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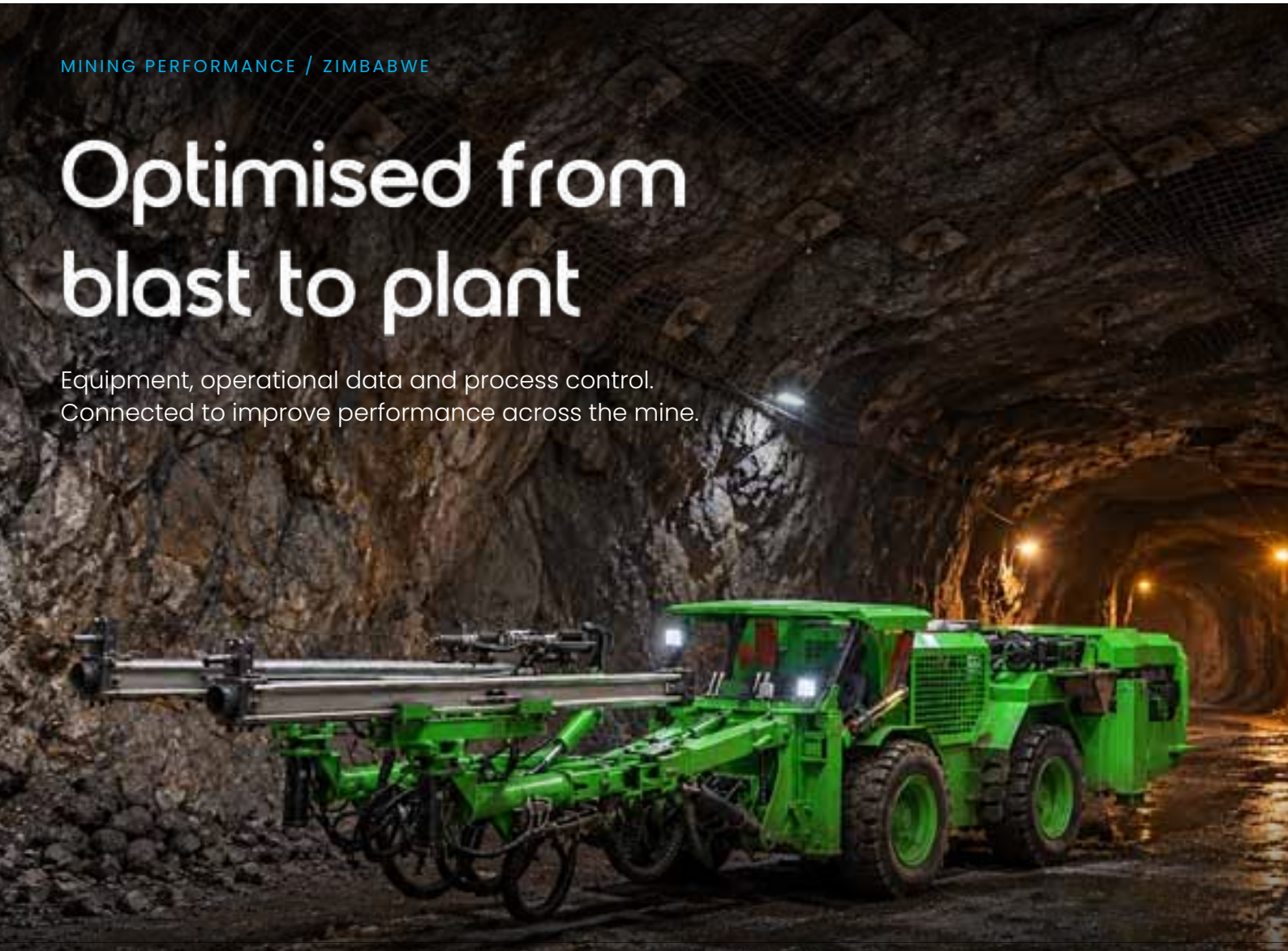
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10 Months
with Kambamura at the helm,
Zimbabwe closes in on US$10 Billion in Export Earnings

A Mining engineer at the helm of the Ministry of Mines, Kambamura's first 10 months put technical leadership, mineral value growth and Zimbabwe's export ambitions under the spotlight

Zimbabwe's mining sector has generated approximately US$9.93 billion in mineral export sales and gold deliveries in the first nine months of 2026, nearly doubling the approximately US$5 billion recorded over the same period last year, in a performance that underscores the impact of a renewed policy drive under Mines and Mining Development Minister Dr Eng)Polite Kambamura, Mining Zimbabwe can report.

The figures reflect a sector gathering momentum under Kambamura's leadership, with strong gold deliveries, a sharp increase in lithium earnings and renewed emphasis on beneficiation helping to strengthen mining's contribution to Zimbabwe's foreign currency generation.

Mineral sales excluding gold reached US$4.74 billion by September, while gold deliveries to Fidelity Gold Refinery (FGR) were valued at approximately US$5.2 billion. Together, the figures put the sector within reach of the Government's target of more than US$11 billion in mineral export revenue for 2026.

Kambamura, appointed in December 2025 after serving as Deputy Minister of Mines and Mining Development, has placed value addition, stronger governance, geological mapping, formalisation of artisanal and small-scale mining, and sustainable resource development at the centre of his programme.

The first nine months of 2026 have provided a strong indication of what that agenda is intended to achieve: a mining industry that generates greater export value, attracts investment and progressively moves beyond the export of raw mineral commodities.

A stronger export performance

The scale of Zimbabwe's mining performance is evident in the comparison between the first nine months of 2025 and the same period this year.

According to figures reported by the Minerals Marketing Corporation of Zimbabwe (MMCZ), non-gold mineral sales increased from US$2.347 billion to US$4.74 billion, representing growth of approximately 102%. Export volumes rose by 23.4%, from 3.84 million tonnes to 4.738 million tonnes.

The figures demonstrate the combined effect of higher shipment volumes and improved commodity values across the export basket.

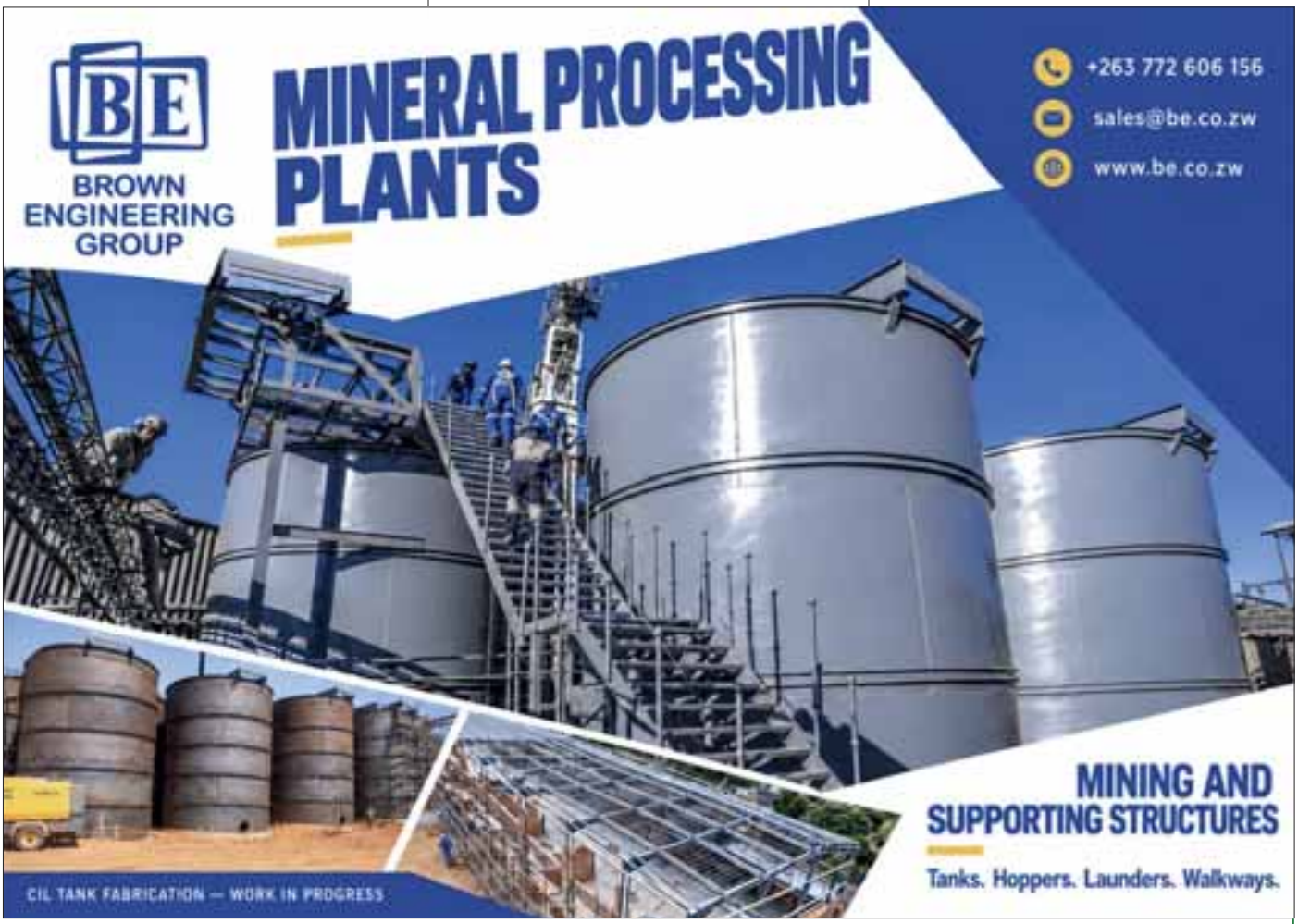
Under Kambamura, the Ministry has pursued a policy direction aimed at maximising the value derived from mineral production, strengthening oversight of exports and accelerating domestic processing. The result has been a significant expansion in reported mineral sales at a time when the Government is seeking to deepen mining's contribution to national development.

