



**ABOVE** Shaft Sinkers offers an extended life-of-mine solution

**LEFT** A shaft-deepening project

# Extending life of mine

Where vertical shafts are used to access ore bodies, many mines are initially sunk to depths that cannot fully exploit the extent of these reserves. However, economically viable ore bodies can often extend deeper than the initial shaft.

**M**ining companies are increasingly faced with the operational challenges of safely and cost-effectively extracting their remaining product from depths in excess of 2 km beneath the surface, failing which, their only other option would be to close their mines. Similarly, open-pit operations reach a point where it is no longer cost-effective to mine in this fashion and alternative ore extraction methodologies need to be found in order to extract the remaining ore.

Now part of the UMS Group, Shaft Sinkers is an internationally recognised mining operations company with a proven track record in sinking ultra-deep mine shafts – up to 3 km, through almost every type of rock strata – that spans more than 50 years. Over the years, the company has pioneered many groundbreaking mining methods, such as mid-shaft development – a system that facilitates horizontal access to the orebody



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Olebogeng Manhe, MD, Shaft Sinkers SA

from the vertical shaft, while primary shaft sinking is still in progress. This has enabled Shaft Sinkers to perform at the forefront of sinking, development and construction.

Olebogeng Manhe, managing director, Shaft Sinkers SA, adds, “Our deep understanding of the importance of rapid access to deep-level orebodies gives us the ability to offer our clients an extended life of mine solution.”

Where companies need to deepen their existing operations in order to capitalise on the anticipated upturn in the resource sector, Shaft Sinkers is well placed in providing a comprehensive suite of mining solutions, which can extend from project initiation to realisation. Two shaft projects currently being undertaken for clients in the DRC and India are designed to move their open-pit operations underground again, extending the life of these mines.

Thabo Moloto, operations director, Shaft Sinkers SA, highlighted, “Our company’s highly specialised technical and managerial personnel are dedicated to providing safe, cost-effective and innovative solutions to our clients. This makes us a leader in ultra-deep mining.”

In order to optimally synchronise production and revenue streams in line with any anticipated upturns in commodity prices, companies need to proactively start looking at extended life of mine planning. **35**