

MEDIA RELEASE

October 2011

VSBK MARKS SUCCESS OF SWISS GOVERNMENTS FIRST TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER PROJECT IN AFRICA

VSBK 1 of 2

Tuesday, 27th September 2011 marked the success of the Swiss Government's first technology transfer project in Africa, with the unveiling of the first operational brick and mortar, energy efficient Vertical Shaft Brick Kiln (VSBK) in South Africa.

The inauguration took place at Langkloof Bricks in Jeffrey's Bay, the first clay brick manufacturer in this country to pioneer this technology, under the auspices of the SA-VSBK Project.

The VSBK is a continuous updraught kiln that contributes towards a significant reduction in energy consumption during the brick firing process, by more than 50%, resulting in reduced carbon emissions, fuel consumption, manufacturing costs and minimal wastage.

The SA-VSBK Project forms part of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) Global Climate Change Mitigation Programme. Given the enormous potential for this Open Source Technology, SDC together with Swisscontact and Skat developed a programme to make the VSBK technology available to the entire clay brickmaking sector.

The VSBK originated in China in the 1970's. Through the support of SDC, this technology has been significantly improved and re-pioneered in Nepal, Pakistan, Afghanistan, India and Vietnam. The SA-VSBK Project Team was put together to oversee the implementation of the technology in South Africa and to perfect existing VSBK designs, as had been developed in other parts of the world. It is in this light that Langkloof Bricks made use of this Open Source programme to construct the most technologically advanced VSBK shafts in the world.

The Clay Brick sector in South Africa is a modern state of the art industry as far as mining and green brick production is concerned (green being unfired). However, faced with impending environmental regulations, the brick entrepreneurs, especially those making use of more traditional firing techniques will soon be forced to source cleaner, more, energy efficient brick firing methods in an effort to create a cleaner environment.

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Such was the message conveyed by keynote speaker and guest of honour, Mr Peter Lukey - Chief Directorate of Air Quality Management and Climate Change from the South African Department of Environmental Affairs.

Lauding the commitment of the South African government, the acting ambassador of Switzerland, Mr Heinrich Maurer said, "In 2009, the South African government pledged to reduce its carbon emissions by 34% in 2020, below a "business as usual" growth trajectory. This was contingent upon availability of international finance and technology transfer. I am happy to say that the VSBK is one of the technology transfer projects in this country that supports government's efforts to reduce carbon emissions."

Juancho Hagnauer, Director for Swisscontact South Africa, said, "Even if only 50% of brick production moves to the VSBK, 380 000 tons of coal will be saved in this country per annum. This equates to over 950 000 tons of CO₂ emissions annually. In fact, every VSBK shaft implemented will conserve a staggering 324 tons of coal per year and reduce CO₂ emissions by as much as 810 tons. The emission of other gases and particulates as PM₁₀ (particulate matter <10 microns) will also be reduced by an anticipated 90%."

Francois Dröz, Resident Director SDC Southern Africa, said, "With South Africa hosting the International Climate Change Conference (COP 17) in Durban at the end of the year, projects such as the SA-VSBK exemplify how the private sector, with the backing of the Swiss Government, can contribute toward the South African National Climate Change Mitigation targets."

Jean Bernard Du Bois, Head of SDC's Global Climate Change Programme, adds, 'In 2009, SDC launched its Global Carbon Credit Program, precisely to support partnerships with countries that are moving forward in the field of sustainable development. It is in this spirit that we are supporting this initiative in South Africa, Climate change is not an aim in itself. At the end of the day, it is what is key for the country in terms of employment creation and local economic development."

ENDS.

PHOTOGRAPHS AND CAPTIONS:

Pic 1: Official Rope Cutting Ceremony

LANGKLOOF BRICKS PIONEERS FIRST SA-VSBK BRICKFIRING KILNS IN AFRICA:
(left to right) Pieter Blake, Production Director (Langkloof Bricks), Heinrich Maurer, Acting
Ambassador, Switzerland, Una Blake, co-founder Langkloof Bricks, Pelelani Ncguka, Vice-
President, ClayBrick Association, Nico Blake, Executive Director, Langkloof Bricks

Pic 2: Mr Heinrich Maurer, Acting Ambassador of Switzerland

COMMITTED TO SUPPORTING SOUTH AFRICA'S CLIMATE CHANGE OBJECTIVES:
Heinrich Maurer, Acting Ambassador of Switzerland lauds SA-VSBK as first technology
transfer project in South Africa through Swiss Agency for development and Cooperation,
Swisscontact and Skat.