Gold remains the sector's largest individual earner, while lithium has emerged as the leading non-gold mineral export. Together, the two commodities illustrate the scale of Zimbabwe's resource potential and the opportunities available through more effective management of the mineral economy.

Lithium takes centre stage

Lithium has become the most striking feature of Zimbabwe's 2026 mining performance.

MMCZ recorded approximately US$2.159 billion in lithium sales during the first nine months of the year, accounting for about 45.6% of total non-gold mineral sales. This placed lithium ahead of platinum group metals (PGMs), which generated US$1.73 billion over the same period.





Spodumene concentrate accounted for US$1.81 billion of lithium sales, while lithium sulphate generated US$190.5 million and petalite contributed US$155.3 million.

The figures demonstrate the growing importance of lithium to Zimbabwe's export economy and the opportunities presented by the Government's beneficiation agenda.

Zimbabwe is moving beyond being principally a supplier of raw materials to become a producer of processed beneficiated materials and industrial products. The lithium sector has become a central testing ground for that ambition.

In February 2026, the Government intensified restrictions on the export of raw minerals and lithium concentrates, reinforcing its position that mineral resources should create greater domestic economic value.

A significant milestone followed in April, when Prospect Lithium Zimbabwe, associated with China's Zhejiang Huayou Cobalt, shipped lithium sulphate from its processing facility in Goromonzi, Mashonaland East.

A significant milestone followed in April, **when Prospect Lithium Zimbabwe, associated with China's Zhejiang Huayou Cobalt, shipped lithium sulphate from its processing facility** in Goromonzi, Mashonaland East.

The US$400 million facility has an annual lithium sulphate capacity of 50,000 tonnes, providing Zimbabwe with an important platform for expanding its role in the lithium value chain.

The emergence of lithium sulphate exports alongside continued spodumene shipments shows how Zimbabwe's lithium industry is beginning to diversify its product range.

The Ministry's challenge now is to build on this momentum by ensuring that more projects progress from announced investment into operating processing capacity, supported by reliable electricity, water, transport and competitive bh production costs.

Gold continues to underpin mining revenue

Gold remains fundamental to Zimbabwe's mining economy, and the 2026 delivery figures reinforce the importance of both large-scale and small-scale producers.

FGR received 35.88 tonnes of gold between January and September, with deliveries valued at approximately US$5.2 billion at prevailing international prices.

Artisanal and small-scale miners accounted for 25.78 tonnes, representing approximately 71.8% of total deliveries. Primary producers supplied the remaining 10.10 tonnes.

Deliveries increased from 9.31 tonnes in the first quarter to 12.09 tonnes in the second and 14.48 tonnes in the third quarter. Third-quarter deliveries were approximately 55.5% higher than those recorded in the first quarter.

The performance highlights the importance of the Government's efforts to formalise small-scale mining, improve mineral marketing and strengthen the contribution of domestic producers to official gold deliveries.

The sector's gold performance provides an important foundation for policies aimed at improving productivity, strengthening compliance and supporting safer mining operations.

The next stage is to ensure that the growth in deliveries is accompanied by better access to finance, suitable equipment, technical training and improved occupational safety. Such measures would help sustain gold production while reducing the environmental and human costs associated with poorly regulated operations.

PGMs and established mineral industries remain important

While lithium has dominated the growth story, Zimbabwe's established mineral industries continue to provide an important source of export earnings.

PGMs generated approximately US$1.73 billion in sales during the first nine months of 2026. The reported total included US$1.26 billion from PGM matte and US$465.6 million from concentrates.

The sector remains strategically important because of Zimbabwe's position on the Great Dyke and the potential to expand domestic processing and capture more value from platinum, palladium, rhodium and associated metals.

Other mineral and industrial exports included US$256 million from high-carbon ferrochrome, US$195.4 million from steel, US$168.6 million from coke, US$87.8 million from chrome concentrates and US$62.3 million from diamonds.

These earnings demonstrate the breadth of Zimbabwe's mineral resource base and the opportunity to develop a more diversified mining and processing economy.

Kambamura's policy agenda seeks to build on these established industries while supporting emerging opportunities in critical minerals. The long-term objective is to create stronger domestic linkages between mining, mineral processing, manufacturing and industrial supply chains.

Critical minerals and a new approach to resource governance

This reform programme has also placed greater emphasis on the strategic management of Zimbabwe's mineral resources.

In May 2026, the Government issued a Mineral Classification and Declaration identifying critical, special critical and strategic minerals, including lithium, nickel, cobalt, graphite, copper, rare earth elements, chrome and platinum group metals.

The declaration introduced additional controls on the exploitation and export of listed minerals and established a framework for mandatory minimum State participation in critical-mineral projects through designated special-purpose vehicles.

Metallurgical coal was also designated a special critical mineral, reflecting the Government's interest in strengthening the domestic industrial value chain.

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The measures signal a more assertive approach to resource governance, with the State seeking to secure a greater economic stake in strategic mineral projects while directing investment towards domestic processing.

For Kambamura, the priority is to translate the policy framework into practical results: more investment in processing facilities, clearer administration of mineral rights and a regulatory environment capable of supporting responsible, long-term mining development.

Predictability and transparency will remain important to achieving these objectives. Clear implementation rules, effective licensing and well-defined participation arrangements can help investors evaluate projects while supporting the Government's goal of retaining more value from the country's mineral endowment.

Modernising the administration of mining rights

Another important component of Kambamura's agenda is the modernisation of mining title administration.

The Ministry is finalizing an electronic Mining Cadastre Register intended to digitise more than 60,000 mining licences and related titles.

The system is expected to improve access to information on mineral rights, reduce overlapping claims and strengthen transparency in the administration of mining titles.

For exploration companies and established producers, reliable information on mining rights is essential to project development, financing and investment decisions. A functional digital cadastre would provide a stronger administrative foundation for exploration and mine development by making it easier to establish the status of mineral ground.

The Ministry has also continued work on the Mines and Minerals Bill and wider regulatory reforms intended to modernise Zimbabwe's mining framework.

The completion of these initiatives will be an important measure of the reform programme's progress. Effective digital systems and clear legislation can reduce uncertainty for operators while strengthening the State's ability to manage mineral resources.

Investment will determine the next phase

Zimbabwe's rising export sales provide a strong platform for further growth, but sustaining the momentum will require continued investment in production, infrastructure and processing capacity.

The Chamber of Mines of Zimbabwe has indicated that the sector requires approximately US$10 billion in capital investment over five years to sustain operations and expand output.

That requirement highlights the scale of the opportunity and the importance of maintaining conditions that support mine development, exploration and industrial investment.

Reliable electricity is particularly important as Zimbabwe seeks to expand mineral processing. Lithium chemical production, metal refining and other beneficiation activities require dependable power, water and transport infrastructure.

Hon Kambamura's agenda therefore extends beyond export restrictions and regulatory changes. Its success will also depend on coordinating mining policy with infrastructure development, investment facilitation and the technical skills required to operate increasingly complex processing facilities.

The Government's emphasis on attracting quality investors who comply with national laws and environmental requirements is central to that effort.

A stronger investment environment would enable established producers to expand, exploration companies to advance promising deposits and new processing projects to move towards commercial production.

Formalisation and responsible mining

The contribution of artisanal and small-scale miners to gold deliveries makes formalisation an important part of Zimbabwe's mining strategy.

Improving access to appropriate machinery, finance, technical training and formal mineral marketing channels can help small-scale operators increase productivity and improve compliance.
At the same time, responsible mining requires stronger attention to under-ground safety, environmental rehabilitation, water management and the prevention of avoidable fatalities.

The current sustainability agenda provides an opportunity to align the growth of small-scale mining with improved operational standards, better environmental outcomes and stronger participation in the formal economy.

For established mining companies, effective formalisation can also improve community relations, reduce environmental risks and support more orderly development of mineral-rich areas.

The objective is to ensure that higher mineral output translates into sustainable economic benefits while reducing the risks associated with unsafe and poorly regulated operations.

Building on the momentum

Zimbabwe's mining performance in the first nine months of 2026 provides Kambamura with a strong platform on which to advance his reform programme.

The sector's approximately US$9.93 billion in export sales and gold deliveries, the growth in non-gold mineral sales to US$4.74 billion and lithium's emergence as the largest non-gold export earner demonstrate the economic significance of mining and the opportunities available through stronger sector management.

The commissioning of lithium processing capacity, continued gold deliveries and work on mining administration reforms provide further evidence of progress towards the Government's ambitions for the industry.
The immediate priority is to sustain this performance, advance processing projects, modernise mining governance and strengthen the infrastructure needed to support production and beneficiation.

For the Association of Mine Managers of Zimbabwe and the wider mining industry, the next phase will be defined by how effectively policy translates into operational capacity, investment and long-term competitiveness.

Government has placed beneficiation, governance and value retention at the centre of his mining agenda. With mineral export sales approaching US$10 billion in nine months, Zimbabwe's mining sector enters the final quarter of 2026 with significant momentum and a clear opportunity to build a stronger domestic industrial base from its mineral wealth.

