

ASPASA broadens its base

An industry association that plays a big role in promoting safety and health in surface mining is ASPASA, which has traditionally represented the quarrying industry but which is now making a determined effort to represent all small surface mines. **Modern Mining** recently spoke to ASPASA's Director, Nico Pienaar (right), about the new direction the organisation has taken and the services it can offer surface mine owners.



Explaining the history of ASPASA, Pienaar says it was founded in 1990 as the Aggregate & Sand Producers Association of SA to be the voice of the quarrying industry. "In the early days, producers of aggregates and sand constituted the bulk of the membership and the name perfectly reflected this," he explains. "Over the years, however, the membership broadened to include producers of dimension stone, clay, silica, salt and coal ash. As a result, the decision was taken in 2017 to drop the full name, which was increasingly seen as being too restrictive, and rebrand using just the initials of the organisation – ASPASA – to reflect our increasingly diverse membership covering the entire field of surface mining."

He adds that ASPASA is starting to get enquiries even from what might be termed the mainstream mining industry. "We're engaging at the moment, for example, with a chromite miner who has expressed an interest in joining. We also have a couple of fluorspar mines who are already members. In general, we would not expect to get the bigger opencast miners on our membership roll as many of the services we offer they would have available in house. But certainly small opencast mines can benefit from membership of ASPASA. In fact, I would go so far as to say that there is really no other body that can cater for their needs as well as we can."

ASPASA divides its membership into three categories (producer members, affiliate members and associate members) and has around 70 company members with 200 operations in total. While there are a large number of informal and often illegal quarrying operations in South Africa, ASPASA represents the bulk of the formal industry – as much as 80 % by value.

Pienaar believes that one of the strengths

of ASPASA is its committee system. These committees – which have expert members drawn from the industry – are dedicated to providing members with data and learning forums to keep abreast of industry issues, as well as providing firm input into the policies and positions governing ASPASA and the industry.

Currently, ASPASA has nine very active committees dealing with a range of focus areas including Legal Compliance, Health & Safety, Environment, Training & Education, Technical, Engineering, International Liaison, Local Liaison and Government Liaison.

In the all-important fields of health and safety and environmental care, ASPASA offers an auditing service to members which ensures that their operations are compliant with not only legislation but also with the stated aims of the member companies themselves. The audits are carried out by industry experts who subcontract to ASPASA.

"Between them, our members have 200 mining licences," notes Pienaar. "Their quarries or mines therefore have to be totally compliant with the Mine Health and Safety Act (MHSA) and infractions can, as you know, lead to Section 54 notices that can close down an entire operation or a portion of that operation – with a consequent loss of production and revenue.

"Many of our members don't really have the expertise to ensure that their operations conform with the provisions of what is really a very detailed and complex piece of legislation but our auditors do. Typically, they will spend a day on site and then deliver a full 'Non-Compliance

"Between them, our members have 200 mining licences. Their quarries or mines therefore have to be totally compliant with the Mine Health and Safety Act (MHSA) ..."



Report' to the member on a CD which shows all the areas of non-compliance. Very little escapes them." He points out that ASPASA can arrange training to 'fix' issues identified in the reports.

He adds that ASPASA can – and has – protected members' rights when it comes to dealing with the DMR's mining inspectors. "In cases where unreasonable decisions are made, we are always happy to assist our members and in some cases serious intervention has been taken," he says.

On the question of environmental compliance, Pienaar says that here again it is difficult for many in the industry to fully understand the extent of their obligations under the various and sometimes overlapping pieces of legislation – most critically the National Environmental Act (NEMA) and the National Water Act – that govern this aspect of their activities. "As with health and safety, our audits help ensure that operations meet all the relevant regulations," he states. "Moreover, our auditors will be aware of impending legislation and can help members prepare for this."

While auditing remains one of the core services offered by ASPASA, the Association is also heavily involved in training. Courses – which can be conducted on site – cover not only areas such as the environment and health and safety but also quality management, blasting practices, mentorship, conveyors, lifting equipment and supervisory skills. The courses – most of them accredited with the MQA – are undertaken on ASPASA's

behalf by an accredited training provider.

ASPASA liaises closely with the authorities in South Africa and with other industry bodies, both in South Africa and overseas. "We're a member of the Minerals Council South Africa and I sit on the board of the Council," says Pienaar. "We also, as you would expect, maintain very close links with the Institute of Quarrying, which is the professional body for individuals in the quarrying industry."

ASPASA is also represented on the Mine, Health and Safety Council (MHSC) and many of its sub-committees. These committees deal with pending legislation in the mining sector and need to be supported by industry.

"Internationally, we interact with our counterparts in countries such as the UK, the USA, Canada, Brazil and Australia, primarily through the Global Aggregates Information Network (GAIN), which represents about 60 % of global aggregates production and which last met in Barcelona earlier this year. We actually represent the whole of Africa as we are the only organisation of our type on the continent."

