

Africa's road infrastructure requires attention

With the road access rate in Africa being only 34%, compared with 50% in other parts of the developing world and transport costs being 100% higher, transport infrastructure has been identified by the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA) as one of the four key sectors requiring attention to address the deficit. The African Development Bank is the executing agency for PIDA.



"In many African countries, the infrastructure deficit is exacerbated due to appropriate road building materials being expensive and/or difficult to obtain," says Zeevik Halber, CEO of AnyWay Solid Environmental Solutions, a provider of soil stabilisation products to the infrastructure and development sectors.

"However, there are alternatives that urgently need to be explored if economic and social development on the continent is to be significantly improved. These are currently being used internationally, including several African states, and are not only speeding up the process of road construction and improvement, but are also reducing the financial, time and environmental costs that are usually associated with this type of infrastructure development."

Dramatic change

Mineral soil stabilisers are dramatically changing the way roads are being built and restored, directly addressing the ever-increasing road building material shortage in developing countries. "Mineral soil stabilisers can and are increasingly being used in areas where locally available soils do not meet the standard road building specifications and where good road building material is expensive and difficult to obtain.

"The faster that African countries can improve their road infrastructure, the faster there can be access to centres of economic importance for the creation of employment opportunities, greater rapidity of inter-country trade, reduced transport costs and ultimately enhanced economic growth for the continent as whole," concludes Halber.

"Unlike in most other countries, AnyWay decided to establish a local production facility in South Africa for the manufacture

of its products for the local and regional markets. However, the concept of using local in situ soils as part of the road pavement structure has yet to be widely accepted by South African engineers," says Jean du Plessis, MD of AnyWay's South African operations.

Damage to reputation

He attributes this principally to bad experiences with other stabilisers. "The use of liquid products has actually caused damage to the reputation of using stabilisation as a sound engineering solution for road infrastructure projects over the past few years. AnyWay's stabilisation products are considered to be traditional as they are powder based, not liquid. Our product is a natural extension of the traditional methods of using cement and lime as stabilisers, but overcomes many of their limitations.

"With a product like ANSS, one can look at using marginal materials that were not otherwise suitable road building materials, and as a consequence, get the job done faster, cleaner and cheaper," concludes Du Plessis.

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