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Afrisam Cements Growth Of Concrete Product Manufacturers

South Africa is home to a vibrant concrete product manufacturing industry, ranging from small to large scale manufacturers, with many of these turning to an independent third party to advise them on best practice in terms of concrete technologies.

AfriSam's Centre of Product Excellence has been assisting the country's leading concrete product manufacturers (CPMs) to optimise their concrete mix designs while at the same time reduce their total manufacturing costs by advising them on the best selection of materials for their production processes.

Mike McDonald, manager of AfriSam's Centre of Product Excellence, says having access to this level of technical input and knowledge transfer is a significant advantage for many of these companies that do not have internal cement technologists. It is a given that this type of knowledge transfer allows these companies to gain a competitive edge in the industry.

"AfriSam, as the leading concrete solutions supplier, has the necessary depth of experience and access to skilled technologists who have an intimate understanding of concrete product manufacturing processes. Leveraging this, we are able to provide all CPMs with quality technical support," he says.

Importantly, the AfriSam Centre of Product Excellence has also helped many new players establish a presence in the market by imparting essential knowledge on the cement, aggregates and sand required to manufacture a quality product, and particularly early on in the conceptualisation stages of these factories.

McDonald says incorrect selection of materials not only has a significant impact on the quality of the end concrete product, but also on the cost of manufacturing. "For example, a poor quality aggregate could increase both cement and water usage," he says.

One of AfriSam's strengths is its vast footprint with 17 aggregate quarries countrywide that produce materials according to the South African National Standards (SANS) 1083 specification. McDonald says this has provided many of these CPMs the flexibility needed when locating their plants.

Based on its close interaction and collaboration with this market, AfriSam has also developed a cement that meets the unique requirements of the sophisticated Gauteng CPM market. AfriSam's Rapid Hard cement meets the high early and late strength requirements of the industry.

"Users of this constituent product, with its high reactivity rate and sophisticated mineral components, benefit from shorter setting times and quicker stripping capabilities, allowing quicker turnaround of moulds and optimal performance during the winter periods with their low ambient temperatures," McDonald says.

By using this AfriSam cement, CPMs have also reduced their cement consumption, while achieving better finishes and durability traits of their concrete products.

McDonald says it also facilitates the incorporation of downstream materials, such as slag. AfriSam has a regular supply of this material that is well known for its ability to enhance the performance of readymix concrete, while substituting as much as 50% of cement in the mix design.

The CPM industry continues to grow as professional teams realise the gains achieved by these technologies which often allow for faster, safer and more aesthetically-pleasing builds, and AfriSam's expertise is at the core of this trend.

CPM PIC 01 : AfriSam Rapid Hard Cement is a superior early strength development product suitable for applications where quick mould turnaround times are required. This early strength development can be attributed to its fineness and the use of a strength modifier.

CPM PIC 02 : AfriSam's value-add to concrete precast manufacturers include on-site technical service, SANS accredited laboratory services and product deliveries around customers' requirements.

CPM PIC 03 : AfriSam is the only company that manufacture 52.5 Rapid Hard Cement as a standard product, ideal for applications such as highway barriers, roof tiles, retaining wall systems, culverts and concrete pipes.

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FROM : CORALYNNE & ASSOCIATES
TEL : +27 011 849 3142
EMAIL : communicate@coralynne.co.za
WEBSITE: www.coralynne.co.za

FOR : MAXINE NEL
AFRISAM
TEL : +27 011 670 5893
EMAIL : maxine.nel@za.afrisam.com
www.afrisam.co.za