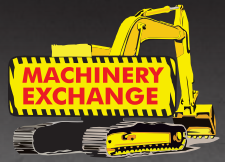


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Bobcat Range Hits Africa

In January 2024, the first Bobcat-branded material handling units began rolling off production lines at plants in South Korea, China and Germany. It represented the culmination of a two-year global initiative, with the full range of forklifts and warehouse equipment formerly produced by Doosan Industrial Vehicle (DIV) rebranded to Bobcat, and now available for the African markets, says Nicolas Dumont, District Sales Manager - Africa for Bobcat.



Nicolas Dumont, District Sales Manager – Africa at Bobcat.



Aside from the rebrand, there's also new machines on offer. Dumont says that they've witnessed the shift from IC to electric, with the portion of class 1 trucks (electric counter balance) having significantly increased over the past three years. 'We believe that this trend is going to continue in the future.'

Consequently, Bobcat is bringing new electric trucks from 6 to 10 tonnes, to meet what Dumont says is growing demand for bigger electric trucks. "We showed the B80NS 8 tonne product at Logimat in Stuttgart in March 2024 and dealers and visitors from Africa immediately showed a lot of interest."

"These new products from 6-10 tonne provide industrial users with a wide choice of zero-emission, low-noise level, environmentally friendly trucks capable of tackling heavy duty tasks," says Dumont. "For example, the B80NS and B100NS heavy-lifting electric trucks with capacities of 8.0 and 10.0 tonne, respectively, offer improved capability, power and performance for businesses across a broad spectrum of industry – from manufacturing, engineering and foundries, to building supplies, transport and warehousing."

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On A Growth Path

Despite the economic headwinds in South Africa, Heinrich Schulenburg, MD of Wirtgen Group South Africa, sees some positives to write home about in the construction sector. It is, however, in countries bordering South Africa where the company has experienced significant growth in the past two years. Looking ahead, Schulenburg believes that Wirtgen Group SA's next wave of growth will be driven by the Kleemann range of crushers and screens. By Munesu Shoko.

Regional Growth

While South Africa still exhibits pockets of opportunity in the face of economic obstacles, Schulenburg says it is countries bordering South Africa that have chipped in with significant growth during the past two years, particularly Zimbabwe, as well as Botswana and Namibia.

While Botswana has in recent years turned its infrastructure development attention to water and pipelines, Schulenburg says its focus is seemingly turning back to roads and bridges. Despite it being a small market, Namibia has also shown signs of growth on the construction front.



Heinrich Schulenburg, MD of Wirtgen Group South Africa.



In Zimbabwe, construction activity has been a major growth driver for Wirtgen Group SA. The Zimbabwean government has embarked on massive reconstruction and rehabilitation projects on major road networks to enhance both domestic and regional connectivity.

Of note is the nearly 600-km Harare-Masvingo-Beit Bridge highway, which is now almost complete with many parts of the road open to traffic. Part of the North South Corridor, which begins in Durban, South Africa, passing through Zimbabwe and ending in Lubumbashi, the DRC, the project is divided into three sections: the 580-km Harare-Masvingo-Beit Bridge highway with its eight toll plazas, the 342-km Harare-Chirundu highway, and the 59-km Harare Ring Road with three toll plazas.

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Wirtgen Group South Africa has delivered Kleemann trains to road contractors operating in Zimbabwe.

Meanwhile, the Mbudzi Interchange Project is said to be halfway complete. For years, the old Mbudzi roundabout has been a major traffic hold-up in Harare, which is why government committed US\$88-million to turn it into an interchange. Elsewhere, work on the Beitbridge-Bulawayo-Victoria Falls Highway, another strategic trade route in the regional North South Corridor, has commenced, marking another significant construction project in the country.

“Leveraging the exceptional support of our capable dealer, **Machinery Exchange, Zimbabwe** has been an outstanding market for us,” says Schulenburg. “On the back of government’s massive investment in road infrastructure projects in recent years, we have had major successes in marketing our products.”