One-on-One with AMMZ President Eng Gift Mapakame

Zimbabwe's mining future will depend on how effectively the industry embraces technology, strengthens safety and turns technical expertise into operational excellence.



Eng Gift Mapakame

Association of Mine Managers of Zimbabwe (AMMZ) President Gift Mapakame (GM) shares his vision for a more efficient, safer and competitive mining sector, outlining his priorities through 2027, the push for regulatory reform and the opportunities presented by investment and technology transfer.

As General Manager of Shamva Mine, he also reflects on expansion challenges and the systems behind the mine's 1.52 million fatality-free shifts to Mining Zimbabwe (MZ).

MZ: You are leading the Association of Mine Managers of Zimbabwe (AMMZ) while also serving as General Manager of Shamva Mine. What are your key priorities for the association during your tenure, and what tangible changes should members expect to see by the end of your presidency in 2027?

GM: My priority is to institutionalise the Association, making it a purpose-driven organisation with defined goals and a clear trajectory.

While AMMZ remains the technical wing of the Chamber of Mines of Zimbabwe, it has a greater responsibility to harness the capabilities of mining professionals and redirect them towards strengthening the operational control framework of our industry.

To achieve this, we need an evolving strategy, adequate resources, functional structures and the right stakeholder relationships.

MZ: AMMZ has been promoting smart mining and the adoption of modern mining technologies. Which technologies and technical innovations should Zimbabwean mines prioritise to improve productivity, reduce operating costs and strengthen safety, and how will AMMZ help members implement them in practice?

GM: The overall direction of mining technology is towards sustainable operations. Since mineral resources are non-renewable and will eventually be depleted, sustainability must underpin our efforts to innovate.

Embracing smart mining means adopting efficient and clean operations that eliminate or minimise risks to employees while reducing environmental impacts and protecting host communities. These technologies should also create value for future generations beyond the lifespan of current mining operations.

When combined with local community empowerment, this approach helps ensure that livelihoods can transition to other forms of economic activity and continue to thrive after mining operations cease.

As AMMZ, our focus is on promoting renewable energy and energy-efficient solutions in mining operations, automation and intelligent systems in process control, and the conversion of process waste products into useful raw materials, among other initiatives.

MZ: AMMZ and the Chamber of Mines have previously proposed amendments to mining regulations, including Statutory Instruments 109 of 1990 and 72 of 1989. What progress has been made on these proposals, what challenges remain, and what is AMMZ doing to ensure that outstanding regulatory reforms move forward?

GM: Through the Chamber of Mines, we were invited by the Ministry of Mines and Mining Development to contribute to the revision of these statutory instruments.

We made contributions aimed at addressing gaps between outdated legislation and current best practices.

One of the major challenges was finding an appropriate way to regulate small-scale and artisanal mining within the existing legislative framework. Some of the requirements appeared to set conditions that were beyond the capabilities of operators in these subsectors.

A dedicated small-scale mining statute may therefore be necessary to regulate the subsector more effectively while promoting safety, productivity, environmental performance and accountability.

The proposed revisions are currently with the Ministry and are progressing to the next stages of development.

MZ: The AMMZ Mine Managers' Bench provides a platform for mine managers to discuss regulatory compliance, statutory responsibilities and operational challenges. What are the most pressing issues emerging from these engagements, and how is the association translating members' concerns into practical solutions through engagement with regulators and policy-makers?

GM: The Mine Managers' Bench is an important engagement platform that has attracted substantial interest from the industry and other stakeholders.

In partnership with the Zimbabwe School of Mines, the platform enables participants to unpack key issues, share success stories and raise awareness. Not all discussions focus on problems; some highlight workable solutions and provide

continued on page 13>>

opportunities to improve industry knowledge.

These discussions also inform the development of a key action tracker, through which identified issues are assigned for follow-up.

As an association operating under the auspices of the Chamber of Mines, which has an established industry network, we channel key actions to the relevant stakeholders.

We can escalate matters to the Chamber through its Executive Committee, on which the AMMZ President is co-opted. This is the principal channel through which we address many policy and regulatory matters.

On technical issues, we work with academic institutions and collaborate with affiliated professional groups and committees, including those dealing with safety, health, environment and quality (SHEQ), surveying and geology.

MZ: You have called for greater participation by Chinese-invested mining operations in AMMZ's activities. What opportunities does broader participation present for Zimbabwe's mining industry, and what is the association doing to strengthen technical collaboration and knowledge-sharing among operators across the sector?

GM: We have observed that Chinese investors have taken a keen interest in partnering with Zimbabwe's mining industry in developing modern mining operations, beneficiation facilities, bulk infrastructure and commodity markets. The lithium, ferrochrome and gold subsectors are cases in point.

For these partnerships to succeed, technology transfer and cultural integration must be nurtured. AMMZ has a role to play in facilitating engagement and creating bridges between different industry participants.

Some of the technologies and skills being introduced are proprietary and may remain so unless collaboration is established at the grassroots level.

AMMZ wants to provide a platform for wider participation and engagement, enabling members to learn, embrace new approaches and adapt them to their operating environments.

We have deliberately engaged with operations under Chinese investment and development to establish relationships, raise awareness of our institutional relevance and demonstrate our capabilities.

At the broader industry level, the Chamber of Mines has also engaged investors to encourage participation in the institutional body. This makes engagement, coordination and mediation easier, with these initiatives extending to AMMZ at operational level.

We believe these interactions present opportunities that can benefit our members and the wider mining industry.

MZ: As General Manager of Shamva Mine, you are responsible for balancing production growth, operational efficiency and safety. What are the main technical and operational challenges involved in expanding production, and what lessons from Shamva's experience could other Zimbabwean mines apply to improve performance and remain competitive?

GM: In my experience, the challenges vary according to the scale of an expansion, but they generally revolve around the bankability of technical and financial assumptions.

Reaching a Final Investment Decision and securing the credit rating required to raise expansion capital demand extensive front-end-loading due diligence. This is normally supported by adequate exploration and feasibility studies, which can be costly, time-consuming and dependent on specialised expertise.

While AMMZ remains the technical wing of the Chamber of Mines, it has a greater responsibility to harness the capabilities of mining professionals and redirect them towards **strengthening the operational control framework of our industry.**

One particularly challenging area is forecasting commodity market conditions and establishing the economic assumptions needed to determine the appropriate scale of an expansion. We have seen considerable volatility and uncertainty in these factors, affecting the long-term viability of expansion plans.

During implementation, controlling project costs and meeting delivery schedules are also critical. An expansion programme must be clearly defined and delivered on time and within budget.

Selecting the right implementation model is therefore essential, supported by a sound project management framework.

I have gained valuable experience from comparing Engineering, Procurement and Construction (EPC), Engineering, Procurement and Construction Management (EPCM), and owner-led implementation models. Each has advantages and disadvantages that must be assessed against a company's constraints and opportunities.

At Shamva, the EPCM approach has worked well for us, particularly in reducing overall implementation costs and enabling sufficient skills and knowledge transfer to our team.

MZ: Shamva Mine has reported 1.52 million fatality-free shifts under your leadership. What systems and management practices have been instrumental in achieving this milestone, and how can AMMZ help other operations adopt effective safety practices to reduce fatalities and serious accidents across the industry?

GM: AMMZ brings together experiences of best practices, lessons learnt and insights into innovation. We have extensive platforms for cross-pollination of knowledge and experience among our members.

In addition, we have continued to conduct our Safety, Health, Environment, Quality and Sustainability Management audits to encourage mining companies to deliberately assess their systems and measure them against best practices.

We also promote emergency preparedness and response. To this end, we support mine rescue and first-aid programmes to strengthen collaboration and improve our disaster management capabilities.

These initiatives are intended to limit the severity of unwanted events and contribute to improved safety performance across the industry.

Mineral Exports Anchor Zimbabwe's US$3bn Surplus Target

Zimbabwe is targeting a current account surplus exceeding US$3 billion this year, supported by rising foreign currency earnings from exports, with gold and platinum group metals underpinning the country's external position, Mining Zimbabwe can report.



By Ryan Chigoche

Finance Minister Mthuli Ncube announced the projection during the International Monetary Fund and World Bank Annual Meetings in Bangkok, as Zimbabwe's current account surplus widened to US1.3 billion in the first half of 2026,from US248 million during the same period last year.

The improvement builds on gains recorded in 2025, when the country posted a US2.1billion surplus,up from US501.2 million in 2024.

A current account surplus occurs when a country receives more from exports, services and other external inflows than it spends on imports and other external payments. For Zimbabwe, a sustained surplus can help ease pressure on foreign currency availability, support the accumulation of reserves and strengthen the country's capacity to pay for imports.

Mineral exports have been central to this improvement, particularly gold, whose export earnings reached approximately US4.06 billion by August,approaching the US4.61 billion generated during the whole of 2025.

The contribution of export-generating sectors is also reflected in overall foreign currency receipts, which rose 47.8% to US10.72 billion in the first half of 2026,from US7.25 billion in the corresponding period last year. Export proceeds accounted for 70.3% of the total, highlighting the importance of mining and other export-oriented industries in supplying foreign currency. However, the strength of these inflows leaves the country exposed to changes in international commodity prices and production levels. A sustained decline in mineral prices could weaken export earnings and narrow the current account surplus, particularly if import demand remains strong.

A current account surplus occurs when a country receives more from exports, services and other external inflows than it spends on imports and other external payments.

Building foreign currency reserves therefore remains an important test of whether the improved external position can be sustained. Reserves reached approximately US$1.96 billion by September, up from US1.2 billion at the end of 2025, lifting import cover to about two months.

