

Industry TODAY

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A Magazine of the Kenya Association of Manufacturers



THE GREEN FACTORY REVOLUTION

Inside Kenya's Race Toward
Sustainable Manufacturing



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Message From The Chief Executive



The story of Kenya's manufacturing sector is one of growth, accomplishments, resilience and most importantly, a story of possibilities. Looking ahead, the future holds a lot of promise for the manufacturing sector, and we must centre critical aspects of human development in our work and business ethos. Our concerted efforts are essential for a better tomorrow.

Kenya's manufacturing sector stands at a defining moment. As global markets increasingly prioritize sustainability, the onus is on manufacturers to

not only drive economic growth but also champion environmental stewardship and social responsibility. Encouragingly, Kenyan industry is rising to this challenge with innovation, resilience, and purpose.

At the Kenya Association of Manufacturers (KAM), we believe sustainability is fundamental to the future competitiveness and resilience of our industries. Manufacturers today are reimagining production processes, investing in cleaner technologies, improving resource efficiency, and embedding sustainability into their core business strategies. This transformation is shaping a stronger and more future-ready manufacturing sector.

Across the country, businesses are adopting sustainability practices that maximize resource utilization and building skills for now and the future. These initiatives are not only helping to reduce environmental impact but also lowering operational costs, improving productivity, and opening access to environmentally

conscious global markets. All these initiatives are geared towards one goal: securing the future of industry.

Importantly, sustainability is no longer viewed as a compliance obligation. It is now a business imperative. Consumers, investors, and international markets are increasingly demanding transparency, responsible sourcing, and sustainable business practices. Manufacturers that embrace these principles are better positioned to thrive in an evolving global economy.

Collaboration remains essential in this journey. Government, private sector, development partners, and consumers must work together to create an enabling environment that supports innovation, investment, and adoption of sustainable technologies.

Policy consistency, infrastructure development, access to green financing, and skills development will be vital in accelerating this revolution. Access to affordable financing, supportive policies, modern infrastructure, and skills development will be essential in accelerating the transition to sustainable manufacturing.

As we spotlight manufacturers driving sustainability in Kenya, we celebrate the enterprises that are leading this transformation and setting new benchmarks for responsible industrial growth. Their commitment demonstrates that sustainability and profitability are not competing priorities, but mutually reinforcing goals.

KAM remains committed to supporting manufacturers on this journey by advocating for progressive policies, facilitating partnerships, promoting innovation, and advancing sustainable industrial practices across all sectors. Together, we can build a manufacturing sector that not only powers economic growth but also secures a sustainable future for generations to come.

Tobias Alando
Chief Executive
Kenya Association of
Manufacturers (KAM)

“
**... ACROSS THE
COUNTRY, BUSINESSES
ARE ADOPTING
SUSTAINABILITY
PRACTICES THAT
MAXIMIZE RESOURCE
UTILIZATION AND**

Message From The Managing Editor

As Kenya forges ahead on its journey toward industrial transformation and economic resilience, sustainability is no longer a peripheral conversation. It is central to the future of manufacturing. Today, manufacturers across the country are increasingly embracing sustainable practices that not only protect our environment but also strengthen competitiveness, innovation, and long-term growth.

The manufacturing sector remains a key pillar of Kenya's economy, contributing significantly to employment creation, export growth, and value addition. However, the demands of a changing global economy, climate change, resource scarcity, and evolving consumer expectations require industry players to rethink traditional production models and adopt more sustainable approaches.

Across Kenya, manufacturers are leading by example through investments in renewable energy, energy-efficient technologies, waste reduction systems, circular economy initiatives, skills development and sustainable sourcing practices. The sector is demonstrating that economic growth and sustainability can go hand in hand.

At the Kenya Association of Manufacturers (KAM), we recognize that sustainability is a strategic opportunity. Sustainable manufacturing enhances operational efficiency, opens access to global markets, attracts responsible investment, and builds trust with consumers and communities alike. Kenyan manufacturers are increasingly positioning themselves as responsible global players capable of competing in environmentally conscious markets.

In this edition, we spotlight manufacturers turning sustainability into a competitive advantage, transforming their operations and already seeing the rewards. Their efforts are building a stronger, more competitive economy for generations to come. The



future of manufacturing in Kenya is green, innovative, and sustainable and the journey is already underway.

**LAWRENCE
NJENGA, HSC**

**Head of Corporate,
Marketing and Membership
Kenya Association of
Manufacturers (KAM)**



Farmer's Choice Leads Push to Unlock Kenya's Booming Pig Farming Sector



Kenya is positioning its pig farming industry as a key driver of food security, nutrition, and rural incomes, with stakeholders warning that urgent investments are needed to unlock the sector's full potential amid rapidly rising demand.

Farmer's Choice Limited, in partnership with the State Department for Livestock Development, convened a National Pig Value Chain Stakeholder Sensitisation Forum at Safari Park Hotel in Nairobi, bringing together policymakers, industry players, farmers, development partners, and private sector stakeholders to assess the current state of the industry and chart a path for sustainable growth.

The forum comes at a time when Kenya's pork industry is facing a widening supply-demand gap. Although the sector contributes approximately KES 19.5 billion annually, representing about five percent of the country's livestock output, pork consumption remains significantly below global recommendations.

Current per capita pork consumption stands at just 0.4 kilograms per person annually, only half of the World Health Organization's recommended level of 0.8 kilograms. However, industry projections indicate that demand could increase by more than 125 percent by 2030, driven by rapid urbanisation, population growth, rising incomes, and evolving consumer dietary preferences.

Speaking during the forum, Principal Secretary for Livestock Development Hon. Jonathan Mueke, CBS, said the government is prioritising the pig sector as part of broader efforts to strengthen agricultural productivity, improve nutrition outcomes, and enhance national food security.

"The pig value chain presents a significant opportunity for Kenya to diversify its sources of animal protein while improving incomes for smallholder farmers," said Mueke. "Addressing constraints such as disease management, feed affordability, traceability, and market access will be critical to closing the supply gap and meeting growing demand."

Despite its potential, the sector continues to face several structural challenges that hinder expansion and profitability. Among the most pressing concerns are the high cost of quality animal feeds, recurring disease outbreaks such as African Swine Fever, limited access to structured markets, inadequate processing capacity, and insufficient cold-chain infrastructure.

These constraints not only affect production volumes but also disrupt supply chains, reduce farmer earnings, and limit consumer access to safe and affordable pork products.

Farmer's Choice Limited Chief Executive Officer Felisters Gitau Mutugu called for stronger collaboration among stakeholders across the entire value chain, noting that sustainable growth would require coordinated interventions from both public and private sector actors.

"Transforming the pig value chain requires deliberate and sustained collaboration across production, processing, markets, and policy," said Mutugu. "We must invest in farmer capacity, strengthen traceability and food safety systems, and build consumer trust, while expanding market access and opportunities for farmers."

The sensitisation forum forms part of ongoing implementation efforts under the National Pig Value Chain Development Strategy 2025–2029, a framework designed to strengthen public-private partnerships and empower smallholder pig farmers across the country. Among the proposed interventions are enhanced farmer training programmes, improved veterinary and extension services, public awareness campaigns on pork nutrition and food safety, disease surveillance initiatives, and investments aimed at expanding market access and boosting domestic consumption.



INDUSTRY TODAY TEAM

CHIEF EXECUTIVE
Tobias Alando

EDITORIAL DIRECTOR
Lawrence Njenga

EDITORIAL LEADS
Faith Chebet
Hope Wambui

EDITORIAL CONSULTANT
Brian Yatich

MARKETING LIAISON
Silas Odhiambo

ADVERTISING LEAD
Arnold Odhiambo

SPECIAL PROJECTS LEAD
Margaret Njiru

CREATIVE LEAD
Daniel Kihara

PUBLISHER
Kenya Association of Manufacturers

P.O. Box 30225-00100 GPO Nairobi, Kenya
5th Floor, 15 Mwanzi Road, Opposite Westgate Mall, Westlands
Tel: +254 (020) 232 4817/8
Email: info@kam.co.ke Website: www.kam.co.ke

**MEDIA, PRODUCTION & COMMERCIAL
PARTNER**

Moland Media East Africa Ltd P.O. Box 51532-00100 Nrb, Kenya
Email: engage@molandea.co.ke

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DATA, TRENDS & GREEN INDUSTRIAL TRANSFORMATION

Kenya's manufacturing sector is undergoing a structured shift toward sustainability, driven by renewable energy expansion, regulatory frameworks, and rising pressure from global supply chains to reduce carbon footprints.

The transition is increasingly measurable, with industries adopting cleaner production systems, circular economy models, and resource efficiency strategies

01

ENERGY TRANSITION: POWERING INDUSTRY WITH CLEAN ENERGY

Kenya continues to rank among Africa's leaders in renewable energy adoption, giving manufacturers a competitive edge in low-carbon production.

Electricity Generation Mix (2026 estimate) %

Geothermal	45%
Hydro	24%
Wind	15%
Solar	3%
Thermal	13%

Over 85% of Kenya's electricity is derived from renewable sources, significantly lowering industrial carbon intensity compared to fossil-fuel-dependent economies. The strong geothermal base provides stable baseload power for industrial operations, while wind and solar expansion continues to support diversification of the energy mix.



02

CARBON EMISSIONS: INDUSTRY UNDER TRANSFORMATION

Manufacturing remains a major contributor to emissions, particularly in cement, steel, chemicals, and packaging production.



National Climate Target

32%
greenhouse gas emissions
reduction by 2030

Industries are increasingly adopting cleaner fuels, energy efficiency systems, and carbon reporting frameworks. Industrial decarbonization is being driven by energy audits, automation, and the shift toward cleaner production technologies that reduce waste and improve efficiency.

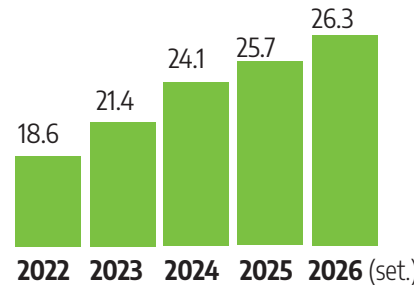
03

ENERGY COST PRESSURE: A KEY SUSTAINABILITY DRIVER

Despite renewable dominance, industrial energy costs remain a major operational challenge.

Electricity costs have increased by over **40%** in four years, pushing manufacturers to invest in energy efficiency and self-generation systems such as solar hybrid solutions.

Industrial Electricity Tariffs (KES/kWh)



04

WATER STEWARDSHIP: INDUSTRIAL EFFICIENCY GAINS

Water use efficiency has become a priority in water-intensive sectors such as food processing, beverages, textiles, and pharmaceuticals.



Leading manufacturers have achieved **15-25%** reductions in water consumption through recycling systems, closed-loop production, and wastewater treatment investments. Industrial water conservation is increasingly integrated into sustainability strategies, reducing operational risk and improving resilience.

05

CIRCULAR ECONOMY: WASTE TO VALUE SYSTEMS

Manufacturers are gradually shifting from linear production models to circular systems that prioritize reuse, recycling, and resource recovery.



Adoption of recycled packaging materials, waste recovery systems, and industrial by-product reuse is increasing across sectors. Circular economy practices are helping firms reduce waste disposal costs by 10-30% while improving resource efficiency and compliance with environmental standards.

THE BIG PICTURE

Kenya's manufacturing sector is transitioning toward a sustainability-driven model where environmental performance is directly linked to competitiveness, investment attraction, and export readiness. The data highlights four key shifts:

- A renewable-powered energy system supporting low-carbon production
- Rising emissions reduction commitments across industry
- Strong momentum in water and waste efficiency
- Increasing ESG-driven investment flows

Sustainability is no longer a compliance requirement but a defining factor in industrial competitiveness and long-term growth.

SOURCES

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CKL AFRICA AT 120: A LEGACY OF SCIENCE, INNOVATION AND COMMITMENT TO AFRICAN AGRICULTURE



Mucai Kuniya, the Group CEO of CKL Africa Ltd.

For more than a century, CKL Africa Ltd has remained deeply woven into the fabric of East Africa’s agricultural transformation. From pioneering livestock disease control in colonial-era Kenya to becoming a modern agricultural solutions provider with ambitions across the African continent, the company’s 120-year journey reflects the evolution of African agriculture itself.

“This milestone is not just about our company’s longevity — it is a testament to the generations of farmers, partners, and employees who have placed their trust in us. We are custodians of a legacy built on science, service, and an unwavering commitment to African agriculture,” says Mucai Kuniya, the Group CEO of CKL Africa Ltd.

Founded on principles rooted in science, service, and farmer productivity, CKL Africa’s history traces back to the Cooper tradition established in 1843, long before the company formally emerged in East Africa. The philosophy was straightforward but revolutionary for its time: apply scientific innovation to agriculture in ways that

improve productivity, reduce losses, and build long-term resilience for farmers.

That philosophy would eventually shape one of the region’s most enduring agricultural enterprises.

At the dawn of the 20th century, livestock farming in East Africa faced devastating challenges, particularly from tick-borne diseases that threatened cattle populations and the viability of commercial farming. According to Mucai, it was during this pivotal period that CKL’s predecessors introduced practical disease prevention solutions that would permanently alter livestock production in the region. “One of the company’s defining milestones came in 1912 with the introduction of systematic cattle dipping in Kenya. At a time when East Coast Fever and other tick-borne diseases were crippling livestock farming, the use of Coopers dip products provided farmers with an effective disease-control mechanism that dramatically reduced livestock mortality and improved herd productivity,” he adds.

The innovation transformed cattle farming from a highly vulnerable enterprise into a more stable and commercially viable sector. It also opened up new possibilities for dairy and beef production across East Africa, laying the groundwork for future agricultural expansion. Throughout the decades that followed, the company continued evolving alongside the changing realities of agriculture.

In 1925, the formation of Cooper, McDougall & Robertson Ltd (CMR) consolidated technical and manufacturing expertise under a stronger global structure, enhancing product development and agricultural support systems. The move strengthened the scientific foundation upon which the business operated and expanded its capacity to support emerging agricultural markets.

Another significant turning point came in 1959 when the business became part of The Wellcome Foundation, one of the world’s leading pharmaceutical and research organizations at the time. Integration into Wellcome expanded the company’s scientific reach beyond traditional livestock dips into pharmaceuticals, vaccines, and broader animal health systems.

The Wellcome era accelerated research and development, allowing the company to diversify its product offering and strengthen its role as a trusted agricultural solutions provider. This transition also positioned the company to respond to increasingly complex animal health and food production challenges across the region.

By 1984, the formation of Coopers Animal Health further integrated global animal health expertise into the business, reinforcing its leadership in veterinary solutions and disease prevention.

“A defining chapter in the company’s modern history emerged in 1990 when The Wellcome Foundation sold its animal health business globally. In Kenya, local shareholders acquired the business, leading to the formation of Cooper Kenya Ltd. The transition marked the beginning of a more locally driven strategy focused on responding directly to the realities of African farmers and agricultural systems,” Mucai recalls. The company’s attention increasingly shifted toward smallholder and medium-scale farmers, recognizing their growing importance in regional food production. Products were repackaged into smaller, more affordable units to improve accessibility, ensuring that farmers with limited resources could still access high-quality agricultural inputs.

In 2000, the company introduced its Strategic Business Partner (SBP) distribution model, a move that fundamentally reshaped product availability across Kenya. The model ensured consistent supply of products closer to farmers while also addressing major



price disparities that existed across different regions.

“Partnering with CKL Africa has transformed how we serve farmers in our community. The reliability of supply and the trust farmers have in CKL products have made our business sustainable and our farmers more productive,” shares James Kariuki, a Strategic Business Partner based in Nakuru.

The SBP system strengthened the company’s distribution network and deepened its presence in rural agricultural communities, where reliable access to animal health products and farm inputs often determines farm productivity.

The early 2000s also marked a new era of local manufacturing expansion.

In-house manufacturing of acaricides began in 2003, significantly enhancing the company’s production capabilities and reducing dependence on external manufacturing systems. Five years later, in 2008, the company expanded further into pharmaceutical manufacturing, reinforcing its position as a major player in veterinary and agricultural solutions.

Another milestone came in 2019 with the establishment of a modern nutritional supplements plant in Tatu City. The facility represented the company’s growing focus on nutrition, feed efficiency, and productivity enhancement within modern livestock systems.

By 2020, the business had evolved beyond its traditional identity and officially adopted the name CKL Africa Ltd, reflecting both its expanding portfolio and broader continental ambitions.

Today, CKL Africa’s purpose is captured in a bold vision:

enabling Africa to become a global leader in food production. The vision emerged in the early 2010s from the recognition that Africa possesses enormous untapped agricultural potential despite lagging behind other regions in productivity. With vast arable land, favorable climatic conditions, and growing demand for food, the continent has the capacity not only to feed itself but also to become a major global food supplier.

For CKL Africa, achieving that vision means helping farmers produce more and better-quality food through reliable inputs, disease prevention, and sustainable farming systems.

The company believes that improving livestock health is one of the most effective ways to strengthen food security. Preventing disease reduces losses, improves productivity, and enables farmers to transition from subsistence farming to surplus production, a critical step toward agricultural competitiveness.

Over the years, the company's product portfolio has expanded significantly in response to changing agricultural systems and farmer needs.



What began with sheep and cattle dips gradually evolved into a diverse portfolio that includes insecticides, parasiticides, veterinary pharmaceuticals, vaccines, nutritional supplements, crop protection products, and soil health solutions. Its nutrition portfolio, which initially focused on minerals, now includes a broader range of feed additives designed to improve animal performance and productivity. Since 2010, the company has also expanded into crop

protection and soil nutrition products, recognizing the growing interdependence between livestock production, crop systems, and overall farm sustainability.

Research, innovation, and technology have remained central pillars throughout CKL Africa's evolution.

From William Cooper's original dip formulations to modern advancements in animal health and biological solutions, scientific research has consistently driven the company's strategy. Investments in manufacturing, formulation technologies, and quality assurance systems have allowed the company to maintain high standards while adapting to changing agricultural conditions.

The company's manufacturing facilities operate under Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) standards, reinforcing its commitment to product quality, safety, and consistency.

"CKL Africa also distinguishes itself through its long-term approach to farmer engagement. Beyond supplying products, the company has historically invested in farmer education, demonstrations, and advisory support," Mucai notes.

Knowledge transfer has been part of its DNA since the earliest cattle dipping demonstrations in the 1910s. Today, the company continues supporting farmers through initiatives such as herd health programs, record-keeping systems, soil health improvement initiatives, and strategic partnerships with agricultural stakeholders.

Collaborations with global organizations and industry leaders have also strengthened CKL Africa's growth trajectory over the decades. Partnerships with institutions such as The Wellcome Foundation, MSD Animal Health, CRV, and Cargill have enhanced the company's access to global expertise, technologies, and agricultural innovations.

Its network of strategic business partners, stockists, and distributors has similarly helped extend agricultural solutions to farmers across the country and beyond.

The company's role in shaping East Africa's agricultural value chains cannot be overstated. Through stabilizing livestock health and reducing preventable disease losses, CKL Africa contributed to the growth of dairy, beef, and livestock industries that now support millions of livelihoods.

"CKL's acaricides and nutritional supplements have been a game-changer on my farm. My herd is healthier, my milk production has increased, and I can now plan for the future with confidence," says Jane Wanjiku, a dairy farmer in Kiambu County and long-time CKL customer.

Its products played a crucial role in combating diseases such as East Coast Fever through solutions like Parvexon and Butalex, while nutritional interventions helped improve productivity within Kenya's rapidly expanding dairy sector.



