innovations that will define the next chapter of Zimbabwe's mining success story.

A cornerstone of Government policy is the empowerment and formalisation of Zimbabwe's artisanal and small-scale mining (ASM) sector, a significant contributor to national mineral production, particularly in gold. Recognising its role in employment creation, rural development and poverty reduction, the Ministry is facilitating formalisation by improving access to mining titles, strengthening technical support services, enhancing geological information, promoting safer mining practices and simplifying regulatory processes. This enables miners to operate legally, access financing and participate more effectively in the formal economy.

Government is equally committed to creating opportunities for indigenous Zimbabweans and local investors to participate meaningfully across the mining value chain, through policies that promote local content, skills development, enterprise growth and partnerships between large-scale mining companies and local businesses.

Responsible mining remains the foundation of a sustainable, globally competitive industry. This extends beyond regulatory compliance to environmental stewardship, occupational health and safety, community development, transparency and sound governance. Mining companies are expected to protect the environment, rehabilitate mined-out areas, manage waste and water resources responsibly, safeguard biodiversity, and ensure safe working conditions for their employees. Operators are also expected to maintain constructive relationships with host communities through meaningful stakeholder engagement and impactful Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programmes that improve livelihoods, infrastructure, education and healthcare in mining communities.

To reinforce these principles, the Ministry is implementing the Responsible Mining Audit Framework (RMAF), a comprehensive tool that promotes compliance with Zimbabwe's mining, environmental, labour, safety and fiscal legislation while enhancing investor confidence and international best practice. As global markets increasingly demand responsibly sourced minerals, Zimbabwe is positioning itself as a reliable supplier producing minerals according to internationally recognised sustainability standards. This reinforces our reputation as a preferred mining investment destination.

The future of Zimbabwe's mining industry lies in a sector that is inclusive, responsible, value-driven and environmentally sustainable. On behalf of the Ministry of Mines and Mining Development, I commend the organisers, exhibitors, sponsors and all stakeholders for their continued commitment to the growth of our mining industry. Your participation strengthens our collective effort to position Zimbabwe as one of Africa's leading mining investment destinations.

Together, let us continue to unlock value, drive beneficiation, promote responsible mining and harness our mineral wealth for sustainable economic transformation and shared national prosperity.

I wish you all a successful and productive Mine Entra Exhibition and Conference 2026.

Hon. Dr. Eng. Polite Kambamura
Minister of Mines and Mining Development
Republic of Zimbabwe


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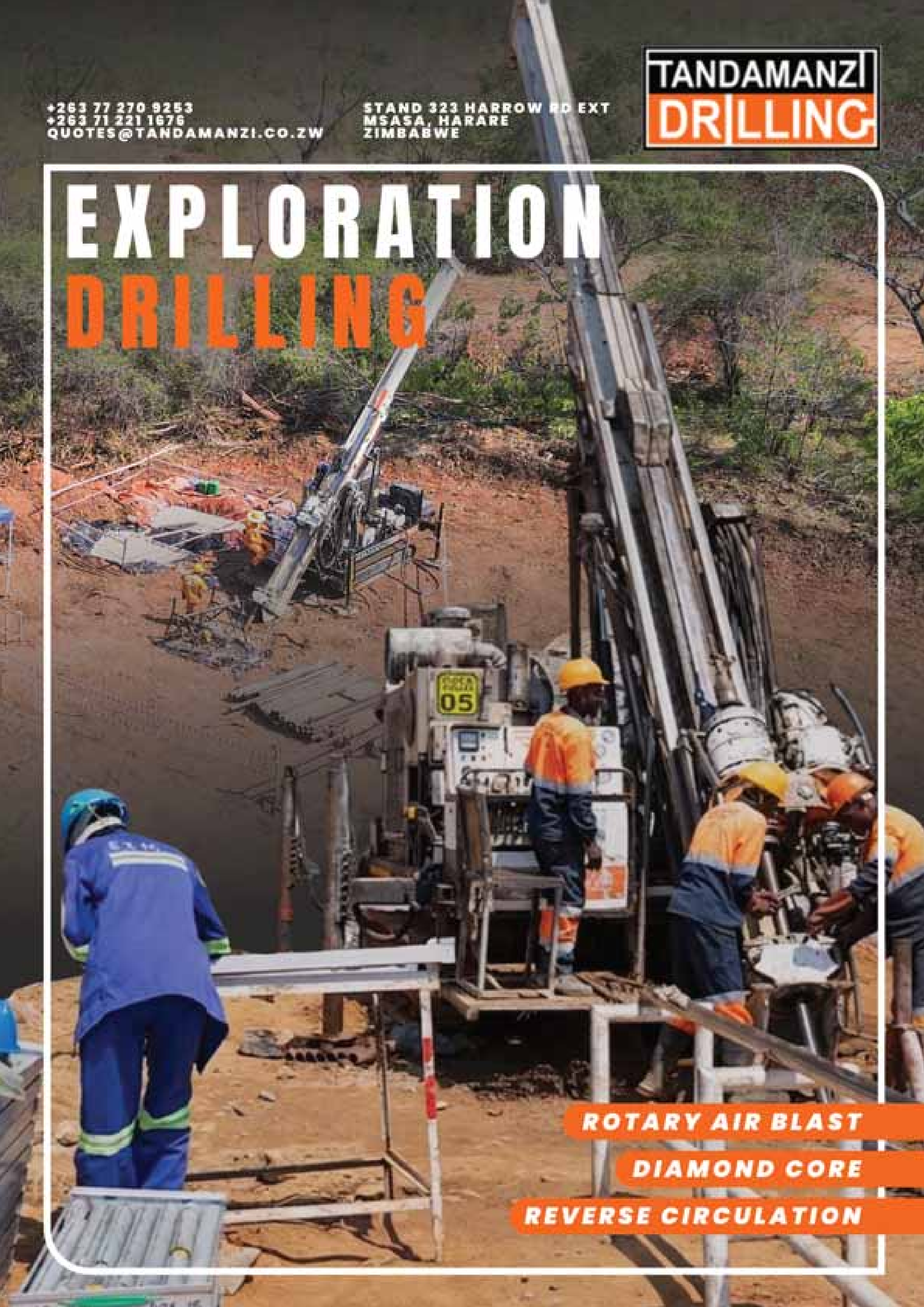
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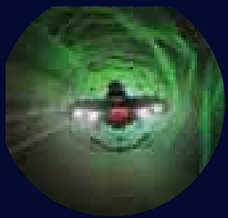

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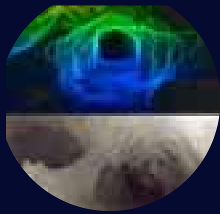

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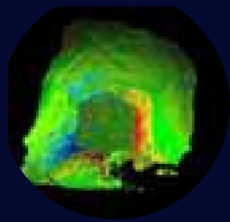

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Freda Rebecca ramps up exploration to 80,000 metres as the mine prepares for post-Shamva future

Mutapa Gold Resources-owned Freda Rebecca Gold Mine in Bindura has nearly doubled its exploration programme to 80,000 metres this year, investing US$14 million in an aggressive drilling campaign aimed at securing a resource base that will sustain production once Shamva Mine ceases trucking ore to its plant, Mining Zimbabwe can report.

Professor Alfred Chinyere

By Rudairo Mapuranga

The exploration push, which has already delineated a down-dip resource of 5.7 million tonnes grading approximately 1.74 grammes per tonne, is designed to extend the mine's life from its current four-year horizon to at least 10 years.

"We have already commissioned a very aggressive exploration campaign," said Alfred Chinyere, General Manager of Freda Rebecca, in an interview with Mining Zimbabwe. "Initially, our target this year was to do 35,000 metres. We have since almost doubled that to 80,000 metres."

The new resource identified sits at grades around 1.74g/t, with contained gold estimated at approximately 319,000 ounces. Freda's head grades have shown consistent improvement over recent years, rising from 1.46g/t in FY2023 to 1.55g/t in FY2025.

Preparing for the Capacity Shift

Freda Rebecca currently processes its own ore alongside Shamva's output through its 2.8 million-tonne-per-annum plant. Once the US$152 million Shamva Hill Project comes online, Shamva will process its ore independently, freeing approximately 50,000 tonnes of monthly processing capacity at Freda's plant.

The freed capacity presents both a challenge and an opportunity. Chinyere confirmed the mine is already preparing to fill the gap left by Shamva's approximately 50,000 tonnes per month contribution.

"When Shamva pulls out its contribution, we should be able to generate that kind of resource where we can feed 50,000 tonnes every month comfortably," he said.

Operating Context

Freda Rebecca currently averages 204 kilograms of gold per month, with C1 cash costs of around US$1,400 per ounce. The mine produced 2.2 tonnes of gold in 2025, contributing about 70% of Mutapa Gold Resources' total output.

At current gold prices of around US$4,000 per ounce, Chinyere said the operation is comfortably funding its stay-in-business capital while investing in the new US$1.2 million laboratory and aggressive exploration programme.

De-risking the Portfolio

Chinyere acknowledged that Freda's outsized role in Mutapa's portfolio presents a concentration risk. However, he views Shamva's expansion as a critical de-risking step.

"Having one business unit carrying the biggest load presents a risk. But with Shamva brought to around 200kg per month, that will automatically de-risk the business."

Mutapa Gold Resources, formed in January 2026 following the restructuring of the former Kuvimba gold cluster, targets monthly production of 570 kilograms by 2029, up from the current 300 kilograms.

Mike's Radiators: Engineering Uptime for Zimbabwe's Mining Industry

"Mining companies don't invest in radiators, they invest in uptime. Every repair, every custom-built component and every engineering solution we provide is designed with one goal in mind: keeping Zimbabwe's mining industry moving."

Please introduce Mike's Radiators and give us an overview of your company and its role in supporting Zimbabwe's mining industry.

Mike's Radiators is a third-generation Zimbabwean engineering company with over 45 years of experience, having been established in 1979 by Miguel Fernandes Marques. What began as a specialist business repairing brass and copper radiators and fuel tanks has grown into one of Zimbabwe's leading cooling system specialists, serving the mining, transport, agricultural and industrial sectors.

Today, we manufacture, repair and service radiators, intercoolers, oil coolers, fuel and header tanks, heat exchangers, air-conditioning condensers and a complete range of cooling system components in brass, copper, aluminium, mild steel and stainless steel. We also design and manufacture custom cooling solutions engineered specifically for Africa's demanding operating conditions.

Our role in the mining industry is simple: to keep equipment operating reliably. We help mining companies minimise downtime through quality workmanship, fast turnaround times and engineered cooling solutions that maximise equipment availability and productivity.

Why are radiator and cooling systems so critical to the performance and reliability of heavy mining equipment?

Mining equipment operates in some of the harshest environments imaginable, where high ambient temperatures, dust, vibration and continuous workloads place enormous strain on cooling systems. Radiators, intercoolers and oil coolers are responsible for maintaining the correct operating temperature of an engine. When cooling efficiency is reduced, engines can overheat, performance declines and the risk of major mechanical failures increases significantly.

Something as simple as a blocked radiator or restricted oil cooler can eventually lead to expensive engine repairs and extended downtime. Routine inspection and preventative maintenance of cooling system components is one of the most cost-effective ways to protect equipment, improve reliability and maximise production.

What are the most common cooling system challenges you encounter in mining operations, and what typically causes them?

The biggest challenge we encounter is that cooling systems often only receive attention once a problem has already occurred. By the time an engine overheats or a radiator starts leaking, what could have been routine maintenance has often developed into a far more extensive repair.

Dust, mud, debris and scale build-up gradually reduce cooling efficiency, while vibration and harsh operating conditions accelerate wear and increase the likelihood of leaks. Like engine oil, filters and other service items, cooling system components require regular maintenance to perform at their best.

A proactive maintenance programme not only extends the life of cooling components but also helps mines avoid unnecessary downtime, costly engine damage and lost production.

How can mine operators identify early warning signs of radiator or cooling system failure before it leads to costly downtime?

Many cooling system failures provide warning signs long before they become major problems. Regular visual inspections are one of the simplest preventative measures. Operators should routinely inspect radiator, intercooler and oil cooler cores for dust, mud or debris that may be restricting airflow. Coolant levels should also be monitored, as unexplained coolant loss can indicate either an external cooling system leak or a developing internal engine issue.