Although the increase provides a stronger buffer against external shocks, reserves remain below the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe's (RBZ) longer-term benchmark of three to six months of import cover.

For the mining sector, the figures underline its role in generating foreign currency, but the wider economic benefits will depend on how export earnings translate into investment, production and stronger domestic economic activity.

The government projects economic growth of 5% in 2026 before slowing to 3.5% in 2027. Maintaining the external recovery will depend partly on sustained mineral output and favourable commodity prices, alongside efforts to strengthen reserves and reduce vulnerability to global market shifts.

Zimbabwe's target of a current account surplus exceeding US$3 billion would extend the improvement recorded over the past two years. The challenge is to sustain mineral export earnings while building stronger external buffers and ensuring that the inflows support longer-term economic growth.

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Interview: Spicer Munjeri - Performance Laboratories Technical Development Manager



Spicer Munjeri

You have built considerable experience in the industry. What made you consider joining Performance Laboratories at this particular stage of your career, and what ultimately convinced you that this was the right move?

At this stage of my career, I was looking for an opportunity where I could combine my technical experience with the ability to shape strategy, drive innovation, and contribute to long-term growth. Performance Laboratories presented exactly that opportunity.

What convinced me was the Managing Director's (Kiran) clear ambition to strengthen the company's technical capabilities while maintaining a strong focus on service delivery and quality. I saw a business that has established a solid reputation in the market and is now positioning itself for the next phase of growth. The opportunity to be part of that journey, while helping to develop new capabilities and solutions for clients, was particularly appealing.

When you assessed Performance Laboratories, what did you see in the business, its technical capabilities, its leadership and its future potential that made the opportunity attractive to you?

What stood out immediately was the company's willingness to grow and evolve. The technical fundamentals are strong, but there is also a genuine appetite to expand capabilities, embrace innovation, and continually improve.

I was equally impressed by the leadership team. They understand that success in this industry comes from combining technical quality with strong client relationships. That mindset, together with the business's growth potential, made the opportunity very attractive.

How does joining Performance Laboratories fit into your own professional journey? What opportunity does this role give you that you found particularly compelling?

Throughout my career, I have worked across laboratory operations, business development, quality management, and technical leadership. This role brings those experiences together in a way that allows me to contribute across multiple areas of the business.

What I find particularly compelling is the opportunity to influence the development of new technical capabilities while supporting operational excellence. It is a position that sits at the intersection of science, innovation, and business growth.

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The mining industry is constantly evolving, creating demand for more accurate, efficient, and specialised analytical solutions. This role provides an opportunity to help shape how Performance Laboratories responds to those challenges while building a culture of technical excellence and continuous improvement.

The AMMZ conference theme is "From Plan to Performance." From your perspective, what must a laboratory demonstrate beyond having a good plan to earn the confidence of mining companies and other industry clients?

Mining companies place enormous trust in laboratory data because critical decisions depend on it. A good plan is important, but confidence is earned through consistent delivery.
For me, it comes down to three things: accuracy, reliability, and accountability. Clients want to know that results are technically sound, delivered on time, and supported by robust quality systems. A laboratory earns trust when it consistently delivers on its promises and becomes a dependable partner rather than simply a service provider.

What do you believe your experience will bring to Performance Laboratories, and which areas of its operations or technical capabilities do you see the greatest opportunity to strengthen?

I hope to bring a practical blend of technical expertise, operational experience, and a strong focus on continuous improvement. Throughout my career, I've been involved in developing new methods, improving laboratory systems, building technical teams, setting up new labs and enhancing quality standards.

The greatest opportunities lie in expanding technical capabilities, strengthening method validation and quality assurance, and improving efficiency without compromising quality. Ultimately, it's about delivering better outcomes for clients and ensuring the laboratory remains at the forefront of industry needs.

Having joined the business, what would you like to achieve in your first 12 months, and what tangible improvements should clients and the wider mining industry expect to see over time?

My first priority is to gain a thorough understanding of our current capabilities, our clients' needs, and the opportunities available to strengthen our services. From there, I would focus on delivering improvements in three key areas: technical capability, operational performance, and customer value.

Within the first 12 months, I would like to see progress in method development and validation, enhanced quality systems, improved laboratory efficiencies, and the execution of expansion projects across Zimbabwe and the region.

Over the longer term, clients should expect to see a laboratory that continues to expand its technical expertise, introduce innovative analytical solutions, and deliver increasingly reliable and efficient services. My goal is for Performance Laboratories to be recognised not only as a testing provider but as a trusted technical partner that contributes meaningfully to the success of mining projects across the region.

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Zimbabwe gold deliveries rise 56% as 50-tonne target beckons

Zimbabwe delivered 35,881.6 kilograms of gold to Fidelity Gold Refinery (FGR) between January and September 2026, leaving the country requiring a further 14,118.4kg in the final quarter to reach the 50-tonne annual target, Mining Zimbabwe can report.



By Rudairo Mapuranga

Data from FGR shows that deliveries increased progressively across the first three quarters, rising from 9,311.9kg in the first quarter to 12,085.7kg in the second and 14,484kg in the third.

The third-quarter total was 55.6% higher than the first-quarter figure, reflecting a substantial increase in gold entering the formal purchasing system during the period.

However, maintaining this growth trajectory through December will be critical, as the country needs to average approximately 4,706kg per month during the final quarter to reach the 50-tonne threshold.

Small-scale miners account for 71.8% of deliveries

Small-scale miners remained the dominant contributors to formal gold deliveries, supplying approximately 25,780.1kg during the first nine months, equivalent to 71.8% of the reported total.

Primary producers accounted for a further 10,101.4kg, representing approximately 28.2%.

The distribution highlights the importance of artisanal and small-scale mining (ASM) to Zimbabwe's formal gold supply chain. More than seven-tenths of the reported intake came from small-scale operators, making their production performance particularly significant to the national delivery target.

Between the first and third quarters, small-scale deliveries increased from 6,510.9kg to 10,837.5kg, a rise of approximately 66.5%.

Primary-producer deliveries rose from 2,801kg to 3,646.4kg over the same period, representing growth of about 30.2%.

The figures show that small-scale deliveries expanded more rapidly than those from primary producers during the first nine months. They do not, on their own, establish whether this resulted from increased mine production, changes in formal market participation or a combination of factors.

Small-scale miners remained the dominant contributors to formal gold deliveries, **supplying approximately 25,780.1kg during the first nine months,** equivalent to 71.8% of the reported total.

Quarterly deliveries strengthen through September

FGR intake increased by approximately 29.8% between the first and second quarters, before rising by a further 19.8% in the third quarter.

The third-quarter total of 14,484kg was 5,172.1kg above the first-quarter figure of 9,311.9kg.

The progression indicates that the formal gold purchasing system received increasing volumes through the middle of the year. However, quarterly deliveries measure gold received by FGR and should not be interpreted as a direct measurement of mine production, processing recovery or total gold produced outside the formal channel.

September recorded 4,715.46kg, down 7.9% from August's 5,119.20kg.

The monthly decline was driven by small-scale deliveries, which fell 14.6% to 3,398.32kg. Primary producers delivered 1,317.14kg, an increase of 15.5% from August.

Despite the overall monthly contraction, September deliveries were approximately 86% higher than the 2,535.21kg recorded in September 2025.

The contrasting performances of the two producer categories demonstrate why monthly aggregate figures should be examined alongside their underlying composition.

The 50-tonne target: What Q4 must deliver

At the end of September, cumulative deliveries stood at 35,881.6kg, equivalent to approximately 71.8% of the 50,000kg target.

The remaining requirement is 14,118.4kg over October, November and December.

This translates into an average of 4,706.1kg per month, compared with the first-nine-month average of approximately 3,986.8kg.

The required fourth-quarter monthly average is therefore about 18% higher than the year-to-date monthly average.

The third quarter provides a more encouraging comparison. Deliveries averaged approximately 4,828kg per month during that period. If this rate were maintained throughout the fourth quarter, annual deliveries would reach approximately 50.37 tonnes.

That projection would put the country marginally above the 50-tonne threshold, but it remains conditional on maintaining the third-quarter rate.

continued on page 19>>



September's 4,715.46kg was approximately 9.4kg above the monthly average required to meet the target. One month of deliveries cannot, however, establish whether that pace will be sustained throughout the quarter.

The 50-tonne objective is consequently within reach on the available figures, although the outcome depends on cumulative deliveries over the remaining three months.

Operational performance will determine the outcome

The September figures underline the importance of monitoring performance by producer category rather than relying exclusively on aggregate deliveries.

Small-scale miners continue to supply the majority of gold received by FGR. Changes in their delivery volumes therefore have a substantial effect on the national total.

For primary producers, the third-quarter figures show deliveries of 3,646.4kg, compared with 3,654kg in the second quarter. The difference amounts to a decline of approximately 0.2%.

This relative stability contrasts with the increase recorded in the small-scale segment. However, delivery figures alone cannot establish whether primary producers are facing constraints relating to electricity, ore grades, mine development, plant availability or processing capacity. Those explanations require mine-level operational evidence.

The same caution applies to seasonal conditions. Rainfall and flooding can affect access to workings and the movement of ore at some operations, particularly where mining infrastructure is exposed. Nevertheless, the available intake figures do not establish how much of the monthly variation in 2026 was caused by weather.

Monitoring the final quarter will therefore require attention to both delivery volumes and the operational factors influencing production and the movement of gold into formal channels.

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Formal deliveries remain central to the gold sector

The dominance of small-scale miners in FGR intake reinforces their importance to Zimbabwe's gold supply chain and the formal market through which the metal is purchased.

