

Collaboration is the name of the game for African mining

The mining landscape in South Africa is often quite different to those of most other African states.

“While South Africa is concerned mainly with sustaining an ageing industry – with its attendant challenges of productivity, viability and competitiveness – most of the continent must address issues like infrastructure, logistics and developing mining codes.

“In either context, though, good leadership among stakeholders is vital to a successful outcome,” Andrew van Zyl, SRK Consulting partner and principal consultant said of the Investing in African Mining Indaba.



“Many African countries are at this event to leverage their mineral resources as a catalyst for broader economic development. To do that effectively needs a strong relationship between the public and private sector – to build trust that will endure through the demanding but inevitable commodity cycles.”

He highlighted the importance of constructive dialogue and engagement between mining companies and key stakeholders like government and communities – warning that South Africa had still to improve its performance on this score.

Cooperative venture

A clear and shared vision gives stakeholders the comfort of knowing what their sacrifices and compromises are going to achieve; the prize must be worth what each stakeholder is prepared to give up.

“Mining today is more of a cooperative venture than ever before, requiring commitment from mines to engage broadly about their impacts and requirements,” said Van Zyl.

“While, in the past, it was usually simpler for new operations to build their own infrastructure in remote areas, this process now demands a more inclusive approach that is sensitive to the wider social and natural environment.”

Financing and renewables

An area where Indaba delegates are already discussing these kinds of opportunities is in innovative financing solutions for energy generation in the African mining sector.

Renewables form part of the conversation about how to finance in-house power generation without the traditional long-term power purchase agreements.

“It is heartening to see signs of revived interest in prospects for mining in various parts of Africa,” he said. “These prospects will be well served by acknowledgements in both the private and public sectors that mines are complex undertakings that rely on real collaboration and partnerships.”

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