

Fuchs Lubricants invests R218m in expansion to boost production

Following the successful completion of Phase One of its expansion at its Isando facility, Fuchs Lubricants is progressing with the next phase of the project. Managing director, Paul Deppe, announced that Phase Two, which began earlier this year and is expected to be completed in 2024 at a total cost of R218m, will result in a 40% increase in lubricants production capacity.



Deppe explained that the company initiated its capacity expansion plan five years ago as part of its growth strategy. Phase One involved the acquisition of additional land at the Isando facility and the construction of new, state-of-the-art warehouse and head office complex. This phase was completed in mid-2022 by DR/Global, which engineered, procured, constructed, and managed the project.

The next step in the expansion is to increase production capacity. Deppe noted that this was necessary as the current plant is operating at full capacity around the clock. "To meet market demand, we had to look at expanding our production capability. It also afforded us the opportunity to introduce the latest technology in blending and filling processes," he said.



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Deppe highlighted that the new plant is an expansion of the existing plant and will provide a much-needed capacity increase. Fuchs began its automation journey when it built its second grease plant in 2018.

"We are adopting the same methodology with the automation of this plant, using a well-known German company that has done work for the group in other parts of the world," said Deppe. He added that 80% of the project spend will be local, with the balance imported, primarily for the automation.

Net zero goals

Esther Seabi, sustainability director, reveals that in line with the Fuchs net zero goals, the project will focus on energy efficiency and renewable energy as key drivers.

Features will include insulation, variable speed drives (VSDs), heat recovery from heated product and flue gas, and a solar PV system. Recently, Fuchs received an accolade from the Green Building Council South Africa (GBCSA) Leadership Awards for 2021-2022. In addition, the new Fuchs head office has been certified as being net zero carbon.

The new warehouse in Isando incorporates some of the latest warehouse management technology, including scanning and system driven batch control. The new materials-handling equipment includes narrow aisle turret trucks stacking up to 17m high. The warehouse includes a comprehensive environmental, safety and fire system, including in-rack sprinklers and automated spill barriers.

Deppe remains bullish about growth in both the local and African markets. “We are steadily increasing our market share and expanding throughout Sub-Saharan Africa from our regional hub in Isando,” he concludes.

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