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Kenya suspends soda ash manufacturer operations



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Tata Chemicals suspension a defining moment for Kenya



Andrew Maramwidze (Editor)

The suspension of mining operations at Tata Chemicals Magadi marks a significant turning point in Kenya's extractive industry.

For over a century, this soda ash manufacturer has stood as a pillar of industrial heritage, yet its current compliance stand-off with the Ministry of Mining underscores a fundamental shift in how the country intends to manage its mineral wealth.

This is not merely a regulatory spat. The government's decision, communicated by Cabinet Secretary Hassan Ali Joho, signals a firm resolve to move beyond colonial-era frameworks and enforce the 2016 Mining Act in its entirety.

The list of concerns from unclear value-addition strategies to outstanding royalty payments and environmental compliance gaps paints a picture of systemic issues that have long plagued the sector.

For Tata Chemicals Magadi, the stakes are immense. As Africa's largest soda ash producer and one of Kenya's leading exporters, the company's operations ripple across the economy. Yet, the government's position is clear: compliance

with the law is non-negotiable, regardless of historical stature or economic significance.

The Mining Act, 2016, was designed precisely for moments like this. Its provisions on equitable royalty sharing, community development agreements, local employment, and environmental rehabilitation represent a social contract between extractive industries and the Kenyan people. The suspension serves as a powerful reminder that this contract must be honoured.

The path forward requires all parties to demonstrate good faith. The company must present comprehensive compliance documentation while the government balances enforcement with the practical realities of sustaining a major industrial operation.

Ultimately, this episode offers an opportunity to reset Kenya's mining governance, provided the outcome yields genuine reform rather than mere regulatory theatre.

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Kenya suspends soda ash manufacturer operations

Non-compliance with Kenya's mining laws has recently led to the suspension of mining operations at Tata Chemicals Magadi.

The suspension comes as the government's push to tighten compliance, improve revenue collection, and promote greater value addition in Kenya's extractive sector.

Tata Chemicals Magadi is Africa's largest soda ash manufacturer and one of Kenya's leading exporters, with more than a century of operations in the country.

The firm was formerly known as Magadi Soda Company before being acquired by Tata Chemicals in 2005. (Photo: Tata Chemicals Magadi)

Its parent company, Tata Chemicals Limited, is part of the broader Tata Group and maintains operations across the United States, the United Kingdom, Kenya, and India, dealing in household products, industrial chemicals, and agricultural inputs.

According to Cabinet Secretary for Mining, Blue Economy and Maritime Affairs Hassan Ali Joho, the suspension will remain in force until the company fully complies with the Mining Act, its regulations, and all other applicable laws governing the country's mining sector.

In a statement, the Ministry said the decision followed years of sustained engagement between the State Department for Mining and the company over its statutory obligations under the Mining Act, Cap. 306, the Mining (Licence and Permit) Regulations, 2017, the Mining (Roy-

alty Collection and Management) Regulations, 2024, and other relevant legal frameworks.

"The company has been directed to submit comprehensive documentation and evidence demonstrating full compliance with all the statutory obligations and to address any outstanding liabilities before it can resume operations," the Ministry stated.

Among the concerns cited are the lack of a clear mineral beneficiation and value-addition strategy, outstanding royalty reconciliation and payment obligations, insufficient export reporting and reconciliation, poor implementation of Community Development Agreements (CDAs), inadequate employment and skills transfer plans for Kenyan citizens, weak procurement of locally available goods and services, and environmental compliance shortcomings.

"The operations have been suspended until the company fully complies with the Mining Act, its regulations, and all other applicable laws governing Kenya's mining sector," the Ministry said.

Joho said the government would continue enforcing compliance across the mining sector to ensure the country's natural resources benefit Kenyans.

"The Ministry remains steadfast in its commitment to ensuring that Kenya's mineral resources are exploited responsibly, sustainably, and in a manner that delivers maximum economic value to the country while safeguarding the environment and protecting the interests of host communities," he said.

The Mining Act, 2016, is the principal legislation governing the exploration, extraction, and management of Kenya's mineral resources. It replaced colonial-era mining laws with a modern legal framework designed to ensure that the country's mineral wealth delivers greater benefits to the public while promoting transparency, sustainability, and responsible resource management.

The law provides for equitable sharing of mining royalties among the national government, county governments, and host communities, ensuring that communities living in mining areas directly benefit from resource extraction.

It also requires large-scale mining companies to enter into Community Development Agreements while prioritizing the employment of Kenyans and the procurement of locally available goods and services.

To improve transparency and efficiency in the sector, the Act introduced an online mining cadastre system that tracks mineral rights and licensing, helping to reduce disputes and overlapping claims through a clearly defined grid system.

The legislation also formally recognizes and regulates artisanal and small-scale miners, integrating them into the formal economy while promoting safer working conditions.

In addition, it places a strong emphasis on environmental protection by requiring mining companies to adopt sustainable practices and rehabilitate mining sites once extraction activities have ended.

Kenya mining industry warns licensing delays hinder investments

Kenya's mining industry players have implored the government to address lengthy delays in issuing mining licences.

According to the stakeholders, the delays discourage investment and allow neighbouring countries to attract projects that could otherwise have been developed in Kenya.

The concerns were raised during the 10th Minexpo Kenya exhibition in Nairobi, where mining companies, equipment suppliers, and consultants discussed the regulatory and operational challenges facing the sector.

Charles Komen, Kenya Country Manager at Mizztech Equipment Supplies, said investors continue to face prolonged waits for mining licences, with some applications taking more than three years to process.

He noted that many companies are issued with short-term permits instead of full licences, creating uncertainty over long-term investments.

"We urge the government to move with speed in issuing mining licences. Many investors have waited for more than three years and are only being issued with short-term mining permits instead of licences," Komen said.

He warned that unless licensing becomes more predictable, investors could increasingly shift their capital to countries such as Tanzania and Uganda, where regulatory processes are viewed as more efficient.

Industry players also called for better management of the country's mining cadastre to improve transparency and certainty in the allocation of mineral rights.

Stakeholders have highlighted that, in addition to licensing, ongoing legislative reforms aimed at improving royalty distribution, enhancing local participation, and strengthening community benefits could make Kenya a more attractive destination for mining investments.

