

MINING & THE ENVIRONMENT

Rehab Constraints

Poor governance, accountability stymieing rehabilitation after mine closure

DAVID OLIVEIRA | CREAMER MEDIA SENIOR STAFF WRITER

Delegates at a mining seminar hosted during Sustainability Week, which took place at the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, in Pretoria, earlier this month, heard that greater levels of governance and accountability were needed to ensure effective land rehabilitation after mine closure.

South African mining solutions and rehabilitation company Ncamiso Mining CEO **Tshego Motsoenyane**, who delivered a speech on postmine land rehabilitation during the seminar, pointed out that the lack of governance and accountability often resulted in no rehabilitation at all.

Another constraint for land

rehabilitation identified during the seminar was the regulation of risk transfer from larger mining houses to emerging companies, as larger mining houses at times sold their operations without fully disclosing the extent of the rehabilitation responsibility.

“This was identified as one of the reasons for the inability to fully rehabilitate land post mine closure, as smaller companies realise the depth of their problem only after the mine has reached maturity,” Motsoenyane said.

She added that, while there had been failures in the past, it was important that mining stakeholders took action to limit the harmful effects of mining. “Stricter governance and accountability

around . . . new mining activities is a step in the right direction, although, ultimately, it lies with the integrity of the mining houses . . . to do what is right by all individuals affected by their operations.”

Motsoenyane further highlighted the importance of using responsible and sustainable mining solutions to effectively rehabilitate land, with particular focus on the challenges for emerging mining companies when doing mine-waste reprocessing and rehabilitation.

“Post mine closure rehabilitation should, first and foremost, aim to identify the beneficiation from end land use and set out to eliminate the dangers and risks associated with derelict and ownerless mines,” she told *Mining Weekly* after the event.

Once end land use has been identified, Motsoenyane says, it is important for mining companies to incorporate strategic planning and take proactive steps parallel to mining activities, as this will ensure the viability of valuable end land use and

mitigate the need to implement further damage-control measures.

“This saves money and time in the rehabilitation process, as it limits the damage post closure and reduces the extent of the clean-up, and would mitigate some of the financial challenges that often result in no rehabilitation taking place at all.”

The most effective way of rehabilitating mine-affected land is to completely remove all mining-related material, contamination and engineering structures, which not only stabilises the land and provides a safe, healthy environment where end land use meets the needs of the community but also prevents scavenging and illegal mining activity, she explained.

“Rehabilitation needs to be an integral part of a mine’s operation and not an afterthought.

“Mining responsibly with rehabilitation as the main focus, rather than exploitation of minerals, will positively affect the way in which the mining process is tackled,” Motsoenyane concluded. ■

 CREAMER MEDIA'S
MINING WEEKLY

ENQUIRY SERVICE

For more information about any product or service in this issue, please email subscriptions@creamermmedia.co.za
Telephone (011) 622 3744 or
Fax (011) 622 9350

All information produced will be dealt with in terms of Creamer Media's information processing policy at <http://www.creamermmedia.co.za/page/consent-to-process-information>

DATE OF EDITION 30/06/2017

The **magazine** that brings results

• From page 8
and to make that capital, you’ve got to be profitable. So, growth needs capital and you’ve got to fund that growth. But how do you fund that growth when the legislative framework is destroying investor confidence, the confidence of the very people who must give you money to ensure that there is that inclusive growth – or, if you like, radical economic transformation – that we’re all striving to achieve.

“You need to generate that capital through profitability and competitiveness.

“As we stand here now, margins are narrowing very badly and this industry is bleeding – bleeding very, very profusely – and this latest charter is now the final nail in the coffin,” Phiri said.

Regarding jobs, Mgojo said many jobs were shed during the commodity price slump of two years ago and many more stood to be shed now as a result of the unilateral gazettement of Charter Three.

“If there’s no growth, and as businesses suffer further as this

new charter imposition is placed on them, more jobs will be lost because companies are not going to be profitable and they’ll have to lay people off, as happens when companies are in distress.

“This industry depends on well-thought-out policies that are going to make it viable for the long term. We are joined at the hip with the DMR, which regulates this industry, and we need each other, but we need to work in a very constructive way, and we’re very open to that. We want that to happen.

“Where there are two willing parties with a common vision of what is in the best interests of the country, workable outcomes will result. Relationships will be repaired when we arrive at a common vision and a common purpose.” Mgojo said.

“It’s our real hope that sense will ultimately prevail and that we can get around the table to do the right thing to ensure that we create a very sustainable future, not only for ourselves but also for upcoming generations of South Africans.” ■