

## Elematic SA's bigger factory meets growing demand

Sustained demand for precast hollow core concrete slabs saw Elematic South Africa (ESA) doubling its output capacity earlier this year, with the construction of a second manufacturing plant. The initial manufacturing facility comprised eight 120m long extruder beds. With the construction of a new factory which was completed early in 2015, another eight were added, bringing the total to 16 extruder beds.

According to Craig Webber, director at ESA, the expansion was due to high demand for ESA's products. "Property developers and building contractors have seen the benefits of using precast concrete floor slabs over the years and demand has been surging," he says. "The product is becoming more widely used as it is well known to save time and money during the construction process. On top of that, we have always aimed to provide a good and reliable service to our customers." This has not only secured the company word of mouth business, but many repeat clients as well.

ESA has been manufacturing precast hollow-core concrete slabs at its manufacturing plant on Gauteng's East Rand since 2007, using internationally respected precast technology. "The extrusion methods we use are well known in the industry to produce the best quality hollow core slabs," Webber adds. Elematic itself is a well established international brand. It was established in Finland in 1959 and currently has a presence in over 100 countries on six continents worldwide. Added to this is the fact that Elematic South Africa's production facility is ISO 9001 certified and all its products carry the SABS mark of quality.

It is a testament to ESA's high quality products and superior service that the company has continued to grow despite difficult economic circumstances. Recession struck South Africa just a year after the company started operating. Nevertheless, it has managed to grow its market share steadily, with demand being at an all-time high when the second factory opened. "Our intention from the outset was always to grow the market and we certainly believe we've done that. It is always healthy to have competition in the market," Webber comments.

ESA supplies hollow core concrete slabs to customers throughout South Africa and beyond its borders. Slabs are available in thicknesses of 120mm, 150mm, 200mm and 250mm. In order to ensure that the production line experiences minimal delays, it is important to have as reliable a supply of raw materials as possible. To ensure a long term reliable supply of aggregate, Elematic's holding company acquired Atoll Mining, a dolomite quarry situated about 500 metres from the company's main factory.

Apart from ensuring a reliable aggregate supply, additional benefits are the high quality and consistency of the aggregates supplied by Atoll. "The quality of the 'classified sand' produced by Atoll using air separation technology from the USA is of particular importance for Elematic in the manufacturing process. The classified sand has a very defined and controlled 'cut point' due to the sand being classified in a dry process. The use of this dry classified sand dramatically reduces the water demand in the batching plant and produces a very constant high strength concrete," explains Webber.

Hollow core concrete slabs continue to grow in popularity as construction timelines are pressurised and contractors require reliable solutions. Customers can be assured that all ESA's products are manufactured in a controlled environment, to the highest standards and finishes. The products also have a degree of environmental friendliness – their acoustic and thermal properties are better than those of a solid slab, and conform to the new, more stringent requirements in the building regulations for these properties. The slabs can also be recycled.

ESA has built up a solid reputation and a large customer base over the years. The company has a long track record of successfully completed projects, some of the most prestigious of which include the Gautrain Station parkade at Rosebank, the parkade for the new registration hall at the UNISA campus in Pretoria, and the 50,000m<sup>2</sup> Stella Park shopping centre in the south of Johannesburg.

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