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As climate change and sustainability become increasingly urgent global concerns, CKL Africa is also adapting its approach to support climate-smart agriculture and environmentally responsible farming systems.

The company has introduced climate-smart products and sustainability initiatives such as the EcoCare project, which focuses on promoting more sustainable agricultural practices and resource efficiency.

Rather than emphasizing expansion through increased land use, the company advocates for productivity gains through prevention, efficiency, and better management practices

SUPPLEMENT FEATURE

— an approach that aligns with modern sustainability principles. Internally, CKL Africa's culture continues to reflect the values that have sustained it for more than a century. The company emphasizes long-term thinking, scientific credibility, stewardship, teamwork, passion, and keeping promises. Employees are viewed not merely as sales personnel but as custodians of technical knowledge and institutional heritage, carrying forward decades of agricultural expertise to future generations.

For the company, reaching 120 years is less about celebrating corporate longevity and more about recognizing stewardship — the responsibility of preserving and advancing a legacy built over generations.

Looking ahead, CKL Africa intends to remain focused on science-led innovation, farmer-centric solutions, and sustainable agricultural productivity. As Africa confronts rising food demand, climate pressures, and evolving agricultural systems, the company sees itself continuing to play a central role in enabling resilient and productive farming across the continent.



After 120 years of navigating disease outbreaks, market transitions, economic cycles, and changing agricultural landscapes, CKL Africa's message to farmers, partners, and stakeholders remains consistent: progress in agriculture is built on reliability, partnership, innovation, and a long-term commitment to those who feed nations.

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TATA CHEMICALS MAGADI LTD

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Looking back at the company's journey from its early days as Magadi Soda Company, what would you describe as the most defining moments in its evolution?

Tata Chemicals Magadi's story is deeply intertwined with the industrial history of Kenya itself. The journey began with the discovery of trona deposits in 1902 and the establishment of the Magadi Soda Company in 1911, making it the second-oldest registered company in Kenya. Located just south of the Equator, approximately 120 kilometers southwest of Nairobi on the south-eastern edge of Lake Magadi, the company started as a pioneering industrial operation in one of the country's most remote and unique landscapes.

Several defining moments shaped the company's evolution over the decades. The acquisition by Brunner Mond & Co. in the early years connected Magadi to the global chemicals industry, while later integration into ICI further expanded its industrial and international footprint. The company's ability to sustain operations amid global economic changes, wars, infrastructure constraints,

and shifting industrial demands demonstrated remarkable resilience. Taking control of rail operations strengthened its export capabilities, while periodic investments, modernized production and expanded capacity.

Perhaps the most transformative milestone came in 2005, when Tata Chemicals Limited acquired a majority stake in the company, bringing renewed focus on operational excellence, sustainability, governance, innovation, and global integration. The transition to Tata Chemicals Magadi Limited in 2011 aligned the business fully with Tata's global identity and values-driven approach.

Today, the company stands not simply as an industrial operation, but as one of Africa's most important natural soda ash producers and a globally recognised Kenyan industrial success story.

Soda ash production has been at the heart of your operations for over a century. How has the company contributed to the development of Kenya's industrial sector and export economy during this time?



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For more than a century, Tata Chemicals Magadi has played a significant role in shaping Kenya's industrial and export economy. Soda ash remains one of the country's most important industrial mineral exports, supporting global industries including glass manufacturing, detergents, chemicals, and industrial processing.

Over the years, the company has grown to become the largest producer of soda ash in Africa and one of Kenya's largest single exporters, generating nearly USD 52 million in foreign exchange earnings annually.

The company's products reach markets across South-East Asia, the Indian Subcontinent, Africa, and the Middle East, helping position Kenya as a respected participant within global industrial supply chains.

Over the decades, Tata Chemicals Magadi has built a strong reputation as Africa's leading soda ash producer. What factors have enabled the company to maintain this leadership position in the global chemicals market?

The company's leadership position has been built through a combination of leveraging natural advantage, long-term investment, operational discipline, and continuous innovation. Lake Magadi contains one of the world's richest naturally occurring trona deposits, providing a strong foundation for natural soda ash production. However, resource availability alone is not enough to sustain leadership over 115 years.

TCML has consistently invested in modernisation, operational efficiency, and global competitiveness. Since 2006, the company has invested over the years in capital projects to improve production systems, environmental performance, logistics, and energy efficiency. The company has also maintained strong relationships with global customers by consistently delivering high-quality products and reliable supply.

Equally important has been the strength of the company's workforce and the culture of resilience and adaptability developed over generations. Operating in a remote environment has required innovative thinking, strong systems, and long-term planning.

The acquisition by Tata Chemicals Limited in 2005 marked a significant chapter for the company. How did becoming part of the Tata Group transform Tata Chemicals Magadi's operations, strategy, and global outlook?

Joining the Tata Group marked a major turning point in the company's evolution. Tata Chemicals brought not only capital investment and operational expertise, but also a globally respected philosophy centred on integrity, sustainability, innovation, and long-term stewardship.

The acquisition strengthened operational systems, governance structures, safety standards, environmental management, and global integration. It also positioned TCML within Tata Chemicals' broader international portfolio of natural soda ash, giving the Magadi operation greater global visibility, access to markets, financial backup and strategic importance.

Beyond operational transformation, the Tata Group's values-driven culture significantly influenced the company's approach to responsible business and community engagement. The emphasis on sustainability, ethical leadership, and long-term value creation continues to shape the company's strategy today.

Sustainability is increasingly central to industrial operations worldwide. How has Tata Chemicals Magadi integrated environmental stewardship and sustainable production practices into its business model?

Sustainability is now central to the company's long-term strategy and operational philosophy. TCML recognises that long-term industrial success must go hand in hand with environmental stewardship, resource conservation, and responsible production. In recent years, the company has invested in cleaner technologies, operational efficiency improvements, and renewable energy initiatives. Key

projects include the adoption of electric calcining technologies, process optimisation systems, and solar energy investments designed to reduce carbon intensity and improve operational sustainability.

Environmental monitoring, water stewardship, resource conservation, and ecosystem management are integrated into day-to-day operations. The company's broader sustainability approach also extends beyond environmental considerations to include social investment, community resilience, employee wellbeing, and long-term regional development.

Lake Magadi is a unique natural resource. What measures does the company take to ensure responsible extraction and long-term environmental conservation of this ecosystem?

Lake Magadi is globally unique, and the company fully understands its responsibility as a long-term steward of this ecosystem. Responsible extraction practices are therefore fundamental to TCML's operational approach.

The company implements continuous environmental monitoring, resource management systems, and controlled extraction methodologies designed to support the long-term sustainability of the lake and the surrounding ecosystem. Water conservation, rehabilitation initiatives, operational efficiency, and environmental impact assessments are integrated into planning and operations.

Protecting the lake is important not only for the business's future but also for preserving the region's ecological and social value for future generations.

Beyond industrial output, Tata Chemicals Magadi has a long history of community engagement. Could you highlight some of the most impactful social initiatives the company has implemented in the Magadi region?

Community partnership has been a defining aspect of Tata Chemicals Magadi's identity over the decades. The company has consistently invested in healthcare, education, water access, drought relief, and social infrastructure across the Magadi region.

One of the company's most significant contributions is operating the only Level 4 hospital in Kajiado West Sub-County. The facility serves more than 1,700 community patients every month and includes maternity services, emergency response support, HIV care, diagnostic services, and a fully equipped ambulance system.

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In education, TCML has invested heavily in bursary programs supporting both secondary school and university students, benefiting well over 1,000 learners to date. The company also supports Magadi Soda School, one of the strongest-performing schools in Kajiado County, alongside internship programmes, technical training initiatives, and TVET sponsorships.

Water and drought support initiatives have also been critical. The company supplies over 15 million liters of water per month by pipeline Rail and Tanker Truck to the surrounding communities, institutions, and livestock areas, while also supporting borehole projects, water-harvesting systems, school feeding programs, and emergency drought relief initiatives.

Employment and skills development are key components of industrial

“
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HAVE PROUDLY SERVED
KENYA AND THE
WORLD THROUGH
SCIENCE, INNOVATION,
AND SHARED
PROGRESS. AND OUR
GREATEST CHAPTERS
ARE STILL AHEAD**

SUPPLEMENT FEATURE

growth. How has the company contributed to job creation, technical training, and capacity building within the local community?

TCML directly employs approximately 500 people and supports many more indirectly through transport, logistics, contractors, local suppliers, and community businesses. Over the decades, the company has become one of the region's most important economic anchors.

Beyond employment, the company has consistently invested in technical training, apprenticeships, internships, leadership development, and capacity-building programs to empower local communities and strengthen future industrial skills.

Industrial innovation is critical in the chemical sector. What technological advancements or operational improvements has the company implemented in recent years to enhance efficiency and competitiveness?

Innovation remains central to the company's future competitiveness. In recent years, TCML has focused heavily on operational optimisation, process efficiency, cleaner technologies, digital monitoring systems, and renewable energy integration.

The company's investment in electric calcining technologies, a global first in soda ash industry, represents an important step toward lower-carbon industrial production when clubbed with the investment in solar power. Additional improvements in automation, process management, energy efficiency, and environmental performance continue to strengthen both competitiveness and sustainability.

TCML recognises that future industrial leadership will increasingly depend on balancing operational excellence with responsible environmental stewardship.

The Tata Group is globally recognized for its values-driven leadership. How do Tata's core principles influence the corporate culture and governance at Tata Chemicals Magadi?

The Tata Group's values continue to shape every aspect of TCML's culture and operations. Principles such as integrity, excellence, responsibility, unity, and pioneering spirit are deeply embedded within the company's leadership approach, governance systems, sustainability philosophy, and community relationships.

These values have strengthened the company's long-term focus and reinforced the belief that business success must always be aligned with ethical leadership, responsible



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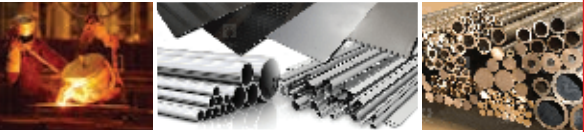


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CONGRATULATIONS TO EATTA ON 70 YEARS OF DRIVING EXCELLENCE

On behalf of AGL Kenya, we extend our warmest congratulations to the East African Tea Trade Association (EATTA) on the remarkable milestone of 70 years of driving excellence in the tea trade.

For seven decades, EATTA has played a pivotal role in shaping and strengthening the African tea industry, bringing together producers, exporters, brokers, and partners to foster a collaborative ecosystem that upholds global standards, enhances profitability, and positions African tea prominently on the world stage. This legacy of leadership and stewardship is both admirable and inspiring.

As a long-standing partner in enabling trade and logistics across the region, AGL Kenya deeply appreciates the critical role EATTA has played in advancing efficiency, quality, and market access within the tea value chain. Your commitment to excellence has not only elevated the industry but has also contributed significantly to the economic growth and global reputation of East Africa.

At AGL Kenya, our journey has been anchored in facilitating seamless trade, connecting markets, and supporting key industries such as tea through reliable logistics and supply chain solutions. We are proud to have walked alongside EATTA in this journey and to contribute to the continued success of this vital sector.

As you celebrate this milestone, we commend your past achievements and look forward to an even more impactful future, one that continues to innovate, strengthen partnerships, and unlock new opportunities for the African tea industry.

Congratulations once again on 70 years of excellence. We are honored to be part of your story and excited for the journey ahead.



Martin Mwangi
Managing Director - Kenya

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SUPPLEMENT FEATURE

stewardship, employee wellbeing, and positive social impact.

Adoption of the Tata Code of Conduct, leveraging the Tata Business Excellence Model, the use of DATOM framework for management of data/IT assets and benefiting from Tata Management Training Centre programs are some examples of practically utilizing Group Assets for influencing culture and governance at TCML.

Finally, what legacy do you hope Tata Chemicals Magadi will continue to build for Kenya and the wider region in the years to come?

We hope the company’s legacy will ultimately be defined not only by industrial success but also by responsible leadership, community partnerships, environmental stewardship, and national contributions.

Tata Chemicals Magadi has spent more than a century helping power industries, supporting livelihoods, strengthening communities, and contributing to Kenya’s



economic growth. Going forward, we hope future generations will continue to see TCML as proof that industry, nature, sustainability, and communities can grow together responsibly and successfully.

“For 115 years, we have proudly served Kenya and the world through science, innovation, and shared progress. And our greatest chapters are still ahead.”

The writer is Sammy Lamba, Head of Sales TATA Chemicals Magadi.



— Congratulations —
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AUTOMATION

HOW AUTOMATION IS CREATING SMARTER SUSTAINABLE MANUFACTURING SYSTEMS IN AFRICA

By Alexander Odhiambo



Solutech Limited CEO

reconciling stacks of invoices before payments can be processed. While these inefficiencies may appear minor in isolation, their cumulative impact on business performance is significant. Logistics alone accounts for an estimated 20–30% of Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) margins. Reducing these costs can unlock resources for market expansion, product development, workforce growth, and access to new regional markets under the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

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TO HELP ADDRESS THIS CHALLENGE, SOLUTECH DEVELOPED EVALOGISTICS, AN ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI)-POWERED DELIVERY OPTIMIZATION PLATFORM THAT AUTOMATES ORDER ALLOCATION AND ROUTE PLANNING.

Running a business in Africa means operating in one of the most dynamic and demanding business environments in the world.

Step into many manufacturing or distribution companies in Kenya today and familiar operational challenges quickly emerge. Field sales agents still record orders manually on paper, logistics planners coordinate deliveries using disconnected spreadsheets, and finance teams spend days

Across the manufacturing sector, businesses are also facing increasing pressure to become more sustainable. Rising fuel costs, resource inefficiencies, wastage, and growing environmental expectations are forcing manufacturers to rethink how they operate. Yet for many companies, sustainability is no longer just about environmental reporting or compliance. It is increasingly becoming tied to operational efficiency, competitiveness, and long-term resilience. Within many of these operational gaps lies an opportunity for transformation through smarter systems



Solutech Limited Team

and digital tools. For more than a decade, Solutech Limited has worked with over 200 distributors and manufacturers across more than nine African countries, including Libya, Nigeria, Ghana, Mozambique, Tanzania, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Uganda, Kenya, Ethiopia, and Somalia, helping businesses improve visibility, efficiency, and operational control.

This experience informed the development of SolutechSAT, a sales automation platform designed specifically for African distribution networks. The platform digitises route-to-market operations, including van sales, merchandising, retail audits, and order capture, while integrating with Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) systems, M-PESA, and the Electronic Tax Invoice Management System (eTIMS).

For manufacturers managing large and often fragmented secondary distribution networks, access to real-time

operational data has become increasingly important. Businesses need accurate visibility on stock movement, customer orders, inventory levels, and field execution to reduce delays, minimise losses, and respond quickly to market demand.

By replacing manual workflows with real-time digital processes, manufacturers are able to reduce order errors, improve stock visibility, and strengthen coordination across their supply chains. These operational gains also create sustainability benefits. Digital audits reduce paper usage, geotagged retail execution minimises unnecessary field movement, and predictive analytics can identify potential stock shortages before they disrupt supply chains or result in product wastage.

Last-mile logistics remains another major pressure point for manufacturers. Rising fuel prices, traffic congestion,

duplicate trips, and inefficient route planning continue to inflate distribution costs across the sector. Despite major investments in production efficiency, many manufacturers still manage delivery operations using outdated planning methods.

To help address this challenge, Solutech developed EvaLogistics, an Artificial Intelligence (AI)-powered delivery optimization platform that automates order allocation and route planning. The platform enables manufacturers to consolidate deliveries, reduce fuel consumption, and improve delivery turnaround times. According to the company, businesses using the system have achieved fuel savings of between 15–20% and significantly reduced duplicate journeys through smarter route optimisation.

Beyond operational savings, the environmental implications are equally important. Lower fuel consumption contributes directly to reduced carbon emissions, while efficient logistics planning helps businesses align operational performance with broader sustainability goals. In a manufacturing environment increasingly shaped by Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) expectations and climate-conscious markets, logistics efficiency is becoming an important component of sustainable industrial growth.

Another persistent challenge for manufacturers lies in documentation and financial reconciliation. Every delivery generates invoices, proof-of-delivery notes, procurement records, and supplier documentation, much of which is still processed manually in many organisations. This slows payment cycles, increases administrative costs, and creates room for errors.

To streamline this process, Solutech introduced EvaDocs, an AI-powered document processing tool that automatically extracts and processes data from PDFs, handwritten records, and even WhatsApp documents. The platform integrates directly with ERP systems, helping businesses reduce manual

data entry while improving speed and accuracy in financial reconciliation.

As sustainability becomes increasingly central to industrial competitiveness, manufacturers are beginning to recognise the close connection between operational efficiency and sustainable growth. Better field data improves order accuracy. Accurate orders reduce waste. Smarter logistics lower fuel consumption. Faster document processing strengthens cash flow and operational responsiveness.

Individually, these may appear as incremental operational improvements. Collectively, however, they contribute to more resilient, efficient, and sustainable manufacturing systems capable of supporting Africa's industrial future.

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FOR MANUFACTURERS SEEKING TO REMAIN COMPETITIVE IN AN INCREASINGLY DEMANDING REGIONAL AND GLOBAL MARKET, THE ABILITY TO OPTIMISE OPERATIONS WILL BECOME JUST AS IMPORTANT AS THE ABILITY TO PRODUCE.

For manufacturers seeking to remain competitive in an increasingly demanding regional and global market, the ability to optimise operations will become just as important as the ability to produce. Businesses that embrace smarter systems, data-driven decision-making, and efficient distribution models will be better positioned to reduce costs, strengthen sustainability performance, improve customer responsiveness, and unlock opportunities under the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

The transition toward sustainable manufacturing will not be driven by ambition alone, but by practical operational changes that improve how businesses move products,

manage resources, and respond to market realities. As manufacturers continue navigating rising operational pressures, digital automation tools are increasingly becoming crucial infrastructure for building resilient, future-ready industries across Africa.

The writer is the Chief Executive Officer at Solutech Limited

ADDING VALUE

FROM WASTE TO VALUE: BUILDING CIRCULARITY, SKILLS AND GREEN GROWTH

By: CPA Kennedy Nyaga

Reddamac Leather

Kenya's leather sector sits at a powerful intersection, where agriculture meets industry, and where livelihoods are shaped every single day. Each year, the country produces over 3 million hides and skins. Yet, despite this abundance, a large portion is either underutilized or exported in raw form, quietly taking with it opportunities for jobs, income, and local value creation.

The real opportunity lies in how we choose to use what we already have. Building a sustainable leather value chain calls for a shift in thinking, from simply producing raw materials to creating finished products, while ensuring efficiency, inclusion, and long-term growth. It starts at the very beginning: how animals are raised, how hides and skins are handled, and how much care is taken before they even reach a tannery.

Good animal husbandry and proper flaying practices may seem like small details, but they make a world of difference. When done right, they significantly reduce defects and improve the quality of hides and skins, making them more valuable at the tannery level.

This is where Reddamac Leather Center Ltd stepped in. Through the leadership of CEO Mr. Robert Njoka, the company recognized a clear gap; and an opportunity to improve practices at the source. Working closely with the Directorate of Veterinary Services and the

Nairobi County Government, Reddamac supported training initiatives at the *Kiamaiko* slaughterhouses, the largest in Kenya.

More than 100 flayers from 16 registered slaughterhouses were trained on proper animal handling, flaying, and skin preservation. The results speak for themselves.