Kenya's mining industry has expressed support for plans to streamline mining legislation. They believe that the proposed reforms, which include establishing a Sovereign Wealth Fund, could bolster investor confidence and attract new capital to the sector.

They argued that the proposed Sovereign Wealth Fund framework could further reassure investors by demonstrating a long-term commitment to transparent management of mineral revenues.

Participants also emphasised the need for stronger engagement with communities hosting mining projects, saying local support is critical to reducing disputes and ensuring sustainable resource development.

The industry further urged mining companies to invest in modern, reliable equipment to improve productivity, reduce operational downtime, and lower production costs as exploration and extraction activities expand.

Cyrus Njonde of Geomine Consulting Group said East Africa is well positioned to benefit from rising global demand for critical minerals, including rare earth elements, uranium, and tin.

"Kenya's deposits of gold, limestone, feldspar, and gypsum, alongside emerging interest in rare earth minerals, present opportunities for increased investment and local value addition," said Njonde.

He said unlocking these opportunities would require a predictable regulatory environment, while industry players said that faster licensing, legal reforms, and investment in technology would enable Kenya to unlock its mineral potential, attract more foreign investment, and create jobs across the mining value chain.





Kenya's Marula Mining acquires Kinusi copper mine in Tanzania

Kenyan mining company Marula Mining has entered into an agreement to amend the terms of its proposed acquisition of 100 percent of Takela Mining Tanzania.

Takela Mining Tanzania Limited owns and operates the Kinusi Copper Mine in Tanzania's Dodoma Region.

The deal provides for the acquisition of full control over the Kinusi mine through its subsidiary Marula Mining Tanzania Limited (MMTL). Marula currently holds a 75 percent stake in the Kinusi mine.

Under the agreement, MMTL will buy back all issued Takela shares, subject to the consolidation of 10 primary licenses into a single mining license. Under Tanzanian law, the Government will receive a payment of 16 percent of the transaction value after the consolidated license is issued.

The total value of the transaction is 2.5 million pounds in three tranches, 500 thousand pounds, 750 thousand pounds, and 1.25 million pounds with commercial sales of over 10 thousand tons. In addition, Takela shareholders will receive 1.5 percent of net royalties from total sales.

The financing of the transaction depends on future revenues from the extraction of copper and manganese or on additional investments.

Marula and Takela are finalising a long-term agreement with the global commodities trading group for the sale of all volumes of copper concentrate and cathodes produced.

Marula Mining is a Kenyan mining company producing minerals in Africa (lithium, tantalum, niobium, graphite, copper, rare earths, tungsten, manganese, and phosphates). The company also owns lithium and tungsten assets in South Africa.

Uganda to unlock artisanal mining value

Authorities in Uganda are advancing reforms to unlock greater value from its artisanal mining industry. Approximately 500,000 artisanal miners operate across the country, including around 90,000 gold miners, with much of the sector still operating informally.

To improve mineral traceability and strengthen domestic value capture, the Bank of Uganda has launched a national gold purchasing program designed to support artisanal miners while expanding the country's official gold reserves.

In addition, the Uganda Chamber of Energy and Minerals, working alongside GIZ Uganda and the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development, is also implementing the TENT Grant Initiative, a UGX 800 million program running through October 2026 that aims to formalize at least 20 artisanal mining cooperatives through improved market access.

Buttressing artisanal miners' importance, the Chamber's Chief Executive Officer, Humphrey Asiimwe, is expected to provide an update on Uganda's formalization agenda and how the country is positioning its gold, graphite, and rare earth sectors to meet rising global demand at the African Mining Week (AMW) 2026.

As global demand for minerals grows, African governments and industry are accelerating efforts to formalize artisanal and small-scale mining (ASM) through new regulations, digital platforms, financing mechanisms, and cooperative models.

These initiatives aim to increase government revenues, strengthen mineral traceability, curb illicit mining, and attract responsible investment.

The AMW 2026 conference, scheduled for October in South Africa, will focus on advancing the formalisation of the ASM panel. Policymakers, mining companies, and industry leaders will come together to explore the policies, partnerships, and technologies that are driving ASM formalisation across the continent.

This discussion is timely, as artisanal mining is playing an increasingly strategic role in the global minerals industry.

ASM accounts for more than 20 percent of global gold and critical minerals production. The sector supports the livelihoods of more than 40 million people and indirectly benefits an estimated 150 million people across sub-Saharan Africa, yet between 70 percent and 80 percent of operations remain informal, highlighting a significant oppor-

tunity to drive economic growth through formalisation.

Meanwhile, a recent tragic mine collapse in Namayingo has underscored the severe safety risks faced by artisanal miners across Uganda, prompting calls for immediate intervention.

The recent collapse of a mine in Namayingo, which tragically claimed lives, serves as a stark reminder of the pervasive dangers inherent in artisanal and small-scale mining (ASM) operations in Uganda. This incident is not an isolated one but rather a symptom of systemic issues that have long plagued the sector, leading to a disturbingly high number of fatalities and injuries.

Artisanal miners, often operating with rudimentary tools and minimal safety precautions, are particularly vulnerable. The lack of proper geological surveys, inadequate ventilation systems, and the reliance on unstable excavation methods contribute significantly to the frequency of these disasters. Furthermore, the often informal nature of these mining activities makes it difficult for authorities to monitor and enforce safety regulations effectively. Experts and community leaders are urging the government and relevant stakeholders to prioritise the safety and well-being of artisanal miners.



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Tanzania, Uganda sign MoU to develop Tanga into regional energy hub

Tanzania and Uganda have signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to develop the northeastern Tanzanian port city of Tanga into a regional energy hub, according to a statement issued by Tanzania's Directorate of Presidential Communications.

The signing was witnessed by Tanzanian President Samia Suluhu Hassan and her Ugandan counterpart Yoweri Museveni at the State House in Dar es Salaam during Museveni's working visit to Tanzania, said the statement.

Deogratus Ndejmbi, Tanzania's minister of energy, said the agreement aims to leverage Tanga's strategic geographic position and existing energy transport infrastructure to transform it into a key regional energy hub.