For policymakers and mining industry participants, the nine-month figures provide a measurable basis for assessing progress towards the annual target. They also demonstrate the importance of distinguishing between total deliveries, the contribution of individual producer categories and the underlying factors affecting supply.

The data does not, by itself, establish changes in illegal gold trading, the proportion of total national production captured by formal channels or the actual foreign currency revenue generated from the deliveries. Such conclusions require additional evidence.

Zimbabwe enters the final quarter with 35.88 tonnes delivered and 14.12 tonnes still required to reach 50 tonnes. The third-quarter average indicates that the remaining target can be met if recent delivery levels are sustained.

The decisive measure will be the volume received by FGR between October and December, rather than the growth recorded in earlier quarters alone.

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Kavango Hillside Mine - TSF Construction Project

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TSF Design, Construction & Management

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Our team of experienced engineering professionals is readily available to provide responsive technical assistance, operational guidance, and engineering solutions tailored to the demands of your mining operations. From TSF design and construction to tailings management, hydro remining systems, hydro re-mining infrastructure, and equipment optimisation, we deliver specialised technical support to facilitate efficient troubleshooting, minimise operational downtime, and maintain compliance with applicable engineering standards and safety requirements.

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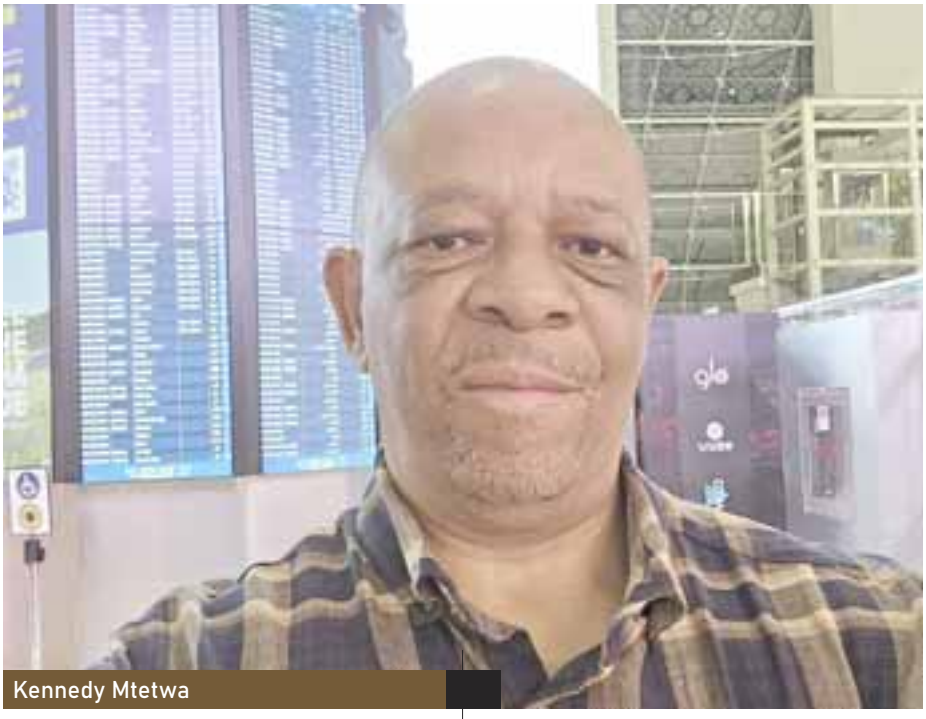
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Copper's global supply gap puts Zimbabwe's exploration strategy to the test

The global copper industry faces a growing challenge: finding enough new deposits to meet demand as electrification expands and existing mines struggle to replace depleted resources. BloombergNEF estimates that US$332 billion in new mine investment will be needed to avert a potential supply deficit of 20 million tonnes by 2050.



Kennedy Mtetwa

By Ryan Chigoche

For Zimbabwe, the opportunity comes with a fundamental obstacle. Exploration is the starting point for new mines, yet an eight-year backlog in granting exploration prospecting orders is limiting the search for new deposits, according to exploration geologist and former Geological Society of Zimbabwe chairperson Kennedy Mtetwa. The delay raises questions about whether the country can build a pipeline of viable copper projects in time to benefit from a tightening market, Mining Zimbabwe can report.

In an interview with Mining Zimbabwe, Mtetwa said companies could not begin the work needed to identify new deposits until they secured access to exploration ground.

"In Zimbabwe at the moment there is an eight-year backlog in granting exploration prospecting orders, so that means no new copper deposits will be found until exploration prospecting orders are granted and exploration work commences. For Zimbabwe to attract copper or any other metals investment, for that matter, the government has to start granting exploration prospecting orders. No grassroots exploration, no new mines," he said.

"In Zimbabwe at the moment there is an eight-year backlog in granting exploration prospecting orders, so that means no new copper deposits will be found until exploration prospecting orders are granted and exploration work commences.

His assessment comes as copper demand is expected to rise sharply over the coming decades. BloombergNEF projects consumption increasing from about 28.5 million tonnes in 2026 to almost 46 million tonnes in 2050. Demand associated with electrification alone is forecast to rise by 89% to 23.3 million tonnes, reflecting copper's role in electric vehicles and electricity infrastructure.

The research projects the market entering deficit by 2028, with the shortfall potentially widening to 20 million tonnes by 2050 without sufficient investment. Yet new supply cannot be brought online quickly. BloombergNEF estimates that developing a copper mine takes an average of 17 years, putting a premium on exploration and investment decisions made well before the projected shortage reaches its peak.

For countries able to identify and develop viable deposits, the outlook could strengthen the case for exploration. But higher demand and prices do not automatically make every mineral occurrence commercially attractive. Deposit size, ore grade, recovery rates, infrastructure and development costs will determine which projects can attract financing.

For Zimbabwe, that raises a more immediate question: what can its geology realistically offer? Mtetwa cautioned against assuming that the country could match the scale of major copper deposits in neighbouring producers.

"Mhangura mine, the largest copper mine in Zimbabwe, produced approximately 315,000 tonnes. In Zambia, one of the major copper mines, Kansanshi, has 6,000,000 tonnes of copper. DRC's new copper deposits at Kamoa are even larger than the Kansanshi mine. So in Zimbabwe we can look for the size of the Mhangura deposit to be realistic. So the Zimbabwean geology is host to small copper deposits," he said.

The figures are not directly comparable. Mhangura's figure refers to historical production, while the figures cited for Kansanshi and Kamoa relate to deposits or resources. Past production does not establish the size of a deposit, just as a resource estimate does not necessarily represent copper that can be recovered economically.

Mtetwa's broader point, however, is that Zimbabwe needs realistic assessments of its mineral potential. Exploration must establish whether deposits are large enough, sufficiently rich and economically accessible to support new operations. Without that evidence, the prospect of a global shortage offers little certainty to investors considering projects in the country.

Historical mining areas provide one starting point for that work. Mhangura, in Mashonaland West, has attracted renewed interest through efforts to recover copper from tailings and investigate the area's wider potential.

In October 2024, the Zimbabwe Mining Development Corporation and its Chinese investment partner, Zhijiu Mining, outlined a US$1 million exploration programme around Mhangura.

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The project was expected to draw funding from revenue generated by a tailings operation reported to be producing about 450 tonnes of copper concentrate a month for export to China.

The initiative illustrates the distinction between recovering value from old mining operations and finding new resources. Tailings retreatment can recover copper from material already mined, while exploration seeks evidence of additional mineralisation that could support future production. Neither activity, on its own, establishes that a new underground mine would be commercially viable.

Mtetwa cautioned that higher copper prices should not be taken as evidence that old deposits still have sufficient economic reserves.

"Mineral deposits anywhere in the world get finished. There is no mineral deposit that will last forever. So the question becomes what is remaining of the small copper deposits might not be economic to mine despite the high copper price," he said.

His assessment highlights a risk for countries hoping to revive historical mining districts as global demand rises. A stronger copper price can improve project economics, but it cannot reverse depletion or guarantee that remaining ore can be extracted profitably. Drilling, resource estimates and technical studies are needed to determine whether an old operation can be reopened or whether investment would be better directed towards new exploration.

For Zimbabwe, the permitting backlog is therefore only one part of the challenge. Granting access to exploration ground would allow companies to test geological prospects, but discoveries would still need to withstand commercial scrutiny. Reliable electricity, transport infrastructure and access to long-term capital would influence whether viable deposits could progress from exploration to production.

The time involved makes early action important. Mtetwa estimates that exploration for large copper deposits generally takes about 10 years before discovery, followed by up to five years of project development. These estimates are not directly equivalent to BloombergNEF's average 17-year mine-development timeline, but both point to the long lead times involved in bringing new copper supply to market.

Zimbabwe cannot assume that a global supply deficit will automatically draw investment to its copper sector. Investors will compare the quality of its deposits, the cost of developing them and the risks of operating in the country with opportunities elsewhere. The first step is to establish what resources exist and whether they can support commercially viable mines.

The coming copper shortage gives Zimbabwe a stronger reason to examine its mineral potential, but the market cannot create deposits that have not been found. The immediate test is whether exploration can move beyond the permitting stage and generate evidence of resources that justify investment.

With new mines taking years to develop, the decisions made now will shape whether Zimbabwe has commercially viable copper projects to offer when additional supply is needed. For the country, the opportunity begins not with the forecast shortage itself, but with the geological work required to establish what it can produce.



Zimbabwe Ferrochrome exports earn US$256 million as chrome sales rise

Zimbabwe's high-carbon ferrochrome exports generated US87.8 million, highlighting the growing importance of domestic processing within the country's mineral export basket, Mining Zimbabwe can report.