Pressure caps and thermostats are equally important but are often overlooked. These relatively in expensive components play a vital role in maintaining correct cooling system pressure and operating temperature. Identifying small issues early through routine inspections can prevent major failures and significantly reduce equipment downtime.

What impact does engine overheating have on mining equipment performance, fuel efficiency, and operating costs?

Engine overheating affects far more than temperature alone. It reduces engine efficiency, increases mechanical stress and can lead to serious failures such as damaged cylinder heads, blown head gaskets and costly engine rebuilds.

continued on page 17>>

An engine that cannot maintain its designed operating temperature will also perform less efficiently, which may increase fuel consumption and place additional strain on other engine components. Beyond repair costs, the greatest expense is often the production lost while equipment is out of service.

Investing in preventative cooling system maintenance is one of the simplest and most cost-effective ways to protect equipment, reduce operating costs and maximise productivity.

Can you take us through your radiator repair and reconditioning process, and explain how you ensure quality and reliability?

Every repair begins with a thorough inspection, flushing and pressure test to accurately diagnose the condition of the component before any work begins.

Depending on the application, components undergo specialised cleaning and reconditioning processes that restore unrestricted coolant, oil and airflow through the core. Where required, worn sections are repaired or replaced using quality materials before final assembly.

Every repaired unit is pressure tested above normal operating pressures to verify its integrity before leaving our workshop. We always say we'd rather a component fail during testing in our workshop than on a customer's machine in the field.

Where required, we also provide pressure test certificates, inspection reports and warranty support, giving customers complete confidence in the quality and reliability of every repair.

How often should mining companies inspect and maintain their cooling systems to maximize equipment life and productivity?

Every mining operation is different, so maintenance intervals should always follow the original equipment manufacturers (OEM) recommendations while also considering the operating environment.

However, regular inspections are essential, particularly in dusty, high-temperature mining conditions where cooling systems are exposed to increased contamination. Routine cleaning of radiator cores, checking coolant condition and monitoring the overall cooling system can identify developing issues long before they become major failures.

Preventative maintenance is always more cost-effective than emergency repairs. A well-maintained cooling system not only extends component life but also improves equipment reliability, reduces downtime and supports consistent production.

What advice would you give maintenance teams on extending the lifespan of radiators and preventing unexpected equipment failures?

Preventative maintenance is the single biggest factor in extending the life of any cooling system. Keeping radiator, intercooler and oil cooler cores clean ensures unrestricted airflow and efficient heat transfer. When cleaning components, the correct equipment and pressure settings should always be used to avoid damaging the cooling fins.

Equally important is maintaining the correct coolant mixture rather than relying solely on water. Quality coolant provides corrosion protection, lubrication and a higher boiling point, helping protect water pumps, thermostat housings and other cooling system components.

Simple routine inspections carried out consistently will always prove more effective and more economical than waiting until equipment has already failed.

Miguel Marques

Does Mike's Radiators provide customised cooling solutions for specialised mining equipment? If so, what does that process involve?

Absolutely. Every mining operation has unique equipment, operating conditions and cooling requirements, which is why we regularly manufacture custom cooling solutions tailored to specific applications.

Whether it's selecting different core thicknesses, fin configurations, construction materials or heavy - duty plate-and-bar designs, every solution is engineered to maximise durability, cooling efficiency and long-term reliability.

Because we design, manufacture, repair and support these products locally, we're also able to offer faster turnaround times, on-site services where required and ongoing technical support, giving customers an engineered solution rather than simply supplying a replacement component.

How is Mike's Radiators embracing innovation and new technologies to meet the evolving needs of the mining industry?

Innovation has always been at the heart of our business. As the mining industry evolves, so do the expectations placed on cooling system specialists, which is why we continuously invest in new technologies, equipment, training and improved working practices.

In 2025, we had the privilege of hosting specialists from Mesabi® (LsM Radiator Inc.) in Zimbabwe for their first-ever technical visit to the country. Their hands-on training provided our team with advanced knowledge on servicing procedures, specialised tooling and warranty requirements for heavy-duty cooling systems commonly found on equipment from manufacturers such as Sandvik, Epiroc and other leading OEMs. The knowledge gained during their visit is now being actively implemented throughout our workshop and service operations.

Beyond technical training, our team participates in ongoing sales, leadership and customer service development throughout the year. We're continually refining our Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), strengthening our quality control systems and investing in research and development to ensure we remain at the forefront of Zimbabwe's cooling system industry.

By combining over 45 years of practical experience with continuous learning and international collaboration, we're committed to delivering world-class cooling solutions backed by world-class service.

"Our philosophy is simple: if we're asking our customers to invest in us, we must first invest in ourselves."

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Sponsoring a mine without a Contract:

A Lawyer's warning about Zimbabwe's most dangerous investment

It had been a gruelling Thursday. After spending ten hours navigating the labyrinth of the legal profession, I finally sat down with a cup of coffee and opened Facebook to decompress. I scrolled to the Mining Zimbabwe page, a vibrant digital town square where the country's miners gather to read about the latest news in mining, seek advice and air their grievances.

By Namatirai Ruzvidzo

Namatirai Ruzvidzo

A particular post caught my eye. The topic was aptly captured: **"Mari ikangowanda sei muchichinjira ma Sponsor magoal posts?"**. Translated to English, the topic meant **"Why do mine owners alter their contractual obligations to sponsors once financial viability is achieved?"** What is this phenomenon called 'sponsoring' in mining circles? Sponsoring a mine/mining operation is a controversial but prevalent phenomenon where an individual bankrolls a mining operation with hard cash and machinery in exchange for a percentage of the gold output. The comments section was a war zone. It was hilarious, but profoundly disheartening. Amidst the accusations of theft and incompetence, one comment stood out. A mine owner wrote, quite seriously: "If you sponsor me and the output starts improving, you are out. Why should I keep paying you when the mine is now running itself?"

I read it twice. Imagine being the sponsor. Imagine parting with $20,000, $50,000, or even $100,000 of your hard-earned cash to buy a compressor, an excavator and explosives. Imagine funding the barren months of sinking a shaft through hard rock. Then, the moment you hit the gold reef and the investment finally begins to yield returns, the person you funded simply decides your services are no longer required. You are "out."As a lawyer, my immediate thought was: Where is the contract? Where is the security? Where is the legal recourse? The terrifying reality of Zimbabwe's small-to-medium mining sector is that, in nine out of ten cases, there is no contract. There is no security. There is no legal recourse. There is only a handshake, a gentleman's agreement, and an informal understanding that profits will be split three ways; 33.3% to the mine owner, 33.3% to the labour, and 33.3% to the sponsor. Sponsorship is, quite simply, an investment disguised in the dangerous informality of artisanal mining. And it is a legal disaster waiting to happen.

The backbone of the economy runs on gentlemen's agreements

To understand why this informality is so alarming, we must look at the numbers. The artisanal and small-scale mining (ASM) sector is no longer a fringe economic activity; it is the undisputed backbone of Zimbabwe's gold industry. According to Fidelity Gold Refinery, small-scale miners produced a staggering 34.9 tonnes of gold in 2025. To put that into perspective, large-scale, formal mining companies produced just 11.8 tonnes. The informal sector is out-producing the formal sector by nearly three to one.

> Furthermore, **the word "sponsor" itself is part of the problem.** It sounds benevolent, temporary, and informal. If we called it what it actually is, **"Unsecured venture capital investment in high-risk extractive operations",** perhaps people would think twice before handing over the cash.

This means that the engine driving our national gold reserves is fueled largely by informal "sponsors", teachers, diaspora workers, local businesspeople and retirees who are pouring millions of dollars into the ground without a single legally binding document to protect them. Why does this happen? Why are our intelligent people parting with serious money without demanding formalisation?

From my perspective as a legal practitioner, the reluctance to formalise stems from a dangerous mix of cultural habits, perceived costs, and a fundamental misunderstanding of what sponsorship actually is. In the ASM sector, speed is prioritised over structure. When a miner hits a promising reef but lacks the capital to extract it, they need a compressor tomorrow, not next month. They find a sponsor with cash, they agree on the standard 33.3% split, and operations begin immediately. The sponsor believes that drawing up a legal agreement will take too long, cost too much in legal fees, and perhaps offend the mine owner by implying a lack of trust.

Furthermore, the word "sponsor" itself is part of the problem. It sounds benevolent, temporary, and informal. If we called it what it actually is, "Unsecured venture capital investment in high-risk extractive operations", perhaps people would think twice before handing over the cash.

Why invest without a legal framework?

When you invest without a legal framework, you are entirely dependent on the continued goodwill of your partner. In mining, goodwill evaporates the moment gold is brought to the surface. Without a formal agreement, there are no defined parameters on who does what. The sponsor believes their job is done once the equipment is delivered. The mine owner believes the sponsor should continuously fund consumables like fuel and explosives. When the sponsor refuses, the mine owner feels justified in cutting them out.

More critically, there are no monitoring mechanisms. How does the sponsor guarantee their return on investment? How do they know that the 100 grams of gold declared at the end of the week wasn't actually 150 grams, with 50 grams quietly diverted? Without a contractual right to place a monitor on-site, audit the milling process, or oversee the elution plant, the sponsor is flying blind.

continued on page 21>>

Then there is the legal reality of the mining claim itself. The sponsor does not own the claim; the mine owner does. If the relationship sours, the mine owner simply bars the sponsor from the site. The sponsor might try to call the police, but the police will ask for proof of ownership or a contract. The sponsor has neither. The dispute becomes a civil matter, and without a contract, proving the terms of the verbal agreement in court becomes an e xpensive, multi-year nightmare.

Practical insights for formalising sponsorship

The solution is not to stop sponsoring mines. The ASM sector desperately needs capital, and sponsors provide a vital economic service. The solution is to strip away the informality and treat sponsorship as the serious investment it is. If you are considering sponsoring a mine, or if you are a mine owner seeking a sponsor, you must abandon the handshake and embrace the contract. Here are my practical, lawyer-tested insights on how to structure a sponsorship deal that protects both parties and guarantees harmony.

1. Reframe the relationship: you are not a sponsor, you are a Joint Venture partner

The first step is psychological. Stop using the word "sponsor." You are entering into a Contractual Joint Venture. The mine owner is contributing the mineral rights and the physical site. You are contributing the capital and equipment. The labour force is providing the extraction work.

By framing it as a Joint Venture, the necessity of a Joint Venture Agreement becomes obvious. This agreement does not need to be a fifty-page corporate behemoth, but it must clearly define the relationship. It must state that the investor is providing specific equipment and funds in exchange for a specific, irrevocable percentage of the output for a defined period.

2. Define the scope of capital contribution

The most common dispute I see is over ongoing costs. The investor buys the compressor and the jackhammers, but who buys the diesel? Who pays for the timber to support the shaft? Who buys the explosives? Your agreement must explicitly define the limits of the investment. Is it a one-off capital injection, or is the investor responsible for ongoing operational expenses? If the investor is responsible for ongoing expenses, those expenses must be deducted from the gross output before the 33.3% split is calculated. This is called recovering working capital, and it is a standard business practice that is almost entirely ignored in informal sponsorships.

3. Establish ironclad monitoring and verification mechanisms

Trust is good, but verification is even better. The agreement must grant the investor specific monitoring rights. This includes the right to place a designated representative on-site during extraction, transportation, and milling. Crucially, the agreement must dictate where the ore will be milled. Many disputes arise when the mine owner takes the ore to a custom miller of their choice, where the recovery rates mysteriously drop. The investor and the mine owner must mutually agree on the milling centre, and both parties (and their representatives) must be present during the cleanup and smelting process.

4. Secure the equipment

If you are buying a $15,000 compressor, whose name is on the receipt? If the relationship breaks down, the mine owner may claim the equipment was a "gift" or part of the operational costs. The agreement must clearly state that the investor retains full legal title to all equipment purchased, and that the equipment is merely leased to the Joint Venture. Furthermore, the agreement should include a clause allowing the investor to immediately remove the equipment if the mine owner breaches the terms of the contract.

5. Define the exit strategy and duration

Remember the Facebook comment? "If the output starts improving, you are out." To prevent this, the agreement must define the duration of the partnership. Is the investor entitled to 33.3% of the output forever? Usually, this is not realistic and breeds resentment. A more practical approach is to define the duration by time (e.g., three years) or by return on investment (e.g., the investor receives 40% until their initial capital is recouped, and then 20% thereafter).
If the mine owner wants to buy the investor out because the mine is "now running itself," the agreement should provide a clear valuation mechanism for that buyout. You cannot simply be kicked out; you must be bought out.