The initiative is expected to strengthen regional and economic cooperation, unlock investment opportunities in the energy sector, and enhance East Africa's role in global energy trade, Ndejmbi said.

Tanga serves as the terminus for the East African Crude Oil Pipeline, which is currently under construction and will run from Hoima in western Uganda to Chongoleani in Tanga.

Monica Masanza, Uganda's Minister of Energy and Mineral Development, described the agreement as a significant milestone in enhancing long-term energy cooperation between the two countries.

She emphasized that the energy, oil, and mining sectors are crucial to Africa's development. Masanza added that the project

will create jobs for the youth, boost trade, and strengthen economic ties between Tanzania and Uganda.





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Tanzania ranks 4th in Africa for mining investment destination

....Minexpo Tanzania 2026 to showcase the country's mining potential

The 10th Minexpo Tanzania is set to take place from October 28 to October 30, 2026, at the Diamond Jubilee Expo Centre in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

This event is a premier showcase for the latest technology in mining and mineral processing, earthmoving, safety equipment, and more. It serves as a one-stop shop for buyers from across East Africa who are looking for new products, equipment, machinery, services, and solutions related to the mining sector.

The event will draw top industry professionals from more than 25 countries, including leading global mining companies, technology providers, and investors.

It aims to serve as an ideal platform for showcasing the latest innovations, exploring business opportunities, and fostering partnerships in Africa's rapidly growing mining and mineral processing sectors.

According to the Fraser Institute's Annual Survey of Mining Companies 2025, Tanzania's reputation as a top location for foreign mining investments has greatly improved.

The Investment Attractiveness Index (IAI),

a comprehensive criterion used by investors to decide where to allocate exploration capital, ranked Tanzania 34th out of 68 jurisdictions worldwide in the 2025 global rankings.

Tanzania's overall score improved steadily, rising from 46.38 in 2023 and 62.75 in 2024 to 68.04 in 2025. The score is calculated using a weighted formula that assesses the country's mineral potential alongside its government's policy framework and business climate. The policy framework is given a 40 percent weighting, while mineral potential accounts for 60 percent.

The greatest Practices Mineral Potential Index, which gauges the nation's pure geological attraction as though it had the greatest laws in the world, is the first step in the computation.

Tanzania performs particularly strongly in the Mineral Potential Index, scoring 75.00 and ranking 15th out of 68 jurisdictions worldwide. This indicates that Tanzania's geological and mineral-resource potential is among the strongest globally.

However, its performance is weaker on the Policy Perception Index (PPI), which assesses factors such as taxation, the legal system, and political stability. Tan-

zania's PPI score of 57.61, while an improvement from 55.41 the previous year, places it 48th out of 68 jurisdictions.

These two components contribute to Tanzania's overall Mining Investment Attractiveness ranking. In 2025, Tanzania ranks 34th out of 68 jurisdictions worldwide, making it the fourth-highest-ranked African jurisdiction in the overall index, behind Botswana (7th), Morocco (15th), and Zambia (25th). Tanzania ranks ahead of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (50th), Namibia (51st), Ghana (53rd), and South Africa (57th).

Overall, Tanzania's position has improved substantially, rising from 67th out of 84 jurisdictions in 2021 to 34th out of 68 in 2025.

The mining industry, academia, and media utilise the Fraser Institute's yearly survey as a fundamental benchmark to assess the risks and benefits of investing in various international jurisdictions.

A total of US\$4.2 billion in exploratory spending was reported by 2,304 senior executives from exploration and development companies worldwide who participated in the 2025 survey.



Akobo Minerals concludes strongest quarterly production

In June, Scandinavian-based gold producer Akobo Minerals, which operates in Ethiopia, concluded its strongest quarterly production period since commencing operations.

The company reported producing approximately 37 kg of doré gold during the second quarter of 2026.

“Operations continued normally throughout the month, supported by stable mining and processing activities and no fuel-related disruptions. Development of the vertical shaft and sub-shaft also continued during June. Based on current observations, the company believes the shaft is entering the final transition into hard rock, which is expected to support more efficient shaft development,” said the company in its July operations update.

The key highlights include: doré gold production in June of approximately 10 kg; doré gold production in the second quarter of 2026 of approximately 37 kg; cumulative doré gold produc-

tion to date of approximately 134 kg; and a lower-grade stockpile of approximately 650 tonnes available for processing.

Akobo Minerals has more than 15 years of active operations in Ethiopia and holds an exploration licence covering 182 km² and a mining licence covering 16 km² in the Gambela region, Dima Woreda.

The Segele mine hosts an Indicated and Inferred Mineral Resource of approximately 69,000 ounces at an average grade of 22.7 g/t gold. The mineralised system remains open at depth, supporting further resource growth and potential mine life extension. In addition, the Company’s exploration licence hosts multiple high-quality targets with significant resource potential.

Akobo Minerals is headquartered in Oslo and listed on Euronext Growth Oslo and the Frankfurt Stock Exchange under the ticker AKOBO. In the United States, the Company’s shares trade on the OTC Pink Market under the symbol AKOBF.

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Zijin Gold's acquisition of Allied Gold approved in Ethiopia

Authorities in Ethiopia have granted regulatory approval for Hong Kong-listed Zijin Gold International's US\$4 billion acquisition of Allied Gold Corporation, allowing the transaction to move closer to completion.

The approval follows regulatory clearances in Canada, the United States, COMESA, and other African jurisdictions. The parties are expected to complete the transaction before the extended closing deadline of July 29, 2026.

The acquisition, announced in January, involves Zijin Gold International purchasing Allied Gold Corporation in an all-cash transaction valued at approximately USD 4 billion. Allied Gold is listed on the Toronto and New York stock exchanges.

The transaction includes Allied Gold's mining portfolio, including the Kurmuk Gold Mine in western Ethiopia. Allied Gold has stated that its operations and development projects will continue under their existing legal, regulatory, and contractual arrangements, with the main change being the ownership of the parent company.

Kurmuk Gold Mine is located in Kurmuk Woreda, Assosa Zone, in the Benishangul-Gumuz Regional State, approximately 750 kilometres west of Addis Ababa. Commercial production is expected to begin in the coming weeks.