By Rudairo Mapuranga

Data from the Minerals Marketing Corporation of Zimbabwe (MMCZ) shows that high-carbon ferrochrome accounted for 5.4% of the country's US$4.7352 billion in mineral sales during the period, while chrome concentrates contributed 1.9%. The figures exclude gold and silver, which fall outside MMCZ's marketing mandate.

Combined, the two chrome product categories generated US$343.8 million, equivalent to approximately 7.3% of total mineral sales.

The distinction between the two products is significant as Zimbabwe intensifies efforts to shift from exporting raw minerals towards domestic beneficiation, with ferrochrome smelting providing a route to capture additional value before export.

However, the latest figures also highlight the importance of examining the performance of individual product categories rather than treating all chrome exports as a single stream.

High-carbon ferrochrome is a smelted alloy used primarily in stainless steel production, while chrome concentrates are an intermediate product that undergoes processing to separate and upgrade chromite-bearing material. Their respective earnings therefore reflect different stages of the chrome value chain.
Beneficiation Drive Faces Industrial Constraints

Zimbabwe's chrome policy is increasingly centred on expanding domestic smelting capacity and reducing dependence on exports of unprocessed minerals.

The Government's February 2026 suspension of exports of raw minerals formed part of a broader effort to strengthen local processing. The subsequent regulatory framework is intended to reinforce the requirement for domestic beneficiation, although the precise legal treatment of individual chrome products must be distinguished from the wider policy announcement.

For the industry, the commercial case for beneficiation depends not only on the export value of ferrochrome but also on the costs of converting ore into alloy.

Ferrochrome smelting is energy-intensive, requiring reliable electricity alongside suitable ore feed, reductants, electrodes and functioning furnace infrastructure. Higher export earnings per tonne do not automatically translate into higher profit margins because the processing stage introduces additional operating and capital costs.

Electricity availability and tariffs therefore remain central to the sector's ability to increase production and compete in international markets.

Zimbabwe already has established ferrochrome producers, including Zimasco and Afrochine, while additional investment proposals have sought to expand the country's smelting and power-generation capacity. The contribution of these projects will ultimately depend on the capacity commissioned, the availability of electricity and the ability of producers to sustain commercial operations.

Export Earnings Need to Translate into Sustained Production

The nine-month figures place chrome alongside lithium, platinum group metals and steel among the contributors to Zimbabwe's mineral sales. High-carbon ferrochrome generated US256 million,compared with US87.8 million from chrome concentrates, demonstrating the substantial contribution of the smelted product to the reported chrome export basket.

Nevertheless, export values alone cannot establish the extent to which beneficiation policy has increased domestic production or improved profitability. A full assessment requires comparable data on export tonnage, realised unit values, furnace utilisation, electricity costs and the volumes of ore processed locally.

For chrome miners and smelters, the immediate challenge is to align mining output with dependable processing capacity. Producers need sufficient ore supply, competitively priced power and reliable access to export markets to maintain furnace operations and justify further investment.

High-carbon ferrochrome generated US256 million,compared with US87.8 million from chrome concentrates, demonstrating the substantial contribution of the smelted product to the reported chrome export basket.

Zimbabwe's beneficiation drive is therefore entering a phase in which industrial execution matters as much as policy direction. Expanding local smelting can increase the proportion of chrome exports sold as ferrochrome, but the long-term outcome will depend on whether investment in processing and electricity delivers sustainable production growth and competitive operating costs.

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PLZ's acid plant brings input security into focus as processing expands

As Prospect Lithium Zimbabwe (PLZ) prepares to expand its lithium processing operations, a US$40 million sulphuric acid project is intended to address a critical part of the production chain: securing a consistent supply of a key chemical input, Mining Zimbabwe can report.

By Ryan Chigoche

The facility is expected to reach full production in the first quarter of 2027, according to PLZ Mine Manager Mthokozisi Goliath. Its development comes as the company prepares to introduce lithium carbonate production, placing greater importance on the coordination of its processing infrastructure and input supplies.

"We have a US$40 million investment. We are in the process of production. Construction will start on the 11th of September. For now, we will hold the commissioning. I think maybe by the first quarter of 2027, we will have full production of sulphuric acid. We will have a constant supply of sulphuric acid," Goliath said.

The project's significance lies in the supply reliability it is intended to provide. Processing operations depend not only on the availability of mineral feedstock, but also on the chemicals and other inputs required to convert that material into saleable products.

The value of additional processing capacity depends on whether the supporting systems can deliver the required inputs and operate reliably alongside existing facilities.

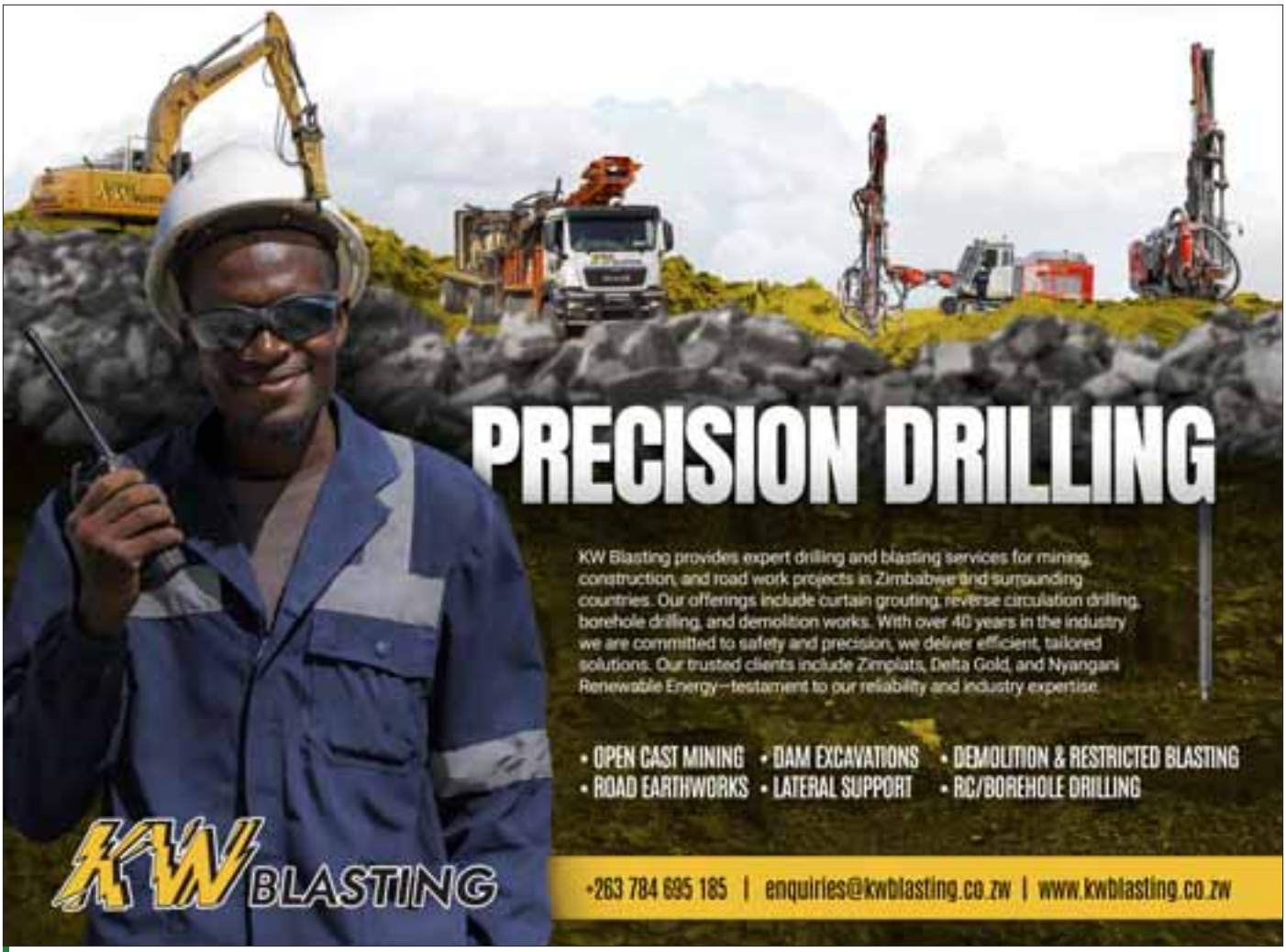
Interruptions in critical supplies can complicate production planning, while dependable availability can give operators greater control over their schedules.

PLZ has not disclosed the acid plant's production capacity or how much of its sulphuric acid requirements it expects to meet from the facility. Those figures will be important in assessing whether the project can cover the operation's demand and how much flexibility it could provide as processing expands.

The investment is being developed alongside PLZ's plan to begin lithium carbonate production in the first quarter of 2027. Goliath said preparations for carbonate production were already under way, extending the operation's plans beyond its existing lithium sulphate business.

That creates a coordination challenge. The value of additional processing capacity depends on whether the supporting systems can deliver the required inputs and operate reliably alongside existing facilities. The acid plant's commissioning schedule and the readiness of the carbonate operation will therefore be important milestones in the company's next phase.