Summing up, Pienaar says that ASPASA is a hugely successful organisation, which has made an enormous contribution towards ensuring that South Africa has a reputable, ethical and compliant quarrying and small mines sector that is amongst the leaders in the world. "We're very proud of what ASPASA has achieved and believe that it will continue to grow its membership and the portfolio of services it offers as it moves forward," he says. ■

A typical small surface mining operation. All operations of this type – whether described as mines or quarries – are governed by the Mine Health and Safety Act.



ASPASA

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Aspasa welcomes H&S diligence

The director of Aspasa, southern Africa's surface mining industry association, has praised its members' commitment to health and safety after they were awarded record high scores in the association's stringent ISHE health & safety and about face environmental audits.

Nico Pienaar said the hard-won scores emphasised the significant improvement in health and safety practice within the quarrying sector in recent years.

"Every year it has become more and more difficult to decide on the recipients of these awards, considering the level of competition," said Marius van Deventer, independent auditor, ISHE Audits at Aspasa.

Out of the 102 ISHE (Initiating Safety, Health, Education) audits done during 2017, 16 operations



Bronwyn Moore, quarry manager at Midmar Crushers (right), receives an award from Marius van Deventer, independent auditor, ISHE Audits at Aspasa

achieved scores of above 90% for their audits. Another 26 operations achieved scores between 90% and 95%, while 40 others scored between 80% and 90%, to end on an average of 85.84%. The Top Performing Operation in the ISHE Audits in 2017 was AfriSam Newcastle with a score of 97.06%. This is the fourth consecutive year the operation has won the Top Performer award in this category.

Midmar Crushers, another big winner this year, scooped the Top Independent Performer (Spear Large) award, making it the third year running the company has taken home the gong.

The About Face programme has guided and aided most Aspasa members to elevate themselves from mediocre environmental performances to being among the best quarry operators in the world.

Eugene Lyons (third in from right) is excited about new Chinese business opportunities following Pota Environment (Shanghai) Ltd's appointment as Sandvik Mobile Crushers and Screens distributor for mainland China



NEW DISTRIBUTOR FOR SANDVIK MINING & ROCK TECHNOLOGY IN CHINA

Sandvik Mining & Rock Technology has appointed Pota Environment (Shanghai) Ltd. as its new mainland China distributor for Sandvik Mobile Crushers and Screens.

Pota will not only be supplying a comprehensive range of Sandvik Mobile Crushers and Screens but will also be providing full aftermarket care, spare parts and dedicated customer service.

A firm specialising in the supply of mobile material handling equipment and dust suppression systems to the Asian market, Pota has a team of 12 sales representatives and six service engineers to support Chinese Sandvik Mobile Crushers and Screens customers.

Of the appointment of Pota, Eugene Lyons, global sales & marketing director for Sandvik Mobile Crushers and Screens, said: "We are delighted to appoint Pota as our distributor in China. This will inevitably open up new opportunities for Sandvik Mobile Crushers and Screens in China and we are excited at the huge potential the market has to offer."

Pota will be participating at bauma China Shanghai exhibition (27-30 November 2018) and will have a Q1441 Priset Impact crusher on their stand.

OHR tips sales of hydraulic excavators in China to grow 40% in 2018



Chinese excavator sales surge

Sales of hydraulic excavators in China are tipped to grow 40% this year – after a 125% year-on-year rise to just under 100,000 units in 2017.

Off-Highway Research (OHR) says the forecasted 40% rise in hydraulic excavator sales will

take the market to the peak of its cycle. The sharp rise in excavator sales has, says OHR, been due to several factors, including the launch of major infrastructure projects, the introduction of public-private partnership (PPP) financing models and

the clearing of old stock and used machines from the market following the 2015-2016 Chinese downturn.

In addition to meeting rising domestic demand, manufacturers in China have been exporting machines in increasing numbers over the last three years. This includes international original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) with a footprint in China, as well as indigenous companies.

OHR, a leading global construction equipment market research consultancy, tips excavator sales to stay reasonably high for the next four years. However, 2018 is expected to be the high-water mark in the current cycle. Slower growth in real estate projects and a reduction in PPP activity is likely to impact on sales. On the other hand, stricter environmental policies and the forthcoming introduction of China IV emissions laws could, says OHR, see an accelerated machine replacement cycle take hold.

SDLG Belt & Road boost

SDLG says the reliability and availability of its loaders, along with their ease of use and low running costs, is seeing them heavily used in ongoing infrastructure projects linked to the US\$350 billion Eurasian Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

The Linyi, China-headquartered manufacturer, part-owned by the Volvo Group, says it is also benefiting from BRI contractors' desire to maximise

profits and savings by exercising prudence with their machine acquisitions.

An SDLG spokesperson said: "Some BRI projects are massive, and many are rolling out quickly. The time between winning a project and beginning work can often be tight, so contractors must quickly obtain large quantities of equipment and get operators up to working speed," explained an SDLG spokesperson.