

EMERGING MINERS' DESK



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As part of its transformation agenda, and to diversify its membership, in 2014 the Chamber established an internal specialist group known as the Emerging Miners' Desk (EMD). Since its launch the EMD has made considerable progress in its main purposes:

- Recruiting and assisting new entrants into the mining industry.
- Implementing a programme that will assist emerging miners in understanding their legal obligations, assist them in conducting their mining activities in a socially responsible manner, and in complying with the environmental obligations required from all mining companies.

A key role of the EMD is stakeholder relations with various organisations such as government departments and Mintek. The EMD also conducts research into the sector.

Though there is no hard-and-fast definition of what makes an emerging miner, these are generally firms that operate in the early phases of the mining cycle. This includes prospectors and developers. Those with which the Chamber is currently engaged are primarily registered companies that hold mining or exploration rights. Most are operating in the coal sector where barriers to entry are less onerous than those into deep-level, hard-rock mining.

In addition the EMD also works with two associations, the Clay Brick Association as well as the South African Diamond Producers Organisation (SADPO) which represents the smaller diamond companies. It also counts small contracting companies among its members. The Chamber has sought and actively seeks to extend

and diversify its membership in order to be more representative of the South African mining industry as a whole. Emerging miners pay a subsidised membership fee and have full access to all Chamber resources.

23 companies made up of emerging miners and related advisory services have joined the Chamber membership and fall under the EMD. The two associations account for a further 200 small companies. As stated above, at present most are engaged in coal operations, followed by diamonds, manganese, iron ore, platinum, industrial minerals and chrome. Most are black-owned, empowered firms, particularly those in the coal sector.

Since its inception the EMD has run a number of public workshops covering diverse areas such as the Mining Charter, finance, water management and environmental compliance. These workshops are free of charge and topics are determined by needs expressed by the participants. The EMD also runs closed sessions exclusively for its members. Examples are on the inputs mining companies can make into the development of the third iteration of the Mining Charter and on finance, run in conjunction with the IDC. The EMD has also hosted a confidential workshop helping facilitate the linking of smaller producers with their larger counterparts in order to create operating and commercial synergies.

The outcomes of these sessions are not left in the air. By way of example, the outcomes of one closed seminar aimed at enabling emerging miners to give inputs to the draft Reviewed Mining Charter were submitted to the DMR. These inputs were made during the window period for submissions to the DMR. At another open session on the Charter, concerns emerged over the status of the pending court case, issues around social and labour plans, an accurate definition of emerging mining and the lack of participation of the junior sector in policy in the past.

The EMD also runs a mentorship programme for emerging miners. In this programme, the Chamber matches, on a pro bono basis, retired executives with emerging miners. Emerging miners' continued meaningful participation in this programme will help determine the content of the coaching programme. The Chamber is grateful for the participation of this pool of retired executives who have committed to ploughing back their skills and experience for the benefit of future leaders in the mining industry.

There have been approximately nine requests for mentorship where EMD members have been linked to mentors. In most cases this involves one or two meetings and the mentors then point the companies in the right direction. In some cases mentors have kept longer relationships with the Emerging Mining companies. Requests range from financial advice, business strategy, legal and regulatory issues, advice on the acquisition of mines, and business partnerships as examples.