The project has received an investment of about USD 620 million and is designed to process 6.4 million tonnes of ore annually. Gold production is projected to reach approximately 290,000 ounces per year

during the initial years and average more than 240,000 ounces annually over an estimated 10-year mine life.

The mine currently has proven and probable reserves of about 2.7 million ounces. Projected all-in sustaining costs are below USD 950 per ounce.

The transaction received support from Allied Gold shareholders in March, with 99.54 percent voting in favour. It later received court approval in Ontario and clearance under Canada's Investment Canada Act.

Upon completion, Zijin Gold International's portfolio is expected to include 12 gold mines in 12 countries, including Ethiopia, Mali, and Côte d'Ivoire.



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Why supporting expecting mothers is mining's next inclusion frontier

By YVONNE RUDOLPH*



The South African mining sector has made great progress in opening doors for women in operational roles. However, keeping female talent in the industry for the long-term means looking past basic recruitment to focus on how the industry can better support women through major life changes, such as pregnancy.

When an operational worker announces her pregnancy, health and safety rules correctly require her to step away from high-risk work, such as underground mining or driving heavy machinery. While these rules are essential to protect both

mother and baby, the sudden shift can leave expecting mothers feeling sidelined. To build a truly inclusive industry, mining companies must see pregnancy support as a powerful tool for retaining skilled talent, rather than a temporary administrative headache.

The label “light duty” often carries an unfair stigma, reducing a capable employee to filing paperwork or doing busywork. When a pregnant employee moves off the floor, her contribution should remain meaningful.

Reassignment is actually a golden oppor-

tunity for structured upskilling. While an operator cannot physically run machinery or go underground, she can spend those months broadening her skill set. This is the ideal time to invest in her development, from foundational software and administrative skills to core interpersonal strengths like peer mentorship, team communication, and hazard awareness. By the time she goes on maternity leave, she hasn't just filled time; she has expanded her professional toolbox.

The impact of pregnancy on a woman's career goes beyond her months on the job; it includes the time she steps away and her eventual return from maternity leave. Leaving an operational shift for several months naturally creates worry about falling behind or losing one's standing.

Teams benefit from short training or catch-up sessions right before a woman goes on leave and again just before she returns, making sure everyone is aligned. Additionally, workforce planning must cover her role without making her feel like her job is under threat. When a temporary replacement is presented as a learning opportunity for another team member, it protects the mother's job security while helping the wider team grow.

At its foundation, supporting expecting mothers is about basic humanity in the workplace. Operating heavy machinery or working shifts is physically demanding on its own; doing that while growing a new life adds an incredible amount of stress and fatigue. When companies respond with empathy, clear guidance, and flexible planning, they show that an employee's worth isn't just about her daily shift output. Women who feel valued during pregnancy return with greater loyalty and commitment, which directly improves long-term female retention in technical mining roles.

Mining operations that get this right will always have the advantage when it comes to hiring and retaining top talent. The industry can make sure motherhood is never a roadblock to a lasting mining career simply by moving past simple compliance and treating people with genuine support.

*Yvonne Rudolph is the Branch Manager of Kathu, PRISMA Training Solutions

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Multotec's spirals and cyclones redefine separation efficiency

In an era where accuracy and efficiency define mineral processing performance, Multotec is advancing the science of separation through its high-efficiency spiral concentrators and cyclones.

Leveraging its global expertise, spanning manufacturing, research, and field service operations in more than 100 countries, alongside two decades of experience in Canada, the company continues to strengthen its presence in the local mining sector.

Its technologies are already delivering proven results in major coal operations and are equally well suited to achieving the same precision and recovery in iron ore processing applications.

Multotec's dense medium and classification cyclones have delivered consistent separation efficiency across Canadian coal operations for the past 20 years. Engineered to perform reliably under the toughest conditions, these cyclones offer a long wear lifespan and are simple to maintain, featuring fewer components and flexible configurations. This design aligns perfectly with the sector's focus on operational efficiency and reduced total cost of ownership.

"Our product specialists specify the ideal combination of pressure, cone angle, vortex finder, and spigot dimensions to achieve optimal separation efficiency and plant performance."

"In addition, our North American custom-

ers benefit from access to our technical expertise and an extensive selection of spare parts and accessories, ensuring they receive reliable support throughout the lifecycle of their equipment," said Niel Lourens, Vice President for Cyclones & Spirals at Multotec.

To ensure long-term efficiency and reliability in harsh operating conditions, Multotec optimizes the materials used in its cyclone construction. By incorporating advanced wear-resistant materials, such as silicon carbide, in place of traditional liners, the cyclones achieve extended service life, enhanced durability, and reduced maintenance costs and requirements, ultimately minimizing overall downtime.

Complementing its cyclone technology, Multotec also offers a range of spiral concentrators that are designed to deliver precise, high-efficiency separation performance and mineral concentration across a range of commodities, including iron ore, coal, gold, copper, nickel, and zinc. The SX7 and MX7 coal spiral concentrator models incorporate two stages of spiraling into a single compact and modular spiral assembly, reducing plant height and floor space requirements.

"These spiral concentrators have proven highly efficient in the Canadian and US coal sectors. Multotec has installed several of these units to date, delivering strong recovery results," said Lourens.

To unlock additional value from existing resources, Multotec's low-cut-density SX10 spiral is engineered to achieve a lower density cut point, resulting in a low-

er ash product.

"With a lower cut density, the SX10 spirals are capable of producing higher-grade coal, which is especially important for Canadian coal plants producing high-specification export metallurgical coal," Lourens adds.

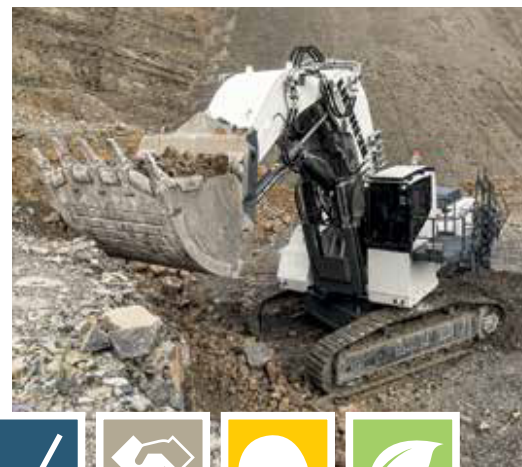
Moreover, Multotec has developed the ultra-fine UX7 spiral, designed to recover heavy minerals with particle sizes of 100 microns and smaller. The UX7 is suitable for a wide range of applications, including iron ore, chrome, manganese, copper, platinum, and mineral sands.