6. Include a Dispute Resolution clause

When disagreements arise, and they will, you do not want to end up in the High Court fighting over a verbal agreement. Your contract must include a dispute resolution clause that mandates mediation and, if necessary, fast-track arbitration. This keeps the dispute private, resolves it quickly, and keeps the mine operating while the issue is sorted out.

Which is a better option, formalising your operations or dealing with the aftermath of a failed sponsorship relationship?

I often hear sponsors say that hiring a lawyer to draft a Joint Venture Agreement is too expensive. Let me offer a different perspective. If you are willing to risk $30,000 on a mining venture, spending a fraction of that amount to secure your investment legally is not an expense; it is an insurance policy. The cost of a professionally drafted agreement is negligible compared to the total loss of your capital, your equipment, and your potential profits.

The artisanal and small-scale mining sector is the driving force of Zimbabwe's gold economy. It is a space of incredible opportunity, raw entrepreneurship, and immense wealth generation. However, as long as it relies on the fragile architecture of informal sponsorships, it will remain a space of unprecedented disharmony and financial tragedy.

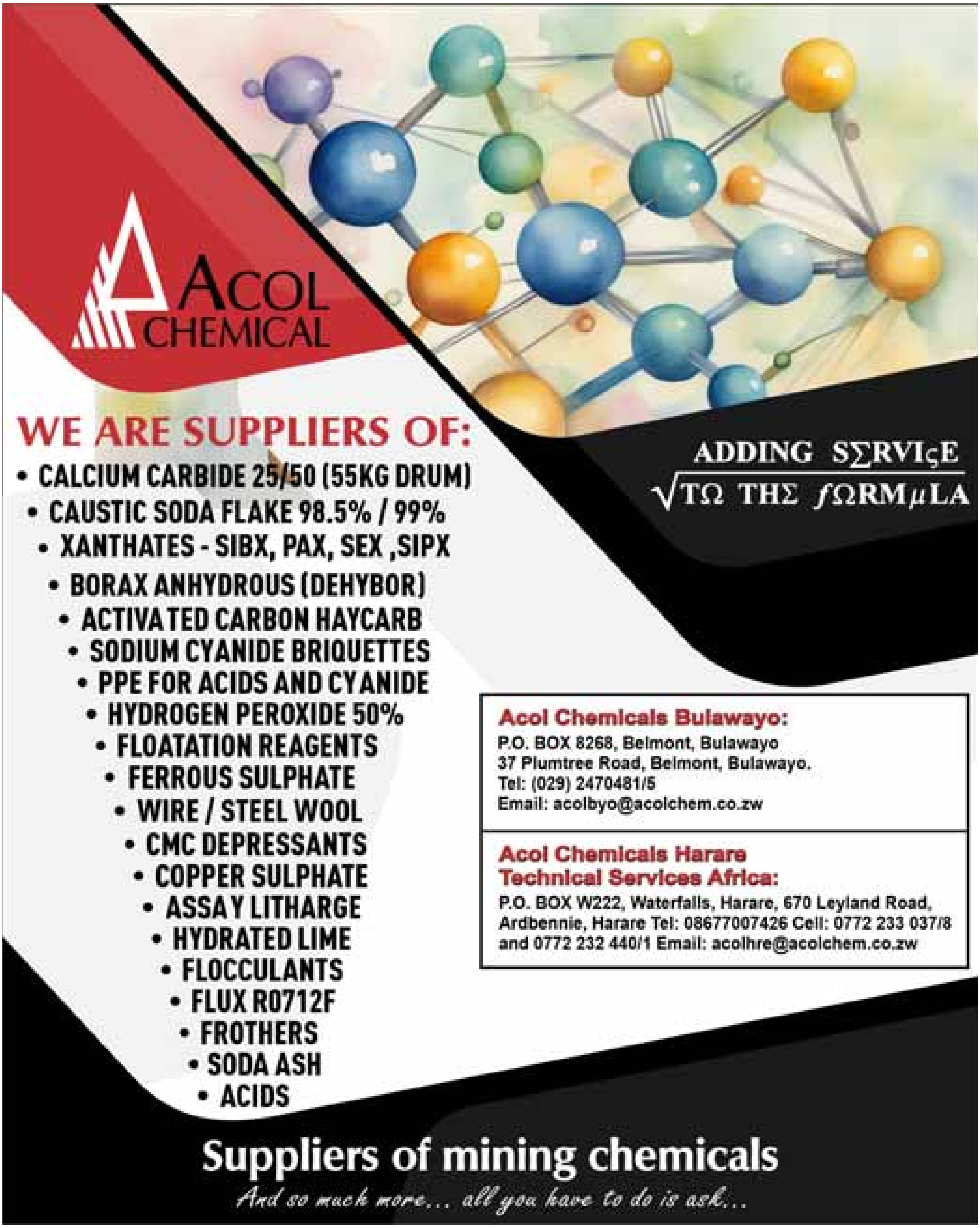
In conclusion

It is time for the sector to grow up. It is time for sponsors to act like the venture capitalists they truly are and for mine owners to act like the corporate executives they aspire to be. The gold in the ground belongs to the nation. The right to mine it belongs to the claim holder. However, the profit belongs to those who are smart enough to put their agreements in writing. Do not let your hard-earned capital become a cautionary tale in a Facebook comments section. Formalise your investment, protect your rights, and mine with confidence.

About Author

Namatirai Ruzvidzo is a registered Legal Practitioner, Conveyancer and Notary Public. She possesses over 15 years specializing in Commercial law, Mining law and Property law. She practices in Avondale, Harare, under the Law Firm, Ruzvidzo Legal Counsel.

She can be reached on +263 784 228 534 or email hello@rlcounsel.co.zw, copying namaruzvidzo@gmail.com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The importance of trade finance Insurance for Mining Companies

Mining companies operate in one of the most capital-intensive and high-risk sectors in the global economy. From exploration and extraction to export and commodity trading, the industry depends heavily on cross-border transactions, long supply chains, and volatile markets.

Mining companies operate in one of the most capital-intensive and high-risk sectors in the global economy. From exploration and extraction to export and commodity trading, the industry depends heavily on cross-border transactions, long supply chains, and volatile markets.

Trade finance plays a crucial role in enabling mining companies to move commodities such as gold, platinum, coal, and copper across international markets. However, these transactions expose mining firms to significant financial and geopolitical risks. Trade Finance Insurance provides a critical safeguard, ensuring stability, liquidity, and growth.

Unique Trade Risks in the Mining Sector

Unlike many other industries, mining faces a distinct set of risks:

a. Commodity Price Volatility

Prices for minerals fluctuate significantly due to global demand, currency shifts, and geopolitical tensions. This volatility affects buyer reliability and payment capacity.

b. Cross-Border Risks

Mining exports often originate from emerging markets where risks include:
· Government intervention
· Export bans
· Resource nationalism

c. Counterparty Risk

Buyers, traders, and intermediaries may default due to financial distress or market downturns.

d. Long Payment Cycles

Mining exports frequently operate on extended credit terms (30–180 days or more), increasing exposure to non-payment.

e. Logistics and Supply Chain Risk

Transporting bulk commodities involves:
· Ports and shipping delays
· Infrastructure challenges
· Loss or damage in transit

How Trade Finance Insurance Assists Mining Companies

Trade Finance Insurance in the mining sector protects against non-payment risks associated with:
· Export of minerals and metals
· Commodity trading agreements
· Offtake contracts
· Structured trade finance facilities

a. Protects High-Value Transactions

Mining exports often involve multi-million-dollar shipments. A single default can severely impact cash flow. Insurance ensures that:
· Receivables are protected
· Losses are minimized
· Financial stability is maintained

b. Enables Access to Trade Finance Facilities

With insurance:
· Banks gain comfort in lending
· Credit lines increase
· Financing costs may decrease

This is particularly important for junior and mid-tier mining companies.

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c. Supports Offtake Agreements

Mining companies frequently enter into long-term offtake agreements with international buyers. Trade Finance Insurance:
· Secures future revenue streams
· Enhances contract credibility
· Reduces the risk of buyer default

d. Facilitates Expansion into New Markets

Entering new export markets can be risky due to unfamiliar buyers and regulatory environments. Insurance allows mining companies to:

· Trade confidently in new jurisdictions
· Expand global footprint
· Diversify revenue streams

e. Improves Cash Flow and Working Capital

Delayed or defaulted payments can disrupt operations, including:
· Payroll
· Equipment maintenance
· Fuel and operational costs
Insurance ensures continuity by stabilizing cash flow.

f. Enhances Balance Sheet Strength

By transferring risk to insurers, mining companies can:
· Reduce bad debt provisions
· Improve financial ratios
· Strengthen investor confidence

Practical Example

A gold mining company exports a shipment valued at $5 million to an overseas buyer on 90-day terms.

Without insurance:
· Full exposure to buyer default
· Potential operational disruption
·
With Trade Finance Insurance:
· Majority of the receivable is covered
· Bank finances the invoice
· Company maintains steady cash flow

Conclusion

Trade Finance Insurance is not just a protective mechanism for mining companies but a strategic enabler of growth, resilience, and global competitiveness.

For mining companies looking to scale and compete globally, Trade Finance Insurance is essential.

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Why Mining needs more than Guards

The mining sector faces a complex and escalating threat landscape, particularly in precious minerals where bullion attracts organised, high-profile criminal syndicates.

These groups actively track operations and exploit vulnerabilities, making layered, intelligence-led security deployment non-negotiable. The deployment of adequately trained personnel is critical to effectively withstand and deter such threats.

Security in mining, however, extends beyond theft and illegal activities. A holistic risk management approach must integrate Safety, Health, Environmental and Quality (SHEQ) principles. Mining environments carry inherent risks, including deep pits, flammable gases, and hazardous substances, all of which require continuous monitoring and disciplined control to prevent life-threatening incidents.

A SHEQ-certified security provider strengthens this approach by deploying guards trained to identify hazards, enforce compliance, and respond proactively. These personnel act as frontline risk mitigators, often preventing incidents that could jeopardise entire underground shifts and disrupt operations.

Technology plays a pivotal role in enhancing security effectiveness. The integration of underground CCTV, access control, real-time gas and smoke detection, drone surveillance, and biometric tracking ensures improved visibility, rapid response, and secure handling of high-value minerals.

When selecting a security partner, executives must prioritise proven mining expertise, SHEQ compliance, trained personnel, and tailored technology-driven solutions.

In conclusion, mining security is a strategic, integrated discipline essential for protecting assets, safeguarding lives, and ensuring uninterrupted operations.


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Freda Rebecca Becomes Zimbabwe's First Accredited Gold Mine Laboratory

Freda Rebecca Gold Mine has become the first gold mining operation in Zimbabwe to achieve ISO/IEC 17025 accreditation for its laboratory, a landmark achievement that aligns with the government's broader strategy to build domestic analytical capacity and curb reliance on foreign

Freda Rebecca General Manager Prof Chinyere receives ISO 17025 from SADCAS

By Rudairo Mapuranga

The Southern African Development Community Accreditation Service (SADCAS) officially handed over the certificate recently, following a rigorous seven-year journey that was delayed by multiple changes in ownership and shareholder structures at the mine.

"This is not merely a ceremonial milestone. It is a defining moment in our journey, not just as Freda Rebecca, but as Mutapa Gold Resources," said Patrick Maseva-Shayawabaya, CEO of Mutapa Gold Resources, which owns the mine. "We are deliberately positioning ourselves for technical excellence, operational discipline, and international credibility."

> "We are deliberately positioning ourselves for technical excellence, operational discipline, and international credibility."

The Brain of the Mine

The accreditation, valid for five years until 15 March 2031, covers chemical analysis, the core function that determines ore grades, guides exploration decisions, supports mine planning, and validates bullion for commercial transactions.

"The lab is the brain of the mine," said Sibongile Maphosa, Human Resources Manager at Freda Rebecca, during the handover ceremony. "The accuracy and reliability of assay results influences all our processes, from exploration to plant performance and critical decision-making."

General Manager Alfred Chinyere, a self-described "systems person," revealed that the journey began in earnest when the mine's management borrowed expertise from Trojan Mine's laboratory manager to guide the certification process.

Previous attempts dating back to 2017 had failed as ownership structures shifted.

Investment in Quality

The mine has invested US$1.2 million in a new laboratory facility, which is currently under construction and will feature a Laboratory Information Management System (LIMS) to further enhance data integrity and predictability.