Before the training, only about 10% of skins from *Kiamaiko* met the quality standards required by tanneries. Today, that number has risen to 95%. What was once seen as low-value or waste is now a reliable, high-quality input into the leather industry.

Encouraged by this progress, Reddamac Leather Center Ltd set out to replicate the model across other regions in the country. The goal was simple: improve quality at the source and unlock value where it had long been overlooked.

This led to a strategic partnership with Garissa University under a National Research Fund (NRF) project on the leather value chain, led by Prof. Julius Huho. Garissa County, located in Kenya's Arid and Semi-Arid Lands region, is rich in livestock. Yet for years, hides and skins from the area rarely made it to tanneries. And when they did, poor handling meant they carried little to no value. For many communities, this potential income stream simply did not exist.

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**MORE THAN 100
FLAYERS FROM
16 REGISTERED
SLAUGHTERHOUSES
WERE TRAINED ON
PROPER ANIMAL
HANDLING,
FLAYING, & SKIN
PRESERVATION.**

The NRF-supported project began by focusing on training; equipping local flayers with the skills needed to improve quality. But as the work progressed, a bigger idea began to take shape.

That idea became “Beyond the Butcher.” It was a shift in mindset: from stopping at slaughter to thinking about what comes next. How can communities not only supply raw hides and skins, but also participate in the value they create?

At the heart of this idea is the belief that the leather value chain should work for everyone; especially pastoralists and

small traders who are often left at the very bottom of it.

One of the key gaps identified was the lack of skills in designing and producing leather goods. Garissa University stepped in to address this by introducing a hands-on training program focused on making simple leather products. The program brings in community members with little or no formal education, local cobblers and vendors, as well as interested students and staff.

To bring this vision to life, Reddamac Leather Center Ltd donated machines and accessories worth KSh 1 million in 2025, enabling the establishment of a leather incubation and training center within the university.



**QUALITY
BOOTS**



**EXECUTIVE
BAGS**

What is now taking shape is a bridge between raw materials and finished products, between potential and opportunity.

The initiative has since attracted strong partnerships. The International Labour Organization (ILO), the African Development Bank, the Ministry of Education, and the Kenya Red Cross Society have all come on board, each supporting different components of the project. Reddamac is also part of an ILO-supported effort to source and procure advanced leather equipment for the university.

These efforts are still ongoing, but the direction is clear.

Garissa University has now been funded by the Ministry of Education to become a center of excellence in leather, recognition of a model that is not only practical, but also scalable and sustainable.

This partnership sends a strong message: Kenya does not have to remain an exporter of raw hides and skins. With the right investments, even regions that have traditionally been left out of industrial development can become active players in value addition. This aligns closely with the Kenya Association of Manufacturers (KAM) and government efforts to promote local production and industrial growth.

At Reddamac, there is a strong belief that industry should do more than extract value; it should help create it. Because when businesses invest in people, skills, and systems, they build more than supply chains. They build trust. And that trust is what makes sustainable industrialization possible.

For a farmer in Garissa County, the impact can be transformative. The animal provides milk. It provides meat. But it also provides a hide; one that now carries value. That hide can be processed into leather, turned into a product, and even come back into the community as a finished good.

Income is created at every step. Value stays closer to home. And with that, a powerful cycle begins, where better returns encourage better animal husbandry, which in turn improves quality, strengthens the value chain, and supports the entire ecosystem.

That is what it means to move from waste to value.

The writer is a Senior Accountant at Reddamac Leather Center Ltd

**STATS &
FIGURES**

04

**ANNUAL
HIDES & SKINS
OVER
3 MILLION
PRODUCED EACH
YEAR IN KENYA**

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FROM 10%
TO 95%
SKINS MEETING TANNERY
STANDARDS AFTER TRAINING**



FUTURE

THE HANDS THAT WILL ENGINEER KENYA'S SUSTAINABLE INDUSTRIAL FUTURE

By: Bethwel Kimaru,

There is a young man I think about often. He sat in the front row of a PLC training I was running last year. Quiet. He took notes by hand while everyone else typed. When we moved to troubleshooting, a live fault on a real system with no hints, he was the last one still at the panel. Everyone else had stepped away or guessed. He had not found the answer yet, but he had not stopped working either. You could see it. A level of concentration that does not let go easily. He found it. He is the kind of engineer Kenya is building too slowly; and losing too easily. Not always to other countries. Often to environments that do not recognize or develop their potential. If the approach to industrial skills does not change, the outcome will remain the same.

Kenya is a young country in more than one sense. About 70% of the population is under 35. That statistic is often repeated, but less often translated into deliberate action. Economists describe it as a demographic dividend, a period when a large working-age population can accelerate growth, productivity, and innovation if it is properly prepared.

That potential does not convert on its own. Across the industrial economy, much of it remains underutilised. Walk into any major industrial facility or exhibition, the likes of Propak or Automate Africa, and the technology advancement in industry is evident. Automated systems. Sensors feeding production data into control rooms. Drive systems adjusting energy use in real time.



Production lines operating with speed and precision that would have seemed out of reach not long ago.

Then ask who is maintaining them. Who configured the control systems. Who will diagnose a fault at two in the morning when production targets are already under pressure. In too many facilities, the answer is one person. Perhaps two. Often trained abroad. Often the only individuals in the plant who fully understand the system. That is not a simple skills gap. It is a structural risk. The imbalance did not happen by chance.

Investment in equipment has moved faster than investment in the people expected to operate it. Workforce development has been treated as secondary, rather than as the

foundation of industrial growth. Yet the capability itself is not missing. The instinct to build, repair, and solve problems has always existed. The Jua Kali was not only an informal sector. It was a mindset; working with what is available, adapting quickly, and finding solutions without waiting for ideal conditions. That instinct is still present.

It is in polytechnics across Eldoret, Kisumu, and Mombasa. It is in trainees who teach themselves control systems. It is in those who remain in workshops after hours, not because they are required to, but because the problem in front of them has not yet been resolved. What is missing is the structure to turn that instinct into consistent industrial capability. The next phase of industrial development will depend on this. Industry 5.0 is not defined by machines alone, but by how people work with them. It requires technicians who understand systems in depth, not only how to operate them, but how to maintain, optimise, and improve them over time.



Motion Control Eng. Services



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This is where sustainability takes a different form. It is not only about energy efficiency or emissions. It is also about building a workforce that can sustain industrial systems, reduce downtime, minimise waste, and keep production consistent. Skilled technicians improve how resources are used. They prevent losses before they occur. They extend the life of equipment. In practical terms, skills are part of how sustainability is delivered on the factory floor.

That level of competence cannot be developed in classrooms alone. It requires exposure to real systems. Dual training offers a clear path. The model combines structured learning with actual industrial experience. Not simulations. Not short attachments. Continuous engagement with working systems, where performance matters and



Motion Control Eng. Services

learning is immediate. Countries with strong manufacturing sectors: Germany, Switzerland, South Korea, have built this connection deliberately. They have treated the transition between training and industry as a continuous system, supported over time.

Kenya has the building blocks. Technical institutions are in place. Industry is willing to engage. What has been lacking is consistency, and urgency. Because the issue is no longer whether the model works. It is whether it is being applied at the scale required.

Back to the young man at the panel. When he traced the fault through the circuit, through the logic, to the exact point of failure, he did not celebrate. He nodded, as if confirming something to himself. That moment matters. It is where skill becomes confidence. Where training becomes capability. It happens quietly, often without recognition, yet it is the foundation on which industrial performance is built.

A sustainable industrial future will not be built by machines alone. It will be built by people who know how to work with them: properly, consistently, and at scale. The demands are already here. The question is whether enough people are being prepared to meet them.

The writer is the Manager Learning Development at Motion Control Engineering Services Ltd

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KENYA HAS THE BUILDING BLOCKS. TECHNICAL INSTITUTIONS ARE IN PLACE. INDUSTRY IS WILLING TO ENGAGE.

NEW ERA

A NEW CHAPTER FOR MANUFACTURERS: WHAT ATLAS COPCO'S EXPANSION MEANS FOR INDUSTRY IN EAST AFRICA

By Amokelani Baloyi

March 2026 marked a notable shift in Kenya's manufacturing landscape with the launch of Atlas Copco's Industrial Technique Division in Nairobi. While the expansion signals confidence in the country's industrial growth, its real significance lies in what it makes possible for manufacturers on the ground. For years, many factories across Kenya and the wider region have worked within constraints: limited access to advanced assembly technologies, delayed technical support, and the cost of relying on solutions sourced from outside the market. This launch begins to change that equation. Atlas Copco's decision to establish this division locally reflects a recognition of Kenya's growing industrial base and its position as a regional hub. With operations dating back to 1873 and a global workforce of over 55,000, the company brings with it a depth of experience that now becomes directly accessible to manufacturers across Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, and Rwanda.

What is now available on the ground goes beyond equipment. The Industrial Technique Division introduces advanced assembly tools, high-precision fastening systems, automation-ready solutions, and integrated quality verification technologies designed to meet modern production demands.

For manufacturers, this shifts the conversation from access to capability. Precision fastening, for instance, is no longer just about tightening a bolt; it is about ensuring consistency across thousands of units. Integrated verification systems allow production lines to detect errors in real time, reducing defects before they move downstream. Automation-ready tools create opportunities to scale production while maintaining accuracy, something that becomes increasingly important as factories aim to meet both regional and global standards.



These solutions are part of what Atlas Copco refers to as a Smart Integrated Assembly approach: where production systems are connected, data-driven, and optimised for efficiency. In practical terms, this means manufacturers gain better visibility into their operations, tighter control over quality, and the ability to make faster, more informed decisions.

One of the most immediate shifts comes from proximity. With technical specialists now based in Nairobi, manufacturers no longer have to rely on delayed external support. Troubleshooting, calibration, and system optimisation can happen closer to the production floor. This reduces downtime, improves equipment performance, and allows factories to operate with greater confidence. For industries where precision is critical, this matters.

The automotive and mobility sectors, in particular, stand to gain significantly. Kenya's growing network of assemblers and component manufacturers can now access technologies used by global original equipment manufacturers: from body shop tools and paint shop systems to electric vehicle battery assembly solutions and in-line verification systems.

This opens up new possibilities for local manufacturers to scale production, diversify offerings, and align more closely with international benchmarks without compromising on quality.

As Cornelius Coetzee, Regional General Manager for Industrial Technique Sub-Saharan Africa, noted during the launch, the expansion is rooted in a belief in the region's potential; supporting industries that are actively innovating and solving real economic challenges with reliable, high-quality technologies.

That same sentiment is echoed in the emphasis on local presence. Being closer to customers across East Africa allows for more responsive support, something Ryan Anthony, Business Line Manager for the Motor Vehicle Industry, highlighted as key to enabling long-term competitiveness in the region.

Beyond automotive, the implications extend across multiple sectors.

Manufacturers today are under pressure to reduce defects, minimize downtime, and meet increasingly strict quality and sustainability expectations. Access to more precise, reliable, and connected systems supports these goals directly; helping factories improve output while reducing waste and inefficiencies.

What strengthens this further is the local team behind the technology.

Engineers such as Godwin Mbaka and Kelvin Maina are not only supporting installations: they are working closely with manufacturers to ensure systems are properly configured, maintained, and optimized over time. This kind of hands-on engagement helps translate technology into actual performance on the factory floor.

The expansion also builds on Atlas Copco's existing presence in Kenya, particularly in Embakasi, where the company has long supported industries with compressors and power tools. The addition of the Industrial Technique Division deepens that relationship, moving from equipment supply to integrated production support. For members of Kenya



Association of Manufacturers, this comes at a time when the push toward modern, competitive, and sustainable manufacturing is gaining momentum. The ability to access advanced assembly technologies locally, and to support them with technical expertise, creates a more practical pathway toward Industry 4.0.

This is what makes the moment significant. Not just the launch itself, but what it enables: better-built products, more efficient production lines, and stronger positioning in both regional and global markets.

As Kenya's manufacturing sector continues to evolve, progress will increasingly depend on how quickly industries can adopt systems that improve precision, reduce inefficiencies, and support long-term growth. This expansion places those tools within reach.

The writer is the Digital Marketing & Communications Lead at Atlas Copco

SUSTAINABILITY

RETHINKING STEAM SYSTEMS: INSIGHTS FROM FORBES MARSHALL ON SUSTAINABLE MANUFACTURING

By Emmanuel Wanjohi

Across the manufacturing sector, the pressure to operate more sustainably continues to intensify. Rising fuel costs, tightening water regulations, and stricter emissions standards are reshaping how plants think about performance. At the same time, expectations from regulators, buyers, and investors are shifting, placing sustainability at the center of industrial decision-making.



as biomass, these shifts do not always address the underlying inefficiencies within the system itself.

Focusing on efficiency does. In many cases, targeted improvements to steam systems can deliver fuel savings of around 24%. These are not marginal gains; they have a direct impact on cost structures, energy consumption, and emissions.

The starting point is often the boiler. In real operating conditions, there is frequently a gap between a boiler's rated efficiency and its

actual performance. This is influenced by factors such as combustion quality, stack temperatures, and how well condensate is recovered. Even small deviations can have measurable consequences. A variation in the steam-to-fuel ratio of just 0.25 can increase fuel consumption by close to 2%, while a rise of 20°C in flue gas temperature can add roughly another 1%. Over time, these incremental losses accumulate into significant cost and energy waste.

Operational discipline also plays a role. Poorly managed blowdown levels, for instance, can increase losses, while scaling within the boiler can waste between 2% and 5% of fuel. At lower loads, inefficiencies become even more pronounced, with radiation losses at a quarter load reaching up to four times those at full load.

Beyond generation, steam distribution presents another layer of inefficiency that is often overlooked. Losses during distribution typically range between 2% and 5% of total steam produced. While this may appear small, it represents a consistent drain on energy across operations.

Distributing steam at higher pressure and reducing it at the point of use helps minimise these losses, while also improving the quality and usability of steam.

One of the most common and least visible sources of loss lies in steam traps.

In many plants, 30 to 60% of mainline steam traps may not function correctly. When traps fail to open, live steam is lost directly to drain. When they fail to close, heat transfer is compromised. In both cases, energy is wasted. Maintaining trap performance above 95% and integrating regular inspection into maintenance routines can significantly reduce these losses.

Even when steam is generated and distributed efficiently, how it is used within processes determines the final outcome.

Temperature control, for example, has a direct impact on energy consumption. A deviation of just 2°C above the required process temperature can increase steam consumption by approximately 4%. Over time, this translates into thousands of litres of additional fuel. Similarly, practices such as bypassing steam traps to maintain temperature, often seen as a quick fix, can lead to losses of 7% to 8% of total steam.

At this stage, precision becomes critical. Condensate recovery is another area where value is often lost without notice. Condensate returning to the boiler carries around 20% of the original fuel energy used to generate steam. Recovering this energy is not only efficient: it is essential. Increasing feedwater temperature by just 6°C can reduce fuel consumption by about 1%, reinforcing the value of capturing and reusing what would otherwise be wasted.

What stands out is that many of these improvements do not require heavy capital investment. In several Kenyan manufacturing plants, practical interventions: ranging from improved steam trapping and temperature control to better pressure management and condensate recovery, have delivered measurable results within short payback periods. In tea processing, for example, improved steam trapping and tighter temperature control have led to a 39% reduction in the steam-to-made-tea ratio. In cereal

manufacturing, a combination of pressure optimisation and condensate recovery has reduced steam consumption by 18%. Confectionery plants applying similar measures have achieved reductions of 12%, while edible oil processors focusing on pressure control alone have recorded savings of 11%.

These outcomes point to a consistent pattern: the most impactful changes are often rooted in addressing everyday inefficiencies rather than introducing entirely new systems. This reframes how sustainability is approached within manufacturing.

It is not only a question of technology, but of how existing systems are understood, managed, and optimized. The path to reducing energy consumption, lowering emissions, and improving cost efficiency is often found in the discipline of operations: paying closer attention to what is already in place and ensuring it performs as intended.

As the industry continues to respond to the demands of a changing economic and environmental landscape, these kinds of improvements offer a practical pathway forward. They demonstrate that engineering a sustainable industrial future is not always about starting over, but about making better use of what already exists.

The writer is an Applications Engineer at Forbes Marshall Pvt. Ltd.



SUSTAINABILITY

ENGINEERING A SUSTAINABLE INDUSTRIAL FUTURE: HOW LEAN ENERGY IS POWERING GREEN INDUSTRIAL TRANSFORMATION

By Julie Ngetich

Across Kenya and the wider East African region, manufacturers are under growing pressure to do two things at once: expand production while reducing their environmental footprint. Energy sits at the center of that tension. It is one of the biggest cost drivers in industry, and one of the biggest sources of emissions. For many businesses, the challenge is not a lack of ambition. It is the gap between wanting to transition to cleaner energy and finding solutions that are practical, reliable, and affordable in real operating conditions. This is where the conversation around sustainable industrialization becomes real, not in policy papers, but on factory floors.

Lean Energy Solutions Limited has built its work around this reality. Rather than positioning sustainability as an add-on, the company focuses on integrating it directly into industrial operations; where efficiency, cost, and reliability matter just as much as environmental outcomes.

Recognized as a Superbrand and a Certified B Corporation, Lean Energy operates on a simple premise: sustainability must make business sense if it is to scale. For decades, many manufacturers have relied on fossil fuels such as coal and heavy fuel oil to power thermal processes. These systems are familiar, but they are also expensive, volatile, and increasingly out of step with both environmental regulations and market expectations.

The transition away from them has often been slowed by one key barrier; capital. Clean energy infrastructure requires significant upfront investment, along with technical expertise to manage it. Lean Energy's response has been to redesign

how energy is delivered. Through its Build–Own–Operate (BOO) model, the company takes on the responsibility of designing, financing, installing, and operating energy systems on behalf of manufacturers. This removes the need for large capital outlays and shifts energy from a fixed asset into a managed service.

At the center of this model is its Steam-as-a-Service offering. Instead of investing in and running their own boilers, manufacturers receive steam on a pay-as-you-consume basis, while Lean Energy installs and operates biomass-fired systems on-site. For the client, this changes the equation entirely. Energy becomes predictable, operationally simpler, and easier to manage. For the industry as a whole, it lowers the barrier to adopting cleaner technologies.

One of the most practical pathways to sustainable manufacturing lies in using what already exists; more efficiently. Across Kenya, large volumes of agricultural and industrial waste are generated every day. In many cases, this waste is burned inefficiently or left to decompose, contributing to environmental degradation without creating value.

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ONE OF THE MOST PRACTICAL PATHWAYS TO SUSTAINABLE MANUFACTURING LIES IN USING WHAT ALREADY EXISTS; MORE EFFICIENTLY.

Lean Energy has focused on turning this challenge into an opportunity. Through briquetting and pelletizing technologies, agricultural residues are converted into high-density, low-emission fuels that can replace fossil fuels in industrial processes. This shift does more than reduce emissions. It introduces circularity into the energy system: linking farmers, aggregators, and manufacturers in a shared value chain. Farmers gain an additional income stream from what was previously discarded. Aggregators build

supply networks around biomass collection. Manufacturers access a more stable and locally sourced fuel alternative. In this model, waste does not sit at the end of the chain. It becomes the beginning of a new one.

Sustainability solutions often remain small-scale, limited to pilot projects or isolated success stories. The real test is whether they can be applied consistently across different industries and geographies.

Lean Energy's operations suggest that they can. The company currently runs more than 20 biomass boiler sites across Kenya and Tanzania, delivering approximately 90 tonnes of steam per hour to industrial clients.