A key differentiator for Multotec in the region is its collaboration with universities and metallurgical research laboratories across North America. These partnerships focus on advancing separation science, optimizing mineral processing flow-sheets, and enhancing process control to drive greater operational efficiency.

Lourens says: "These research partnerships are essential to how the industry innovates, shares knowledge, and advances mineral processing solutions in line with the sector's future needs."

As Canadian miners continue to seek solutions that balance productivity, efficiency, and environmental performance, Multotec's spirals and cyclones are helping to drive that transition by combining its global knowledge with local expertise to enable smarter, more sustainable mineral processing.

Experience the Progress.



Liebherr's Innovative Mining Solutions

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- Strategic design to increase uptime and reliability
- Highest productivity and efficiency through intelligent energy management
- Ergonomic design for safe and user-friendly operation and maintenance
- Customer-focused support throughout the entire equipment lifecycle
- Liebherr's commitment to reduce environmental footprint across all machines

BME advances safer blasting in hot and reactive ground conditions

Hot holes and reactive ground conditions are becoming increasingly significant challenges for mining operations, with the potential to compromise safety, disrupt production, and undermine blast performance.

"While these conditions have been encountered for decades, the scale and complexity of modern mining have elevated their significance," said Nishen Hariparsad, General Manager of Technology and Marketing at BME, during a recent company webinar titled 'Managing Hot Holes and Reactive Ground in Mining Operations'.

"Successfully managing these risks requires scientific expertise, disciplined operational practices, and a proactive approach to risk management."

Hennie van Niekerk, Regional Technical Services Manager at BME, explained that hot holes and reactive ground are distinct hazards that require different management strategies.

"Hot holes are primarily thermal hazards, while reactive ground is a chemical hazard involving reactions between ammonium nitrate-based explosives and reactive minerals," he explained. "Although elevated temperatures may accelerate these reactions, each hazard requires its own controls."

Hot holes are particularly prevalent in coal mining regions, where underground coal seam fires generate elevated ground temperatures, gas emissions, and, in some cases, open flames. "Heat may reach blast holes through conduction, convection, radiation, and geo-thermal gradients, depending on site conditions," he said.

Meanwhile, reactive ground develops when sulphide-bearing rock chemically interacts with ammonium nitrate-based explosives. According to Hariparsad, this interaction can generate heat, lead to decomposition, and, in extreme cases, cause premature detonation.

"Reactive ground often develops without obvious warning signs, which is why it is frequently referred to as the industry's 'silent killer'," he explained.

Victor Krause, Reactive Ground Specialist at BME, noted that visible heat is not always a reliable indicator of risk. "Some of the most severe reactions occur in blast holes showing little or no evidence of elevated temperatures before charging," he said.

He explained that reactive ground develops when sulphide-bearing rock chemically interacts with ammonium nitrate-based explosives. He said that this creates the potential for heat generation, decomposition, and, in extreme

cases, premature detonation.

He added that oxidation rates can double with every 10°C increase in temperature, creating the potential for thermal runaway, in which heat generation exceeds the rock mass's ability to dissipate energy.

"Once oxidation reactions become established, temperatures can escalate rapidly, making early identification and control essential," he said.

While reactive ground is commonly associated with coal mining and spontaneous combustion, he noted that similar risks also occur in PGM, base-metal, and other metalliferous operations. He said that BME classifies reactive ground into sulphide, acidic, and alkaline categories, each capable of reacting with nitrates, destabilising explosive products, and affecting detonation performance. "Understanding these geological conditions forms the foundation of selecting appropriate explosive products and control measures," he said.

Krause said that managing these hazards requires a holistic approach.

"Every element within a blast hole, bench, or mining block must be evaluated against prevailing ground conditions," he said. "It is very important to understand both the chemistry and the technical aspects of how our products are applied in a particular operation."

Accurate sampling and testing underpin effective reactive ground management.

"Delays in testing may allow oxidation to alter samples and reduce their ability to accurately represent in-situ conditions," he said. "Significant emphasis is therefore placed on sampling protocols and testing frequency."

Testing determines the degree of reactivity, establishes inhibitor requirements, and validates safe explosive sleep times under site-specific conditions. "Laboratory testing may define safety windows that allow operations to continue for periods significantly longer than the intended operational sleep times, providing an additional margin of safety before products are deployed in the field," he said.

Where reactive ground is identified, inhibited explosive formulations can provide an additional layer of protection by suppressing chemical reactions between ammonium nitrate and reactive minerals.

"Depending on the explosive system and delivery configuration, inhibitors such as urea may be incorporated during manufacturing or introduced during the sensitisation process," he said. However, he stressed that inhibitor concentrations must always be determined

through site-specific testing and validation.

"Site-specific reactivity assessments, inhibitor requirement determination, and sleep-time validation remain essential to ensuring safe blasting performance," he emphasised.

While inhibited emulsions are designed to slow reaction rates and provide a larger safety window, they do not eliminate the underlying chemistry. "They therefore complement, rather than replace, rigorous testing and disciplined operating procedures," he said.

He noted that elevated temperatures can also affect explosive performance. "Certain explosive components may begin to soften at temperatures of around 70°C, increasing the risk of degradation or premature initiation," he said. "Both electronic and non-electric initiation systems may also be adversely affected if conditions are not properly understood and controlled."

He added that ammonium nitrate-based bulk explosives at "prolonged exposure to elevated temperatures can increase the likelihood of decomposition or ignition, particularly where reactive ground conditions are present," he said. According to Hariparsad, effective reactive ground management is an ongoing process that must evolve as mining progresses.

"Reactive ground testing should begin as soon as reactivity is suspected and continue throughout the life of the operation," he said.

