**NEWS ARTICLE**

IZA Africa forges ahead to promote hot dip galvanizing in 2024

**06 December 2023:** The [International Zinc Association (IZA) Africa](http://www.zinc.org) is committed to continue to promote and educate the public about zinc applications in Africa next year, says Executive Director **Simon Norton**. “We will launch a new publication in early 2024 dedicated to providing technical support to engineers and designers around galvanizing steel. We will also focus on final-year students and educating them about hot dip galvanizing.”

IZA Africa offers engineers and designers assistance to select the correct zinc coating for any civil or mechanical engineering application. It has a permanent materials expert on hand to offer advice and tap into the association’s international resources and expertise base if need be.

IZA Africa has also secured significant commercial research funding to investigate the feasibility of new zinc refining processes to meet South Africa’s own demand for refined zinc, while using locally produced ore and concentrates. The research aims to develop and understand novel refining processes to significantly reduce the external power input compared to traditional pyrometallurgical processes.

It will allow for economically viable production of SHG refined zinc. Ore usage may be further maximised by producing refined by-products such as silver and rare earth elements. The research work is being carried out at the University of Cape Town’s Department of Chemical Engineering under the leadership of **Professor Jochen Petersen**, along with sponsors [Vedanta South Africa](https://vedanta-zincinternational.com/) and [Duferco Steel Processing](http://www.duferco.co.za/dsp/).

IZA Africa promotes zinc via publications, webinars, seminars, and presentations at professional institutes by offering expertise in the application and detailed specification of galvanized steel, galvanized wire, and continuously galvanized steel sheet for buildings, fencing, reinforced concrete, and structural steel.

The largest proportion of refined zinc used in South Africa and Africa is for hot dip galvanising and continuous galvanizing. Zinc coatings are powerful tools in the fight against corrosion of steel in deep mining, coastal steel structures, for reinforcing steel in concrete, and on atmospherically exposed steel structures.

The zinc application expertise offered by IZA Africa benefits construction projects and steel-related industries. Zinc galvanizing is a powerful corrosion protection medium that ensures the longevity of steel structures, particularly related to essential infrastructure such as rail infrastructure, mining, power generation, and renewable energy.

“Road and rail infrastructure is essential to transport people and goods, support economic development, and empower communities. However, such infrastructure is often exposed to various environmental factors that can cause corrosion, such as moisture and sea spray salt. Corrosion can compromise the safety, performance, and durability of road and rail infrastructure, leading to increased maintenance costs, reduced service life, and potential accidents,” explains Norton.

The focus on renewable energy has also placed the spotlight on the role played by zinc, especially in energy storage. The World Economic Forum (WEF) states that the metal plays a critical role in enabling green technologies like solar and wind. As the world transitions to a low-carbon economy, zinc will continue to play a key role in supporting clean energy technologies.

A case study that demonstrates the effectiveness of zinc to protect steel against premature corrosion is the fencing of land in South Africa. IZA Africa conducted an 11-year atmospheric corrosion exposure programme that involved exposing various wire-coating types at different locations countrywide.

These locations were deemed to be representative of the range of atmospheric conditions typical of agricultural environments in South Africa. The results showed that zinc-coated steel fencing was the most effective in protecting steel against premature corrosion. Recently, De Beers Venetia diamond mine installed hot dip galvanized steel in its new deep underground shafts near Messina in Limpopo Province.

Looking to 2024, Norton says IZA Africa will forge ahead with its seminar and webinar series about the application of zinc to protect steel against premature corrosion. It provides electronic and hard copies of its various publications, such as ‘Essentials of Galvanizing’, ‘Rapid Guide to Galvanizing for Consulting Engineers’, and ‘Zinc Matters’.

These seminars and publications give practicing consulting engineers insight into the specification and application of zinc-based coatings. Topics covered include zinc-rich paints, their composition, selection, and pitfalls; the advanced specification of galvanized steel; and zinc thermal sprayed coatings for steel structures such as wind turbine towers and even shipping.

***Ends***

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**About the International Zinc Association**

The IZA is the only global industry association dedicated exclusively to the interests of zinc and its users. Operating internationally and locally through its regional affiliates, the IZA helps sustain the long-term global demand for zinc and its markets by promoting such key end uses as corrosion protection for steel and zinc as being essential in human health and crop nutrition. IZA’s main programmes are Sustainability & Environment, Technology & Market Development and Communications.

In South Africa, the IZA plays a vital role in establishing the basis for the successful revitalisation of the zinc industry by increasing awareness of zinc and its applications and benefits in key sectors and markets, which will ultimately translate into the increased uptake of zinc.

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