"Our lab is not one of the best-looking laboratories in Zimbabwe, but we spruced it up, and it managed to get us through certification," Chinyere said. "We have actually started building a new lab. This is going to cost us US$1 million, with accessories bringing the total to around US$1.2 million."

The accreditation comes as Zimbabwe intensifies efforts to build domestic certification capacity. In April 2026, Cabinet approved a Minerals Value Chain framework that includes a National Minerals Research and Analytical Scientific Laboratory Infrastructure pillar aimed at ending "costly and risky reliance on foreign laboratories for mineral certification."

Under the framework, the University of Zimbabwe will serve as an apex hub for lithium, rare earth elements, and uranium, while regional universities will specialise in platinum group metals, diamonds, and industrial minerals.

"Reliable internal testing will reduce the delays associated with repeat testing, uncertainty, disputes over results, and over-dependence on external verification," Maseva-Shayawabaya said. "With the aggressive exploration drive that we are on, this certification will enable us to better manage and, therefore, reduce our exploration costs."

SADCAS CEO Dr Eve Gadzikwa, who personally handed over the certificate, noted that as of 31 May 2026, SADCAS had issued 442 certificates of accreditation to 365 facilities across the region, including five certificates beyond the SADC region.

"Achieving accreditation is no small feat. It is indeed a rigorous and demanding journey," Gadzikwa said. "Your success deserves recognition, especially given that it comes after seven years of pursuing the accreditation journey."

The accreditation aligns with Mutapa Gold Resources' ambition to become "one of the largest gold producers in Zimbabwe" and reflects the parent company's strategic focus on systems, data integrity, and international credibility.


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First-Half Gold Deliveries Hit 21.4 Tonnes in 2026

Highest since 2022 as sector builds momentum toward 50-tonne target

H1 2026 deliveries of 21,397 kg represent a 5.2% increase over H1 2025 and a 55.2% surge from H1 2024, driven by ASM sector growth and large-scale mine recoveries.

Zimbabwe's gold sector has recorded its strongest first-half performance since the record-breaking year of 2022, with total deliveries to Fidelity Gold Refinery (FGR) reaching 21,397.5975 kg in the first six months of 2026. The figure represents a 5.2% increase from the 20,345.5953 kg delivered in the same period of 2025 and a remarkable 55.2% surge from the 13,784.29 kg recorded in the first half of 2024.

By Rudairo Mapuranga

The first-half performance places Zimbabwe firmly on course to achieve its ambitious 50-tonne annual target for 2026, with 21.4 tonnes already banked and the historically strong third quarter still ahead.

Second Quarter 2026: Record-Breaking Momentum

The second quarter of 2026 delivered a total of 12,085.6735 kg of gold to FGR, representing a 29.8% increase from the first quarter's 9,311.9240 kg and a 2.9% rise compared to the second quarter of 2025, which recorded 11,746.4961 kg. The quarter-on-quarter growth is the strongest since the formalisation drive began in earnest, underscoring the accelerating momentum across the sector.

ASM deliveries in the second quarter reached 8,431.6871 kg, up 29.5% from the first quarter's 6,510.9110 kg. However, compared to the second quarter of 2025, which delivered 8,790.8174 kg, ASM output declined by 4.1%. The year-on-year decline reflects the ongoing transition from informal to formal production, as enforcement against smuggling and the registration backlog temporarily compress officially reported output before a sustained increase materialises.

Large-scale deliveries in the second quarter totalled 3,653.9864 kg, up 30.4% from the first quarter's 2,801.0130 kg and 23.6% higher than the second quarter of 2025's 2,955.6787 kg. The large-scale segment's consistent growth trajectory provides a stable foundation upon which ASM's variable but high-growth output can build.

Monthly Performance: June Leads the Charge

June 2026 emerged as the strongest month of the year so far, with total deliveries reaching 4,810.0673 kg, a 21.7% increase from May 2026's 3,951.0136 kg and an 11.0% rise compared to June 2025's 4,331.7948 kg.

The ASM sector delivered its strongest monthly performance since at least early 2025, with 3,580.2739 kg in June, up 30.6% from May's 2,740.7582 kg and 8.1% higher than June 2025's 3,312.6102 kg. Large-scale miners also recorded modest growth, delivering 1,229.7934 kg in June, up 1.6% from May's 1,210.2554 kg and 20.7% higher than June 2025's 1,019.1846 kg.

The first half of 2026 represents a 55.2% increase over the first half of 2024 and a 51.8% increase over the first half of 2023, highlighting the sector's remarkable recovery since the difficult years of 2023 and 2024.

ASM Sector: The Engine of Growth

Artisanal and small-scale miners have been the primary driver of the sector's resurgence. In the first half of 2025, ASM deliveries reached 14,561.68 kg, a 96.31% increase from the 7,416.97 kg delivered in the same period of 2024. The ASM sector now contributes approximately 75% of national gold output, having delivered 34.9 of the 46.7 tonnes in 2025.

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The formalisation drive, spearheaded by the Zimbabwe Miners Federation's digital Gold Card system, Magaya Mining's training hubs in Kwekwe, Chegutu and Mazowe, and FGR's expanded buying centre network, has been instrumental in capturing value that previously leaked into parallel markets.

Large-Scale Mining: Steady Recovery

Large-scale miners delivered 5,541.87 kg in the first half of 2025, a 12.95% decrease from the 6,367.33 kg recorded in the same period of 2024. However, the segment has shown steady recovery through 2026, with June 2026's 1,229.7934 kg representing the highest monthly figure since at least early 2024.

Key drivers of large-scale performance include Mutapa Gold's Freda Rebecca, Shamva, and Jena mines; RioZim's Renco Mine, now fully stabilised after its capital restructuring; Caledonia's Blanket Mine; and Namib Minerals' phased reopening of Mazowe and Redwing mines, backed by a US$300-400 million investment programme.

50-Tonne Target: Within Striking Distance

To achieve 50 tonnes by year-end, Zimbabwe needs average monthly deliveries of approximately 4,767 kg for the remaining six months (July–December). June's 4,810 kg has already exceeded that required average, and with the third quarter historically delivering the highest volumes of the year, the target appears increasingly attainable.

FGR's own projections remain optimistic, citing expanded ASM formalisation, new large-scale capacity coming online, reduced leakage through the Gold Trade Enforcement Unit (GTEU), and improved buying centre access as key factors that will drive further growth.

Record Year in Sight

The first-half performance of 21.4 tonnes is the strongest since the record-breaking year of 2022, when full-year deliveries reached 35.6 tonnes. With the third quarter historically delivering the highest volumes of the year, formalisation programmes gaining traction, large-scale mines ramping up, and enforcement against smuggling tightening, the second half of 2026 is poised to deliver the strongest gold output in Zimbabwe's history.

The numbers speak for themselves: 21.4 tonnes in six months, June alone delivering nearly 4.8 tonnes, and a trajectory that points firmly upward. Zimbabwe's gold dominance is not a mirage – it is being forged, month by month, kilogram by kilogram, in the tunnels and stamp mills of a nation committed to extracting its full mineral wealth.

Mines bill to be finalised this year as decade-long journey nears end

After more than a decade of delays, Zimbabwe's long-awaited Mines and Minerals Bill is finally set to be enacted before the end of 2026, Mining Zimbabwe can report.

Dr Polite Kambamura

Mines and Mining Development Minister Dr Polite Kambamura confirmed recently that the Bill, which received an adverse report from Parliament's Legal Committee in 2025, has been revised and will soon be returned to Parliament.

"We addressed all the issues that they raised. And very soon, we'll be taking the Bill back to Parliament. I think before the year ends, we'll finalise the Bill into an Act," Dr Kambamura said.

The Minister's announcement marks a significant milestone in a legislative journey that began nearly 11 years ago, when the late former President Robert Mugabe's administration first introduced the Mines and Minerals Amendment Bill in 2015. The proposed law seeks to repeal and replace the archaic Mines and Minerals Act (Chapter 21:05) of 1961, a colonial-era law that has long been criticised for creating legal loopholes and favouring entrenched mining interests at the expense of communities and sustainable development.

The Long Road to Reform

Attempts to align Zimbabwe's mining legal framework with current realities began in earnest in 2015, when the government gazetted the first Mines and Minerals Amendment Bill. The following year, the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Mines and Energy conducted public hearings in all 10 provinces, gathering submissions from large-scale and small-scale miners, civil society, and mining communities.

Despite these extensive consultations, the Bill stalled. In 2018, a version reached President Emmerson Mnangagwa's desk, but he declined to sign it, citing concerns over provisions that infringed on property rights. The President returned the Bill to Parliament with objections that, according to the Parliamentary Legal Committee, were not adequately addressed in subsequent drafts.

The Bill was officially gazetted again in June 2025 under General Notice 1243A. However, on 1 October 2025, the Parliamentary Legal Committee issued an adverse report, identifying several provisions that, if enacted, would violate the Constitution.

The 2025 Adverse Report: Key Objections

The PLC's objections were extensive and wide-ranging:

Exclusion of Artisanal Miners: Clause 4 failed to define artisanal miners, rendering the clause discriminatory. Artisanal miners currently produce about 60 percent of all minerals, especially gold.
Unreasonable Appeal Periods: Clause 25 provided only two working days for applicants to appeal if their registration as staking agents was refused, violating the right to administrative justice guaranteed in Section 68 of the Constitution.
Excessive Discretionary Powers: Clause 31 gave Provincial Mining Directors wide discretion to deny exclusive prospecting licences based on vague criteria, creating opportunities for corruption.
Constructive Deprivation of Property: Clause 37 imposed a 10-year prohibition on landholders who withheld consent for prospecting, effectively depriving them of proprietary rights without compensation.
Dual Role of Provincial Mining Directors: Clauses 38, 40, 46, and 61 gave PMDs both the power to grant mining rights and to adjudicate disputes, violating the doctrine of separation of powers.

Zvobgo noted that the 2025 adverse report was actually the second time the PLC had flagged constitutional concerns, with the first adverse report having been issued in 2023.

Key Provisions of the Proposed Legislation

Despite the setbacks, the Mines and Minerals Bill represents a comprehensive overhaul. Key provisions include:

Establishment of a Mining Cadastre Registry: A computerised system to document and manage all mining rights, replacing the current manual system and promoting transparency.

"Use It or Lose It" Principle: Stricter rules to curb speculative hoarding of mining claims, requiring active development rather than simply paying annual fees.
Strategic Minerals Framework: The power for the government to declare certain minerals as strategic, requiring a minimum investment of US$1 million and joint venture arrangements with the State. Gold and diamonds, initially excluded, have been reinserted following public consultations.

Local Participation: Small-scale mining preserved exclusively for Zimbabweans, with only citizens or companies wholly owned by them allowed to hold prospecting rights.

The Bill has drawn sharp criticism from industry stakeholders. Samson Dzingwe, President of the Zimbabwe Prospectors Union, described the drafting process as "secretive and segregative," arguing that provisions on strategic minerals effectively lock out Zimbabwean operators.

Minister of Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs Ziyambi Ziyambi has committed to proposing amendments in consultation with the Mines Minister and the Parliamentary Legal Committee.

The urgency of finalising the Bill cannot be overstated. In 2015, the Fraser Institute ranked Zimbabwe among the bottom 10 least attractive jurisdictions for mining investment. A decade later, the 1961 Act still governs the sector, a law crafted before independence, before the lithium revolution, and before the global push for responsible mining.

Dr Kambamura's commitment to finalising the Bill before the year ends offers hope. But the process must be transparent, consultative, and genuinely responsive to concerns raised by the Parliamentary Legal Committee, small-scale miners, and other stakeholders.


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Caledonia's Blanket Mine Q2 2026 Output Rises 18%

Caledonia Mining Corporation Plc has reported a significant rebound in gold production at its flagship Blanket Mine in Zimbabwe, with output for the second quarter of 2026 rising sharply as operational measures to access higher-grade ore gain momentum, Mining Zimbabwe can report.

Blanket Mine, Gwanda, Zimbabwe

By Rudairo Mapuranga

The company produced 17,360 ounces in Q2 2026, an 18% increase from the 14,767 ounces recorded in the first quarter. Despite the strong quarter-on-quarter recovery, production remained below the record levels of the corresponding period in 2025, which the company attributes to its planned mining sequence and temporary constraints on high-grade access earlier in the year.