PLZ's sulphate plant has a design capacity of 50,000



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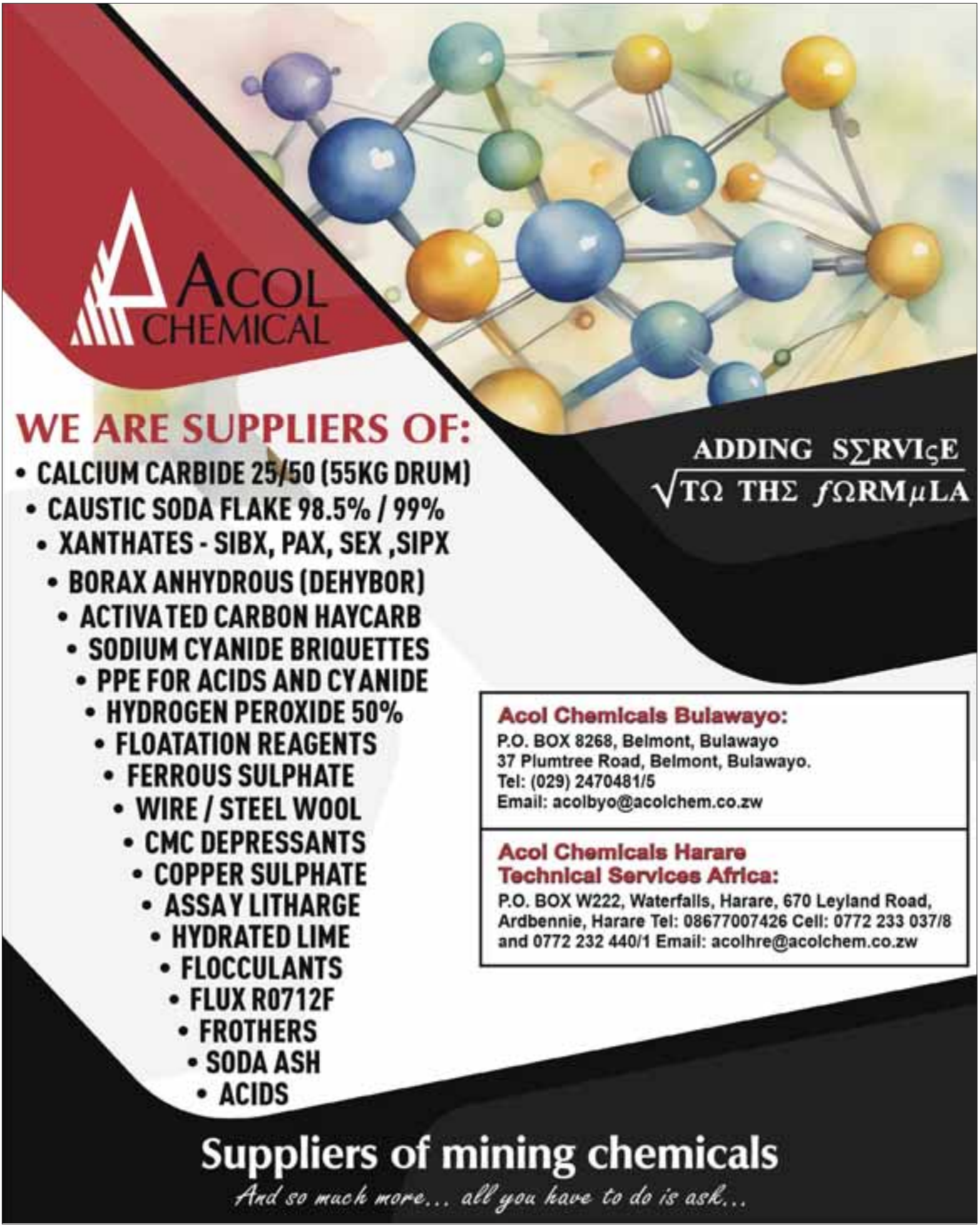
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Ground Control must become a core priority across Zimbabwe's Mining Industry

Zimbabwe's mining industry faces a long-term challenge in reducing falls-of-ground accidents, with rock engineering professionals being urged to extend practical ground-control expertise beyond established mines to artisanal and small-scale mining operations, Mining Zimbabwe can report.



(ZINIRE) President Omberai Mandingaisa

By Rudairo Mapuranga

The call comes as mining fatalities reached approximately 150 in the nine months to September 30, 2026, exceeding the 132 deaths recorded throughout 2025. Deputy Chief Government Mining Engineer Tapererwa Paswavaviri and Zimbabwe National Institute of Rock Engineering (ZINIRE) president Omberai Mandingaisa have called for practical interventions that make ground support safer and more accessible across operations of different sizes.

Addressing ZINIRE's 13th Annual General Meeting and Symposium at Victoria Falls Safari Lodge, the two officials highlighted the need to translate advances in rock engineering into measures that can be implemented underground, particularly in smaller workings where access to specialist expertise is limited.

The discussions, held under the theme "Leveraging Technology for Next Generation Fall of Ground Management," placed ground control at the centre of both mine safety and operational performance.

Ground failures remain a persistent industry risk

Figures presented by Paswavaviri showed that Zimbabwe recorded 132 mining fatalities across 109 fatal accidents in 2025, down from 186 deaths in 2024 and 237 in 2023.

However, the subsequent increase to approximately 150 fatalities by September 2026 highlights the difficulty of sustaining improvements in mine safety.

Falls of ground accounted for 44 of the 109 fatal accidents recorded in 2025, while shaft-related collapses and accidents claimed another 22 lives. In the artisanal and small-scale mining sector, 64 deaths were recorded during the first quarter of 2026, with ground collapses accounting for 54% of fatalities in the period.

The figures underline the need for ground-control measures that extend beyond compliance inspections to the way mining operations are designed, developed and managed.

Unsupported hanging walls, inadequate timber or roof-bolt support, poorly planned shallow workings and shafts without secondary escape outlets were among the unsafe practices identified by Paswavaviri.

For established mining companies, ground instability can also affect production through damaged workings, rehabilitation costs, ore dilution and interrupted access to mining areas. Integrating rock engineering into mine planning and capital allocation is therefore essential to protecting workers and maintaining operational continuity.

Extending expertise beyond established mines

A central challenge is the limited access to professional rock engineering services among artisanal and small-scale miners, despite the sector's significant contribution to employment and gold production.

Paswavaviri called on ZINIRE, established mining companies and private geotechnical consultants to take practical ground-control knowledge directly to smaller operations.

"We must take rock engineering out of the boardroom and down to the small-scale shafts," he said.

The proposed "Adopt-a-Syndicate" approach would bring rock engineering departments at established mines and private consultancies together with the Ministry of Mines and Mining Development's regional offices and the Zimbabwe School of Mines to provide practical training to small-scale mining communities.

Training would cover basic ground assessment, safe shaft sinking, timber support, pillar sizing and the identification of warning signs such as tension cracks and loose hanging walls.

For mine managers, the proposal presents an opportunity to extend established safety knowledge into surrounding mining communities. Its effectiveness, however, will depend on sustained engagement, appropriate support materials and the ability of miners to apply the rec-

continued on page 35>>



Eng Tapererwa Paswavaviri

For mine managers, the proposal presents an opportunity to extend established safety knowledge into surrounding mining communities. Its effectiveness, however, will depend on sustained engagement, appropriate support materials and the ability of miners to apply the recommended practices within their operating conditions.



ZINIRE vice President Freddy Chikwiri

Technology must produce practical solutions

ZINIRE president Omberai Mandingaisa reinforced the need to develop ground-support solutions suited to smaller underground workings, where the dimensions and conditions may differ considerably from those of large-scale mines.

Falls of ground accounted for 44 of the 109 fatal accidents recorded in 2025, while shaft-related collapses and accidents claimed another 22 lives.

"They don't open huge spans, they open small spans. But we need to also look at how do we support these small spans that are working," Mandingaisa said.

His remarks highlight an important consideration for technology developers and rock engineers: solutions must reflect the actual conditions in which they will be used rather than relying exclusively on systems designed for larger operations.

ZINIRE vice president Freddy Chikwiri similarly urged professionals to translate complex engineering analysis and numerical modelling into clear instructions that workers can follow underground.

"You can do the presentations, you can do the numerical models, you can do all the things that you want, but ultimately, your role is to make sure that whoever is getting in that pit, whoever is getting in that shaft, they go back and they see their family and loved ones alive," Chikwiri said.

Technology can strengthen ground-control decisions through three-dimensional mine modelling, improved monitoring and appropriate support systems. Mechanised bolting and remote scaling can also reduce workers' exposure to unsupported ground where the equipment is suitable and economically accessible.

However, technology alone cannot resolve unsafe practices. Its value depends on competent personnel, reliable implementation, adequate training and consistent supervision.

ZINIRE
Zimbabwe National Institute of Rock Engineering



ZINIRE members pose for a picture at the the organisation's 13th AGM and Symposium

Beyond the mine: A Mining Engineer's journey into banking, leadership and global Impact

The story of Tinashe Chivhande

When people think of a mining engineer, they usually picture safety shoes, mine designs, production plans, drilling and blasting.



Tinashe Chivhande

Few imagine that the same professional might later find themselves in a suit, analysing businesses, supporting credit decisions, managing client relationships and helping companies pursue growth through banking solutions. Yet that has been the unconventional career journey of Tinashe Chivhande, a Mining Engineering graduate who deliberately transitioned from mining technology into banking and has since built a growing career within Stanbic Bank Zimbabwe.

Chivhande's journey demonstrates an increasingly important reality for young professionals. The skills developed through engineering can extend far beyond the technical environments in which they were acquired. Analytical thinking, structured problem-solving, innovation and adaptability can create value across industries, provided professionals have the mindset and willingness to continuously learn.