These systems serve sectors with high energy demand; food and beverage processing, pharmaceuticals, textiles, chemicals, and dairy, demonstrating that cleaner energy models can operate within complex, large-scale manufacturing environments. The significance here is not only in the numbers, but in the repeatability of the model. It shows that sustainable energy solutions can move beyond pilots and become embedded in everyday industrial operations.

Industrial transformation is often discussed in terms of technology and infrastructure. Less attention is given to the people who make these systems work. Lean Energy's approach reflects a broader view of sustainability; one that includes skills development and community impact.

The company employs over 250 people, with a strong focus on youth and women, and supports education initiatives that have reached more than 50 students. At the operational level, technical training is built into project sites, creating a workforce that is not only employed but also equipped with relevant, transferable skills.

Beyond direct employment, the biomass supply chain creates economic activity in rural areas, where agricultural waste is sourced. This strengthens linkages between industry and agriculture: an area KAM has consistently identified as critical for building resilient and inclusive manufacturing systems.

For manufacturers, sustainability is not an abstract concept. It is evaluated in terms of cost, efficiency, and compliance. Through energy audits and system optimization, Lean Energy's clients typically achieve reductions of 10% to 30% in energy consumption, alongside significant savings on fuel



Lean Energy Solutions/Products for Lean Energy Solutions

costs and improved environmental performance.

These outcomes matter. They demonstrate that environmental responsibility and operational efficiency are not competing priorities; they can reinforce each other. In a regulatory environment that is increasingly focused on energy efficiency and emissions, such gains also position manufacturers to remain compliant and competitive.

Kenya's push toward sustainable industrialization is gaining momentum, supported by policy, industry leadership, and growing awareness of climate risks. What remains critical is the availability of solutions that work within the realities of industry. Lean Energy's model offers one such pathway; grounded in practicality, built around partnerships, and designed to deliver measurable results.

As the sector continues to evolve, the focus will not only be on adopting new technologies, but on integrating them in ways that strengthen businesses, support communities, and reduce environmental impact.

That is how a sustainable industrial future is built; not in theory, but in practice.

The writer is the Marketing Manager at Lean Energy Solutions



70 YEARS OF SHAPING THE EAST AFRICAN TEA TRADE

EATTA at 70: How East Africa’s “green gold” is navigating policy shifts, global demand and value addition challenges

Tea has long been described as Kenya’s “green gold,” yet a significant share of its value continues to be realised outside East Africa. As the East African Tea Trade Association (EATTA) marks 70 years of operation, attention is turning to how the region can retain more value from one of its most important export commodities.

Kenya remains the world’s largest exporter of black tea and hosts the biggest tea auction globally through EATTA in Mombasa. Despite this strategic position, industry leaders say the country still captures only a fraction of the full value chain, particularly in branding, packaging and retail markets. The Mombasa Tea Auction has become a central hub in global tea trade, setting price signals for millions of farmers across East Africa. Each week, between 12 and 15 million kilograms of tea pass through the auction floor, attracting buyers from Asia, the Middle East, Europe and North America.

According to EATTA Managing Director George Omuga, scale remains the auction’s strongest advantage. “Buyers come to Mombasa because they are assured of large, consistent volumes that meet export requirements,” he says. “The system has evolved over decades to provide



George Omuga, the Managing Director of the East African Tea Trade Association (EATTA)



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reliability and efficiency in global tea sourcing.” This scale has positioned the auction as a critical pricing reference point for the global tea market, particularly for black tea, where East Africa is a dominant supplier.

Export dependency and global price influence

East Africa’s tea industry is heavily export-oriented, with over 95 per cent of production destined for international markets. This structure means that global consumption trends, not regional demand, largely determine pricing. Geopolitical shifts, currency fluctuations and international demand cycles therefore play a more significant role in shaping farm-gate prices than local consumption patterns.

“Tea prices are driven by external markets,” Omuga notes. “Local demand is simply too small to influence global price formation in a meaningful way.” Kenya itself consumes only a small fraction of its production, leaving domestic markets with limited influence on overall price stability.

Why local tea consumption remains low

Despite being a leading producer, Kenya’s domestic tea consumption remains relatively modest. One of the key constraints is cost, particularly at the packaging stage. Retail tea prices are elevated partly due to expensive packaging inputs, most of which are imported. These materials attract multiple taxes and levies that significantly raise production costs for local manufacturers. As a result, packaged tea sold in Kenyan supermarkets often carries a higher cost structure compared to bulk exports. In some cases, companies have found it cheaper to export tea in bulk, package it abroad, and re-import finished products for sale in the local market. Industry stakeholders argue that this undermines efforts to grow domestic consumption and build local value addition capacity.

Policy and cost pressures across the value chain

Beyond packaging costs, the tea sector faces a complex set of structural challenges that affect competitiveness. Electricity remains a major input cost, particularly for factories that operate during night-time processing cycles. Although these hours fall within off-peak periods, tariffs remain relatively high, prompting calls for time-of-use pricing models that would reduce energy costs during low-demand periods.

At the same time, producers face multiple levies at county level, particularly on transportation and branding of packaged tea. Trucks carrying tea across counties incur various charges along major transit routes to the port of Mombasa, adding to logistical costs and reducing margins. Regulatory costs have also risen sharply in recent years. Industry players cite increases in compliance fees imposed by regulatory agencies as a growing burden, especially for smaller factories operating on thin margins. These combined pressures have intensified calls for a more streamlined policy environment that supports competitiveness while ensuring regulatory standards remain intact.

The reserve price experiment and market disruption

One of the most significant policy interventions in recent years was the introduction of a government-imposed reserve price for tea between 2021 and 2024. The policy was intended to protect farmers from low prices by setting a minimum trading threshold.

However, the system did not adequately account for variations in tea quality across different grades. As a result, large volumes of tea remained unsold at auction because buyers were unwilling to meet the minimum price for lower-grade products.

This led to a build-up of stockpiles, with weekly auction volumes rising significantly as unsold tea accumulated in warehouses. Given that tea is a perishable commodity, extended storage resulted in quality deterioration and lower eventual selling prices.

“Tea does not improve with age,” Omuga explains. “When it stays too long in storage, its quality and value decline.” The experience highlighted the complexity of price regulation in a globally traded commodity and its unintended consequences on market efficiency.

Digital transformation of the auction system

In response to evolving trade dynamics, the Mombasa Tea Auction has undergone significant digital transformation. The trading platform is now fully digitised, allowing brokers and buyers to participate remotely. This has improved accessibility for international participants and reduced

the need for physical presence at the auction floor. Electronic dispatch systems have replaced manual documentation processes, improving efficiency and reducing administrative delays. The platform also supports multiple simultaneous auction sessions, increasing capacity and improving throughput. These innovations have enhanced transparency, reduced transaction costs and positioned the auction to better serve a global buyer base that increasingly demands speed and efficiency in commodity trading.

Sustainability and climate resilience in tea production

Environmental sustainability has become a central focus of the tea industry’s long-term strategy. Tea production relies heavily on biomass energy, particularly wood fuel used in drying processes.

To address sustainability concerns, industry guidelines require factories to maintain dedicated woodlots, particularly eucalyptus plantations, to ensure a renewable supply of fuel. At the same time, there is a growing shift toward replacing eucalyptus trees near water sources with indigenous species to protect ecosystems.

Climate change has further intensified the need for innovation. Research institutions are developing new tea varieties that can withstand drought, frost and increased pest pressure. These climate-resilient cultivars are expected to play a key role in sustaining productivity under increasingly unpredictable weather conditions.

Sustainability frameworks within the sector are also guided by four key pillars: social responsibility, economic viability, environmental protection and technical efficiency. Together, these standards aim to ensure long-term competitiveness while balancing environmental and social obligations.

Branding and value addition challenges

Despite its global dominance in production, Kenya’s tea is still largely exported in bulk form. In many international markets, Kenyan tea is blended with other origins and sold under foreign brands, limiting its visibility and identity. Industry leaders argue that this represents a missed opportunity in value creation. Efforts are now underway to explore direct branding and marketing strategies that would allow Kenyan tea to reach consumers under its own identity. The approach mirrors successful global models such as Sri Lanka’s Ceylon Tea and India’s Darjeeling Tea, which have built strong geographical branding and premium positioning in international markets. Developing similar recognition for Kenyan tea could significantly

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“THE INDUSTRY REMAINS A PILLAR OF OUR AGRICULTURAL ECONOMY,” OMUGA SAYS. “BUT MAINTAINING GLOBAL LEADERSHIP WILL REQUIRE CONTINUOUS MODERNIZATION OF THE ENTIRE VALUE CHAIN.”

enhance export earnings and strengthen the country’s position in high-value retail segments.

Governance and industry coordination

The East African Tea Trade Association brings together more than 300 members across the value chain, including producers, buyers, brokers, warehouse operators and exporters. This inclusive governance structure ensures that decision-making reflects the interests of the entire industry ecosystem. It also helps maintain trust and coordination in a sector where multiple stakeholders depend on efficient market functioning.

Outlook: balancing reform, innovation and competitiveness

The future of East Africa’s tea industry will depend on how effectively it balances policy reform, technological innovation and sustainability.

Key priorities include reducing production costs, improving efficiency in the auction system, strengthening branding and increasing domestic value addition.

For EATTA leadership, the focus is on ensuring that East Africa does not remain only a supplier of raw commodities but evolves into a stronger player in global tea branding and retail markets.

“The industry remains a pillar of our agricultural economy,” Omuga says. “But maintaining global leadership will require continuous modernization of the entire value chain.”

As the Mombasa Tea Auction continues to evolve, it remains a critical link between East African farmers and global consumers, anchored by seven decades of trade, transformation and adaptation, and now facing its next phase of reinvention.



FROM SADOLIN TO KANSAI PLASCON: REINVENTING A LEGACY BRAND IN KENYA'S COATINGS MARKET

What began as Sadolin Paints in the 1950s has, following its 2017 acquisition by Japan's Kansai Paint, evolved into a company positioning itself as a premium force in East Africa's coatings industry. As Kansai Plascon Kenya marks nearly a decade under its current banner, Managing Director Mr. Kota Enami reflects on a journey shaped by transformation, discipline, and a renewed focus on quality.

"Even though the company's name is Kansai Plascon Kenya, the roots are from Sadolin Paints, which has been in operation since the 1950s," Enami says.

"We may look like a 10-year-old company, but we have very deep roots in Kenya, and we're proud to still be operating strongly in this market."

From Acquisition to Cultural Reset

The 2017 acquisition was part of Kansai Paint's broader strategy to expand into Africa's growing coatings market. But beyond rebranding, it introduced a shift in how the business operates.

"Becoming part of Kansai Paint was a big step forward," Enami explains. "We now report to Japan, which is a listed company in Japan Stock Exchange. We have the responsibility to be compliant, transparent and effective to the investors and the market which has changed how we work, making our processes more structured, efficient, and sophisticated." Backed by a global network spanning Japan, India, Europe, and Southeast Asia, the company can respond more quickly to changing market needs. "If we don't have a product locally, we can source it from within the group. That flexibility allows us to meet emerging demands much faster."



Mr. Kota Enami, Managing Director Kansai Plascon Kenya

Betting on Decorative Growth

While historically strong in automotive and industrial coatings, segments where performance often outweighs price, Kansai Plascon is now pushing deeper into decorative paints, which account for the majority of Kenya's coatings market. "The Kenyan market is growing steadily, and the biggest growth is in decorative paints," Enami says. "We have a reputation in automotive and



Kota Enami, Managing Director of Kansai Plascon Paints, showcases the company's premium paint solutions, reflecting a commitment to innovation, quality, and vibrant transformation across homes and businesses.

industrial, so the focus now is to build that same strength in decorative."

The transition, however, has not been without challenges. Moving away from the widely recognized Sadolin name to Plascon required rebuilding brand awareness.

"The greatest difficulty was the rebranding," he admits. "Even now, we feel we haven't done enough, so we are still investing in building the brand." The decorative segment remains highly competitive, dominated by established players and strong price sensitivity. Kansai Plascon's strategy is to differentiate through quality and consistency, drawing on its industrial heritage.

Innovation with Local Relevance

A key part of that positioning is innovation aligned with global trends and local realities. The company is accelerating its shift from solvent-based to water-based paints, which offer lower environmental impact. On regulatory compliance, particularly around lead-free products, Enami is clear, saying, "As part of Kansai Paint, we already comply with global policies, including lead-free standards."

Sustainability efforts are guided by the Kansai Paint Group's 2030 targets, including reducing greenhouse gas emissions and energy consumption. Rather than relying on offsets, the focus is on operational improvements, from factory efficiency to transport systems. "We want to be practical," Enami says. "There's still a lot we can improve on the ground, in machinery, logistics, and energy use."

Investing in People and the Market

Beyond products, Kansai Plascon is investing heavily in its



ecosystem, particularly painters, who play a critical role in influencing product choice. Each year, the company trains between 1,500 and 1,700 painters, bringing the total to nearly 20,000 over the past decade. "The painters are our most important stakeholders," Enami notes. "Once they use the product, they understand the quality." The long-running Rangi ya Chapaa incentive program is also being digitized, with plans for an app that will track performance and reward top painters across the country, offering both recognition and data-driven insights.

Digital Shift and a Challenger Mindset

Internally, digital tools are improving efficiency, enabling real-time sales tracking and faster decision-making. "Tasks that used to take days now take minutes," Enami says. "That allows our teams to focus more on customers and field engagement."

He describes the company's approach to decorative paints as that of a challenger brand. "We may be leaders in automotive and industrial coatings, but in decorative, we are challengers—and challengers cannot afford to stand still."

Looking Ahead

With Kenya's paint market growing alongside the construction sector, Kansai Plascon is positioning itself for long-term expansion. The goal is clear: to strengthen its place among the top players while building a reputation as a leading premium decorative brand.

"I see Kansai Plascon Kenya growing strongly over the next decade," Enami says. "We want to lead in the premium space while continuing to support our customers and partners."

In a market where price often drives decisions, the company is making a longer-term bet that consistent quality, strong relationships, and adaptability will define leadership.

A DECADE OF GRIT AND INNOVATION:
HOW HYDRO ALUMINIUM IS RESHAPING
MANUFACTURING IN EAST AFRICA



Standing Left is the CFO Mr. Rahil Shah, and Right is the CEO Mr. Keval Shah



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The manufacturing industry often brings to mind labor-heavy processes, high energy demands, and a constant hunger for raw materials. Yet over the past decade, Hydro Aluminium Limited has been quietly redefining that narrative. In a sector long dominated by legacy firms the company's rise has been shaped by innovation, resilience, and a clear sense of purpose.

The aluminium extrusion manufacturer has been supplying companies across East and Central Africa with high-quality aluminium profiles since 2018, building a reputation for reliability and timely delivery. That consistency, according to the company's leadership, has helped position it among the region's preferred extruders.

"Ten years is a long time. We started with a team of four, and today we've grown to about 180 staff," says CEO Keval Shah. Carving out space in a competitive industry has not come easy. But for the company's leadership, the strategy has always been grounded in solving real problems rather than chasing abstract growth.

Rather than emerging from abstract ambition, the company was built around real industry frustrations. CFO Rahil Shah notes that persistent gaps in quality and service timelines created an opportunity for disruption. Keval adds that delays were not just a fabrication issue but extended across the supply chain, from suppliers to project execution, an inefficiency the company set out to correct from the start.

Early Challenges and Strategic Milestones

In its early days, the company faced a fundamental challenge: a shortage of specialized skills in Kenya's aluminium extrusion space. "We had to learn through trial and error," Keval recalls.

The commissioning of machinery in 2018 marked a turning point, allowing the company to move into mass production. More importantly, the integration of surface treatment processes enabled it to evolve beyond basic extrusion into a vertically integrated operation. By



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Industry
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controlling the final stages of production, the company improved product consistency, shortened turnaround times, and strengthened its position as a quality-driven manufacturer.

At the same time, it began to challenge stagnation in the architectural aluminium space, where designs had remained largely unchanged for years. By introducing new profiles, the company expanded both functionality and aesthetic possibilities.

Its influence has also extended beyond construction. Working closely with bus body builders, an industry increasingly shifting toward lighter, more energy-efficient mobility, the company has co-developed designs suited to evolving transport needs.

Simultaneously, its move into renewable energy, particularly solar mounting structures, places it at the intersection of industrial growth and sustainability.

Behind the growth lies a deliberate and disciplined operational strategy.

"We've invested heavily in building a reliable and responsive raw material pipeline," says Rahil. "That way, production isn't at the mercy of long lead times."

In an industry where delays can stretch for months, this foresight has allowed the company to remain agile and dependable. By aligning procurement, inventory, and production cycles, it has turned efficiency into a clear competitive advantage. That advantage is reinforced by continuous investment in technology. Over the years, the company has upgraded its machinery, testing equipment, and internal systems to keep pace with global standards.

More recently, the integration of AI into its operational software has streamlined processes and sped up decision-making. "Tasks that once took hours can now be completed in a fraction of the time," says Keval, "allowing teams to focus on higher-value work."

Financial and Operational Strategy



Congratulations to Hydro Aluminium Ltd on 10 Years of Steady Growth and Industry Leadership

Succeeding for ten years in manufacturing demands that an organisation possess a vision worth standing behind, the right people in the right roles, and systems that hold under pressure.

Hydro Aluminium Ltd has spent ten years putting those pieces in place, and it's paid off. What was once a small fabrication operation is now one of the leading aluminium extrusion manufacturers in East and Central Africa.

It's been our pleasure at Bridge Talent Management to be part of that story since 2022. As Hydro's people partner, our work has touched recruitment, HR outsourcing, immigration services, and dedicated on-site support.

We have played a hands-on role in managing Hydro's workforce and supporting a smooth and consistent HR operation on the ground. The partnership has ensured consistent payroll delivery, a successfully implemented centralised HRM system, and seamless day-to-day employee support that keeps Hydro's workforce running at its best.

Fifteen years of serving organisations have taught us that great people power great companies, and it takes the right systems and partners to sustain that.



It's the principle we have applied to organisations across Kenya in talent acquisition, payroll management, labor compliance, and workforce outsourcing, and it is the same principle that has steered our work with Hydro from day one.

We look forward to standing alongside Hydro Aluminium as they step into their next decade of growth.

Congratulations, Hydro. Here's to ten years well built.

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Congratulations from Team CSI

To our wonderful client Hydro Aluminium, Team CSI are proud to be partners in progress, and celebrate your 10 years of excellence, growth, and trusted services. This milestone is a testament to the trust of your clients, the dedication by your team, and the strong partnerships you have built along the way. As we mark this significant achievement, we remain committed to providing reliable, forward thinking insurance solutions that protect what matters most to you now, and into the future.

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SUPPLEMENT FEATURE

Equally central to its strategy is a strong emphasis on people. “We’ve built a culture of ownership and continuous learning,” he adds. Employees are encouraged to contribute to problem-solving and innovation, not just execute tasks.

According to management, this approach has strengthened accountability while creating clear growth pathways, with several team members rising from entry-level roles through the ranks.

Sustainability and Regional Dynamics

Sustainability has become a core pillar of the company’s operations. “Aluminium is one of the most recyclable materials,” Rahil notes.

As a result, the company has gradually shifted from relying on virgin imports to sourcing and processing scrap. This transition, supported by its move into vertical integration in 2019, has helped maintain product quality while reducing environmental impact.

Beyond materials, the company has invested in solar energy at its plant and introduced water recycling systems within its production processes, reflecting a broader shift toward resource efficiency.