"As mining advances into new geological domains, changing ground conditions may alter a site's reactivity profile, requiring explosive formulations, inhibitor levels, and allowable sleep times to be continuously validated."

Where uncertainty exists regarding hole temperature, reactive ground potential, product suitability, or allowable sleep time, BME advocates a stop-work approach until risks have been reassessed and appropriate controls implemented.

"Safe blasting also depends on maintaining confidence in the predictability of the entire blasting process," he said.

He stressed that personnel should never attempt to remove explosives from a reacting blast hole or recharge affected holes. "Once a reaction has started, exclusion zones and emergency procedures must be implemented immediately," he said.

Drawing on global experience and best practice, BME continues to support mining operations through scientific testing, product development, and technical expertise. "This facilitates the management of increasingly complex blasting environments safely and effectively," Hariparsad said.

Data Driven Grind Circuit Optimization



Hydrocyclone performance and particle size classification are crucial elements in the comminution process. The ability to measure particle size within individual cyclones is essential for grind circuit optimization and for controlling product size sent downstream.

Current Challenges

All cyclones within a cluster behave differently, yet until recently, operators were unable to measure the particle size from each individual cyclone. How can they ensure target size classification for optimal recovery? How is particle size variability controlled? In a macro economic environment where the demand for valuable mineral is outstripping the supply, how does a concentrator relax the grinding task, grind coarser, and increase throughput without violating the downstream process barrier? It is impossible to respond to industry challenges using conventional measurement technologies.

Innovative Solutions

For over 20 years, CiDRA Minerals Processing has been creating reliable and innovative technologies designed to address the most difficult challenges in the mining industry.

CiDRA's CYCLONetrac™ Particle Size Measurement System (PST) with SMARTsensor™ technology is quickly becoming the industry standard for particle size measurement and is the only real time measurement system that directly measures and tracks particle size for individual cyclones every four seconds.

The SMARTsensor is a wave guide that is inserted through the pipe wall on each overflow pipe. As the particles strike the waveguide, high frequency acoustic waves are generated, captured, and produce a frequency spectrum that is processed to determine particle size.

The Paradigm Shift

This unique technology allows minerals processing operations to make a step change from conventional measurement to direct, real-time measurement of individual cyclones with the capability to provide up to five particle size measurements every four seconds.

Operators can now make decisions that reduce particle size variability and achieve their target grind size (micro control strategy). CYCLONetrac PST also enables a consolidated particle size measurement from all cyclones in the cluster to derive a P80 measurement for the control and optimization of the grind circuit (macro control strategy).

Another benefit of using CYCLONetrac PST is the ability to prevent roping, a process upset that negatively impacts recovery before it occurs. Additionally, identifying cyclones that are out of class enables condition-based monitoring at the individual hydrocyclone level. Finally, relaxing the grind task and producing coarser particles minimizes maintenance required to shut down and clean flotation circuits. This helps reduce water usage and energy consumption.



What Our Customers Say

One customer attests to the benefits and value that CYCLONetrac PST technology provides: *"CYCLONetrac PST allows us to obtain better control of the P80, by cyclone, and evaluate its positive impact on tonnage without drastically affecting plant recovery. Also, it allows us to optimize the classification circuit, identifying the main constraints (cyclone feed pump flow, pressure, water addition to control % solids, classification efficiency)."*

Another customer stated *"The good news is that each individual cyclone's performance can be seen. There is a wealth of new information that none of us have ever seen before regarding cyclone cluster operation."*

(Joe) João Felix, Felix Projects
Representative in Sub-Sahara Africa for:
CiDRA Mineral Processing, Inc.

When Good Oils Go Bad Part 2

Oxidation: When Oil Gets Old

By Steven Lumley, technical manager, WearCheck

Oxidation - the focus of part 2 of WearCheck's "When Good Oils Go Bad" series - is one of the most common chemical reactions we encounter in everyday life. It occurs when fuel burns, when steel rusts, when wounds are cleaned with hydrogen peroxide and even when a cut apple turns brown. In lubricating oils, oxidation is no less familiar and no less damaging.

Put simply, oxidation is the chemical reaction between a lubricant and oxygen. Over time, this reaction alters the oil's chemistry, leading to degradation of both the base oil and its additives. While oxidation occurs at all temperatures, it accelerates dramatically as operating conditions become more severe, making it one of the primary causes of lubricant failure in service.

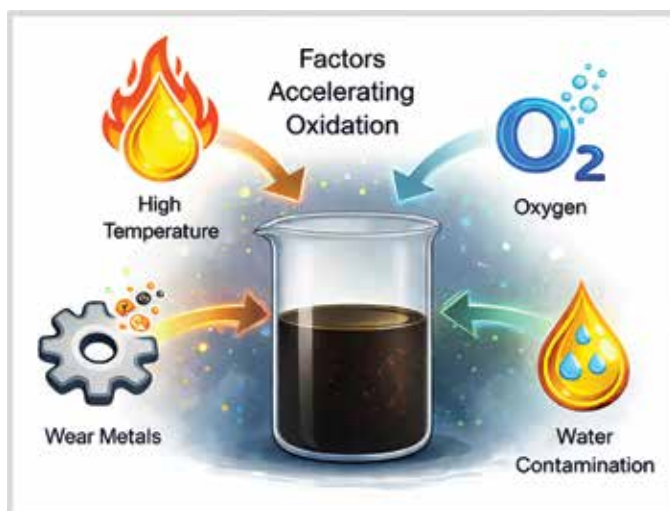
In lubricating oils, oxidation involves the sequential addition of oxygen to the base-oil molecules, producing a range of reactive - and often harmful - by-products, including aldehydes, ketones, hydroperoxides and carboxylic acids.

As these oxidation by-products accumulate, the lubricant's physical and chemical properties begin to change. The oil thickens, acids form, additives are depleted and insoluble materials can precipitate out as sludge or varnish. Left unchecked, oxidation compromises the lubricant's ability to protect equipment, increasing wear, corrosion and the risk of deposits.