His career foundation was firmly rooted in mining. For his final year project at university, Chivhande developed an Emergency Detection System for Mines, applying technology to a practical challenge within mine safety. The project earned him an invitation to the SAIMM Student Colloquium in Johannesburg, where mining students from across Southern Africa presented their research and innovations. His project placed third at the colloquium, opening another opportunity for him to present the innovation at the Chamber of Mines Association of Mine Managers Conference, where he gained audience and interacted with the mining industry leaders and decisionmakers. The exposure opened his mind and contributed to his entry into the mining technology space, joining Vision AI in his first professional role.

At Vision AI, Chivhande gained practical experience on mining technology. His work involved technological and artificial intelligence solutions for mining and related industries, providing exposure to systems implementation, project execution, stakeholder management, AI, LiDAR and drone technologies. It was an environment that reinforced his interest in using innovation to solve real-world problems.

At the time, a future in mining and technology appeared the natural progression. However, as his professional interests evolved, Chivhande became increasingly drawn to leadership, business strategy, innovation and the opportunity to make an impact locally and globally. Engineering had equipped him to solve technical challenges, but he wanted to better understand how organisations grow, how industries are financed, how strategic decisions are made and how value is created at scale.

That curiosity eventually led to what might initially appear an unconventional move: transitioning from Mining Engineering into banking.

To Chivhande, however, the transition was less about abandoning engineering and more about applying the same capabilities in a different environment. Engineering had taught him to break down complex problems, analyse information objectively, think systematically and continuously search for better ways of doing things. Those capabilities were not restricted to mining.

He found the opportunity to apply them differently when he joined Stanbic Bank Zimbabwe through its Graduate Trainee Programme. Entering banking presented a significant learning curve. Chivhande moved into an environment where many colleagues had backgrounds in finance, economics, accounting and banking, while he was encountering concepts such as credit assessment, transactional banking, client portfolios, global markets and trade finance from an entirely different starting point.

Rather than viewing his engineering background as a disadvantage, however, he gradually began applying it as a differentiator. Client requests became problems to solve, processes became opportunities for improvement, and information and data became sources of insight. The Graduate Programme exposed him to different areas of banking, including Branch Banking, Client Coverage, Transactional Banking, Credit, Global Markets and Investment Banking. The rotations provided a broad understanding of how different parts of a financial institution work together to support individuals, businesses and wider economic activity.

One of the major lessons to emerge from the experience was a broader understanding of what banking represents. Beyond branches, products and transactions, banking can be viewed as an enabler of growth helping individuals pursue aspirations, enabling businesses to unlock opportunities and create employment, and facilitating economic activity. At its core, this requires understanding people and businesses, solving real challenges and connecting clients with financial solutions that can help them achieve their ambitions.

> *"Engineering had trained me to break down complex problems, assess information objectively, think systematically, and keep looking for better ways of working."*

continued on page 37>>

Throughout the programme, Chivhande increasingly sought opportunities to contribute beyond his immediate responsibilities. His interest in technology remained an important part of his identity, and he became involved in promoting digital adoption and exploring how emerging tools could improve productivity and ways of working within the business.

His approach to development has also extended beyond formal workplace training. Chivhande is an avid reader of leadership and personal-development literature, drawing lessons from authors such as Dale Carnegie, Robin Sharma and John Maxwell. That learning has been complemented by mentorship from professionals including Dean Muungani, Larnston Gowera, Ngonidzashe Sandengu and his professional mentor, Patson Mahatchi. Together, those influences have reinforced one of the principles that has shaped his journey: growth is rarely accidental. It requires deliberate effort, disciplined habits, continuous learning and the willingness to act when opportunities arise.

His contribution and development were recognised when he received the Young Professional of the Year Award while still serving as a Graduate Trainee. For Chivhande, the recognition reinforced the view that meaningful contribution does not necessarily depend on title, tenure or age.

The most defining chapter in his career came through his selection to represent Stanbic Bank Zimbabwe and the Standard Bank Group at the One Young World Summit in Munich, Germany. The opportunity placed him among young leaders from different parts of the world who were engaging with issues ranging from leadership and innovation to sustainable development and societal impact.

He returned from Munich as a One Young World Ambassador, with a strengthened interest in leadership and a broader perspective on the contribution young professionals can make within their organisations and communities. The experience also reinforced his desire to share his journey with fellow engineers and other young professionals who may find themselves considering careers beyond the disciplines in which they originally trained.

Another defining moment was being selected to **represent Stanbic Bank Zimbabwe and the Standard Bank Group at the One Young World Summit in Munich, Germany**

After successfully completing the Graduate Programme, Chivhande reached another significant milestone when he was appointed Assistant Relationship Manager within Business & Commercial Banking at Stanbic Bank Zimbabwe.

The appointment brings together much of what has defined his journey so far: analytical thinking developed through engineering, an interest in technology and innovation, exposure to credit and financial solutions, and an increasing focus on understanding businesses and building client relationships. In his new role, he will work closely with businesses, supporting client relationships and their growth ambitions while continuing to deepen his own understanding of commercial banking. For Chivhande, however, the appointment represents another beginning rather than the conclusion of the journey.

Looking back, his transition from Mining Engineering into banking was therefore not necessarily about changing who he was professionally. It was about expanding what he could become. His journey carries a broader message for engineers and other technically trained professionals contemplating careers beyond their original fields of study. A qualification provides an important foundation, but it does not have to define the limits of a career.

Industries may differ significantly, but the ability to analyse, learn, communicate, solve problems, build relationships and adapt remains valuable across sectors. In a rapidly evolving world of work, professionals who can think across disciplines and bring different perspectives to complex challenges may increasingly find themselves with an advantage.

Sometimes, the skills developed in one field become precisely the skills that allow someone to create value in another. From developing mine-safety technology and presenting engineering innovations in South Africa, to working in mining technology, transitioning into banking, championing digital innovation, representing Zimbabwe on a global leadership platform and ultimately progressing into relationship banking, Chivhande's career so far illustrates that professional journeys do not always have to follow predictable lines.

The opportunities that shape careers can sometimes exist beyond the path initially imagined. What matters is the willingness to take the first step, embrace the discomfort of learning again and trust in the ability to grow into new opportunities. For young engineers in particular, the lesson from Chivhande's journey is simple: a degree can determine where a professional journey begins, but mindset, adaptability and the ability to create value can determine just how far that journey goes.





AI can improve Geotechnical logging, but Engineers must retain control

An engineer from Unki Mine has called for the gradual adoption of artificial intelligence (AI) in geotechnical work, saying the technology can improve data consistency, identify anomalies and automate routine assessments, but must remain subject to professional judgement and field verification, Mining Zimbabwe can report.



Tinashe Sibanda

By Rudairo Mapuranga

Tinashe Sibanda, speaking at the 13th Annual General Meeting and Symposium of the Zimbabwe National Institute of Rock Engineering (ZINIRE), said AI could help address inconsistencies in geotechnical logging, where different professionals may record, interpret or classify the same rock conditions differently.

The issue has implications for mine design, excavation stability and life-of-mine planning, where the quality of geological and geotechnical information informs engineering decisions.

"The core does not change, but the logging differs from one [geologist] to another," Sibanda said, identifying observation, interpretation and classification as areas where human variability can affect recorded data.

He argued that AI should be introduced as a verification layer within existing workflows, rather than as a replacement for geologists and rock engineers.

Under the approach he described, the geologist continues to log the core, while AI checks the resulting information for inconsistencies and flags anomalies for investigation. A qualified engineer then reviews the findings and makes the final decision.

Sibanda illustrated the process using Rock Quality Designation (RQD), a measure used to assess rock quality from recovered core. If a calculated value of 53 is mistakenly entered as 5, an automated system could flag the discrepancy by checking the recorded value against the underlying data and calculation.

Beyond checking individual entries, AI could compare measurements across intervals to identify unusual patterns requiring further investigation. Such applications could help improve database consistency and the reliability of information used in engineering assessments.

However, Sibanda cautioned that identifying an anomaly does not automatically establish the correct answer. AI-generated flags must be checked, while the quality of the data used to train and operate a model remains critical to its reliability.

He also warned against automation bias, in which professionals become so accustomed to system recommendations that they stop questioning them. False alarms can undermine confidence in a system, while blindly accepting its outputs can allow errors to pass through the engineering process.

For mine operators, the distinction is important. Consistent data processing does not necessarily mean that the underlying geological interpretation is correct. Field observations and engineering experience remain necessary to determine whether a model's output reflects actual ground conditions.

Sibanda said AI should not yet be relied upon to make final rock mass classifications independently, emphasising the need for human oversight.

His presentation also highlighted the potential for machine learning to extend beyond basic data checks into rock mass assessment. Sibanda described work involving Rock Mass Rating (RMR), in which model-generated assessments are compared with physical observations to determine how closely the predictions match field conditions.

He acknowledged that the results were not uniform. In some areas, the model produced assessments close to those obtained physically, while other cases required corrections.

That experience points to both the opportunity and the limitation of applying machine learning to rock engineering: routine tasks may be automated, but models still need to be tested against real conditions before their outputs can be trusted in more demanding applications.

Sibanda also explained that hydrogeological information intersects with rock engineering, particularly in slope stability assessments and pit design, where groundwater conditions and hydrostatic pressure influence the assessment of ground stability. The relevance of such information depends on the engineering problem and the models being developed.

Rather than pursuing a large-scale rollout from the outset, Sibanda recommended starting with limited applications, evaluating their performance and expanding as confidence in the results improves.

For mining operations, the immediate value of AI lies in strengthening the checks behind geotechnical decisions and reducing routine work, not removing the engineer from the process. Wider adoption will depend on the quality of the underlying data, the consistency of model performance and the ability of qualified professionals to verify its findings against actual ground conditions.



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