At the same time, the aluminium sector itself is evolving. In Kenya, the rise of electric mobility, particularly in the bus sector, is driving demand for lightweight materials, while the growth of renewable energy is creating new opportunities for aluminium applications. Across the region, increasing industrialization is also opening the door for more specialized components, pointing to a wider story of economic transition and opportunity.

Values and Achievements

A decade in, the company has anchored its operations on ethics and transparency.

“Honesty isn’t just a value, it’s a practical approach to problem-solving and long-term sustainability,” says Keval. By fostering openness internally and building trust

externally, the company has cultivated relationships that go beyond transactional engagements.

Its achievements extend beyond production volumes and market share. It has also played a role in expanding product innovation within Kenya’s aluminium sector, introducing designs and applications that continue to broaden industry possibilities.

Despite its progress, the company continues to navigate structural challenges within Kenya’s manufacturing sector.

Among the most significant is the high cost of power, an issue that heavily impacts energy-intensive industries like aluminium processing.

“Overlapping regulations, licenses, and tariffs also add to production costs,” Rahil explains, noting that such constraints can limit competitiveness both regionally and globally. Addressing these challenges, he adds, is not just important for businesses but critical for unlocking the full potential of Kenya’s manufacturing sector.

Even so, the company is looking ahead. According to Marketing Executive Joan Mutheki, the focus is on deepening its presence across East Africa while broadening its identity.

“We want to move from being just a manufacturer of aluminium profiles

to a provider of integrated solutions,” she says. Central to that vision is continued investment in product development, aimed at unlocking new applications and supporting emerging industries.

“We envision a future where we continue to build trust across industries and work collaboratively to drive growth, not just for ourselves, but for the wider region,” she adds.

For Keval, the ambition is straightforward: to be seen not just as a manufacturer, but as a reliable partner helping shape the future of industry in East and Central Africa.

POWERING THE SHIFT: HOW SPIRO IS REWIRING AFRICA’S TWO-WHEEL ECONOMY

Across Africa’s cities, the hum of the boda boda has long been synonymous with economic survival, fast, flexible, and deeply embedded in daily life.

But beneath that familiar rhythm, a quieter revolution of electric mobility is taking shape and scaling fast. For instance, Spiro is reimagining electric mobility, not just as a climate solution, but as an economic engine.

“We believe in the continent,” says Raymond Kitunga, Deputy Country Head at Spiro Kenya. “The opportunity was clear, clean, affordable commercial mobility, and the environmental imperative. These are challenges that cut across every African country.”

From Petrol to Power: A Market Ready for Disruption

Africa’s transport ecosystem is vast, with over 30 million petrol-powered motorcycles moving people and goods daily. For decades, the internal combustion engine has been the backbone of informal transport. But it is also increasingly expensive, volatile, and environmentally unsustainable. Spiro’s model challenges that status quo directly.

At the core is a simple but powerful idea: remove the biggest barriers to electric vehicle adoption, charging time, and cost unpredictability.



Their solution? Battery-as-a-Service (BaaS).

“We specifically chose battery swapping because these riders cannot afford downtime,” Kitunga explains. “They need to be on the road, earning. Swapping allows them to continue working without interruption.” Instead of waiting hours to charge, riders swap depleted batteries for fully charged ones in minutes, keeping their income streams intact.

More Money, Less Cost: The Economics of Electrification

For riders, the shift is not just environmental, it’s financial. According to Spiro, electric motorcycles cut operating costs significantly:

- Up to 40% savings on maintenance
- Stable energy costs over time
- Lower cost per kilometre compared to petrol

“You’re saving close to 35 to 40 percent compared to petrol,” says Kitunga. “And for over 14 months, our swap prices have remained constant.” That price stability stands in stark contrast to fuel markets, where prices fluctuate frequently, often driven by global geopolitical shocks. For riders operating on thin margins, predictability matters. “It allows them to plan,” Kitunga



Raymond Kitunga, Spiro Kenya

adds. “They know what they will spend over the next year. That’s something petrol cannot offer.”

Infrastructure at Scale: Building the Backbone

According to Kitunga, scaling electric mobility in Africa is about infrastructure.

From just 22 swap stations in Mombasa, Spiro has expanded rapidly across Kenya, now operating in 35 counties with over 400 battery swap stations across its markets.



Raymond Kitunga/Spiro-During-National-EMobility-Policy-Launch

That growth, Kitunga says, has been intentional.

“You need strong partnerships. You need to map the country correctly. And you need to understand where demand density exists,” he explains. “This is not light work; it requires coordination across multiple stakeholders.” The result is a growing energy network designed around rider convenience, minimizing downtime while maximizing accessibility.

Beyond Mobility: A Triple Impact Model

Spiro’s value proposition extends beyond transport and sits at the intersection of:

- Climate action
- Economic empowerment
- Energy transition

“When a rider earns more, the impact goes beyond the individual,” Kitunga notes. “They invest in education, reinvest in business, and support families. That’s how economies grow.”

It’s a multiplier effect, one that positions electric mobility as a development tool, not just a technology shift.

The Battery Question: Solving the Sustainability Puzzle

Critics of electric mobility often point to a hidden challenge of battery disposal. Spiro’s response is a three-life-cycle model designed to extend battery use and minimize waste. “The battery doesn’t just die after one use,” Kitunga explains. “It starts in mobility, then moves to stationary use, like backup power, and finally, up to 68% of its components are recycled.” In total, a single battery can last 8 to 10 years across these stages.

“We’ve already built partnerships for the final recycling phase,” he adds. “We don’t want to see landfills filled with batteries in the future.”

Made in Kenya: Local Manufacturing Takes Shape

Spiro is also betting on local production. At its assembly plant in Kenya, the company can produce over 50,000 bikes annually, with a growing push toward localization.

“We are adding 11 locally sourced components,” Kitunga says. “Our goal is to create a product that reflects the true DNA of Kenya.” The move aligns with broader efforts to strengthen manufacturing and reduce reliance on imports, while creating jobs across the value chain.

Policy, Markets, and the Road Ahead

Electric mobility in Africa is still in its early stages, but momentum is building.



Smart Swap

Governments are beginning to take notice. Countries like Rwanda and Ethiopia have already introduced aggressive policies to limit internal combustion engines.

In Kenya, Kitunga credits policy support as a key enabler.

“The government has done a brilliant job creating a conducive environment,” he says. “But we need continued policy support, financing solutions, and stakeholder alignment.” Financial institutions, too, are starting to engage, especially as new models reduce risks around asset financing.

A Sector Accelerated by Global Shifts

Global energy volatility is adding urgency to the transition. As fuel prices fluctuate due to geopolitical tensions, electric mobility is becoming not just viable but necessary.

“We are prepared,” Kitunga says. “We have positioned ourselves for anyone ready to transition.” With over 21,000 electric bikes already on Kenyan roads, adoption is gaining traction. “These riders cannot be wrong,” he adds. “There is something they have discovered, and it is working.”

The Quiet Revolution

Kitunga emphasizes that the shift to electric mobility in Africa will not happen overnight. But it is happening, incrementally, commercially, and at scale.

“Not through grand announcements, but through everyday decisions: a rider choosing to save on fuel, a business investing in efficiency, a city quietly reducing emissions,” he says, concluding that in that sense, the revolution is already underway.

LEADERSHIP

SKILLS, RESILIENCE AND INDUSTRY LEADERSHIP IN A TIME OF DISRUPTION

By Sharon Mosin

When we speak about Kenya's journey towards a competitive, industrialised, middleincome economy, the focus often centres on infrastructure, markets, and investment. However, through my daily interactions with companies, in workshops, and with training institutions, one fundamental truth emerges: the future of our industry rests on people; especially their skills, the opportunities they access, and their preparedness for a rapidly changing world.

This human aspect of industrialization has never been more important. Kenya, like many emerging economies, is undergoing transformation amid significant disruption. Climate change is altering production and consumption patterns. Technology is redefining how work is organised. Geopolitical instability is impacting energy prices, supply chains, and the cost of doing business.

The tensions around the Strait of Hormuz; through which nearly a quarter of global oil and gas trade typically flows, reminds us how distant events can swiftly disrupt production systems everywhere, including here in Kenya. For a growing manufacturing economy and a net energy importer, the lesson is unmistakable: industrial resilience can solely rely on physical infrastructure; it must also be built through skills.

This reality becomes especially evident in the context of green transition. Kenya has made notable progress in renewable energy and is beginning to gain traction in electric mobility, energyefficient buildings, and cleaner production processes. These advancements are essential for competitiveness, energy security, and climate resilience.

However, industries can only thrive when skilled individuals are available to install, operate, maintain, and adapt modern systems. Quite simply; a **green economy cannot function without green skills.**



Laura Amulele Ambayi, Electrical Apprentice at Rina Systems Limited, at the Don Bosco Boys Town Electrical Workshop, showcasing her class project.

Through PropelA, our industryled dual apprenticeship initiative, we have seen the benefits of skills development rooted in real workplace environment. Implemented in partnership with 70+ companies, together with National Industrial Training Authority (NITA), the Kenya Association of Manufacturers (KAM), and Don Bosco Boys Town, PropelA brings learning into the workplace, where theory is tested against real production demands.

Apprentices spend 75% of their training time inside companies, gaining hands-on experience while building strong technical foundations. The result is a pipeline of electricians, plumbers, and technicians who are

not only qualified on paper, but genuinely workready for modern, energyefficient, and increasingly digital industrial environments. This approach is not coincidental. It is a direct response to how the world of work itself is changing.

The World Economic Forum projects that nearly a quarter of all jobs globally will change significantly within the next five years, driven by the green transition, digitalisation, and rising geopolitical volatility.

Employers are already feeling this shift, as skills gaps in many sectors now pose as much risk to productivity and continuity as supplychain disruptions or rising energy costs. Preparing

“
**APPRENTICES
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EXPERIENCE WHILE
BUILDING STRONG
TECHNICAL
FOUNDATIONS.**

for the future of work, therefore, is not about predicting tomorrow's job titles. It is about equipping people with the capacity to adapt; technically, digitally, and entrepreneurially, as industries evolve.

This mindset underpins our Future Fit approach, which responds to a challenge many manufacturers now face: skills systems built for fixed roles in increasingly dynamic value chains. As production becomes more digital, greener, and more interconnected, companies need workers who can adapt to changing technologies, processes, and standards. Future Fit aligns skills development with evolving industrial demand; particularly across digital and green value chains, so firms can sustain productivity and competitiveness as markets and business models continue to shift.

Kenya's demographics add urgency to this discussion. With nearly 75% of the population under the age of 35, the country holds a powerful human-capital opportunity, yet too many youths, particularly women and those from disadvantaged backgrounds, remain excluded from emerging sectors due to misaligned pathways into skilled work.

Our experience shows that inclusion does not mean lowering standards; industryanchored models, expand access while preserving quality and productivity, recognising competence alongside credentials and linking skills directly to decent work or enterprise.

Over Swisscontact's decades of work in Kenya and other emerging economies, one lesson is clear: lasting impact comes when the private sector is part of the engine, not just a beneficiary. Workforce development is no longer peripheral; it sits at the heart of industrial competitiveness, resilience, and growth. Countries that withstand disruption best are those that invest early in local capability and treat skills as strategic infrastructure.

If Kenya is to engineer a sustainable industrial future, industry must lead this shift. If we get that right, Kenya's industrial future will be greener, more innovative and inclusive and firmly rooted in local capability.

We invite private sector partners to join the 70+ companies already engaged through PropelA, investing in a workready talent pipeline that reduces skills gaps, strengthens productivity, and supports longterm competitiveness for both their businesses and Kenya's industrial economy!

The writer is the Country Director at Swisscontact Kenya.

FedEx, Kenya Association of Manufacturers strengthen commitment to powering Kenya's manufacturing and trade ambitions



Managing Director of Sales for Sub-Saharan Africa at FedEx giving his address during the CEOs Manufacturers Breakfast in partnership with FedEx

Nairobi, Kenya: 14th April 2026: Federal Express Corporation (FedEx), one of the world's largest express transportation companies, in collaboration with Kenya Association of Manufacturers (KAM), convened a high-level Industry CEOs Breakfast, highlighting how time-definite logistics can unlock Kenya's manufacturing growth and export competitiveness.

The engagement comes at a pivotal moment for Kenya's industrial sector, as the country seeks to increase manufacturing's contribution to GDP from 7.3% (KNBS, 2025) to 20% by 2030. As global supply chains continue to evolve alongside shifting logistics cost dynamics, indus-

try leaders underscored the importance of enhancing the speed, reliability, and integration of transport solutions.

The forum brought together senior executives, policy-makers, and logistics experts to examine how Kenya can strengthen its position in time-sensitive, high-value industries such as pharmaceuticals, automotive, electronics, and agribusiness.

Opening the session, KAM Chief Executive Tobias Alando warned that ongoing geopolitical tensions are already placing significant strain on manufacturers, increasing the cost of trade and disrupting established supply routes.

"Global dynamics continue to affect the manufacturing sector in Kenya. Beyond global developments, structural factors within the logistics ecosystem, such as regulatory requirements and infrastructure capacity, play a role in shaping the competitiveness of locally manufactured goods in regional and international markets," said Mr. Alando.

Leon Bruwer, Managing Director of Sales for Sub-Saharan Africa at FedEx, reaffirmed the company's long-term commitment to Kenya, noting that its designation as one of only nine direct-serve markets in Africa reflects a strategic focus on the country's trade and investment potential.

He noted, *"Kenya is a strategic player in our growth story in Africa. Our continued investment in capacity to and from Nairobi, combined with our global air network, enables businesses to access international markets with greater speed, reliability and predictability."*

Kenya's strong global position in perishable exports such as tea and flowers already demonstrates the value of speed and reliability in logistics. As the country expands into higher-value manufacturing, precision logistics – enabled by integrated global air networks – will become increasingly central to maintaining product integrity, reduc-



Leon Bruwer - Managing Director of Sales for Sub-Saharan Africa at FedEx & Tobias Alando - Chief Executive at KAM during the CEOs Manufacturers Breakfast in partnership with FedEx

ing lead times, and meeting international market demands.

However, stakeholders noted that while air freight offers unmatched speed and reliability, there is an opportunity for policymakers and industry players to further enhance its accessibility and commercial viability for SMEs across African trade routes.

FedEx is also enhancing cross-border trade through digital solutions and streamlined customs processes, enabling Kenyan businesses, particularly SMEs, to navigate international logistics more efficiently and scale globally.

The forum concluded with a shared commitment from FedEx and KAM to deepen collaboration in support of Kenya's manufacturing ecosystem, with a focus on enhancing global connectivity, improving access to efficient logistics solutions, and enabling businesses to participate more competitively in international trade.

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OPENING THE SESSION, KAM CHIEF EXECUTIVE TOBIAS ALANDO WARNED THAT ONGOING GEOPOLITICAL TENSIONS ARE ALREADY PLACING SIGNIFICANT STRAIN ON MANUFACTURERS, INCREASING THE COST OF TRADE AND DISRUPTING ESTABLISHED SUPPLY ROUTES.

High logistics costs lock SMEs out of African markets, new study shows

KAM launches Logistics Study Report



Dignitaries that graced the Launch of the Logistics Study

Monday, 30th March 2026, Nairobi: Kenya's manufacturing sector has called for urgent action to address logistics bottlenecks that continue to undermine competitiveness and limit the country's ability to fully benefit from the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). This was during the launch of the Logistics Study Report by Kenya Association of Manufacturers (KAM).

Findings from the report reveal that logistics costs across key trade corridors remain high and unpredictable, often outweighing the benefits of tariff reductions under AfCFTA. For instance, transporting a 20-foot container along the Nairobi-Lusaka corridor costs between USD 3,500 and USD 7,000, with transit times ranging from 8

to 30 days depending on border conditions and operational disruptions.

The study further highlights that while AfCFTA has opened access to 54 countries, the ability of Kenyan manufacturers; particularly SMEs, to access these markets is constrained by inefficiencies in logistics systems, including border delays, infrastructure gaps, high freight costs, and limited cargo consolidation mechanisms.

Speaking during the launch, Principal Secretary, State Department for Trade, Dr. Juma Mukhwana, CBS, highlighted the role of government in creating an enabling business environment and addressing structural barriers to trade.

"The work of government is to develop the right policies and ensure the business environment is conducive for enterprises to grow. Kenya's time is now, and Africa's time is now. We must move from exporting raw materials and importing finished goods to building value locally and regionally. This calls for investments in infrastructure, support for SMEs, and stronger regional integration. Africa remains a fragmented market, and aligning standards and systems will be key in unlocking its full potential," said Dr Mukhwana.

He noted that ongoing government interventions, including investments in infrastructure such as the Standard Gauge Railway and the development of County Aggregation and Industrial Parks(CAIPs), are aimed at improving efficiency, supporting industries, and enabling SMEs to access raw materials and markets more effectively.

KAM Chief Executive, Tobias Alando, emphasized that logistics, not market access, is now the defining constraint to competitiveness. "The African Continental Free Trade Area brings together 54 countries into a single market, creating significant opportunity for Kenyan manufacturers. But there is a clear gap between that opportunity and reality.

While markets are opening, the systems that connect us to those markets are not moving at the same pace. This report confirms that the challenge is no longer just access, but the cost, efficiency, and predictability of moving goods. In many cases, logistics costs now outweigh the benefits of tariff reductions, meaning that even when markets are open, products are not competitive by the time they arrive."

Representing the SME perspective, KAM SME Hub Chair and Founder of Harriet Botanicals, Harriet Ngo'k, highlighted the disproportionate logistics burden faced by SMEs despite their critical role in the economy. She reiterated, "I export to over 50 countries, and the cost of moving goods is one of the biggest challenges we face as SMEs. For products worth KSh 30,000, it costs me KSh 14,000 to get them to Rwanda, KSh 17,000 to Nigeria, KSh 38,000 to Australia, KSh 30,000 to the U.S., and about KSh 10,000 to Qatar. These costs are high and unpredictable, and they directly affect where and how we can trade."

She also noted that inefficiencies across key trade corridors continue to limit competitiveness: "On routes such as the Lusaka corridor, transport costs remain high and transit times are unpredictable, with delays at borders slowing movement despite high traffic volumes. For SMEs dealing in perishable goods, these delays translate into direct losses: My products have a shelf life of three to six months, yet it can take seven to ten days just to reach nearby markets like Uganda. By the time they arrive, I have already lost part of that shelf life, and there is always the risk of rejection."

TradeMark Africa Country Director, Lilian Mwai, noted that the study provides a critical foundation for targeted reforms to unlock trade and strengthen manufacturing competitiveness. "TradeMark Africa is proud to have partnered with KAM on this initiative. This study goes beyond identifying challenges: it pinpoints the real bottlenecks affecting Kenyan manufacturers, particularly SMEs. From high clearance costs to infrastructure delays and inefficiencies in logistics systems, these are issues that must be addressed to unlock intra-African trade and enable businesses to compete effectively."

The report recommends targeted interventions to address these constraints, including improved coordination across border agencies, investment in reliable and efficient infrastructure, and the development of cargo aggregation mechanisms to support SMEs in reducing logistics costs and improving market access.

The preparation of the Logistics Study Report was made possible

through the support of TradeMark Africa (TMA), with funding from the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) of the British High Commission in Kenya, in support of efforts to strengthen trade facilitation and export competitiveness.