The production uplift is primarily driven by improving grades delivered to the processing plant. According to the company, grades have been steadily increasing since January 2026, with the average grade for Q2 2026 reaching 2.88 grams per tonne (g/t). This positive trajectory has continued into July, with grades to date reaching 3.05 g/t.

Operational Initiatives Supporting Growth

Management remains confident in the company's full-year production guidance for 2026, which remains at 72,000 to 76,500 ounces. The outlook is supported by several key operational initiatives expected to bolster production in the second half of the year.

"We are now tracking a grade of approximately 3 g/t, and we expect to remain at that level for the rest of the year," said Mark Learmonth, Chief Executive Officer. "With the introduction of a seven-day working week and the completion of the elution plant upgrade due in the third quarter of 2026, we expect production to further increase in the second half of the year, in line with our guidance."

The shift to a seven-day working week, implemented in June 2026, is expected to add approximately 200 tonnes per day of additional ore processing capacity. Furthermore, the completion of an elution plant upgrade is scheduled for Q3 2026, which will enable the processing of stockpiled fine-grain loaded carbon from September onwards, providing an additional production boost. These measures are part of a broader strategy to improve operational resilience and efficiency at Blanket, following a capital expenditure programme initiated in 2025 that included significant investment in mine development to access higher-grade zones.

The company produced 17,360 ounces in Q2 2026, an 18% increase from the **14,767 ounces recorded in the first quarter.**

Financial Context and Outlook

The operational recovery comes against the backdrop of a supportive gold price environment. In the first quarter of 2026, Caledonia reported robust financial results despite lower production, with revenue rising 18% to over $66 million, driven by an average realised gold price of $4,816 per ounce. This price strength led to a 69.4% increase in profit after tax to $18.9 million for the quarter.

With the production trajectory now improving, the company is well-positioned to capitalise on sustained gold prices. The Bilboes project remains a key long-term growth driver for the company, with first gold targeted for late 2028 and financing initiatives well progressed following the completion of a $150 million convertible note offering in January 2026.

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3 Candy Close, Mt Pleasant, HarareTel : +263-8677 000 692-6/08677 102 418
Postal: Box HG953, Highlands, Harare | Website: www.grmining.co.zw | Email: info@grmining.co.zw

President
Mr. Fungai Makoni

Vice President
Mr Qubeka Nkomo

(Immediate Past President)
Mr.John Musekiwa

The Board Chairman, Board Members, Executive Management and Staff of Golden Reef Mining (Pvt) Ltd salutes the immediate past President Mr. John Musekiwa and congratulates incoming President Mr. Fungai Makoni & VP Mr. Qubeka Nkomo.

We wish the new Presidium every success.

Congratulations
Makorokoto, Amhlophe!!!

Why better ventilation is key to Zimbabwe's gold growth

Zimbabwe's ambition to produce 50 tonnes of gold annually will depend on more than investment, exploration and higher mineral prices. It will also hinge on how safely and efficiently mines operate underground, where an often-overlooked factor, ventilation, is emerging as a critical driver of productivity, Mining Zimbabwe can report.

Dr Tonderai Chikande

By Ryan Chigoche

As artisanal and small-scale miners continue to contribute the bulk of the country's gold deliveries, more operations are following ore bodies deeper underground. While this opens new production opportunities, it also increases exposure to hazardous gases, heat and dust, making effective ventilation essential not only for protecting workers but also for sustaining output.

Industry experts say ventilation has traditionally been treated as a compliance requirement or a response to accidents, rather than a core component of mine planning.

> "Experience across the global mining industry demonstrates that **well-ventilated mines are generally more productive, more efficient and more resilient."**

"There is no conflict between safety and productivity," Mine Ventilation Society of Zimbabwe (MVSZ) President Dr Tonderai Chikande told Mining Zimbabwe. "Experience across the global mining industry demonstrates that well-ventilated mines are generally more productive, more efficient and more resilient."

The relationship between airflow and productivity becomes more pronounced as underground mines deepen. Poor ventilation can restrict access to working areas, delay mine development, reduce productive shifts and force costly infrastructure upgrades that could have been avoided through proper planning.

"When ventilation constraints are not embedded in early mine design, companies often encounter situations where infrastructure must be retrofitted, with production slowed due to airflow limitations," Chikande said.

For Zimbabwe's mining sector, where operators are increasingly pursuing deeper deposits, integrating ventilation into mine design from the outset could improve operational efficiency while reducing long-term costs.

The challenge is particularly acute in the artisanal and small-scale mining sector. Many underground workings expand gradually with limited technical planning, while financial constraints make sophisticated ventilation systems difficult to install. As a result, ventilation is often considered only after conditions deteriorate or an incident occurs.

Rather than replicating complex systems used by large industrial mines, Chikande said the focus should be on practical, affordable solutions suited to the realities of small-scale operations. Proper mine layouts, strategically positioned airways, auxiliary fans and routine inspections can significantly improve underground air quality without imposing prohibitive costs.

Beyond individual mining operations, the sector is also contending with an ageing regulatory framework. Much of Zimbabwe's mine ventilation legislation was developed decades ago, before deeper underground mining, diesel-powered equipment and modern atmospheric monitoring technologies became common place.

"There is a need to modernise the regulatory framework so that it addresses emerging risks such as diesel particulate matter, which was not present when the initial regulations were promulgated," Chikande said.

Updating these standards, he argued, would strengthen mine planning, improve compliance and ensure ventilation keeps pace with the changing nature of Zimbabwe's mining industry.

The discussion comes at a time when the country is seeking to expand mineral production while improving safety standards across both large-scale and small-scale mining. As underground operations become more extensive, ventilation is increasingly being recognised not simply as an engineering function but as an operational asset that influences productivity, costs and long-term mine viability.

For Zimbabwe, the challenge is not only to produce more gold but to do so sustainably. Achieving that will require greater investment in mine planning, stronger technical capacity and regulations that reflect the realities of modern underground mining.

In the race towards 50 tonnes of gold, the quality of underground air may prove just as important as the quality of the ore itself.

Zimbabwe mine workers get wage increase as NEC pegs minimum salaries in US Dollars

Zimbabwe's mining industry workers are set to receive wage increases after labour unions and employers agreed on new minimum salaries for 2026, with wages now pegged in United States dollars under a dual-currency framework.

How Mine rescue team at ZIMPLATS for a rescue competition

The National Employment Council (NEC) for the Mining Industry announced that the Associated Mine Workers Union of Zimbabwe (AMWUZ), the Zimbabwe Diamond and Allied Minerals Workers Union (ZDAMWU), and the Chamber of Mines of Zimbabwe reached an agreement on new minimum rates of pay for Grades 1 to 13 on July 9, 2026.

The agreement covers the period from January 1 to December 31, 2026 and will be submitted to the Ministry of Labour and Social Services for registration and publication.

Under the agreement, minimum wages for mining employees increased by 5% for the first half of the year and a further 7% for the second half, with all adjustments based on the US dollar value principle.

For the period January to June 2026, the minimum monthly wage for a Grade 1 employee rose from US$391.39 to US$410.96, while a Grade 13 employee's minimum wage increased from US$907.77 to US$953.15. From July to December 2026, minimum monthly wages were further adjusted, with Grade 1 rising to US$418.78 and Grade 13 reaching US$971.31.

The agreement requires foreign-currency-generating mining companies to pay workers using a dual-currency system comprising both US dollar and ZiG components. Non-foreign-currency-generating companies may apply for exemption and, if approved, will be allowed to pay the full minimum wage in ZiG at the prevailing Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe interbank exchange rate on the date of payment.

The NEC also retained service increments for long-serving employees. Workers with more than two years of service with the same employer will receive additional increments ranging from 2% after two years of service to a cumulative 12% after 25 years.

Employers have been instructed to implement the revised deductions and contributions, including Mining Industry Pension Fund contributions and NEC dues set at 0.6% of the applicable grade minimum wage. Any shortfalls are to be backdated to January 1, 2026.

The agreement includes an exemption clause allowing qualifying non-foreign-currency-generating mining companies to seek relief from dual-currency payment obligations, reflecting efforts to accommodate varying operating conditions across the sector. Employers capable of paying above the NEC minimum rates have also been encouraged to do so.

NATIONAL EMPLOYMENT COUNCIL FOR THE MINING INDUSTRY RATES OF PAY

Effective: 1 January 2026 to 31 December 2026

Grade	Minimum/Month 31/12/2025	New Minimum/Month 01/01/2026	USD Portion	ZiG Portion	Minimum/ Shift	Increase
1	391.39	410.96	279.45	131.51	15.81	19.57
2	394.51	414.24	281.68	132.56	15.93	19.73
3	396.12	415.93	282.83	133.10	16.00	19.81
4	403.08	423.23	287.80	135.44	16.28	20.15
5	415.11	435.86	296.39	139.48	16.76	20.76
6	434.60	456.33	310.30	146.02	17.55	21.73
7	452.40	475.02	323.01	152.00	18.27	22.62
8	492.73	517.37	351.81	165.56	19.90	24.64
9	597.71	627.59	426.76	200.83	24.14	29.89
10	670.12	703.62	478.46	225.16	27.06	33.51
11	785.11	824.37	560.57	263.80	31.71	39.26
12	851.57	894.15	608.02	286.13	34.39	42.58
13	907.77	953.15	648.14	305.01	36.66	45.39

Overall Increase 5%

Notes

- Foreign currency generating companies shall pay the new minimum wages in both USD and ZiG portions as provided above.
- Non-foreign currency generating companies may be exempted from paying in dual currency and shall pay the new monthly USD minimum wages at the prevailing official rate on the date of payment.

Muzarabani's US$90 billion oil bounty takes shape as drilling contracts awarded

The Muzarabani oil and gas project, sitting atop an estimated US$90 billion resource base, has entered a decisive new phase with Invictus Energy awarding key drilling contracts as the explorer races toward its next high-impact well in the second half of 2026, Mining Zimbabwe can report.

Scott Macmillan

The broader Cabora Bassa Basin is estimated to contain approximately 1.38 billion barrels of oil and condensate, with an in-situ value of roughly US$90 billion at current market prices. The Mukuyu gas field alone is estimated to hold up to 20 trillion cubic feet of gas and 845 million barrels of conventional gas condensate, equivalent to approximately 4.3 billion barrels of oil equivalent.

To put that in perspective, one trillion cubic feet of gas can power a 500-megawatt power station for 50 years. At 20 Tcf, the same plant could run for 1,000 years. Paul Chimbodza, founder and managing director of Geo Associates, told the Chamber of Mines Annual Conference that the project has "barely scratched the surface" after just two wells drilled across the 360,000-hectare licence.

Wellpad Construction Underway as Rig Mobilises

Invictus has awarded contracts for wellpad construction, access road upgrades and water supply infrastructure for the Musuma-1 exploration well. Exalo S.A., the contractor for Rig 202, is mobilising a team to Zimbabwe this week to commence in-country setup and critical maintenance activities ahead of the planned rig move.

The evaluation of long-lead equipment suppliers, including wellheads and tubulars, is complete, with contract awards being prepared. Well services contracts are expected in the coming weeks, completing the final suite of contracts required for the campaign.

"Awarding wellpad construction, civils, road upgrades, water supply, long-lead equipment and logistics contracts represents an important step in our preparations," Invictus Managing Director Scott Macmillan said.

Musuma-1 targets an estimated gross mean unrisked prospective resource of 1.2 trillion cubic feet of gas and 73 million barrels of condensate. It is the first exploration well to be drilled outside the Mukuyu discovery area, targeting a new play type in the eastern portion of the licence, where several high-potential prospects have been identified.

PPSA Signed, Regulatory Framework in Place

In May 2026, Invictus signed the Petroleum Production Sharing Agreement (PPSA) with the Zimbabwean Government through Geo Associates, establishing the legal and fiscal framework governing oil and gas exploration, production and revenue sharing.

The broader Cabora Bassa Basin is estimated to contain approximately **1.38 billion barrels of oil and condensate, with an in-situ value of roughly US$90 billion** at current market prices.

The agreement adopts a hybrid model, allowing the Government to receive its share either in cash or in petroleum products, using a sliding-scale model tied to project returns.

"In times of low returns, the contractor gets a higher share. In times of higher returns, government gets a much bigger share," Macmillan explained.

Finance Minister Mthuli Ncube described the Cabora Bassa project as a "strategic national undertaking" capable of reshaping Zimbabwe's economy through energy security, industrialisation and employment creation.