Pic 3: Full Perspective of Langkloof Bricks VSBK Brickfiring Shafts

LANGKLOOF BRICKS PIONEERS WORLDS MOST TECHNOLOGICALLY ADVANCED,
VSBK BRICK KILNS AFRICA

Pic 3: Swiss Partners with the Local Authorities:

Juancho Hagnauer (Swisscontact), Francois Droz (SDC), Pelelani Ncguka (ClayBrick
Association), Peter Lukey (Dept Environmental Affairs), Anele Moyo (SDC), Jean Bernard Du
Bois(SDC), Janine Kuriger (SDC), Heinrich Maurer (Acting Ambassador – Swiss Embassy
South Africa) Heini Mueller (SKAT)

ABOUT THE SA-VSBK PROJECT STAKEHOLDERS

The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)

The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) is Switzerland's international cooperation agency within the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA). In operating with other federal offices concerned, SDC is responsible for the overall coordination of development activities and cooperation with Eastern Europe, as well as for the humanitarian aid delivered by the Swiss Confederation.

The goal of development and cooperation is that of reducing poverty. It is meant to foster economic self-reliance and state autonomy, to contribute to the improvement of production conditions, to help in finding solutions to environmental problems, and to provide better access to education and basic healthcare services.

About Swisscontact

As the development organisation of the Swiss private sector, Swisscontact, Swiss Foundation for Technical Development Cooperation, supports economic development in over 25 countries in Asia, Africa, Eastern Europe and Latin America. Founded in 1959, Swisscontact's focus areas are:

- Fostering vocational training and continuing education
 - Supporting small and medium enterprise (SME)
 - Reducing environmental impact
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About Skat

Skat is an independent Swiss organisation working in the fields of technology development and transfer. Since 1978, Skat has provided technical expertise, management support, and training to bilateral and multilateral development agencies, and non-governmental organisations (and specifically to the VSBK project).

Langkloof Bricks

Langkloof Bricks is an established ClayBrick manufacturer situated between Jeffrey's Bay and Humansdorp. The company is owned by the Blake family who have been committed to the supply of quality clay brick products to the area for over 40 years. Langkloof Bricks was founded by the late Mr George Blake and Mrs Una Blake, who is still fully involved with the company. The day-to-day operations are managed by her two sons, Nico (Executive Director) and Pieter Blake (Production Director). In addition to pioneering the first energy efficient VSBK brick firing kilns in South Africa, Langkloof Bricks has also recently set up the Brick Centre, located in a high traffic area on the outskirts of Jeffreys Bay. This innovative outlet is designed to represent and sell products for all clay brick manufacturers in the area.

Distributed by **TradeMark Communications** on behalf of the SA-VSBK Project team. For more information, please contact:

Company : **SA-VSBK Project**
Contact : John Volsteedt
Designation : Project Manager
Tel No : +27 (0)12 346 5102 / +27 (0)86 519 1983
Email : john.volsteedt@sa-vsbn.co.za

Contact : Luca de Giovanetti
Designation : Assistant Project Manager
Tel No : +27 (0)12 346 5102 / 071 298 3109
Email : luca.degiovanetti@sa-vsbn.org

Contact : Kevin Fruin
Designation : Founder SA-VSBK Project
Tel No : 082 909 4276
Email : kevin@namakwastene.co.za

Company : **Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation**
Contact : Anele Moyo
Designation : Climate Change Programme Manager
Tel No : +27 (0)12 366 9400
Email : anele.moyo@sdn.net

Company : **Swisscontact**
Contact : Juancho Hagnauer
Designation : Director, Regional Office, Southern Africa
Tel No : +27 (0)12 346 5102 / +27 (0) 76 103 6417
Email : jh@swisscontact.co.za

Company : **Skat**
Contact : Karl Wehrle
Designation : Senior Water and Environmental Sanitation Specialist
Tel No : +41 (0)71 228 5454
Email : Karl.Wehrle@skat.ch

Company : **Langkloof Bricks**
Contact : Nico Blake
Designation : Executive Director
Tel No : +27 (0)42 295 1251 / +27 (0)83 458 9711
Email : nico@langkloofbricks.co.za

VERTICAL SHAFT BRICK KILN
CLEANER CLAY BRICK TECHNOLOGY

VSBK

Company : **TradeMark Communications**
Contact : Jacqui Duarte / Alanna Kondo
Tel No : +27 (0)21 447 1766 / +27 (0)82 440 6359
Email : admin@trademarkcomm.co.za

Vertical Shaft Brick Kiln
SA-VSBK Project
Office 80B, 107 Nicolson Street
Brooklyn, Pretoria 0181, South Africa

Tel: +27 (0)21 346 5102
Fax: +27 (0)21 346 5106

info@sa-vsbk.org
www.sa-vsbk.org

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CLEANER CLAY BRICK TECHNOLOGY