“THE AFRICAN CONTINENTAL FREE TRADE AREA BRINGS TOGETHER 54 COUNTRIES INTO A SINGLE MARKET, CREATING SIGNIFICANT OPPORTUNITY FOR KENYAN MANUFACTURERS. BUT THERE IS A CLEAR GAP BETWEEN THAT OPPORTUNITY AND REALITY. WHILE MARKETS ARE OPENING, THE SYSTEMS THAT CONNECT US TO THOSE MARKETS ARE NOT MOVING AT THE SAME PACE.

Manufacturing Outlook 2025: Charting the path to Kenya's industrial success



KAM Board Vice Chair - Hitesh Mediratta

Thursday, 27th March 2025, Nairobi: Kenya's manufacturing sector is at a pivotal point, with both emerging opportunities and existing challenges shaping its future. The *Manufacturing Outlook 2025* paints a clear picture of the current landscape; highlighting the sector's potential to drive economic growth, job creation, and industrial transformation. However, high production costs, policy uncertainties, and underutilized market opportunities continue to slow progress.

In response, Kenya Association of Manufacturers (KAM) has launched the *Manufacturing Priority Agenda (MPA) 2025*, a strategic roadmap designed to strengthen

local industries, enhance global competitiveness, and create a more predictable business environment. Kenya's industrial sector remains a key driver of economic progress, but growth has been tempered by factors such as rising operational costs and market access limitations.

KAM Board Chair, Jane Karuku reaffirmed KAM's commitment to driving sustainable industrialization for national prosperity. "At KAM, our purpose is to create prosperity for the nation through sustainable industrialization. This means advocating for policies that empower manufacturers, strengthen local industries, and

“AS KENYA NAVIGATES THE MANUFACTURING LANDSCAPE IN 2025, ALL STAKEHOLDERS—GOVERNMENT, INDUSTRY PLAYERS, AND DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS; NEED TO WORK TOGETHER TO ENSURE SUSTAINED GROWTH.”



Dignitaries During the launch of the Manufacturing Priority Agenda 2026.

create jobs. We also need to encourage our own consumption through Buy Kenya, Build Kenya. The younger generation is already showing enthusiasm for locally made products, and we want to build on this momentum. These MPAs serve as crucial roadmaps, guiding policies, supporting MSMEs, and ensuring local industries scale up effectively."

KAM Chief Executive, Tobias Alando called for intentionality in policy reforms to enhance the sector's global competitiveness. "We must be deliberate about creating a predictable tax environment that fosters business growth. Our focus should be on export competitiveness, SME development, and a regulatory framework that supports industrial expansion."

Kenya's geographic position offers significant advantages for regional and international trade, yet intra-African trade remains relatively low. Dr. Juma Mukhwana, Principal Secretary, State Department of Industry, noted that, "Intra-Africa trade accounts for only 15%, which means we continue to rely heavily on external markets. At the same time, China is manufacturing ten times more than the entire African continent. While we are making progress in opening markets, it is equally important to ensure that our industries

are equipped to meet this demand."

Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Investments, Trade, and Industry, Hon. Lee Kinyanjui, highlighted the need for collaborative solutions to longstanding barriers. "Energy costs remain a significant concern, and it is important to explore ways of making manufacturing more competitive. Additionally, we need to reassess multiple levies imposed at the county level to ease the cost burden on industries. A balanced approach to taxation, one that considers long-term industrial growth, will be key to unlocking the sector's full potential."

As Kenya navigates the manufacturing landscape in 2025, all stakeholders—government, industry players, and development partners; need to work together to ensure sustained growth. Countries like Vietnam and China have demonstrated that with the right policies, investment in industrial capacity, and a united effort, manufacturing can become a major driver of economic transformation. Kenya has the potential to follow suit, but success will depend on bold, coordinated action to propel the sector forward.

Manufacturers call for urgent regulatory reforms to cut cost of doing business

KAM launches Regulatory Audit Report



CS MITI - Hon. Lee Kinyanjui

Tuesday, 10th March 2026, Nairobi: Kenya's manufacturing sector has called for urgent regulatory reforms to address the rising cost of regulation and duplication of levies that are undermining the competitiveness of local industries. This emerged during the launch of the Regulatory Audit Report for the Manufacturing Sector by the Kenya Association of Manufacturers (KAM).

The study reveals that manufacturers face a complex regulatory environment characterized by multiple licensing requirements, overlapping mandates among regulatory agencies, and rising compliance costs imposed at both national and county levels. In many cases, businesses are required to obtain numerous permits and

undergo repeated inspections from different agencies regulating similar operational areas, significantly increasing the cost of compliance.

Speaking during the launch, the Cabinet Secretary for the Ministry of Investments, Trade and Industry Hon. Lee Kinyanjui acknowledged the regulatory challenges raised by manufacturers and reaffirmed the Government's commitment to strengthening Kenya's industrial policy framework. He noted that the Government is currently developing an Industrial Policy aimed at addressing key structural challenges affecting the manufacturing sector, including fiscal policy, regulatory predictability, and industrial competitiveness.

"Manufacturing remains the only sector with the strong



Tobias Alando, Bharat Shah - KAM Board Member, Former KAM Chairperson - Mucai Kuniya.

potential to create sustainable jobs for our economy. The industrial policy which we are developing will set out solutions to many of the issues raised by manufacturers, including fiscal policy concerns and regulatory stability and predictability. While government often views regulation as necessary for oversight and revenue, industry experiences it as a cost of doing business. What is important is that we strike the right balance to ensure predictability and the sustainability of Kenyan industries, particularly as they navigate global disruptions such as delays in the shipment of raw materials and other supply chain shocks," said Hon. Kinyanjui.

Chief of Staff at the Office of the Deputy President, Dr. Christopher Wanjau, highlighted the Government's ongoing efforts to combat illicit trade and counterfeit goods, which continue to undermine legitimate manufacturing businesses. He noted that a multi-agency committee coordinated by the Office of the Deputy President is actively working to strengthen enforcement against illicit trade and counterfeits in order to protect compliant businesses. "Unfair competition from counterfeit and illicit products continues to undermine legitimate manufacturers who invest heavily in quality production, regulatory compliance, and taxation. Through the multi-agency committee on illicit trade coordinated by the Office of the Deputy President, we are strengthening enforcement to ensure that businesses operating within the law are protected and that the market remains fair for local industries," noted Mr. Wanjau.

KAM Chief Executive Tobias Alando noted that the Regulatory Audit Report provides clear evidence that regulatory inefficiencies; particularly the duplication of fees, levies, and compliance requirements imposed at both national and county levels, have become a major structural constraint to industrial growth. He said, "The cumulative regulatory



CS MITI - Hon Lee Kinyanjui and CEO KAM - Tobias Alando.

burden on manufacturers has grown significantly over time. In some manufacturing sectors, businesses must obtain more than 50 licences, permits, fees, and charges from multiple regulatory agencies at both national and county levels. To mention just a few examples, the Pharmaceutical and Medical Equipment sector requires up to 57 licences, the Chemical and Allied sector 53, and the Food and Beverage sector 51. These overlapping mandates and rising compliance costs divert resources away from investment and innovation, ultimately weakening Kenya's competitiveness in regional and global markets."

He added that unless regulatory processes are streamlined, Kenya risks losing ground in regional trade frameworks such as the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), East African Community (EAC), COMESA, and other preferential trade arrangements including the EU-Kenya Economic Partnership Agreement and AGOA.

The report recommends harmonization of regulatory mandates among national and county agencies, improved fiscal predictability, and the adoption of county tariff pricing policies to ensure that fees and levies reflect the actual cost of services provided. It also calls for strengthened enforcement against illicit trade and the development of a national AfCFTA implementation strategy to support Kenyan manufacturers in accessing regional markets.hjk

Industry leaders noted that implementing these reforms would significantly reduce the cost of doing business, improve regulatory predictability, and enable Kenya's manufacturing sector to strengthen its competitiveness both regionally and globally.

The report was developed with support from TradeMark Africa through funding from British High Commission in Kenya.



BUILDING A 360-DEGREE FARMER ECOSYSTEM: INSIDE MAZAO NA AFYA'S GROWTH STRATEGY

Mazao Na Afya: Three Decades of Transforming Kenyan Agriculture



Dr. Peter Karanja, CEO Mazao na Afya Ltd

"Before we became Mazao na Afya Ltd, we were Farmers Price Centre Limited," recalled Dr. Peter Karanja Ndungu, CEO, as he reflected on the organization's 30-year journey.

His early days as an agricultural extension officer in Mwea Region gave him firsthand insight into the critical gaps in both input supply and farmer knowledge.

Founded in 1996 with a modest seed capital of KES 180,000, Mazao na Afya has since grown with a singular

mission: to deliver end-to-end agricultural solutions, combining quality inputs with expert guidance.

The 360° Farmer Support Model

"The farmer is very close to my heart," says Dr. Karanja, emphasizing, "we are not an input supplier, we are a solution provider." Under his guidance, Mazao na Afya has evolved beyond traditional retail into a fully integrated group model designed to bridge longstanding gaps across the agricultural value chain.

Today, the company serves as the anchor for distribution across Mt. Kenya and other key regions, while AgriPrice Centre Ltd, launched in 2016, focuses on addressing critical importation and crop nutrition needs. In 2022, Mazao Na Afya further expanded its portfolio with Agitec Seedlings, professionalizing seedling propagation, and complemented it with Mazao na Afya Sacco, a financial support framework that empowers both farmers and stockists.

"Farmers were travelling all the way to Naivasha for seedlings. We needed to bring that service closer to them," he explains. Dr. Karanja notes that with technology advancing, farmers can no longer rely solely on traditional backyard nurseries.

To address this, capacity building has been institutionalized through the annual Agitech Grad Expo, while digital transformation is taking shape via the M-Toroli App; an online platform that connects farmers directly to inputs, streamlining access and efficiency.

With branches in Nairobi (Kamaki's), Loitoktok, Malindi, Mutithi, Bura in Tana River, and Marigat in Baringo, Mazao na Afya has grown rapidly. A new headquarters, financed by KCB Bank, marks a major step forward.

"The space we were operating from had become restrictive. Efficiency demanded expansion, and this new facility is a significant milestone for the Mazao Group," says the CEO.

This reflects the company's strategic response to the evolving needs of Kenya's farming community. As it marks three decades of operation, Mazao Na Afya is positioning itself less as a shop and more as an agricultural institution.

To realize this, the group operates around a 360-degree farmer support model. "We want to support the farmer from seed to market."

This is done by providing soil testing and advisory services, including soil analysis, precision nutrient application through agronomy teams dispatched to farms. The institution has also incorporated drone spraying, mapping and fertilizer broadcasting.

Besides propagation, Mazao na Afya also does production support, supervised planting and follow-up, ensuring support continues until harvest. "The only challenge remaining now is the market, and we are looking for the value addition and processing to solve it," he highlights.

Climate Change & Adaptation Strategy

Dr. Karanja emphasizes that over-reliance on rainfed agriculture is no longer tenable, noting that failed rains last year resulted in significant losses for farmers. To mitigate such risks, Mazao na Afya, in partnership with key stakeholders, offers soil testing, irrigation guidance, and is promoting modern solutions like drone spraying.

"It is efficient, effective, and protects the farmer from chemical exposure," he explains. "We need to secure the farmers' investment through crops and livestock insurance."

The group's financial innovations have also transformed the adaptation landscape. Using stockists as last-mile distributors, their system operates on a 70% distribution and 30% retail model.

Through an ecosystem banking approach, banks can leverage Mazao na Afya's transaction data to set credit limits, with funds flowing directly from the bank to Mazao, eliminating delays and risks of misappropriation.

He underscores that Kenya is not yet food secure. "Farming must become agribusiness; we cannot continue importing maize while we have fertile land here," he asserts.

He advocates for deliberate government investment in dams and insists that value addition and processing must happen close to production zones to strengthen the agricultural sector.

Building Trust

In an industry often undermined by counterfeit inputs and weak enforcement, Mazao Na Afya has anchored its growth on regulatory discipline and institutional credibility.

The company operates in strict alignment with the Pest Control Products Board, the Kenya Plant Health Inspectorate Service, the Kenya Veterinary Board, the Agrochemical Association of Kenya and other compliance agencies a posture that shows emphasis on product integrity, phytosanitary standards, and responsible agrochemical stewardship.

Beyond compliance, Mazao Na Afya has cultivated long-term collaborations with global and regional industry leaders, including Syngenta East Africa, Bayer East Africa, Osho Chemical Industries, Twiga, Amiran, and Elgon.

These partnerships reinforce its positioning not merely as a distributor, but as a trusted industry player operating within Kenya's formal agricultural ecosystem.



In a market where trust determines both farmer livelihoods and food safety outcomes, regulatory compliance is not a box-ticking exercise; it is the backbone of the company's brand.

Innovating for the Future

With a comprehensive 360-degree support system now in place for farmers, Mazao na Afya is turning its focus to resilience. The company is exploring structured insurance partnerships to safeguard farmers against climate shocks, recognizing that productivity gains are meaningless without proper risk coverage.

Simultaneously, the Mazao na Afya Sacco is being scaled to deepen financial inclusion for both farmers and stockists, strengthening liquidity across the distribution network.

Dr. Karanja stresses that innovation must remain at the heart of every business, with digital integration forming the backbone of the company's long-term strategy.

The M-Toroli App exemplifies this approach, enabling farmers to order inputs remotely and receive delivery directly to their farms while embedding agronomist consultation into the purchasing process, merging advisory services and commerce on a single platform.

Internally, the company is piloting robotics and automation to optimize inventory management, reduce waste, and improve traceability.

In a sector marked by climate uncertainty and input inefficiencies, innovation is no longer optional; it is structural and embodied in every business model. Three

decades on from its modest beginnings, Mazao na Afya's core philosophy remains unchanged: when the farmer succeeds, the business succeeds.

As Kenya faces mounting food security pressures, climate variability, and the urgent need to transition from subsistence farming to agribusiness, private-sector actors like Mazao na Afya are positioning themselves as systems builders, connecting inputs, finance, technology, and knowledge across the value chain.

“

INTERNALLY, THE COMPANY IS PILOTING ROBOTICS AND AUTOMATION TO OPTIMIZE INVENTORY MANAGEMENT, REDUCE WASTE, AND IMPROVE TRACEABILITY.

Technology has exponential returns when it is well employed,” he observes. The fourth decade will test how effectively technology, insurance, and value addition can be integrated into this ecosystem. But if the past thirty years offer any indication, the company's future will remain anchored in a simple conviction, that sustainable agriculture begins with supporting the farmer, end to end.



Plant Health Our Business



— Congratulations —
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The Board, Management and Staff of the Kenya Plant Health Inspectorate Service (KEPHIS) congratulates Mazao na Afya Ltd on the remarkable milestone of celebrating 30 years Anniversary as well as the launch of the new headquarters.

For three decades, Mazao na Afya Ltd has demonstrated commitment to advancing sustainable agriculture, empowering farmers, and strengthening food systems in Kenya and beyond. This achievement shows resilience, visionary leadership, and dedication to quality and excellence in agribusiness.

As the National Plant Protection Organization (NPPO) for Kenya, KEPHIS remains committed to partnering with industry players to safeguard plant health, assure quality agricultural inputs, facilitate safe trade, and support agricultural productivity. Through our services in seed certification, plant variety protection, phytosanitary certification, pest diagnostics, laboratory testing, and quality assurance of agricultural inputs, we continue to promote safe and sustainable agricultural production towards a food secure nation and safe trade.

KEPHIS values the Mazao na Afya Ltd commitment to improve agricultural productivity and returns to farmers affordably, through offering quality agricultural solutions that contribute to food security, economic growth, and improved livelihoods.

Congratulations once again on this significant milestone. We wish you continued success and greater achievements in the years ahead.

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Congratulations Mazao na Afya on your 30th Anniversary





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JUMBO CHEM KENYA@15: BUILDING RESILIENCE, POWERING SUSTAINABILITY, AND REDEFINING LOCAL MANUFACTURING

Fifteen years ago, Jumbo Chem Kenya Ltd entered the industrial arena with a daring proposition: to manufacture thermal insulation locally for a market that relied exclusively on imports.

Today, the company stands as a powerful testament to resilience and innovation within Kenya's manufacturing sector. Marking its 15th anniversary, Jumbo Chem celebrates more than just a chronological milestone; it honors a journey defined by endurance, strategic reinvention, and a clear vision for the future.

The path to success, however, was far from linear. Founded in 2011, Jumbo Chem's early years were characterized by a grueling uphill battle. The company had to navigate a volatile mix of financial constraints, operational hurdles, and a skeptical market that was hesitant to trust home-grown insulation solutions over established foreign brands.

For the first five years, profitability remained elusive, compounded by a severe cashflow crisis in 2014 that required a shareholder bailout.

Yet those early trials became defining moments. Strategic decisions, including restructuring leadership, investing in the right talent, and installing advanced machinery sourced from South Korea, laid the groundwork for a turnaround.

By 2021, the company paid its first dividend, signaling not just recovery, but stability. A recent reinvestment in modern machinery, funded entirely from internal resources, underscores a business that has come into its own.

Filling a Critical Market Gap

Jumbo Chem's entry into the thermal insulation space was driven by a clear gap: the absence of local manufacturing capacity in a rapidly growing construction sector. With rising awareness of climate change, increasing energy costs, and demand for efficient building solutions, the need for insulation became more urgent.



The company responded by positioning itself as a homegrown pioneer in eco-friendly manufacturing. Its solutions, ranging from roof and wall insulation to pipe lagging, address a critical challenge in tropical climates: heat gain. Through this strategic move of reducing reliance on air conditioning, the products delivers tangible energy savings while contributing to sustainability goals.

Innovation as a Growth Engine

Over the years, Jumbo Chem has continuously refined its value proposition, moving beyond basic manufacturing to become a solutions-driven enterprise. Its investment in advanced production technologies from Asia has enabled scalability, product diversification, and cost optimization. This evolution reflects a deliberate shift: from competing on price to delivering value through performance, durability, and environmental responsibility.

Navigating a Challenging Business Environment

Jumbo Chem's journey also highlights the broader challenges facing manufacturers in Kenya. High energy costs, fluctuating raw material prices, taxation pressures, and limited access to affordable capital have tested the company's resilience.

Market dynamics have presented additional hurdles. Building trust in a price-sensitive construction industry required patience and persistence. Talent acquisition and retention proved difficult in the early years, particularly for a relatively unknown brand.

The company's response has been pragmatic, strengthening corporate governance, investing in digital transformation, and maintaining disciplined financial management. Establishing strong supplier relationships and operating in foreign currency accounts has helped mitigate supply chain and currency risks.

“
OVER THE YEARS, JUMBO CHEM HAS CONTINUOUSLY REFINED ITS VALUE PROPOSITION, MOVING BEYOND BASIC MANUFACTURING TO BECOME A SOLUTIONS-DRIVEN ENTERPRISE.

Sustainability is no longer a peripheral consideration for Jumbo Chem, it is embedded in its operations. The company conducts energy audits to optimize efficiency, employs closed-loop water systems to minimize waste, and is increasing the use of recycled raw materials.

A notable innovation lies in its approach to non-compliant

products. Rather than discarding them as waste, the company has identified alternative applications in construction, turning potential losses into value while reducing environmental impact.

The Northlands Project

Among its flagship projects, Jumbo Chem's work at the ICRC pharmaceutical storage facility in Northlands City stands out. The warehouse, previously unable to maintain



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the required temperature threshold for drug storage, faced significant spoilage risks.

Jumbo Chem has reduced internal temperatures from as high as 32°C to below 23°C through the installation of advanced thermal insulation solutions which is well within the required limit. The result was a 95 percent reduction in drug spoilage, demonstrating the real-world impact of effective insulation technology.

