**NEWS ARTICLE**

Futureproofing infrastructure with galvanized steel

**4 December 2024:** In South Africa where decaying water works, sewerage works, and railway systems need rapid upgrading and rehabilitation, new and remediated infrastructure must not only last for decades but thrive under challenging operating conditions.

Hot dip galvanized steel has become integral to achieving this goal. “Galvanizing is about more than just corrosion protection,” states **Simon Norton**, Director of the [International Zinc Association](http://www.zinc.org) (Africa). “It is about creating infrastructure that stands the test of time with reduced maintenance and increased resilience and saves the taxpayer money.”

Galvanized steel is the backbone of sustainable development. Coastal environments, in particular, benefit from galvanized rebar in concrete, which resists the corrosive effects of salt and carbonation. Examples like Cape Town’s sea-facing retaining walls at Clovelly on the False Bay coast showcase how galvanized steel rebar in concrete performs under extreme conditions.

In coastal areas, bridges are exposed to harsh environments with high levels of humidity and chlorides. Galvanized rebar has been successfully used in bridge construction to ensure long-term concrete durability and prevent corrosion-related failures. All new bridge construction or repair in the City of Cape Town South Africa is required to utilise hot dip galvanized rebar in concrete structures.

Luxury apartments along the prestigious Mouille Point, Sea Point, and Camps Bay beachfront in Cape Town have also suffered deterioration on columns and concrete balconies because hot dip galvanized rebar was not used in the original concrete. “With these apartment prices reaching astronomical heights and owners faced with exorbitant repair costs, all the concrete used along the East and West Coast of South Africa should contain hot dip galvanized reinforcing steel. Nothing less will suffice,” urges Norton.

Structures exposed to seawater, such as wharfs and docks, are particularly vulnerable to corrosion. Galvanized rebar provides excellent protection against marine corrosion, extending the service life of these concrete structures.

In terms of environmental resilience, the sacrificial nature of zinc ensures that galvanized steel rebar containing concrete structures endure even in high-corrosion environments. By extending the lifespan of structures, galvanizing minimises disruptions and costs associated with repair. Using galvanized rebar supports the circular economy by reducing the frequency of replacements and the materials consumed in maintenance.

Galvanized steel is not just about addressing today’s challenges; it is about anticipating future needs. “As we look to build infrastructure that lasts, reduces capital costs and is durable for decades, galvanized rebar is an indispensable tool,” concludes Norton. Its role in environmental resilience, cost saving, and sustainability assures its place in the future of construction.

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**Notes to the Editor**To download hi-res images for this news article, please visit [http://media.ngage.co.za](http://media.ngage.co.za/) and click the International Zinc Association link to view the company’s press office.

**About the International Zinc Association (IZA)**

The IZA is the only global industry association dedicated exclusively to the interests of zinc and its users. Operating internationally and locally in Africa through the IZA Africa Desk, 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 essential in human health and crop nutrition. IZA’s main programmes are Zinc Use Research, Sustainability & Environment, Technology & Market Development and technical Communications.

In South Africa, the IZA plays a vital role in establishing the basis for the successful growth of the zinc industry by increasing awareness of zinc and its applications and benefits in key sectors and markets.

**International Zinc Association Contact**
Simon Norton
Director

IZA Africa
Phone: (021) 788 9980

Cell: 082 831 2924
Email: zinc@iafrica.com
Web: [www.zinc.org](http://www.zinc.org)

**Media Contact**
Rachel Mekgwe

Senior Account Executive
NGAGE Public Relations
Phone: (011) 867-7763
Cell: 074 212 1422
Email: rachel@ngage.co.za
Web: [www.ngage.co.za](http://www.ngage.co.za/)