The PPSA will serve as the model contract for all future petroleum activity in Zimbabwe.

A Project Decades in the Making

The Muzarabani project is licensed under Geo Associates, with Invictus Energy holding 80 percent and One Gas Resources holding the remaining 20 percent. The initial licence area of 100,000 hectares has since been expanded to 360,000 hectares through collaboration with the Mutapa Investment Fund.

Chimbodza noted that Mobil had explored the area for about 10 years, leaving behind seismic data that Geo Associates has reinterpreted using modern computing power and software.

"That's all we did with the Mobil data. We subjected it to new techniques, new resolution, and we started picking up what Mobil couldn't pick up then," he said.

The company has generated more than a dozen drill-ready targets across the licence area.

"In our case, we are spoiled for choice on where to drill," Chimbodza said.

Market Finally Exists

Chimbodza noted that while Mobil explored the area some 40 years ago, the project was never developed because there was no market for gas at the time.

"Fast forward to today, there is a huge market, not only in Zimbabwe but in the region," he said.

With infrastructure already available in the region that can be retrofitted, the project could supply power to Zimbabwe's energy-hungry economy and beyond. The early production phase will include a pilot gas-to-power project supplying electricity to Dallaglio Investments' Eureka Gold Mine.

Traditional and cultural ceremonies will be held at the Musuma-1 wellsite ahead of wellpad construction as the project moves from a decades-old dream towards tangible reality.

From Data to Decisions: How Edge IOT & AI is Redefining Operational Intelligence for African Mining

Tendayi Mwayi, CEO, Edge IOT and AI

As Zimbabwe's mining industry gathers in Bulawayo for Mine Entra 2026, one conversation is becoming impossible to ignore: the future of mining will not be defined solely by bigger equipment or larger processing plants, but by the ability to see, understand and act on operational data in real time.

For Edge IOT & AI, Mine Entra represents far more than another exhibition. It is an opportunity to demonstrate how Operational Intelligence is transforming mines across Africa—connecting people, machines and processes to improve productivity, strengthen safety and enable faster, better-informed decisions.

This vision aligns closely with this year's Mine Entra theme, "Unearth, Transform, Prosper: Anchoring Economic Transformation Through Mining Value Chains." Rather than viewing the transformation engendered in this theme as simply beneficiation of minerals, Edge IOT & AI believes another great opportunity lies in transforming fragmented operational data into actionable intelligence that delivers measurable business outcomes.

Beyond Digitalisation: Building the Connected Mine

Mining operations generate enormous amounts of information every minute—from GPS coordinates to sensor data, fuel readings, speed, maintenance records, personnel activity, and environmental conditions.

The challenge is rarely a lack of data.

The challenge is that this information often exists in disconnected systems, making it difficult for operations teams to understand what is happening across the mine in real time and translate it into actionable insight.

Edge IOT & AI addresses this challenge through Kuchera, the Operational Intelligence platform that consolidates data from across the mining value chain into a single source of truth.

Rather than producing reports after problems occur, Kuchera provides live operational visibility, AI-powered analytics, and actionable recommendations that enable management teams to identify bottlenecks before they lead to production losses.

Turning Visibility into Performance
Edge IOT & AI's Kuchera Platform covers the monitoring requirements of the full mining operation, providing intelligence across production, safety, fleet management and asset performance.

Solutions include:

- Production Monitoring & Optimisation – improving haul cycle times, equipment utilisation and operational efficiency.

- Machine Health Monitoring – identifying equipment issues before failures occur through predictive maintenance.

- Fuel Monitoring – reducing fuel losses while improving consumption analysis and operational accountability.

- Tyre Monitoring - extending tyre life and avoiding catastrophic tyre failure.

- Driver Monitoring – using AI vision technology to detect fatigue, distraction, smoking and other unsafe behaviour.

- Collision Avoidance & Pedestrian Detection – reducing vehicle interactions and improving operational safety around trackless mining machinery.

- Personnel Tracking & Evacuation Management – providing real-time visibility of workforce location during routine operations and emergencies.

- Underground Communications & Connectivity – enabling continuous communication and situational awareness in underground environments.

- Digital Workflows - simple digital forms allowing the “missing gap” of manual information provided by operators and technicians to be captured in the Kuchera platform.

Together, these technologies create a connected ecosystem where every operational decision is based on live intelligence rather than assumptions.

Seeing What Traditional Reporting Cannot

One of the clearest examples of Operational Intelligence comes from a simulated open-pit mining scenario that demonstrates Kuchera's capabilities.

A mine was consistently missing production targets despite every department reporting acceptable performance.

Truck availability exceeded 90%.
Loading operations were on target.
The crusher reported no significant mechanical failures.

Yet haul cycle times had increased from approximately 40 minutes to over 60 minutes, resulting in significant production losses.
Traditional reporting identified the symptom.

Kuchera identified the cause.

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Using live operational intelligence, the platform revealed that the actual bottleneck was excessive queuing at the crusher's ROM pad—not fleet productivity.

Instead of recommending additional equipment or expensive infrastructure, Kuchera proposed a simple operational change: stockpiling ore around the ROM pad while using a front-end loader to maintain continuous crusher feed.

Within only a few shifts:

· Crusher queues disappeared.
· Haul cycle times returned to target.
· Fleet utilisation improved.
· Daily production increased—without purchasing additional trucks or increasing labour.

This illustrates the difference between reporting historical data and delivering Operational Intelligence.

Visibility Saves Lives

While production remains a commercial priority, safety continues to be mining's most important responsibility.

Operational visibility is increasingly becoming one of the industry's strongest safety tools.

Across Africa, Edge IOT & AI has deployed technologies that improve emergency response, workforce accountability, and situational awareness in challenging mining environments.

Examples include:

· Lesotho Highlands Water Project: Smart ventilation and access control reduced shaft-clearing delays while improving underground conditions.

· Rosh Pinah Mine (Namibia): AI-powered Driver Monitoring Systems reduced haulage incidents by encouraging safer driving behaviours.

· Letseng Diamond Mine (Lesotho): AI-powered Driver Monitoring Systems reduced haulage incidents by encouraging safer driving behaviours.

Real-time visibility means operators know where personnel are, how equipment is performing, and where operational risks are developing—before incidents escalate.

Operational Intelligence is Africa's Next Competitive Advantage

According to Tendayi Mwayi, CEO of Edge IOT & AI, the mining industry's next leap forward will not come from collecting more data, but from using it more intelligently.

"Mining companies already have access to enormous volumes of operational data. The real opportunity is turning that data into decisions that improve safety, increase production and reduce operational waste. That is true Operational Intelligence."

Mwayi believes African mining has an opportunity to lead rather than follow the global digital transformation journey.

"Our vision is simple: connect every person, every machine and every process in real time. When leadership has complete operational visibility, they make faster decisions, respond proactively to risks and unlock productivity that previously remained hidden."

Join Edge IOT & AI at Mine Entra 2026

Visitors to the Edge IOT & AI stand at Mine Entra 2026 will experience how live operational dashboards, AI-driven analytics and connected mining technologies are helping operations move beyond isolated systems towards a fully connected mine.

Rather than showcasing technology for technology's sake, the company will demonstrate practical solutions that deliver measurable business outcomes:

· Increased production
· Lower operating costs
· Improved fleet utilisation
· Better ESG reporting
· Stronger workforce safety
· Faster operational decision-making

As Zimbabwe's mining industry embraces digital transformation, Operational Intelligence is rapidly becoming a strategic necessity rather than a future ambition.

And at Mine Entra 2026, Edge IOT & AI intends to show exactly what that future looks like.

Media Contact
Edge IOT & AI
Email: info@edgeiotandai.com
Website: edgeiotandai.com

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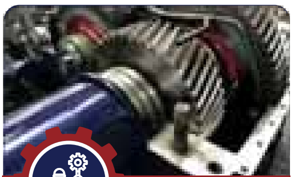

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Interview with Mr. Wellington Takavarasha Chief Executive Officer, Zimbabwe Miners Federation (ZMF)

Zimbabwe's artisanal and small-scale mining sector has become the driving force behind the country's record gold production. As the industry embraces formalisation, beneficiation, and stricter regulation, ZMF Chief Executive Officer Wellington Takavarasha shares his insights on the sector's achievements, challenges, and vision for the future.

Wellington Takavarasha

Congratulations on the strong performance of Zimbabwe's artisanal and small-scale gold miners (your members), whose contribution has been instrumental in driving record national gold output. What do you attribute this success to, and how does ZMF intend to sustain and grow this momentum?

Several factors have driven this success: government policy reforms, improved gold marketing through Fidelity Gold Refiners, stronger organisation through ZMF, capacity-building programmes, increased investment in processing equipment and mechanisation, and favourable international gold prices.

To sustain this momentum, ZMF is intensifying programmes on mine safety training, environmental management, proper shaft support systems, responsible explosives use, occupational health standards, and formal safety inspections.

Formalisation remains fundamental. We continue engaging the Ministry of Mines to simplify licensing procedures and reduce bureaucracy, enabling miners to access financing, secure investment, benefit from technical support, and improve environmental compliance.

Access to mining ground is our greatest challenge. Many miners have the skills and willingness to invest but lack secure access to viable mineral resources. ZMF is advocating for dedicated ASM mining zones, the release of underutilised claims, geological mapping support, transparent title administration, and stronger security of tenure to encourage long-term investment.

Small-scale gold mining is now exclusively reserved for Zimbabwean citizens and wholly locally owned companies. There are concerns that foreign investors could continue operating through proxy ownership or local fronts. What will ZMF do to help the government enforce this policy effectively?

ZMF fully supports this policy, which ensures mineral wealth benefits Zimbabweans through employment, entrepreneurship, and community development. However, success depends on robust implementation and effective monitoring to prevent proxy ownership or fronting.

What ZMF Will Do:

Strengthen Member Registration: Maintain an up-to-date database of legitimate Zimbabwean operators and verify company ownership structures before extending membership and support.

Promote Compliance: Educate miners on legal ownership requirements, develop a code of conduct requiring disclosure of beneficial ownership, and encourage self-regulation through provincial structures.

Report Suspected Fronting: Establish confidential reporting channels through provincial leadership and cooperate with government investigators where there is credible evidence of proxy ownership.

Support Digital Monitoring: Advocate for an integrated digital mining cadastre and licensing system, and promote gold traceability from mine to market.

Build Local Capacity: Support Zimbabwean miners with training, access to finance, and technology transfer so they remain competitive and do not surrender control to external financiers.

Safeguards Needed:

Mandatory beneficial ownership disclosure verified periodically by authorities.

Routine compliance audits of ownership, financing, and operational control.

Strict penalties, including cancellation of titles, financial penalties, blacklisting, and criminal prosecution where fraud is involved.

Financial transparency to distinguish legitimate commercial lending from arrangements that transfer operational control.

Community monitoring through traditional leaders and district mining committees to identify operations controlled by undisclosed foreign interests.

We must distinguish between illegal ownership and legitimate investment partnerships. Foreign investors can still participate through lawful arrangements such as equipment supply, technical services, or financing that does not undermine Zimbabwean ownership and control. Clear guidelines will provide certainty to investors while protecting policy integrity.

Mining accidents continue to affect the small-scale sector. What practical measures is ZMF implementing to improve occupational safety, environmental stewardship, and responsible mining practices?

Mining accidents are preventable. ZMF is committed to creating a culture where safety becomes a core value rather than an afterthought.

Capacity Building and Training: Through provincial structures and partnerships with the Zimbabwe School of Mines, ZELO, and ZIMSHEQ, we conduct regular training on mine safety, hazard identification, ground support, safe blasting, mercury-free processing, first aid, and emergency preparedness.

Formalisation: Formalised operations are more likely to comply with regulations, access technical support, and invest in appropriate equipment, enabling better monitoring and accountability.

Technology Adoption: We advocate for i

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improved access to finance so miners can replace unsafe manual methods with mechanised equipment, proper ventilation systems, personal protective equipment, and efficient processing technologies.

Environmental Stewardship: We promote proper waste management, rehabilitation of mined-out areas, protection of water sources, controlled chemical use, and the reduction of mercury use through cleaner gold recovery technologies.

Collaboration: We strengthen partnerships with the Ministry of Mines, the Ministry of Environment, EMA, and the Ministry of Labour to ensure miners receive technical guidance and compliance support rather than relying solely on enforcement.

Our vision is a professional, safe, environmentally responsible, and commercially viable ASM sector that increases production while protecting lives and communities.