At its core, collaboration has been central to Jumbo Chem's growth. Partnerships with professional bodies such as the Architectural Association of Kenya, the Institute of Engineers of Kenya, and the Kenya Association of Manufacturers have enhanced brand visibility and industry credibility.

Internationally, its collaboration with global soundproofing firm Alpha Acoustiki has expanded its technical capabilities, enabling it to meet specialized customer needs.

As Jumbo Chem looks to the future, regional expansion is firmly on the agenda. While logistical challenges, particularly the high cost of transporting bulky yet lightweight products remain a constraint, the company is exploring the establishment of production facilities in Uganda and Tanzania within the next decade.

In the interim, reseller networks in Uganda and Rwanda, supported by a growing digital marketing presence, are helping extend its reach across East Africa.

At 15 years, Jumbo Chem Kenya Ltd is more than a manufacturing company, it is a case study in resilience, adaptability, and the power of local innovation. Its journey reflects the realities of building a business in a challenging environment, while also highlighting the opportunities that come with persistence and strategic vision.

As the company celebrates this milestone, its message to stakeholders is one of gratitude and shared progress. Customers have shaped its innovation, partners have strengthened its foundation, and employees have driven its success.

Looking ahead, Jumbo Chem's ambition remains clear, to lead in sustainable building solutions, expand its regional footprint, and continue insulating the future, both literally and figuratively.



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BUILT IN AFRICA, FOR AFRICA

How ACTOM is anchoring electromechanical manufacturing on African soil, and why Kenya is becoming the launchpad for a continental reset.

By Victor Kwabe



Mid-morning, the power goes out around Cabanas. Inside ACTOM's Nairobi facility, the interruption barely registers. Engineers keep moving. Fabricators continue their work.

Outside, the grid has dropped again, one of several outages that have become routine, often forcing generators to run for hours. For Kelvin Agengo Oriwo, ACTOM's General Manager for Kenya and Eastern Africa, it is less an inconvenience than a diagnosis.

"This is the paradox. We sit on some of the richest renewable resources in the world, but we still don't have reliable power."

It is from within this contradiction that ACTOM is building



its East African strategy: not simply to supply infrastructure, but to reshape how Africa manufactures, powers, and sustains itself.

Walk through the facility, and one thing becomes clear: this is not a transient operation. The workforce is local. Engineers, technicians, trainees. No revolving door of imported expertise. That choice is deliberate.

With a 123-year engineering legacy rooted in South Africa, ACTOM has grown into Africa's largest electromechanical manufacturer, operating across more than 60 countries with 33 outlets across sub-Saharan Africa, approximately 14 divisions and 35 business units. Its expansion into Kenya signals something more structural than scale, a shift from supplying Africa to building within it.

"We are not here to sell into the market. We are here to build within it so that, over time, this becomes a Kenyan company."

Across much of the continent, infrastructure still arrives as a finished product. Skills are used, but not transferred. Systems are installed, but not owned. ACTOM is attempting to reverse that model.

The IP needs to be domiciled here, manufacturing needs to happen here, and the people need to be Kenyan. The long-term objective is to anchor a fully-fledged East African manufacturing hub in Kenya, one capable of supplying the region from within.

The Energy Constraint

If there is a single bottleneck to that vision, it is energy. Kenya's resource profile should make it an energy powerhouse, with geothermal reserves, consistent solar exposure, and expanding wind capacity. Yet reliability gaps persist, and costs remain high.



The numbers tell a stark story. Kenya's total installed generation capacity currently stands at approximately 3.4 gigawatts (GW), against a presidential target of 10 gigawatts against national target of 10 gigawatts by 2030.

The current energy mix comprises roughly 38% 41% geothermal, 25% hydro, with solar contributing just 3 to 3.5% of the grid supply, despite Kenya sitting directly on the equatorial solar belt. Meanwhile, approximately 10% -13% of the supply is imported from neighboring countries, creating a sovereign vulnerability that Oriwo flags with urgency.

"Even global geopolitical tensions shouldn't affect us this much, but they do."

Compounding the generation gap is a transmission and distribution problem. According to recent reports, Kenya loses an estimated 22% of generated electricity in transmission and distribution, what engineers call core losses, or I²R losses.

Oriwo's point is sharp: every new generation plant built while transmission infrastructure remains unreformed effectively loses almost a quarter of its output before it reaches a consumer.

Fix the transmission, and Kenya gains the equivalent of a substantial generation increment without building a single new plant.

ACTOM's response to this operates on two fronts: engineering and policy. On the engineering side, battery energy storage systems (BESS) are emerging as a critical stabiliser. Renewable energy, by nature, is intermittent.

Storage bridges that variability, turning potential into reliability. A new policy requiring all new renewable installations to include BESS is, in Oriwo's view, a step in



the right direction, and a space ACTOM has moved into deliberately, having recently completed the acquisition of a BESS specialist company. “Renewables are not the issue. Intermittency is. Storage is what closes that gap.”

On the policy side, the central intervention ACTOM is pushing is net metering, enabling households and businesses with rooftop solar to feed surplus generation back into the grid via a dual meter and draw it back at night.

The framework exists in Kenya, but the current entry threshold is set at one megawatt, a scale requiring capital outlay that puts it out of reach for most users.

Scale that across a million installations, and the infrastructure value alone approaches KES 1 trillion. That is before factoring in jobs, reduced import dependency, and the fiscal dividend of a broader employed base.

“If you unlock solar at scale, you’re looking at close to a trillion shillings in infrastructure value. And that’s before you factor in jobs.”

Engineering For Reality

ACTOM’s competitive edge lies not just in what it builds, but how it builds. In South Africa, the company is the backbone of ESKOM, the national utility, one of the most extensive power infrastructure networks on the continent.

The install base numbers are significant. Across ESKOM’s grid, over 90% majority of power transformers, distribution transformers, high-voltage equipment, medium-voltage switchgear, protection and control systems, and battery chargers carry the ACTOM name.

That dominance in that solar installation was not inherited. It was earned through R&D that translated real-world problems into engineering solutions. Renewable energy systems introduce harmonic stresses and heating patterns that conventional transformers are not designed to handle. ACTOM re-engineered its transformer range specifically for solar and wind applications, a product distinction that matters in a market where equipment failure in a remote solar plant is far more costly than the transformer itself.

“A standard specification is not enough for this environment. You have to design for the realities on the ground.”

That means building above baseline standards. A transformer rated at 11kV for the Kenyan grid is designed with a tolerance up to 17kV. For a recent proposal covering Ring Main Units for the Ethiopian market, rated at 15kV, ACTOM’s product is rated at 17kV. That headroom is not over-engineering. It is resilience, calibrated for grids where voltage fluctuations are frequent and infrastructure stress is real.

ACTOM also supports maintenance and operations at KOEBERG Koeberg Nuclear Power Station, Africa’s only nuclear power station, in Cape Town. On Kenya’s proposed nuclear plant, currently attracting public debate focused on the Siaya site near Lake Victoria, Oriwo is unambiguous.

“It is a good idea. A bold statement of intent. The challenge is that we are too politicised as a country, and we don’t give the experts enough opportunity to educate us.”

Jobs And The Automation Question

Globally, manufacturing is accelerating toward automation. In Kenya, ACTOM is taking a more measured approach. The reason is context.

Kenya’s overall unemployment rate exceeds 50%. Among people under 35, who constitute the majority of the population, given a national median age of just 19.5 years, youth unemployment runs at approximately 69%.

Deploying heavily automated manufacturing into this environment is, Oriwo argues, not just economically counterproductive; it is socially destabilising.

“You don’t come into a market like this and replace people with machines. You create jobs first.”

Building The Missing Layer

For ACTOM, manufacturing is only as strong as the workforce behind it. In Kenya, the company maintains a standing pipeline of interns and trainees drawn from local universities, the Technical University of Kenya, Dedan Kimathi University, the University of Nairobi, Strathmore University, and Jomo Kenyatta University, Kiambu Technical Institute, among them. Others. Several have transitioned into full-time roles. Plans are underway to establish a dedicated training centre in Kenya, mirroring ACTOM’s accredited model in South Africa, where the company has adopted schools and operates a nationally recognised certification programme that gives graduates portable qualifications, not just firm-specific skills.

“The region needs capacity building, not symbolic CSR. We need people who can actually sustain the industry.”

In a country where the median age is under 20, the stakes are clear. Every trained technician is not just an employee but a multiplier within the wider industrial ecosystem, capable of sustaining, repairing, and eventually innovating on the infrastructure that ACTOM installs.

The Cost Of Making Things

Even with its long-term outlook, ACTOM operates within a challenging business environment. Regulatory fragmentation is significant: the company currently navigates 135 130+ separate compliance requirements in Kenya, many overlapping, most carrying associated fees. The ease of doing business in Kenya, as commonly measured, reflects ease of registration, not ease of production.

Employment costs add a compounding layer. Each statutory payroll deduction, housing levy, social funds, and pension contribution requires a matching employer contribution. Those costs flow into the cost of production, which flows into prices charged downstream, which ultimately flows to

the end consumer.

The citizen who feels the effect of factory closures or price increases is, in this chain, the same citizen whose statutory protections drove up the cost of employment.

“Manufacturing in Kenya is expensive. What we need is coherence, deliberate, structured policy, not reactive exemptions.”

Oriwo points to one concrete inconsistency: a complete imported solar panel enters Kenya duty-free, while solar cells imported for local panel assembly attract a 5% duty. The policy, as currently structured, penalises the act of manufacturing locally, precisely the behaviour it should be incentivising.

Since establishing operations in Kenya in early 2022, 2023 ACTOM has expanded across East Africa, delivering projects in Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda, Ethiopia, Somalia and South Sudan. The Rwanda work is among the most notable, a vaccine manufacturing facility, part of a portfolio that demonstrates the breadth of sectors served by ACTOM’s electromechanical competence.

Kenya remains the anchor, the operational and strategic hub from which regional expansion is managed. The next phase is establishing physical presence, not just project delivery, in Uganda, Ethiopia and Tanzania. East Africa. The model is consistent: local integration, local talent, local adaptation.

“When you are present, you understand what works, and what doesn’t. Then you adapt without losing the objective.”

It is a slower approach than exporting finished solutions, but one designed for permanence rather than extraction. By the end of the conversation, Oriwo reduces the industrial question to a single factor. Energy.

“I would make energy the one agenda. Everything else follows.”

A national solar programme built on accessible net metering, connecting a million sites at an average installation cost of KES 800,000, would move nearly KES 1 trillion through the economy. The jobs, the taxes, the industrial competitiveness, the e-mobility transition: all of it follows from that first variable.

ACTOM’s investment in Kenya is, at its core, a bet on that equation. That if energy is fixed, industry follows. If industry follows, jobs emerge. And if jobs emerge, economies, begin quietly, structurally, to build themselves.

Not as markets. But as makers.

MARKETING

BEYOND GREEN CLAIMS: HOW MARKETING, BRANDING AND EVENTS ARE HELPING MANUFACTURERS TELL THEIR SUSTAINABILITY STORY

By Silas Odhiambo

Kenya's manufacturing sector is undergoing a significant transformation. With more than 90% of the country's electricity generated from renewable energy sources such as geothermal, wind, and solar, local manufacturers are increasingly positioned to turn sustainability from a compliance obligation into a source of competitive advantage.

As regional and global competition intensifies, three interconnected pillars, marketing, branding, and industry events, are shaping the sector's green transition. These are no longer peripheral business functions.

They are becoming central to how manufacturers build trust, strengthen competitiveness, attract investment, and position themselves for long-term growth.

Marketing: Engaging the Conscious Consumer

One of the clearest shifts in the market is the rise of the environmentally conscious consumer. Kenyan buyers, particularly urban millennials and Gen Z consumers, are becoming more deliberate in their purchasing decisions. Increasingly, they are paying attention to product labels, company values, sourcing practices, and environmental impact. PricewaterhouseCoopers June 2023 Global Consumer Insights Pulse Survey found that over 70% of consumers are willing to pay a premium for locally manufactured products manufactured through sustainable processes or made from recycled or eco-



friendly materials.

In response, manufacturers are moving beyond traditional advertising towards Green Marketing strategies that emphasize sustainability, responsible production, and environmental stewardship. However, studies focusing on manufacturing firms in Nairobi City County reveal an important reality: consumers may be attracted by green messaging, but long-term loyalty is driven by product quality and authentic sustainability practices rather than marketing claims alone.

This places authenticity at the center of successful green marketing. Leading firms are now using digital platforms and QR-

enabled packaging to provide consumers with real-time information on sourcing, energy use, waste reduction, and production processes. In doing so, marketing is evolving from one-way promotion into a more transparent and trust-based conversation with consumers.

Branding: The Currency of Trust and Transparency

As sustainability messaging becomes more prominent, branding is also evolving towards greater accountability and verification. In late 2025, Kenya Association of Manufacturers (KAM), in partnership with the Ministry of Investments, Trade and Industry (MITI), launched Eco-Labeling Guidelines for the manufacturing sector. The initiative responds to growing pressure for manufacturers to comply with sustainability standards in both domestic and export markets, particularly in destinations such as

the European Union, where frameworks such as the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) are reshaping global trade requirements.

The guidelines establish a common framework for communicating sustainability claims across the product lifecycle, from design and manufacturing to usage and disposal. Beyond enhancing consumer confidence, they are intended to strengthen Kenya's export competitiveness while reducing the risk of greenwashing.

For small and medium-sized manufacturers, which form the backbone of Kenya's industrial sector, this shift is particularly significant. Standardized eco-labels create a more level playing field, allowing smaller enterprises to compete alongside multinational brands on the basis of verified sustainability credentials. A small agro-processor in Murang'a, for example, can increasingly differentiate itself through trusted environmental standards rather than scale alone.

At the same time, manufacturers are beginning to integrate sustainability more deeply into corporate identity. Circular economy principles, zero-waste commitments, regenerative sourcing, and water stewardship are becoming part of broader brand narratives that resonate with environmentally conscious consumers, retailers, and business partners alike.

Events: Catalysts for Collaboration and Innovation

Industry events are also playing a growing role in advancing sustainable manufacturing practices. Forums such as the Kenya LOOP Forum, organized by KAM, are bringing together manufacturers, investors, policymakers, and development partners to accelerate the circular economy agenda. Similarly, platforms such as the Energy Management Awards, Clean Energy Expo and Conference, and PROPAK East Africa are increasingly highlighting clean energy technologies, energy efficiency solutions, sustainable packaging, wastewater management, and green processing innovations.

Beyond networking, these events are fostering practical collaboration across industries. Manufacturers are increasingly exploring industrial symbiosis models, where waste from one production process becomes raw material for another. Plastic waste, organic residue, and other by-products are being repurposed into recycled inputs, packaging materials, or animal feed, reducing both waste and production costs.

These platforms are also opening new pathways for green financing. In recent years, several Kenyan manufacturers have secured sustainability-linked financing after presenting circular economy and decarbonization strategies at industry forums. At the same time, many firms are extending sustainability engagement beyond conference halls by inviting customers, suppliers, and communities to experience energy-efficient production lines and zero-waste operations first-hand. Such experiences often build stronger trust and brand loyalty than conventional advertising campaigns.

Integrating the Three Pillars for Maximum Impact

The greatest impact emerges when marketing, branding, and events work together as part of a unified sustainability strategy. A manufacturer investing in green marketing must support those claims with credible eco-labels and reinforce them through industry engagement and consumer interaction.

For instance, a Nairobi-based furniture manufacturer using recycled plastics could combine a digital campaign highlighting carbon savings with certified eco-labels on its products, while also hosting workshops for architects and interior designers to demonstrate the durability and commercial viability of sustainable materials. This integrated approach strengthens visibility, trust, and long-term brand recall.

Sustainability is no longer sitting on the sidelines of Kenya's manufacturing sector. It is increasingly shaping how companies compete, attract markets, and build long-term value. Across the three pillars of marketing, branding, and industry events, manufacturers are finding new ways to communicate sustainability through product messaging,

eco-labels, retail shelves, digital campaigns, e-commerce platforms, and industry engagements. Those that embrace sustainability authentically and communicate it credibly will be better placed to compete in both regional and global markets. In the years ahead, competitive advantage will not only be defined by cost, but also by credibility, trust, and a strong sustainability story.

The writer is the Marketing Manager at Kenya Association of Manufacturers (KAM).

FOR SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED MANUFACTURERS, WHICH FORM THE BACKBONE OF KENYA'S INDUSTRIAL SECTOR, THIS SHIFT IS PARTICULARLY SIGNIFICANT.

MANUFACTURING

WATER IN LEATHER PROCESSING: MANAGING A CRITICAL INDUSTRIAL RESOURCE

By Purity Gachugu

The leather industry rarely introduces itself in obvious ways. It appears in the shoes we work on, the belts we fasten and the bags we carry from place to place. It is familiar and functional, yet the process behind it remains largely out of sight.

Globally, the leather industry is valued at approximately USD 53 billion as of 2025, while Kenya's market stands at around USD 116 million, supported by more than 10 licensed tanneries across the country. This positions the sector as an important contributor to Kenya's industrial development, with clear opportunities for growth and value addition. At the same time, it is an industry that depends heavily on natural resources, particularly water.

The journey of leather begins with raw hides and skins, which are by-products of the meat industry. These materials are taken through a series of stages: wet blue, crust, and eventually finished leather. Each step is technical and carefully managed, relying on a combination of chemicals, skilled handling, and consistent processing conditions.

Water is central throughout this entire process. It is used to clean hides, facilitate chemical reactions, support beamhouse operations, and rinse away residues at different stages. Processing one ton of raw hides typically requires between 40 and 50 cubic meters of water, and in some facilities, even more when older machinery is still in use.



What is less visible is what happens after the water has served its purpose. A large proportion of it, close to 90%, is discharged as effluent. If not properly treated, this wastewater can affect surrounding ecosystems, including rivers and soils that communities depend on. Managing it requires significant investment, with effluent treatment accounting for about 15% of production costs, driven by the chemicals and energy needed to meet environmental standards.

For manufacturers, this creates a constant balancing act between maintaining efficiency and managing environmental responsibility. Kenya has begun to take deliberate steps to address this.

Under the Kenya Kwanza Bottom-Up Economic Transformation Agenda, the leather sector has been identified as a priority for industrial growth. Developments such as the Leather Industrial Park in Kenanie, which is now over 90% complete, are designed to provide shared infrastructure, including centralized effluent treatment systems that meet global standards.

This approach helps reduce the cost burden on individual tanneries while improving compliance and environmental performance across the sector. There are also ongoing efforts to improve access to water through boreholes and pipeline infrastructure. At the same time, international collaboration is shaping the direction of the industry. Kenya's engagement with Italy brings expertise from one of the world's most advanced leather processing systems. This creates an opportunity to strengthen local capacity, improve production standards, and build a more

structured value chain that can compete globally.

Trade agreements such as the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), the Economic Partnership Agreement with the European Union, and the Kenya–United Kingdom Economic Partnership Agreement further expand access to international markets. However, these markets increasingly expect manufacturers to demonstrate how their products are made, including how resources such as water are managed.

Within Kenya, pressure on water resources is becoming more evident. Tanneries draw water from rivers, boreholes, rainwater harvesting systems, and piped supply, yet these sources are facing strain from pollution, environmental degradation, and declining groundwater levels.

