

## **MEDIA STATEMENT**

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### **Research, Development and Innovation in Mining survey will assist the industry achieve a safer, healthier, more productive future**

**Johannesburg, 31 October 2024.** Research, development and innovation (RD&I) is essential for the South African mining industry's drive for modernisation to make mining safer, more productive and accessible as it strives for an inclusive, transformed and sustainable sector. A new survey has been launched to better understand trends in mining industry RD&I.

In the past three decades, the mining industry has made significant gains in safety, health and inclusion of women in the sector through CEO-led initiatives. To consolidate these trends and to make further step changes, innovative thinking is needed for how mining is conducted in a healthier and safer way that makes the industry a preferred long-term, sustainable career choice for a broader range of people.

The new survey, which is designed to capture valuable insights into RD&I trends, is underway. Mining companies are encouraged to participate and to provide critical information that will drive advancements in technology and modernisation of the sector, and to shape a future where mining is not only more efficient but also more inclusive and environmentally friendly.

Stakeholders are invited to email RIIS to participate: [research@riis.africa](mailto:research@riis.africa)

The survey closes on 30 November 2024.

The Minerals Council South Africa and the Human Sciences Research Council's (HSRC) have agreed to conduct the survey to gain a comprehensive overview of the RD&I investment environment in South Africa as mining companies increasingly modernise their operations.

The Minerals Council and HSRC partnership, which is facilitated by innovation-focused advisory firm, the Research Institute for Innovation and Sustainability (RIIS), will produce an inclusive, industry-wide survey to provide insights into the key investment aspects that encourage – or impede - mining innovation in South Africa given the relatively low expenditure into RD&I in the sector.



In 2021/2022, expenditure on RD&I in South Africa's mining, minerals and mining-related activities was R646 million of which R603 million came from private companies, according to an HSRC study. Overall, minerals-related RD&I expending accounted for 6.6% of total business spending on RD&I of R9.8 billion.

The mining of metal ores, excluding gold and uranium, accounted for 71% of the sector's RD&I spending, while coal and lignite attracted 0.3%, the lowest spending in all the minerals segments.

In 2021/22, the top three research fields in mining, as measured by expenditure on RD&I, were engineering sciences (50.0%) followed by chemical sciences (35.4%) and earth sciences at (9.8%).

The safety and health of employees is a priority for the Minerals Council and its members. The number of fatalities at mines have decreased by 88% to 55 in 2023 from 484 in 1994. The number of injuries decreased by 75% to 2,080 from 8,347 in the same period.

By 2022, the latest year for which the Minerals Council has verified data, the incidence rate for tuberculosis in the mining sector was 278/100,000, well below the 537/100,000 national rate. Mining companies have also made significant inroads into reducing cases of silicosis and noise-induced hearing loss (NIHL), with reductions of 90% and 86% respectively between 2003 and 2022.

Advances in research, development and innovation will contribute to the next significant step change in the mining industry's quest for Zero Harm.

**For further queries:**

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