The Ministry of Mines has issued a public notice calling on all holders of mining titles to regularise their outstanding obligations by 30 August 2026, warning of forfeiture of mining rights. How prepared are ZMF members to meet this deadline?

The notice is timely and necessary, reinforcing compliance, accountability, and proper administration. ZMF fully supports Government efforts to ensure mining titles are held by active, compliant operators.

Our members are responding positively, with many already regularising titles, paying inspection fees, and submitting statutory returns. However, preparedness varies, with some facing challenges.

Challenges Include:

Financial constraints due to fluctuating mineral prices and limited access to affordable finance.

Administrative bottlenecks and delays in accessing records and processing applications.

Limited awareness of specific compliance requirements and procedures.

Distance to Mining Affairs offices, especially for operators in remote districts.

Disputes over mining claims delaying regularisation.

ZMF Support:

Our provincial and district structures are conducting awareness campaigns, disseminating information on compliance requirements, and encouraging miners not to wait until the last minute. Provincial leadership works closely with Ministry officials to guide members through the regularisation process and resolve administrative issues.

We are also engaging Government to promote efficient service delivery and ensure genuine, productive miners are not disadvantaged by procedural delays beyond their control.

Our Message: Do not ignore this deadline. Mining rights are valuable national assets and must be protected through full compliance.

Going forward, ZMF will advocate for a more digital, transparent, and decentralised mining administration system that reduces compliance costs, shortens processing times, and improves access to services.

> Our Message:
> **Do not ignore this deadline. Mining rights are valuable national assets** and must be protected through **full compliance.**

Looking ahead to the next five years, what is your vision for Zimbabwe's artisanal and small-scale mining sector, and what policy reforms would have the greatest impact?

Our vision is a transformed ASM sector: modern, well-capitalised, safe, environmentally responsible, and globally competitive, recognised as a key pillar of national economic development in line with NDS2 and Vision 2030.

Critical Policy Reforms:

Accelerated Formalisation: Simplify and decentralise mining title administration, reduce compliance costs, and ensure security of tenure. Clear rights encourage confident investment.

Access to Finance: Dedicated mining development funds, affordable credit, loan guarantee schemes, and equipment leasing programmes specifically for ASM operators.

Access to Productive Mining Ground: Transparent allocation of mineral rights, release of dormant claims, and additional exploration opportunities for Zimbabwean miners.

Geological Mapping: Investment in exploration support to reduce risks, improve resource confidence, and enhance production efficiency.

Mechanisation and Technology: Duty concessions on mining equipment, technology transfer programmes, and support for local manufacturing of mining equipment.

Beneficiation: Establishment of shared processing centres, gold service centres, and regional mineral processing hubs to enable local processing and greater value capture.

Safety and Environment: Continuous training, stronger extension services, affordable safety equipment, and modern mining methods to reduce accidents and improve compliance.

Enterprise Development: Capacity building incorporating business management, financial literacy, corporate governance, and marketing skills so miners operate profitable, resilient businesses.

Collaboration: Stronger partnerships between Government, ZMF, financial institutions, investors, development partners, research institutions, and academia to drive innovation and policy implementation.

If these reforms are implemented consistently, Zimbabwe has the opportunity to position its ASM sector among Africa's leading mining industries characterised by formalisation, higher productivity, improved safety, environmental responsibility, increased value addition, and broad-based economic inclusion.

Such transformation will improve livelihoods for millions, strengthen national mineral production, increase export earnings, create sustainable employment, and make a significant contribution to long-term economic development.

Rising Young Engineer: A Conversation with Ngoni Nyandoro

From graduate trainee to Underground Manager at Freda Rebecca Gold Mine, his journey is a testament to hard work, resilience, and technical excellence. We had a one-on-one with Ngoni Nyandoro, one of the youngest Underground Managers in Zimbabwe's gold mining sector, to discuss his remarkable career journey, leadership philosophy, and vision for the future.

Eng Ngoni Nyandoro

MZ: Ngoni, congratulations on your recent promotion. What first drew you to mining engineering?

Ngoni Nyandoro (NN): The quote, "Mining is not just about extracting minerals from the earth; it is about unlocking the resources that build nations and improve lives," resonated deeply with me soon after completing my Advanced Level studies. Mining plays a significant role in national development, offers opportunities to solve real-world challenges, embraces advanced technologies, and provides avenues for leadership and career growth. These aspects of the profession motivated and inspired me to pursue a degree in Mining Engineering.

MZ: Walk us through your career journey, from your first days as a graduate to this leadership role.

NN: I hold a Bachelor of Science Honours Degree in Mining Engineering and a Master of Business Administration (MBA), majoring in Finance, both from the University of Zimbabwe. This combination of technical and business education has provided me with a strong foundation in mine operations, project management, financial analysis, and strategic decision-making.

I began my mining career at Ayrshire Mine (Pan African Resources), where I completed a hands-on graduate trainee programme from August 2017 to November 2018. In November 2018, I joined ZIMASCO, where I gained expertise in contractor management, project evaluation, budgeting, and stakeholder engagement.

Seeking broader operational responsibility, I joined Zimplats in November 2020 as an Overseer Miner. A strong focus on safety, leadership, and operational excellence earned me the role of Shift Boss, which I held for two years. During this time, I played a key role in improving mining systems, production performance, and safety compliance.

I then joined Mutapa Gold Resources – Freda Rebecca Gold Mine as Mine Captain. I successfully implemented initiatives that improved productivity, operational efficiency, and safety while consistently delivering production targets. In recognition of my contributions and leadership, I was promoted to Underground Manager. This progression reflects my proven ability to deliver sustainable results, develop high-performing teams, and lead mining operations safely and effectively in demanding environments.

MZ: Freda Rebecca is Zimbabwe's largest gold producer. What does this responsibility mean to you?

NN: As Underground Manager, the responsibility extends beyond achieving daily production targets. The role is directly linked to Freda Rebecca Gold Mine's legacy of sustained gold production, an increased life of mine, and the introduction of technology that saves lives. Our current goal is to capitalise on strong gold prices while engineering lower operating costs so that we can remain sustainable even if gold prices decline in the future.

MZ: What leadership lessons have you learned along the way?

NN: My leadership journey has taught me that achieving sustainable results is not only about meeting production targets but also about mastering safety, costs, and operations while building trust with teams, communities, regulators, and superiors. One must combine technical credibility with a commercial mindset and be able to lead through challenging market cycles and operational risks.

The most important lesson I have learned over the years is having the courage to make decisions, especially under pressure. In mining operations, situations often arise that require quick decisions to maintain productivity, address risks, or respond to unexpected challenges, and these are the moments that set you apart. Gaining operational exposure, managing change, and making sound decisions under pressure are what truly shape a leader.

MZ: Your promotion is part of a broader shift, young professionals taking on bigger roles in Zimbabwe's mining sector. What message do you have for other young engineers?

NN: It is encouraging to see young professionals increasingly taking on significant leadership roles within Zimbabwe's mining industry and the broader business sector. I am privileged to be part of this generation of young leaders who are being entrusted with greater responsibilities and opportunities to influence organisational success.

My message to young engineers is simple: hard work pays. The early years of your career are critical in shaping your future. Be willing to get your hands dirty, spend time in the field, and immerse yourself in the practical aspects of your profession. The future of the industry belongs to those who are prepared to build it.

MZ: Looking ahead, what does success look like for Ngoni Nyandoro five years from now?

NN: As I reflect on my career journey and the progress I have made within the mining industry, I remain ambitious about the future and the impact I can make on both my organisation and the broader mining sector. I foresee myself providing strategic leadership that drives sustainable growth, operational excellence, and safety performance.

A key element of my future vision is to play a leading role in developing and implementing systems that position Freda Rebecca Gold Mine as a world-class mining operation. I aspire to contribute to establishing operating models and business processes that enable the mine to become one of the lowest-cost gold producers in the industry, measured by cost per tonne mined and processed, while simultaneously maximising shareholder value.


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LEADING FROM THE FRONT

How Sany Excavators continue to dominate Zimbabwe's market

Across Zimbabwe, SANY Excavators have become the trusted choice for contractors, miners, and investors driving the country's growth.

By Jabulani Zheke

SANY has established itself as Zimbabwe's excavator market leader, commanding an estimated 80% market share. This achievement reflects the confidence of both local businesses and Chinese investors who have chosen SANY as their preferred equipment partner.

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SANY has established itself as Zimbabwe's excavator market leader, commanding an estimated **80% market share.**

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SANY Excavators - Leading from the Front.

Sany is Powering Zimbabwe's industrial and Mining Energy Transition

by Takudzwa Mandireva

The future of heavy equipment is no longer a distant vision. In Zimbabwe, the transition to electric machinery is already happening.

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CONTACT US FOR MORE INFORMATION

Henry Madovi: Sales Director.
+263 77 212 9375

Jabulani Zheke:
Sales and Marketing Manager
+263 78 495 0361

Takudzwa Mandireva: Key Accounts Manager
+263 71 586 2328

In conversation with Whaleside Shaft Sinkers Managing Director George Chiunda

Mining Zimbabwe Magazine sat down with George Chiunda, the founder and Managing Director of Whaleside Shaft Sinkers, to discuss his remarkable journey, leadership philosophy, and the technical expertise that has made his company a leader in specialist shaft sinking.


Eng George Chiunda

MZ: Can you tell us about your professional background, where you studied, and what was your path into the mining industry?

George Chiunda (GC): My journey began with a Mining Engineering (Honours) degree. If you include my vocational training, I have been part of the industry since 1982, but I began my professional career proper in 1985. Mining is my profession, and it has been the foundation of my life's work.

MZ: How long have you been with Whaleside Shaft Sinkers, and what brought you to the company?

GC: Whaleside was established in 1999. It was a private investment opportunity that allowed me to combine my lifelong passion for mining with my entrepreneurial drive. I have always wanted to go into business, and founding Whaleside gave me that platform.

MZ: What has been your most memorable project or milestone in your career so far?

GC: That is a tough question after so many years, but I would have to say the decision to move into shaft sinking itself is my most memorable milestone. In 2011, there was no other company in this country doing specialist shaft sinking. I took a calculated risk and moved into a profession where I had very little direct experience. Not only did we succeed, but we shaped the company to be what it is today. It is deeply gratifying to now have my children working in the business alongside me.

MZ: What leadership philosophy or principles guide you in managing a specialist shaft-sinking company?

GC: The most critical principle that guides everything we do is safety. Shaft sinking is a highly risky job, it is the vertical equivalent of working on a skyscraper, but in reverse, going down into the earth. You need a workforce that is incredibly safety-conscious and a management team that is rigorous about standards.

MZ: What do you find most challenging, and most rewarding, about leading Whaleside?

GC: The most challenging aspect is managing that risk. We work in dangerous places: deep shafts, humid environments, and wet conditions. A fall in a shaft mostly results in fatality. Ensuring that every single person goes home safely is our primary challenge. The reward, however, is seeing the team succeed in those conditions and watching the business grow and thrive.

MZ: How would you describe the company culture at Whaleside, and what role do you play in shaping it?

GC: I try to lead by example. I don't believe in sitting in an office and simply issuing orders. I enjoy being on the ground, checking the site, and talking to the workers. This approach helps instil a culture of involvement and pride, where everyone understands that we are in this together. Seeing the team take ownership of their work and the safety of their colleagues is what makes the company culture strong.

MZ: What shaft lining systems does Whaleside prioritise for deep shafts?

GC: Whaleside prioritises engineered, risk-based shaft lining systems. For deep shafts in variable ground conditions, reinforced monolithic concrete linings are the preferred permanent support due to their strength and durability. This support is normally done where the shaft walls have incompetent ground conditions. It varies between 1 metre and 30 metres or more.

MZ: How are your winding systems designed and configured?

GC: Our winding systems are designed according to project depth and production requirements. Typical sinking configurations provide payload capacities of 3–8 tonnes with rope speeds generally between 6–12 m/s, while ensuring full compliance with statutory safety factors and international engineering standards.

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MZ: How does Whaleside manage water ingress during sinking operations?

GC: Water ingress is managed by pumping using air pumps at the shaft bottom. We also utilise stage pumping where required. This normally applies to shafts that are at greater depth. The amount of water also varies from area to area and from shaft to shaft.

MZ: What mechanised equipment does your fleet include?

GC: Drilling is done using hand-held pneumatic drilling machines. Equipment availability is maintained through preventative maintenance, condition monitoring and availability of strategic spare parts management.

