

Envirobuild offers greener flooring options

A joint venture between Envirobuild, carpeting and flooring company Van Dyck, and Hammarsdale-based Mathe Group, Envirobuild will produce eco-friendly rubber flooring for commercial, industrial and residential use.



Seated left is Jaco Snyman, Envirobuild managing director, standing Mehran Zarrebini, Van Dyck Carpets head and right is Vusimuzi Mathe, Mathe Group director

Jaco Snyman, managing director of Envirobuild, says that the new products, which include 93% recycled materials, are a perfect fit with increasing demand for greener flooring options. Internationally, architects, interior designers and the construction industry are under pressure to meet their clients' sustainable building requirements in order to ensure green building certifications.

"There is very little high quality flooring of this nature produced locally so there is definitely a market for it. We are the first company to produce eco-friendly rubber flooring in KwaZulu-Natal and one of very few in South Africa," he said. The main component of Envirobuild flooring is rubber crumb that is sourced from Mathe Group.

Managing director of Van Dyck, Dr Mehran Zarrebini, said the collaboration between the partners was exciting as there were significant synergies in place. Van Dyck produces rubber based acoustic cradles and underlays for commercial carpeting and sporting applications, while Mathe is a well-established tyre recycler.

Financial investment

Minor adjustments to existing machinery at Van Dyck's Durban factory meant that production could begin immediately. "However, because we anticipate volumes going up both quickly and appreciably, we have invested R800,000 in additional machinery which is due to arrive within the next three months and is expected to be operational by the beginning of June. This will quadruple existing capacity," said Zarrebini.

“This is an exciting venture for us. We are about to commission a new plant in Hammarsdale that has capacity to recycle 250,000 truck tyres. This will be an important market for our rubber crumb. It is particularly exciting venture as there are still very few secondary rubber products made from recycled rubber in South Africa,” said head of Mathe Group, Vusumuzi Mathe.

Snyman added that the partnership with Van Dyck was particularly important as that company not only provided the manufacturing expertise but also enhanced the credibility of a new entrant into the market.

Export opportunities

Although he had initially looked to importing environmentally friendly rubber flooring products from Canada and America, he had abandoned this as the exchange rate made this unaffordable. There is a ready supply of used tyres in South Africa and Envirobuild will be able to both make and deliver mats to America more cheaply than they can produce them here, opening up significant export opportunities.

Rubber flooring is suitable for a wide range of applications. It absorbs impact and cushions falls, making it ideal for use in play areas, schools and retirement facilities. Together with increased grip, this also makes rubber flooring particularly suitable for use in gyms, dance studios and sporting facilities. It is also ideal for use around swimming pools and wet areas such as saunas and jacuzzis.

Snyman said that rubber flooring was also suitable for industry and warehousing as it was able to withstand impacts as well as high footfall and the movement of heavy equipment such as hoists and forklifts.

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