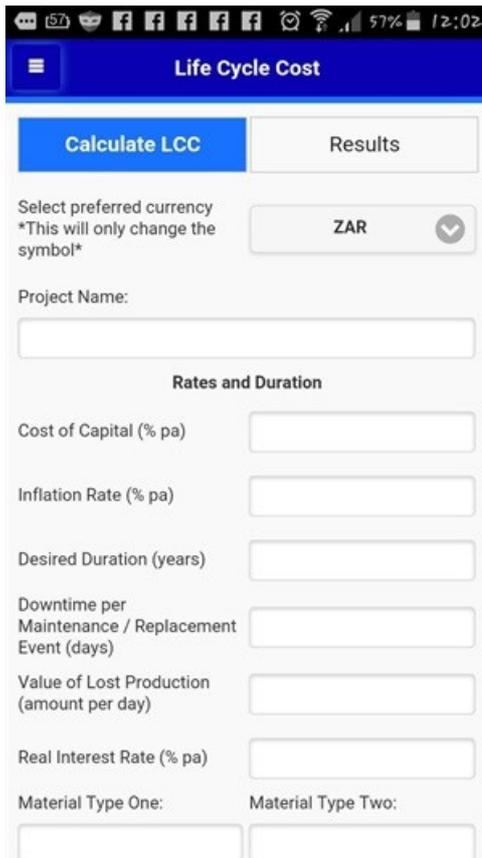


# Stainless steel LCC brought into 21st century with app

By [Sindy Peters](#)

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According to [Sassda](#) executive director John Tarboton, one of the biggest obstacles to the specification of stainless steel in certain applications is the misperception that it's more expensive in comparison to other initially cheaper options. Addressing this challenge, in 2016 the association launched an app that assists engineers in assessing stainless steel life cycle costs, giving its technology a mobile platform.



We interviewed Tarboton to find out more about the app, how it's been received by the sector, and the benefits of using the app versus the traditional methods of stainless steel life cycle cost analysis.

## ***Tell us a bit about yourself and what you do at Sassda?***

I graduated from the University of the Witwatersrand with a BSc (Eng) in Physical Metallurgy in 1988 and worked in research and development on characterising the physical metallurgy of transformable stainless steels and research into high nitrogen stainless steels. Later on, I worked in the technical customer services department, where I was responsible for Europe and North America. In 2013, I moved to the Southern Africa Stainless Steel Development Association (Sassda), responsible for technical and the fabrication and welding sectors, and in 2014, I became the executive director of Sassda.

As a team, we are focused on growing manufacturing of stainless steel products. We are also the voice of the stainless steel industry. It is challenging because, with any association, it is always difficult to measure the value that is delivered to members, whereas with a business, success is easier to measure and therefore to manage. With associations, value is also more intangible. Nonetheless, the satisfaction levels of our members show we're succeeding and the ongoing benchmarking that we conduct, proves that we are a world-class association.

## **▣ What prompted Sassda to launch the Life Cycle Cost calculator app?**

The concept of life cycle costing (LCC) when specifying stainless steel has been around for decades. Unfortunately, it was not widely adopted by specifiers (e.g. engineers, quantity surveyors, architects etc.) and materials tended to be compared mainly on the basis of initial costs. In the early 1990s, Sassda, in partnership with Euro Inox, produced a computer program to calculate the total life cycle costing. That program has now been brought into the 21st century with the development of the LCC App for both android and iOS.

The app has all the functionality of the Sassda LCC program, but is much more accessible and follows the move of users from desktop computers to mobile devices. Via the app, Sassda hopes to help the industry realise the true benefits of stainless which will lead to them specifying it more regularly, in an even wider range of applications. To boost awareness and usage of the app, we have also been running a competition to promote usage of the app with a [R125,000 trip to Paris](#) as first prize!

## **▣ What has the industry reception been like since it launched late last year?**

It has been favourably received, especially since it has proven so easy to use. It highlights the importance of taking into

account economic factors, such as inflation and interest rates, as well as operating costs, such as corrosion protection, maintenance, downtime, and replacement costs. Overall, I think the app illustrates the type of role industry associations need to be taking, namely spearheading innovation and embracing technology on behalf of their members for the greater good of the industry.

▣ ***What are the benefits of using the app versus the traditional methods of stainless steel life cycle cost analysis?***

We have seen through, for example, articles produced in the Sassda journal over the last 50 years that, although traditional methods were available, they were onerous to apply and the “value analysis” was often not done. This meant that short-term expediency resulted in long-term cost benefits not being realised. The app aims to make the technique of LCC accessible to everyone.



**New app launched to assess stainless steel life cycle costs**

16 Aug 2016



John Tarboton, executive director, Sassda

▣ ***What innovations do you imagine we'll see in the construction space in the long-term?***

The move to green buildings is a big trend and importantly, also requires an appreciation of life cycle costing. Green buildings are better insulated, use low costing lighting, natural cooling, for example by using vertical gardens and last longer with less maintenance. This results in a higher initial cost, offset by lower maintenance costs, higher rentals and better resale prices. Stainless steels are a key part of green buildings, whether it is vertical gardens, roofing, balustrading, cladding or signage.

▣ ***What other innovative local apps or initiatives would you like to see?***

I would like to see the development of an app that will make material selection easier based on corrosion resistance requirements of a particular environment, whether that is atmospheric exposure, plant processing or chemical transport.

## ABOUT SINDY PETERS

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