Oxidation is unavoidable, but its rate is highly dependent on operating conditions such as temperature, oxygen exposure, catalytic metals and contaminants. Let's take a closer look at these factors:

Temperature

The oxidation rates increase exponentially, with temperature following the Arrhenius rate rule. As a rule of thumb for mineral oils, the rate of oxidation roughly doubles for every 10°C increase in temperature above ±75 °C. This is why oils in hot-running systems age far faster than those operating under cooler conditions.



Oxygen Exposure

Poorly sealed systems, aeration and excessive air entrainment increase the availability of oxygen accelerating oxidative reactions.

Catalytic Metals

Wear metals such as iron and copper act as powerful oxidation catalysts, and even small concentrations can significantly speed up oil degradation.

Water Contamination

Water not only promotes corrosion but also accelerates oxidation reactions and additive breakdown, particularly at elevated temperatures.

The Oxidation Chain Reaction

Oxidation in lubricants takes place through a complex series of chain reactions that consists of three key stages: initiation, propagation and termination.

Initiation

In the initiation stage, external stress factors like heat, wear metals or contamination break a chemical bond within the lubricant, generating a free radical - a highly reactive molecule with an unpaired electron.

Propagation

The free radical quickly reacts with oxygen to form peroxide radicals, which in turn attack other lubricant molecules. This creates additional free radicals, a process known as branching, which allows the reaction to spread and accelerate throughout the oil.

Termination

Oxidation slows only when free radicals are neutralised. This occurs when either two radicals combine to form a stable compound, or when antioxidant additives in the oil sacrifice themselves to interrupt the chain reaction. Once antioxidants are depleted, oxidation can proceed rapidly and uncontrollably. Remember, antioxidants delay oxidation, but they do not prevent it indefinitely.



The Consequences of Oxidation

As oxidation progresses, its effects become increasingly damaging. Viscosity increases due to the polymerisation of oxidised molecules, while acid formation leads to corrosion of metal surfaces. Sludge and varnish deposits impair oil flow and heat transfer, and additive depletion reduces anti-wear, anti-foam and corrosion protection. Together, these changes lead to a progressive loss of lubricant performance, ultimately leading to higher friction and increased wear.

In severe cases, oxidation-related deposits, particularly varnish, can cause sticking valves, blocked filters and overheating - often long before the oil appears visibly degraded.



Detecting Oxidation Through Oil Analysis

Oxidation is one of the most closely monitored degradation mechanisms in oil analysis and is assessed using a range of application-specific laboratory tests.

Used together, these techniques provide early warning of accelerated oxidation - often long before catastrophic lubricant failure occurs. The key tests used to assess oxidation are summarised below.

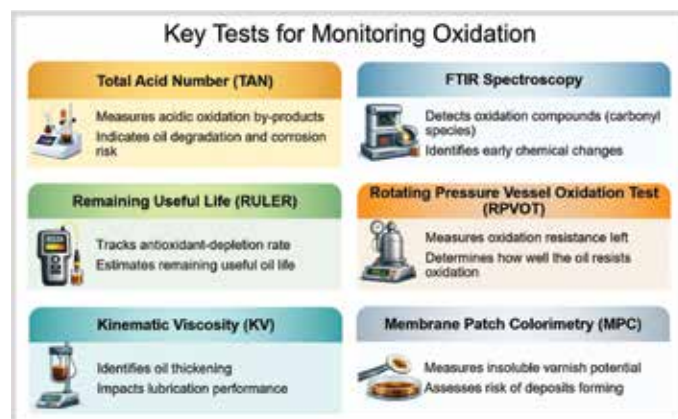
Final Thought

The reality is, oxidation is the inevitable ageing process of lubricating oils. While it cannot be eliminated, it can be managed effectively through correct lubricant selection, contamination control,

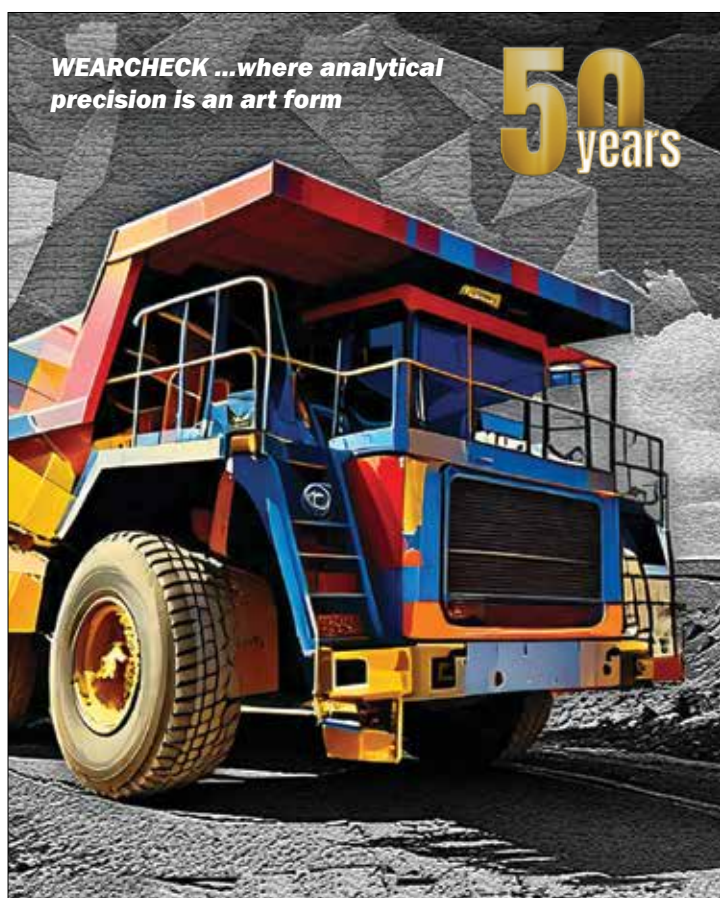
temperature management and a well-designed oil analysis programme. Understanding how oxidation occurs and recognising its early warning signs allows operators to intervene early, extend oil life and ultimately protect critical equipment from avoidable damage.

After all, oils don't fail simply because they age, they fail when the effects of ageing are left unchecked.

The next instalment of this WearCheck series moves from oxidation to nitration – a different pathway, but one that can be just as damaging.



