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## Epiroc ROC family of drill rigs ROC for Booyesen Bore

**“Mobility, flexibility, reliability, efficiency and precision drilling capacity define Epiroc’s ROC family of drilling machines making them the most suitable and up for the task,” states Pieter Malan, General Manager of Booyesen Bore Drilling Company, Sishen.**

This specialist drilling company is currently operating three generations of surface drill rigs, the ROC L8 MK I and ROC L8 MK II supplied by Atlas Copco alongside the latest FlexiROC D65 machines from Epiroc. The recent delivery by Epiroc of three FlexiROC D65 surface drill rigs has bolstered this longstanding Northern Cape customer’s total drilling machine fleet to 51. Booyesen Bore purchased their first FlexiROC D65s in 2013 which have up to now drilled in excess of 500 000 x 300mm diameter holes for nine Northern Cape solar farms, as well as a large number of blast hole meters in Northern Cape mines. Their fleet also includes a SmartROC D65 for blast-hole drilling as well as a few CS14 and CS1500 core drilling machines.

Epiroc evolved from the global split in January 2018 of Atlas Copco into two separate companies and comprises the Mining & Rock Excavation Technique Business Area and Construction Tools division to focus on the mining and civil engineering sectors. The industrial businesses remain with Atlas Copco. Epiroc Business Line Manager, Surface & Exploration Drilling (SED), Hedley Birnie, explains how the business partnership with Booyesen Bore started: “In 1999, SED Area Sales Manager for Atlas Copco, Cobus Engelbrecht, conducted the very first trial with a ROC L8 MK I test machine for Booyesen Bore at Beeshoek Mine. The machine was the first drill rig capable of drilling at an angle making it ideally suited for block drilling. Booyesen Bore was so impressed with the ROC L8’s performance that they decided to keep the machine for blast-hole drilling on the mine and to systematically replace all their non-Atlas Copco drill rigs at the end of their life cycle with ROC L8s.”

When founded in 1977 by Hennie Booyesen, Booyesen Bore focussed mainly on exploration drilling. In 1990 the family business expanded its services to blast-hole drilling and continued to grow into the successful business and major role player in the Northern Cape’s mining environment that it is today. Part of the Mogs (Mineral, Oil & Gas Services) Group, Booyesen Bore’s offering includes Down-The-Hole (DTH), percussion, exploration and core drilling as well as in-pit de-watering drilling services. Operating with a staff of 430 from the Kuruman head office, supported by an office in Beeshoek under the auspices of Hennie’s son Hein as General Manager and a facility in Kathu, the company is active mainly in the Province’s iron ore and manganese mines but also holds a sizable market share in the supply of drilling services to solar facilities in the region. Thirty eight out of the total of 51 ROC L8, D60 and D65 machines are currently in operation.

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Pieter explains that the Northern Cape area presents some of the most challenging conditions in the world. “We drill into some of the hardest rock in the world, with compressive strengths above 500MPa under extreme surface and weather conditions; these drilling machines take a huge hammering. While most machines start to fall apart after only a short time of drilling, the Epiroc drill rigs give us up to 80% availability over many years of operation. Only machines of this exceptional quality will last for 30 000 hours plus. In addition, the ROC boasts the lowest fuel consumption per drilled meter compared to all other machines used by Booyesen Bore in the blast-hole environment. So as far as we are concerned, when it comes to technology, reliability, ease of operation, manoeuvrability and fuel efficiency, the ROC machines are in a class of their own.”

Birnie gives acknowledgement to Booyesen Bore’s fundamental role in the joint development of the machines from the ROC L8 MK I up to the state-of-the-art FlexiROC D65. Pieter adds that they were impressed by the fact that when they raised ideas, Atlas Copco not only listened but also responded to their requirements in the development of the machines which resulted in the ROC family becoming the preferred drill rigs for Booyesen Bore. He confirms that these developments prompted Booyesen Bore to replace all their MK I machines which at one stage totalled 16, to MK II units, when they reached the end of their life span. He also notes Atlas Copco’s assistance with the conversion of a ROC10 MK II to an RC (Reverse Circulation) machine for exploration drilling.

Developments included a lighter tower, replacement of steel feed with stronger and lighter aluminium feed, improvements to the air system, changes to the cooling system and break out table, an improved engine uptake as well as a stronger compressor. Booyesen Bore was also influential in the move from cable back to chain feed.

Hein compliments the latest FlexiROC D65’s automation capability which he says is a function of productivity and safety. Alongside manoeuvrability, automatic alignment further contributes to penetration rate as set up time between holes is substantially shortened.

The latest FlexiROC D65 crawler rig sets the benchmark in DTH drilling delivering a perfect balance between productivity and efficiency to provide a complete drilling solution. With hole diameters of between 110 – 203mm, this rugged multi-functional machine is able to handle a vast number of drilling angles, delivering straight, smooth holes with plenty of air to keep the hole clean for easy charging. The high efficiency of the DTH hammer relies on its precisely matched compressor capacity.

Due to its low weight the rig can be transported across mine areas on a low bed without requiring an escort which speeds up productivity. Booysen Bore also highlights the ROPS/FOPS approved cabin which has been designed around the operator, giving him full control and superior visibility of drilling activities. The Sat Nav capability facilitates machine location and the compatibility of the D65's computerised management system with most mine and fleet management systems has also impressed Booysen Bore.

On the aspect of training, Booysen Bore transfers the theoretical and practical class-accredited training provided by qualified Epiroc MQA and MerSETA trainers to their operators. "We are committed to stimulating development through collaboration with our local communities and we consequently source our operators from the local labour force." Booysen Bore was instrumental in the development of a small local empowerment company by providing the business with a small part of its core drilling service.

From an after-market perspective, Hedley explains that over their many years of experience with the equipment, Booysen Bore has developed the necessary competencies and technical skills to maintain their fleet to maximum availability levels. From their well-equipped workshop at the Kuruman head office they are able to service, repair, maintain, refurbish and even self-manufacture certain components. "We are always willing to extend our support through Cobus and our Kuruman office as required by Booysen Bore. We remain committed to growing this longstanding partnership through continued close collaboration with Booysen Bore," concludes Hedley.

As the pioneers in using Atlas Copco/Epiroc drilling machines for close on two decades and with a reputation of excellence, Booysen Bore has become a selling platform of Epiroc drilling machines for other drilling companies in the area. /ends

### Press release from Epiroc South Africa (Pty) Ltd

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**Epiroc** is a leading productivity partner for the mining, infrastructure and natural resources industries. With cutting-edge technology, Epiroc develops and produces innovative drill rigs, rock excavation and construction equipment, and provides world-class service and consumables. The company was founded in Stockholm, Sweden, and has passionate people supporting and collaborating with customers in more than 150 countries. Learn more at [www.epiroc.com](http://www.epiroc.com).

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