Commenting on some major milestones, Schulenburg tells Quarrying Africa that the company has sold about seven Wirtgen recyclers, nine Vögele pavers and about 30 HAMM rollers in Zimbabwe alone in the past two years. Wirtgen Group SA has also recently delivered its first ever Ciber mobile asphalt plant in Zimbabwe. Known as the iNOVA 2000 model, it has been successfully commissioned and already has produced numerous tonnes of asphalt for major road projects.

“We have also been successful with our Kleemann range of crushers and screens, which have been deployed on borrow pits that supply main road works in the country. In fact, we have delivered two trains – each comprising an MC 110 EVO2 jaw crusher, an MCO 9 EVO2 cone crusher and an MSC 703 EVO screen. We also have two more Kleemann trains on order, which are scheduled for delivery in 2024,” he says.



File Image: Ciber iNova 2000

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Wirtgen Group SA has recently delivered its first ever Ciber mobile asphalt plant in Zimbabwe.

Trends

Commenting on some emerging trends in these markets, Schulenburg notes a growing appetite for new technologies in Zimbabwe and Botswana. This is in direct contrast with South Africa, where there is a general belief that technology takes away jobs from workers. Consequently, he says, the market continues to “fight its way into older technology”, which is less productive.

“Zimbabwean and Botswanan contractors are much more open to new technology, mainly because they fully understand that using machinery does not inhibit job creation. A machine does things efficiently and at a perfect quality level. These contractors are now reaping the benefits of increased productivity and ultimately lower costs of projects,” he says.

Apart from technology adoption, Wirtgen Group SA has adopted a new approach in the past two years, which has seen the company investing heavily in stock. This is aimed at shortening lead times for contractors, especially given the challenges associated with global supply chains and the delays at South African ports. In addition, the company has strengthened its used equipment offering to ensure it has a comprehensive offering for all customer profiles, especially cash-strapped start-up construction contractors.



File Image: Machinery Exchange, 5 Martin Drive, Msasa, Harare, Zimbabwe.

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Wirtgen Group SA has sold about nine Vögele pavers in Zimbabwe alone in the past two years.

Outlook

Looking ahead, Schulenburg sees a positive outlook for the business in 2024, with a substantial R750-million worth of deals in the pipeline. He is encouraged by the Kleemann range of mobile crushers and screens, which is gaining traction after a slow start in the market.

“We have initially struggled to gain traction with the Kleemann brand. It is always difficult to introduce a new product, especially in a market where there are already some established brands. We are doing quite well with Kleemann in Zimbabwe and Botswana. In addition to the orders of two trains in Zimbabwe, we have another train on order in Botswana,” he says.

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In fact, he adds, significant future growth for Wirtgen Group SA will come from the Kleemann brand, with big opportunities from both the aggregates and mining markets. The Kleemann range distinguishes itself with a range of capabilities. Firstly, says Schulenburg, it is a sturdy machine – the stability of the chassis results in better crushing performance, and this has been proven on many reference sites where the machines have been deployed.

“Another key competitive edge of the Kleemann offering is its lower fuel consumption, largely driven by new technology engines combined with on-board generators that drive most components. This is particularly important for customers in our region where fuel prices are prohibitive. A Kleemann train on average achieves anything between 20% and 30% better fuel consumption than most of our competition. It is even much more efficient with the diesel-electric option,” says Schulenburg.

To close a crucial gap in its Kleemann offering, Wirtgen Group SA will introduce a smaller impact crusher during the first half of this year – the MR 100 NEO. The new machine will be suited for smaller crushing operations such as brickyards and recycling applications.

Read the full article in Quarrying Africa Magazine: <https://quarryingafrica.com/on-a-growth-path/>



File Image: Wirtgen Group Technology Day

Feel free to contact our Sales Team on +263 782 191 490 or email equipment@machinery-exchange.com for more information on our various product ranges.

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