In response, some tanneries are beginning to adjust how they operate. Investments in water treatment technologies are becoming more common, alongside expanded rainwater harvesting and internal systems for monitoring usage. Tools such as water metering and sub-metering are helping companies better understand their consumption patterns and identify areas where efficiency can be improved.

Industry institutions are also supporting this shift. Through initiatives like the Annual Energy Management Awards, the Kenya Association of Manufacturers recognizes companies that demonstrate strong performance in water efficiency. Its Centre for Green Growth and Climate Change provides technical support through water audits, waste reduction strategies, and guidance on Environmental, Social, and Governance practices.

These efforts contribute to a broader transition within the sector: one that links environmental responsibility with long-term industrial competitiveness.

Sustaining this progress will require continued coordination between industry and government. Manufacturers will need to strengthen internal systems for water management,

including regular audits, clear performance targets, and consistent monitoring. At the same time, supportive policies, access to financing, and updated training frameworks will be essential in enabling wider adoption of sustainable practices.

The story of leather in Kenya continues to evolve. It is shaped not only by the products that reach the market, but by the processes behind them and the resources that make them possible. Water sits quietly at the center of that story: crucial, finite, and deeply connected to both industry and everyday life.

In Athi River, where several tanneries operate, workers often speak about how closely their work is tied to water: how a single interruption in supply can slow down an entire production line, and how changes in quality can affect outcomes in ways that are not always immediately visible. Beyond the factory gates, nearby communities rely on the same water sources for daily use. What flows through industrial systems does not exist in isolation; it eventually returns to shared spaces.

At the same time, cities like Nairobi are experiencing heavier rains that often overwhelm drainage systems, leading to flooding and runoff that is quickly lost. It raises a practical question of how such water can be better managed: captured, treated where necessary, and redirected

into productive use, rather than remaining a recurring disruption.

That connection between production and people, between industry and environment, is what makes water management more than a technical issue. It is part of how the sector relates to the communities around it, and how it prepares for the future.

How that relationship is managed today will shape what the leather industry becomes in the years ahead.

The writer is the Textiles & Apparels and Leather & Footwear Sector Officer at the Kenya Association of Manufacturers (KAM)

“FOR MANUFACTURERS, THIS CREATES A CONSTANT BALANCING ACT BETWEEN MAINTAINING EFFICIENCY AND MANAGING ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY. KENYA HAS BEGUN TO TAKE DELIBERATE STEPS TO ADDRESS THIS.”

SUSTAINABILITY

HOW SUSTAINABLE TRADE IS STEERING GLOBAL INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE

By Abel Kamau

A few clicks. That is all it takes today. You sit in Nairobi and order a pair of sneakers from China, clothes and accessories products from Dubai, or a phone accessory from Europe. Within days or weeks, that package travels thousands of kilometres across oceans, ports, warehouses, trucks and airports before finally arriving at your doorstep.

Now multiply that transactions needed to serve the growing global population standing at 8.2 billion.

Every single day, ships carry crude oil, coffee, electronics, textiles, machinery, flowers, fruits and countless consumer goods across continents to satisfy the demands of an increasingly connected global economy. Trade has made the world smaller, faster and more convenient. But behind every package delivered and every cargo ship docked lies an environmental cost that the world can no longer ignore.

For decades, climate change felt like a distant conversation happening in conference rooms and scientific journals. Today, it is impossible to ignore. The devastating floods witnessed across countries, prolonged droughts, rising temperatures, food insecurity, melting glaciers and unpredictable weather patterns are now everyday realities. Climate change has moved from being an invisible threat to a visible global crisis affecting economies, businesses and livelihoods alike.



At the centre of this conversation is trade and industry.

Industrial production, transportation and consumption have significantly contributed to global greenhouse gas emissions. According to the World Resources Institute (WRI), energy use accounts for over 76% of global emissions, with transportation, manufacturing and electricity generation among the largest contributors. Global supply chains, while important for economic growth, are also major generators of carbon emissions.

Yet, paradoxically, trade may also hold one of the strongest solutions to climate change.

The future of global commerce is increasingly becoming sustainable. Around the world, businesses, consumers and governments are rethinking how products are produced, transported and consumed. Sustainability has shifted from being a reputational advantage to becoming a defining factor in global trade and competitiveness.

Consumers today are asking different questions. Where was this product made? Was it ethically sourced? How much carbon was emitted during production and transportation? Can the packaging be recycled? Does the company uphold fair labour practices?

These shifts are redefining international trade. Across major export markets such as the European Union

and North America, stricter sustainability regulations are emerging. Exporters are increasingly required to comply with Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) standards, carbon reporting obligations, traceability requirements and sustainability certifications before accessing these markets. From carbon border adjustment mechanisms to eco-labelling requirements and sustainable sourcing standards, sustainability is now shaping global trade policy.

For manufacturers and exporters, this signals a major transition. The conversation is no longer only about producing quality goods at competitive prices. It is now equally about how sustainably those goods are produced. This is why sustainable trade is becoming the next frontier of industrial competitiveness.

Forward-looking businesses are already adapting. Across industries, companies are investing in renewable energy, energy-efficient manufacturing systems, wastewater recycling, sustainable packaging, waste reuse and greener logistics solutions. Others are redesigning supply chains to reduce transport distances and carbon footprints. Global shipping companies are exploring cleaner fuels, air freight is being shifted to sea freights, while retailers are prioritising suppliers with stronger ESG credentials.

Interestingly, sustainability is also proving to make business sense. Investments in solar energy, recycling systems and efficient production technologies are helping firms lower operational costs while improving resilience against rising energy prices and tightening environmental regulations. Sustainability is increasingly moving from being viewed as a compliance burden to a business growth strategy.

Several trends are now shaping the future of sustainable trade and commerce.

First is the rise of green supply chains. Businesses are under growing pressure to track emissions across their entire value chains, from raw material sourcing to final delivery. Transparency and traceability are becoming critical components of trade.

Second is sustainable logistics. The transport sector is under increasing scrutiny due to its carbon footprint. This is accelerating investments in electric mobility, fuel-efficient fleets, green ports and low-emission shipping solutions. Companies are also seeking to shorten supply chains through regional trade.

Third is the growth of sustainability certifications and compliance frameworks. Certifications that were once

considered optional are becoming necessary for market access. Businesses exporting to premium international markets are increasingly required to demonstrate compliance with environmental and ethical standards.

Fourth is the shift towards circular economies. Industries are moving away from the traditional “produce-use-dispose” model towards approaches that maximise the value of materials for as long as possible through recycling, reuse, and product life extension. In this transition, waste is increasingly being redefined as a resource rather than a by-product.

Kenya and Africa have a unique opportunity within this transition.

As global industries seek greener production destinations, Africa possesses significant advantages including abundant renewable energy potential, vast mineral resources, youthful labour and expanding regional markets under frameworks such as the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). The continent has an opportunity not just to industrialise, but to industrialise sustainably.

In 2025, Kenya Association of Manufacturers (KAM), in partnership with GIZ under the “Bringing AfCFTA Home” initiative, developed a Sustainable Trade Guidebook to support manufacturers in understanding sustainability certifications and emerging compliance requirements for export markets. Such initiatives are critical in helping businesses future-proof themselves in an evolving global trade environment.

Ultimately, sustainability and trade are becoming increasingly interconnected. Environmental responsibility is now influencing how goods are produced, traded and consumed across the world.

The challenge before businesses, governments and consumers today is how to balance profit, people and planet in a rapidly changing world. The decisions made today about production, consumption and trade will shape the competitiveness of industries tomorrow.

The future belongs to economies and businesses that can produce efficiently, trade responsibly and grow sustainably. In many ways, sustainability is the new currency of global competitiveness.

The writer is the Trade Policy Manager at Kenya Association of Manufacturers (KAM) and a Carbon Audit Professional (CAP)

KAM INDUSTRY LEADERS COCKTAIL IN PARTNERSHIP WITH EQUATOR ENERGY

Kenya Association of Manufacturers, in partnership with Equator Energy, hosted the Industry Leaders Cocktail themed *Industrial Competitiveness in Kenya: Protecting Margins, Building Resilience, Funding Growth*.

Speaking at the event, KAM Energy Sector Chair, Genesio Mugo, noted that energy remains a critical driver of manufacturing competitiveness, accounting for up to 30–40% of production costs. He highlighted key pressures facing the sector, including volatile electricity tariffs, fluctuating fuel prices and foreign exchange exposure, noting that manufacturers are increasingly adopting renewable energy solutions such as solar to reduce costs, strengthen resilience and advance sustainability goals.

“Competitiveness is not just about cost; it is about certainty. Manufacturers need reliable, affordable and transparent energy to plan, grow and remain resilient,” he noted.

A panel discussion chaired by James Shoetan, CEO, Equator Energy explored how industry can stay ahead of disruption while sustaining growth and competitiveness. Discussions underscored the need for agility, early adoption of innovative solutions, access to green financing, and stronger regulatory alignment. Panelists also emphasized moving beyond policy dialogue to practical action that strengthens operational resilience amid shifting market and logistics conditions.

KAM Head of Strategy, Tom Onguru, noted that the cocktail provides an important platform for industry leaders to connect, exchange insights, and explore partnerships that support mutual growth. A key takeaway from the discussion was that safeguarding industrial competitiveness will require collective action, strategic partnerships, and empowered industry leadership. KAM remains committed to advancing



James Shoetan, CEO, Equator Energy during the KAM Industry Leaders Cocktail in Partnership with Equator Energy.



KAM Energy Sector Chair, Genesio Mugo during the KAM Industry Leaders Cocktail in Partnership with Equator Energy.

practical solutions, policy advocacy, and partnerships that drive sustainable industrial growth.



Roundtable with MPs/MPs, KAM Leadership, Members and Partners during the Annual Roundtable with the National Assembly Committee on Finance and National Planning.

Manufacturers Engage National Assembly Committee on Finance and National Planning to Strengthen Industry Competitiveness

Kenya Association of Manufacturers (KAM) has today hosted the Annual Roundtable with the National Assembly Committee on Finance and National Planning. The highlevel forum provides a key platform for dialogue between industry and policymakers to jointly develop solutions that drive a competitive and resilient manufacturing sector.

Hon. Kuria Kimani, Chair of the National Assembly Committee on Finance and National Planning, appreciated the manufacturing sector's crucial role in powering economic growth while acknowledging the challenges holding back industry from reaching its full potential. He noted that taxation, regulation, and the cost of energy and logistics continue to significantly influence Kenya's business environment alongside global uncertainties. He called for strong, datadriven collaboration between government and the private sector to boost Kenya's global competitiveness.

KAM Board Vice Chair, Hitesh Mediratta, urged African countries to deepen intracontinental trade, noting that global disruptions particularly in the Middle East are driving up production costs. He called on Africa to fully leverage AfCFTA and the Tripartite Free Trade Area to build economic resilience.

KAM Chief Executive Tobias Alando underscored the value of the annual roundtables, noting that the Finance Bill 2025 incorporated several longstanding manufacturing concerns.

TradeMark Africa Kenya Country Program Director, Lillian Mwai Ndegwa, emphasized the importance of aligning policy with onground implementation to sustain longterm growth.

Anne Nalo, Country Economist and Economic Advisor, British High Commission, Nairobi called for the resolution of issues such as VAT refund delays, implementation of the Business Laws Amendment Bill, and enforcement of existing economic partnerships to unlock business growth.

The forum brought together KAM Board Directors, sector leaders, SMEs, development partners, and other stakeholders. The dialogue was supported by Trademark Africa, with funding from the British High Commission under the Regional Economic Development for Investment and Trade (REDIT) Programme.

PRECISION, DURABILITY, AND DATA: KIBO AFRICA'S BET ON ELECTRIC MOBILITY

From a precision-driven factory floor to an electric future shaped by the realities of the boda boda economy, Kibo Africa is engineering mobility for where it matters most.

From the moment you step onto the factory floor, the intent is unmistakable: a production line designed to catch every flaw before a motorcycle leaves, for riders who cannot afford even a day of downtime. Kibo Africa is doing more than assembling motorcycles.

It is building a system, one shaped as much by African terrain as by engineering discipline.

On the factory floor, there is no rush. Each station moves with a steady rhythm. At the carburetor module, a technician pauses to consult a work instruction pinned to the board before making the next move.

Close behind, a quality officer moves from station to station, selecting from three coloured tags, orange, green, red, that determine whether a component advances or returns for rework.

This signals a system designed for precision. Taking us through his world is Vincent Suba, Production Manager at Kibo Africa, a company that has built motorcycles for African roads since 2013 and is now making a calculated shift into electric mobility.

Suba joined as a graduate engineer and has since grown within the company, developing a deep commitment to the transition to electric mobility, stepping into a system that builds motorcycles able to withstand potholes, rough terrain, and the daily grind of a boda boda operator, consistently across every unit. "You can capture each and every quality issue before the bike drops at the end of the line," says Suba. "So we've tried to split the work instruction into smaller tasks. Because when you bombard someone with a lot of work, it's very easy for them to make mistakes."



“BEFORE ANY PART IS INTRODUCED INTO PRODUCTION, IT UNDERGOES INSPECTION FOR NON-CONFORMITIES, DAMAGE, STORAGE DEFECTS, OR LOGISTICAL FAULTS. IT IS A QUIET BUT DECISIVE FILTER.”



Engineering out failure

At Kibo, production begins long before assembly. Every order originates with the sales team, defining not just quantity but configuration, model, colour, and specifications.

From there, the process moves through bonded and duty-paid warehouses before reaching the line. But nothing proceeds unchecked.

Before any part is introduced into production, it undergoes inspection for non-conformities, damage, storage defects, or logistical faults. It is a quiet but decisive filter.

"Just like when you buy something online, you might realise it's not the quality you expected," Suba says. "On our end, we have a check so that never happens." Inside pre-assembly, complexity is broken down into modules: handlebar, carburetor, swing arm, braking system. Each is assembled at a dedicated station, reducing variability and making faults easier to isolate.

"The goal is to break the process into smaller units so every step is visible and controllable," says Suba, adding that uniformity is enforced through strict work instructions.

"We also assemble according to defined instructions to ensure consistency." Verification is constant. Once a module is complete, it is tagged orange, signalling readiness for inspection. Quality control then determines its fate.

"If it's red, it means that module did not pass; if green, it has passed the check," Suba explains.

Even identity is controlled, with every chassis matched to its engine's serial number as tagged. "This serial number has to match with the engine for purposes of compatibility and traceability."

The system is designed with one goal: stop failure at the earliest possible point.

Built for the terrain

Kibo's motorcycles are not designed in abstraction. They are built for use—hard, daily use.



Vincent Suba, Production Manager at Kibo Africa

"Our objective is to come up with a product that is more durable, reliable, and suited for the African terrain," says Suba.

That intent is visible in the design. The rear wheel is larger and thicker, built for traction and load-bearing. The bikes carry up to 250 kilograms. The frame, a cradle design, is engineered to absorb stress across uneven surfaces.

Even the choice of spoked wheels reflects this thinking.

"You can still move, because we have 36 spokes on that wheel," says Suba. "Unlike the cast wheel, you can't move for long."

It is a practical decision: in remote areas, a rider must keep going, even with partial damage.

This durability-first philosophy has shaped Kibo's evolution, from the K149 to the K150, K160, K160R, K250 series, and now the K160E for urban use. Each iteration reflects feedback from riders navigating real conditions.

“JUST LIKE WHEN YOU BUY SOMETHING ONLINE, YOU MIGHT REALISE IT'S NOT THE QUALITY YOU EXPECTED,” SUBA SAYS. “ON OUR END, WE HAVE A CHECK SO THAT NEVER

Intelligence in the system

At the core of Kibo's EV strategy is data, which Suba says is continuously stored, tracked, and analysed to improve product performance.

For example, the Battery Management System provides real-time monitoring; tracking performance, identifying faulty cells, and estimating remaining range.

"You are able to track which cells are not working well, the output, and the range that is left."

It also supports a longer-term sustainability model, indicating when cells are exhausted and can be replaced, extending the battery's overall lifespan.

Beyond cost and efficiency, the shift to electric mobility aligns with broader climate and industrial goals.

Kenya's transport sector remains a significant source of emissions. Transitioning high-usage segments like boda boda fleets could deliver outsized impact.

"Having an EV bike will lead to a reduction of tailpipe emissions," says Suba.

Kibo's operations align with international standards, including ISO certifications for quality, energy, and environmental management.

Regional signals are already emerging. Ethiopia has moved to restrict imports of internal combustion motorcycles, an early indicator of where policy across Africa may be heading. For Kenya, the question is no longer if, but how fast.

Leading through transition

Suba's own trajectory reflects the transition underway.

He joined Kibo in 2023 as a graduate engineer and rose quickly into leadership, shaped by mentorship and a production culture that values problem-solving.

"From graduate engineer to now being a production manager, you're providing solutions, you're part of the change," he says. He draws a distinction between authority and leadership.



“**JUST LIKE WHEN YOU BUY SOMETHING ONLINE, YOU MIGHT REALISE IT'S NOT THE QUALITY YOU EXPECTED,"** SUBA SAYS. **"ON OUR END, WE HAVE A CHECK SO THAT NEVER HAPPENS."**

"There's being a boss and being a leader. I had a leader who showed me how to handle things in a more professional way."

Today, he leads a young team pushing continuous improvement from within.

"When you have people that are challenging you, you have to find ways to come up with solutions."

Precision as a principle

On the floor, a batch nears completion. Pre-assembly stations fall quiet as work shifts to the mainline. Instructions remain pinned in place. Tags wait for the next cycle.

Final checks are underway, chassis matched to engine, identification plate fixed, records aligned. Nothing moves without verification. Nothing leaves without accountability.

"The e-mobility in the country is at a developing stage, but we are heading in a good direction," says Suba.

At Kibo, that direction is not rushed but engineered, step by step, station by station, until every part turns green.

CEOs Manufacturers Breakfast During in Partnership with FedEx



Leon Bruwer - Managing Director of Sales for Sub-Saharan Africa at FedEx & Tobias Alando - Chief Executive at KAM.

Energy Management Awards



KAM Centre for Energy Efficiency and Conservation (CEEC) Team during the Energy Management Awards 2026



KAM Leadership during the 22nd Edition of the Energy Management Awards 2026.

Launch of the Logistics Study Report



Dignitaries that graced the Launch of the Logistics Study.

Clean Energy Expo & Conference



UNIDO Representative to Kenya - Tally Einav giving his address during the 11th Clean Energy Expo and Conference.



KAM, UNIDO launch Industrial Clean Tech Platform to accelerate green manufacturing during the 2026 Clean Energy and Expo Conference

Launch of the Regulatory Audit Report



Hon Lee Kinyanjui and CEO KAM - Tobias Alando during the launch of the Regulatory Audit Report.



Hon. Lee Kinyanjui giving his address during the launch of the Regulatory Audit Report.

Launch of the Manufacturing Priority Agenda 2026



Dignitaries During the launch of the Manufacturing Priority Agenda 2026.



KAM Board Vice Chair - Hitesh Mediratta.

Corporate Golf - Nairobi Edition



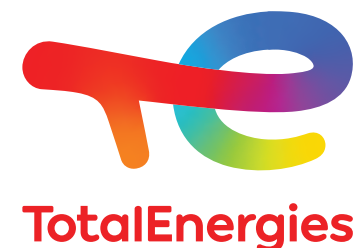
KAM Chief Executive - Tobias Alando Tee Off During KAM Annual Corporate Golf, Nairobi Edition.



The 2026 Overall Winner during the KAM Annual Corporate Golf Tournament being awarded prizes by KAM Chief Executive - Tobias Alando.



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