Please visit www.wearcheck.co.za or contact WearCheck on marketing@wearcheck.co.za or +27 (31) 700-5460.



Mining runs on precision and the pursuit of productivity

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Tanzania's Gold Engine Roars Back Under Barrick

Gold has long powered Tanzania's mining economy, but the story of Barrick Gold Corporation in the country is less about geology and more about transformation. What was once a strained and uncertain operating environment has evolved into one of Africa's most closely watched examples of how governments and mining companies can rebuild trust and unlock value together.

At the centre of this shift is Twiga Minerals Corporation, the joint venture formed in 2019 between Barrick and the Tanzanian government. More than a corporate restructuring, Twiga reset the relationship between state and investor, turning a period of conflict into a framework for collaboration. It gave the government a direct stake in the country's gold assets, aligned economic interests, and created a pathway for operations to stabilise and grow. Before this shift, Barrick's Tanzanian assets, then operated under Acacia Mining, had been caught in a prolonged dispute over taxes, exports, and regulatory compliance. The fallout disrupted production, shook investor confidence, and left key mines underperforming. The creation of Twiga marked a decisive break from that past, allowing Barrick to regain operational control and reintroduce long-term planning.

Today, the company's presence in Tanzania is anchored by two major operations, Bulyanhulu Gold Mine and North Mara Gold Mine. Together, they form a Tier One gold complex producing more than half a million ounces of gold annually. But beyond production figures, what stands out is how these mines have been repositioned from struggling assets into consistent performers. At Bulyanhulu, a technically complex underground mine, operations were successfully restarted after a period of suspension, supported by renewed investment in infrastructure and systems. North Mara, combining open-pit and underground mining, has seen steady improvements in efficiency and output. Both operations now reflect a level of operational discipline that was missing during earlier years of uncertainty.

Since 2019, Barrick's economic footprint in Tanzania has grown significantly. Billions of dollars have been injected into the local economy through taxes, procurement, and investment, with a strong emphasis on sourcing goods and ser-

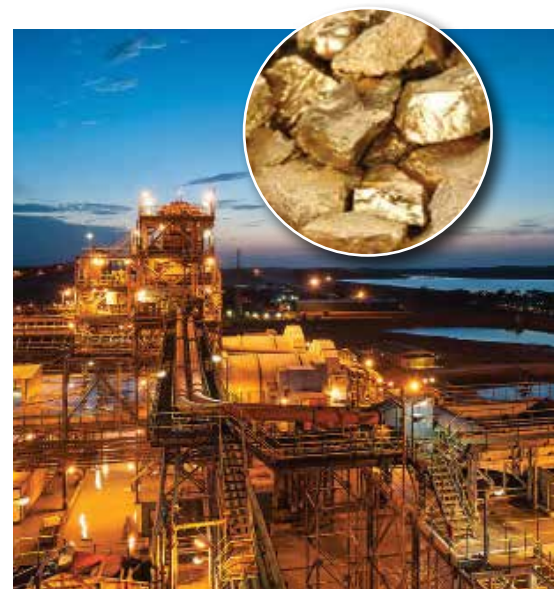
vices locally. This shift has helped stimulate domestic supply chains and support the growth of Tanzanian businesses linked to the mining sector. Employment has followed a similar pattern. The workforce numbers in the thousands, with the overwhelming majority being Tanzanian nationals and a significant portion drawn directly from surrounding communities. This focus on local participation is not just about numbers; it is part of a broader effort to embed mining more deeply into the national economy rather than operating as an isolated enclave industry.

The Twiga model itself has gained attention across the continent. By giving the government a meaningful stake and ensuring a clearer sharing of benefits, it has helped restore investor confidence while addressing long-standing concerns about resource ownership and value distribution. In a sector often defined by tension between host countries and operators, it offers a more balanced approach. At the same time, Barrick's operations have extended beyond mining into social and community investment. Programmes in education, healthcare, and water infrastructure have been rolled out in mining regions, alongside initiatives such as the "Future Forward Programme", which aims to expand access to schooling. These efforts are designed to strengthen the company's social licence to operate—an increasingly critical factor in modern mining.

The progress has not come without challenges as legacy issues, particularly around community relations at North Mara, continue to require careful management. Land use concerns, environmental questions, and past grievances mean that maintaining trust with local communities remains an ongoing process rather than a completed task. Regulation is another evolving factor. Tanzania has introduced reforms that increase government participation and tighten compliance requirements. While these changes have improved oversight and governance, they also add layers of complexity for operators navigating the regulatory landscape. Operationally, the mines themselves are not simple. Deep underground mining at Bulyanhulu, combined with complex ore processing and cost pressures, requires continuous investment and technical expertise. Add to that the inherent volatility of global gold prices and it becomes clear that sustaining performance is as demanding as achieving it.

Barrick's strategy in Tanzania is focused on longevity and expansion. Exploration is ongoing, targeting extensions of existing deposits and identifying new opportunities in underexplored areas. Infrastructure upgrades are improving efficiency and unlocking additional resources, while plans for a Special Economic Zone linked to mining operations point to a broader vision of industrial development. The wider impact on Tanzania's economy is significant. Gold remains the country's leading export, and Barrick's operations are among the largest contributors to export earnings, government revenue, and foreign investment. Beyond direct financial contributions, the development of skills, local industries, and infrastructure is helping to reshape the mining sector's role in the national economy.

In the global context, Tanzania is firmly positioned as one of Africa's leading gold producers, supported by strong geology, established infrastructure, and growing investor interest. As demand for gold continues—driven by its role as a safe-haven asset in uncertain economic times—the country's importance in the global market is likely to endure. Barrick's journey in Tanzania ultimately reflects a broader shift in how mining is approached on the continent: it is no longer just about extracting resources but about building partnerships, sharing value, and creating lasting economic impact. The shift from conflict to collaboration has not only revitalised the company's operations but has also established a benchmark for managing resource development more sustainably. As Tanzania's gold sector continues to evolve, Barrick, through Twiga, remains central to this narrative. They are not just an operator; they actively participate in creating a more balanced and integrated mining model that emphasises the importance of performance and partnership working together.





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