

MEDIA STATEMENT

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MINERALS COUNCIL COMMITS TO SUPPORTING LOCAL MODERNISATION

Congratulates chosen finalists of the Isidingo Drill Design Challenge

Johannesburg, 25 October 2018. The Minerals Council South Africa congratulates the three finalists selected at the conclusion of the first phase of the Isidingo Drill Design Challenge. The competition is aimed at instilling new, creative approaches to local innovation and design, and in this case also improving the efficiency, health and safety with which drilling occurs in the overall mining cycle.

The finalists are local equipment manufacturers Fermel, HPE and Novatek.

The Isidingo Drill Design Challenge is a partnership between the Mandela Mining Precinct and boutique innovation consulting firm RIIS. The Minerals Council has actively supported the initiative.

“With the potential of becoming a widely-used new technology in deep-level mining and elsewhere, the challenge incentivises entrants to rethink the decades-old mining drill technology,” said Sietse van der Woude, Senior Executive: Modernisation and Safety at the Minerals Council.

Faster and more precise drilling could reduce dangerous fall of ground incidents, thus contributing to a safer mining environment. It could also increase the speed of drilling, thereby lowering the cost of ownership of the equipment, and create new jobs in the eventual manufacturing process. Lighter equipment will also open job opportunities to more people, including more women.

Launched in late August, the challenge was structured to achieve rapid design and development through three phases. The first is the design phase, in which entrants were given 30 days to submit their initial concepts.



Phase two will now follow with the winners being given 60 days to establish their proof-of-concept, before moving into the final phase where they will develop a prototype.

Entrants were called to design a drill that would be capable of greater precision and be more energy efficient on one hand, and to incorporate human-centred design on the other. In essence, the drill had to be lighter, quieter and easier to use.

“We are very encouraged by the number of entrants who participated in this challenge and even more heartened by the number of individuals not associated with original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) who entered their own designs. We look forward to the outcome of the next two phases and ultimately, to the commercialisation of an industry-changing rock drill,” said Van der Woude.

“If we get this right, it will be good for suppliers, mining companies, employees and the country. Aside from sparking innovation, the challenge encourages new players to emerge. It is about a shift in the perception that mining is a sunset industry,” he added.

The Isidingo Drill Design Challenge is among several projects targeting modernisation in mining.

For more on the Isidingo Drill Design Challenge, visit <https://isidingodrill.co.za/>, and for more on the Minerals Council South Africa’s modernisation initiatives, please visit <http://www.mine2030.co.za/>

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