

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### Precast Concrete Slabs Speed Up Housing Delivery

South Africa's massive backlog in affordable housing is likely to see continued demand for precast hollow core concrete slabs from Elematic SA, given the high quality finish and the time that this technology saves in the construction process.

"With rapid urbanisation and the increased premium on land in urban areas, multi-storey residential designs are now the norm," says Elematic SA director Craig Webber. "This makes the use of pre-stressed concrete slabs an efficient and affordable solution, streamlining the pace of construction work while enhancing building quality and lifespan."

The four-storey walk-up design, for instance, lends itself well to a repetitive construction methodology where precast comes into its own. Webber emphasises that the precast option eliminates the need for back-propping and allows other trades to start working under the slabs immediately, significantly accelerating the project schedule.

Moreover, the high quality finish on the soffit – or underside – of the slabs makes an additional false ceiling unnecessary, and eliminates this potential cost. The company's precast staircases also lend themselves well to the fast track approach to many modern housing projects.

Using the traditional rib-and-block method of slab construction, contractors can wait about three weeks for concrete to cure fully, before props can be removed and work can commence.

"By comparison, we install our precast slabs on one day and grout the next, allowing building to start on the third day without any further delay in the project timeline," he says.

Manufacturing of these advanced precast products under controlled conditions in Elematic SA's state-of-the-art production facilities on Gauteng's East Rand ensures a constantly high standard that is tested and fit for purpose. As the largest producer of pre-stressed hollow core slabs in the Johannesburg area, the company's two factories include 16 beds for a variety of slab sizes.

“In operation since 2005, we received ISO 9001 certification in 2009 and our products are approved by the South African Bureau of Standards,” he says. “These quality standards underpin our products’ standing as among the most advanced in the industry, backed by the extensive knowledge and experience behind the Elematic brand.”

Originally established in Finland in 1959, Elematic has precast production plants in more than 70 countries worldwide; it is part of the Consolis Group, which focuses on research and development in cement and precast concrete products.

Helping the business sustain its quality standards is construction material leaders AfriSam, which provides a reliable supply of specialised cement – the Rapid Hard product in the 52.5R strength class – to Elematic SA’s factories near Benoni. AfriSam Rapid Hard cement is very fine, giving it a larger surface area to react with water, which increases the rate of hydration and gives it higher early strength.

This allows the manufactured concrete product to be released from the mould sooner, speeding up the production cycle and making factories as efficient as possible. It also provides consistent strength performance, so that the production processes can be timed with precision and without any danger of breakage due to weakness when removing products from moulds. The high early strength makes this cement brand ideal for pre-stressed members.

The company has been using AfriSam cement since 2007, relying on the product’s consistency and quality, and on AfriSam’s high level of customer service. Like AfriSam, Elematic SA has its own ISO-accredited laboratories and testing equipment to ensure consistent quality; calibration of its test equipment is conducted regularly in line with SANAS standards.

Moving with the times to conserve energy costs, the Elematic SA facility has this year installed photovoltaic cells that will generate some 40% of its factories’ power demand.

PIC 01 : Elematic SA has been using AfriSam cement since 2007, relying on the product’s consistency and quality, and on AfriSam’s high level of customer service.

PIC 02 : Controlled conditions under Elematic SA’s state-of-the-art production facilities ensures a constantly high standard that is tested and fit for purpose.

PIC 03 : In operation since 2005, Elematic SA received ISO 9001 certification in 2009 and its products are approved by the South African Bureau of Standards.

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FROM : CORALYNNE & ASSOCIATES  
TEL : +79 523 7422  
EMAIL : [communicate@coralynne.co.za](mailto:communicate@coralynne.co.za)  
WEBSITE: [www.coralynne.co.za](http://www.coralynne.co.za)

FOR : MAXINE NEL  
AFRISAM  
TEL : +27 011 670 5893  
EMAIL : [maxine.nel@za.afrisam.com](mailto:maxine.nel@za.afrisam.com)  
[www.afrisam.com](http://www.afrisam.com)