MZ: How is ground support selected for varying conditions?

GC: Ground support selection is based on geotechnical mapping, rock mass classification, stress conditions and excavation life. Friction bolts are used for rapid support, resin bolts for permanent reinforcement and cable anchors where long-term stability and high-load capacity are required.

MZ: How are ventilation requirements determined?

GC: Ventilation requirements are determined through airflow modelling, diesel equipment demand (where applicable), blasting fumes, heat load and regulatory requirements to maintain safe air velocities, acceptable temperatures and healthy working conditions.

MZ: What safety principles are embedded in your operations?

GC: ISO 45001 principles are embedded through mandatory Pre-Task Risk Assessments, Job Hazard Analysis, permit-to-work systems, toolbox talks, supervision and continuous monitoring for all high-risk activities.

MZ: How is project performance monitored and tracked?

GC: Project performance is monitored using Microsoft Project together with KPIs including metres advanced, cycle times, equipment utilisation, productivity, safety performance, cost and schedule variance.

MZ: What testing and inspection regimes are applied to headgear structures?

GC: Headgear structures and winding systems undergo routine non-destructive testing including ultrasonic testing, magnetic particle inspection, visual inspections and rope examinations, supported by statutory inspections and engineering certification.

MZ: Does Whaleside design and fabricate custom headgear systems?

GC: Yes. Whaleside designs, fabricates and installs customised headgear systems specifically for small and medium-scale mining operations. Each solution is engineered according to shaft dimensions, production requirements, hoisting loads and client budgets while maintaining the same commitment to statutory requirements, safety, structural integrity and operational efficiency.

Feeding the Mines Which Feed the Nation

Small-scale miners deliver most of Zimbabwe's gold and directly sustain over a million livelihoods, but the sector receives less than adequate funding to ensure its sustainable growth.


A small-scale mining operation in Mashwest, Zimbabwe

By Kudzaishe Nzira

If you visit any Fidelity Gold Refinery (FGR) buying centre and watch the gold being brought in, you will notice that the bulk of it comes from small-scale miners. They now account for over 70% of deliveries made to FGR, with close to 35 tonnes recorded in 2025.

But the tonnage is not where the real story lies. The main concern is the distribution of value. When a large mining house earns, the return flows to a narrow band of shareholders. When a small miner earns, the money moves through an entire community: the miners, service providers, the mill operator, the driver, the woman selling food to the miners, and the families behind each of them. By most estimates, the sector sustains well over a million people.

The question is: why do the people who produce the most gold and support the most families remain the least able to attract sustainable investment?

Some might argue that they should formalise. But what if funding is what's needed for them to formalise?

The Financing Gap

A small-scale miner who needs a mill, a pump, a generator, an environmental impact assessment, a mini-exploration exercise, or to sink a shaft rarely qualifies for a loan. There is no title deed to pledge as security, no accounts an analyst can read, and an income that rises and falls with the gold price.

Presented with all three, banks and financial institutions have historically walked away. However, the traditional funding mechanisms are shifting, and the range of instruments available is wider than most assume.

> If you visit any **Fidelity Gold Refinery (FGR)** buying centre and watch the gold being brought in, you will notice that the bulk of it comes from small-scale miners. **They now account for over 70% of deliveries made to FGR**, with close to **35 tonnes recorded in 2025.**

Instruments Beyond the Bank

Streaming offers cash today in exchange for the right to buy a share of future gold at a low, fixed price over several years. There is no bank loan and no loss of ownership. The constraint is scale: a single claim is usually too small to interest a streamer, so miners can consolidate or stream through a shared milling centre.

Royalty finance follows similar logic. Capital is advanced upfront in return for a small percentage of sales, pegged at a few cents in every dollar, for the life of the mine. There are no instalments and no interest; strong months and weak months are carried together. Like streaming, it depends on pooled production large enough to underwrite.

Equity brings in an investor who provides money for a stake in the business. Nothing is repaid, but the miner gives up a share of control and profit. The Victoria Falls Stock Exchange (VFEX), which trades in US dollars, already offers the venue, Karo Mining Holdings raised US$36 million there, US$25 million of it from local investors. It might be difficult for an individual miner to list alone, but a fund can be set up that pools many operations and sells shares to ordinary Zimbabweans and the diaspora, then reinvests in its portfolio.

Bonds allow borrowing from many lenders at once. A gold bond ring-fenced solely for small-scale mining, denominated in hard currency and issued to the public and the diaspora, is workable, provided it is run by an independent body that publishes its accounts. These bonds can then generate returns for the holders or be traded in secondary markets.

Local funders can consider lending against a miner's Fidelity delivery record rather than a title deed. Honest, traceable production becomes the collateral.

None of these instruments works in isolation, and none works while miners remain under the radar. A commitment to formalisation is key. Once a miner is registered, that's the first point, and their gold can be traced, they cease to be a credit risk and become someone a bank, a streamer, a royalty firm, a share sale, or a bond can finance.

To serve as insurance, the government can absorb first-loss exposure on approved lending, so banks can extend credit with confidence. Additionally, it can expand the capital base of the Mining Industry Loan Fund to broaden its reach.

The miners are already doing their part. Every day they dig the gold that pays for the nation's bills. The task now is to make sure the money finds its way back to them, and through such a cycle, we accelerate our journey towards an upper-middle-class society.

Kudzaishe is a Mining Engineer at Zimbabwe's Ministry of Mines and Mining Development, and a mineral economics researcher advising on mining business growth, investment structuring, and mineral market intelligence across the mining sector. He writes in his personal capacity.


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Minerals and Location found in Zimbabwe

Agate	Nyamandhlovu, Chikomba, Lupane
Aluminum	Mutare, Nyanga, Mwenezi
Amazonite	Nyamandhlovu, Rushinga
Amethyst	Nyamandhlovu, Hurungwe, Hwange, Makonde, Lupan
Antimony	Kwekwe, Bubi, Mberengwa, Kadoma, Shurugwi
Arsenic	Bubi, Shurugwi, Mutare, Gwanda
Asbestos	Masvingo, Gwanda, Matobo, Mberengwa, Insiza, Makonde, Umzingwane
Aventurine	Masvingo, Beitbridge
Barites	Kwekwe, Mwenezi
Beryl	Hurungwe, Kariba, Goromonzi, Harare, Mudzi, Rushinga, Mutoko, Bindura, Marondera, Gutu, Buhera, Bikita, Chegutu, Hwange, Mberengwa, Gweru
Bismuth	Gwanda, Insiza, Goromonzi, Hwange
Cesium	Mudzi, Bikita, Goromonzi
Calcite	Hwange, Bindura, Chiredzi, Mwenezi
Chromium	Mberengwa, Guruve, Makonde, Gweru, Kwekwe, Shurungwi, Chegutu, Kadoma, Gwanda, Insiza, Masvingo, Chirumanzu
Citrine	Marondera, Harare, Goromonzi
Clay	Harare, Bulawayo, Gwanda, Gweru
Coal	Gokwe, Chiredzi, Beitbridge, Mwenezi, Hwange, Lupane, Binga, Kariba, Hurungwe, Bikita
Cobalt	Kwekwe, Insiza, Shamva, Bubi, Bindura
Copper	Makonde, Kadoma, Mutare, Chirumanzu, Chegutu, Kwekwe, Shurugwi, Beitbridge, Gokwe, Bindura, Chipinge, Bikita, Insiza, Makonde, Harare, Bulawayo, Shamva, Chiredzi, Nkayi, Mudzi, Chegutu, Bindura, Kwekwe, Hurungwe, Bubi, Makonde, Bikita, Gwanda, Masvingo.
Cordierite	Hurungwe, Beitbridge, Chimanimani, Rushinga, Makuti
Corundum	Beitbridge, Chiredzi, Shurugwi, Marondera, Mberengwa, Mazowe, Rushinga, Insiza, Goromonzi, Wedza, Makoni
Diamond	Gweru, Bubi, Beitbridge, Binga, Mwenezi, Mutare, Chivi
Diatomite	Hurungwe
Dolomite	Mutare, Beitbridge, Makonde, Mudzi, Masvingo, Rushinga.
Emerald	Gutu, Masvingo, Insiza, Mberengwa, Hurungwe.
Feldspar	Harare, Bikita, Umzingwane, Goromonzi
Fireclay	Hwange, Chiredzi, Kwekwe, Lupane, Nkayi, Kadoma, Kwekwe
Flint clay	Mwenezi, Beitbridge
Fluorite	Hwange, Guruve, Binga
Garnet	Beitbridge, Hurungwe, Mudzi, Guruve, Rushinga, Marondera
Graphite	Hwange, Hurungwe, Kariba, Makonde
Gypsum	Beitbridge
Gold	Every district in Zimbabwe
Iron	Kwekwe, Mberengwa, Harare, Kwekwe, Buhera, Gweru, Charter, Chiredzi, Masvingo, Mazowe, Kadoma.

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Minerals and areas of verified deposits in Zimbabwe

Jade	Masvingo
Kaolin	Kwekwe, Mutare, Bubi, Hwange, Kadoma, Mazowe, Harare, Umzingwane, Nkayi, Chegutu
Kainite	Hurungwe, Nyanga, Mudzi, Rushinga
Lead	Mberengwa, Kwekwe, Gokwe, Mutare, Wedza, Hwange
Limestone	Mberengwa, Gwanda, Bindura, Shamva, Mazowe, Kadoma, Umzingwane, Gweru, Chegutu, Chimanimani, Mudzi, Harare, Hurungwe
Lithium	Goromonzi, Mudzi, Buhera, Bikita, Chegutu, Hwange, Harare, Insiza, Rushinga, Mutoko, Mutare, Hwange
Magnetite	Gwanda, Nyanga, Kadoma, Mwenezi, Insiza, Buhera, Mberengwa, Beitbridge, Gweru
Manganese	Kwekwe, Gweru, Makonde, Mberengwa
Mercury	Bubi, Kadoma
Mica	Hurungwe, Rushinga, Kariba, Hwange
Molybdenum	Kwekwe, Insiza, Shurugwi, Makonde, Chipinge, Gweru, Mutare
Mtorolite	Guruve, Mutare
Nickel	Bubi, Makonde, Kwekwe, Insiza, Guruve, Shamva, Shurugwi, Matobo, Chegutu, Bindura, Gweru.
Ochre	Gweru, Kwekwe
Palladium	Kwekwe, Makonde, Shurugwi, Chegutu
Phosphate	Buhera
Platinum	Kwekwe, Makonde, Shurugwi, Chegutu, Centenary
Pyrite	Shurugwi, Gwanda, Mazowe, Kadoma, Bulilimamangwe, Shamva, Hwange.
Salt	Mwenezi
Sapphire	Mudzi
Selenium	Makonde
Silica	Gweru, Kwekwe, Makonde, Chegutu, Gokwe, Harare, Goromonzi
Sillimanite	Hurungwe
Silver	Makoni, Makonde, Kwekwe
Talc	Bubi, Guruve, Insiza, Nyanga, Mutare, Mt Darwin, Mberengwa, Goromonzi, Mutoko, Wedza, Kwekwe, Makoni
Tantalum	Hurungwe, Guruve, Kariba, Mudzi, Mutoko, Shamva, Bindura, Harare, Goromonzi, Murehwa, Mt Darwin, Rushinga, Mazowe, Marondera, Gutu, Masvingo, Buhera, Bikita, Mutare, Hwange, Chivhu, Mberengwa, Chimanimani, Makoni, Insiza
Tin	Hurungwe, Mudzi, Shamva, Bindura, Goromonzi, Harare, Rushinga, Mt Darwin, Nyanga, Gutu, Bikita, Hwange, Masvingo, Mutare
Topaz	Hurungwe, Gweru, Mutare
Tungsten	Hurungwe, Kariba, Shamva, Mazowe, Rushinga, Bindura, Guruve, Mt Darwin, Harare, Mudzi, Goromonzi, Bulawayo, Insiza, Matobo, Gwanda, Umzingwane, Bubi, Buhera, Mberengwa, Kadoma, Bikita, Shurugwi, Mutare, Chipinge, Chegutu, Kwekwe, Chiredzi, Wedza, Gweru, Hwange, Masvingo, Makoni
Vanadium	Mt Darwin, Guruve, Bulawayo
Vermiculite	Buhera, Mudzi
Zinc	Kwekwe, Gokwe, Nyanga


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