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Intertek, a leading quality solutions provider to industries worldwide, is providing essential quality, safety, compliance and performance monitoring as part of the growing range of services it offers to clients in Africa



Intertek traces its history back nearly 130 years to a marine surveying company founded by the entrepreneur Caleb Brett in the 1890s to answer a vital need at the time - independent testing and certification of ships' cargoes. Through a long process of amalgamation and acquisition it has since grown to become the global go-to resource for almost every industry sector. Employing more than 36,000 people at 1,000 laboratories in more than 100 countries the FTSE 100 group ensures quality, health, environmental, safety, and social accountability standards for virtually every market. It holds extensive global accreditations, recognitions, and agreements - and its expertise in overcoming regulatory, market, and supply chain hurdles is a legend.

From that and its performance (delivering a first half operating profit of £152.3 million this year) it is clear that Intertek is well embedded in global markets. As African countries establish their regulatory frameworks, the continent is becoming an extremely important region to the group. Many governments have put in place stringent requirements to ensure their consumers are protected from sub-standard products and goods. Intertek works with governments in Africa to support such programmes. Exploration activity in Africa is increasing, particularly in Angola, Mozambique, Tanzania, Central Africa and Ghana. Ultimately, customers in these areas seek support where limited infrastructure is present.

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Intertek has a presence in 25 African countries, but with a dozen offices, South Africa might be called its heartland. “Industry Services is the single largest division,” says Regional Director Paulo Pereira. “We help clients to manage risk and optimise returns within the Oil and Gas, power, nuclear, mining, construction, engineering and chemical industries. In the sub-Saharan region we operate in three outstanding areas; technical inspection services, technical staffing services and asset integrity management services.” Within South Africa Intertek is already identified as the market leader within the petrochemical testing industry. However this is rapidly becoming the case throughout Africa, with state of the art laboratories based in Durban, Cape Town, Johannesburg, Beira, Dar es Salaam, Mombasa, Luanda, Abidjan, Takoradi, Limbé and Lagos

The company’s recently established oil condition monitoring laboratory in Johannesburg is staffed by leading tribology experts. Backed up by a custom-designed web portal and reporting system, this service is destined to become a key service provider to the transport and mining industries of sub-Saharan Africa.

Environmental compliance is becoming a huge issue in this sector. “We have recently established an Environmental Division that assists clients with environmental monitoring and testing. Our Environmental division has a dedicated team which is able to assist clients with legislation compliance by recording the



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impact their activities have on the environment. Our state-of-the-art environmental laboratory is based in Johannesburg and specialises in environmental testing of land, water and air.” Intertek is also working closely with industry as South Africa prepares for the introductions of biofuels.

Having joined the team in 2005, Karin Ovari has worked across various high-hazard industry disciplines providing value-based safety leadership and operational performance development interventions. Now the regional manager for Intertek Consulting & Training (IC&T) Sub-Saharan Africa she was

given a neat compliment by one client, who said: ‘We need you to come and sprinkle your fairy dust - we don’t know what it is, but it works!’ “Thankfully with the development of our Safe Operations and Performance (SOP) framework, not only are we able to sprinkle our fairy dust, we are also able to measure it!”

The petrochemical industry is notoriously high risk and consequently obsessed by safety, says Ovari. One of the aims of IC&T is to help organisations and individuals achieve their safety vision. Winning the hearts and minds of employees and co-creating a culture of safety requires visible leadership, she says. “Visible leadership is where the rubber meets the road; it is the verbs in our safety policies

and procedures. We offer a full consulting service, from identification and analysis of needs, through to skills development, on-the-job coaching and competency assessment.”

But this is done with pragmatism. “People don’t want ‘more stuff’ to implement or know; they want to know how to use, implement and improve current systems and ways of doing things. At IC&T we work with organisations’ current processes and procedures to establish how they can be revitalised and made more efficient and productive!”

Research suggests the single most important tool to address on-the-job performance is through the one-on-one interactions of leaders with the workforce.



“When something goes wrong, it seems easier to write a new policy or procedure to prevent it happening again. However, most organisations have plenty (if not too many) processes, policies and procedures. What we should be doing at that stage is rather asking the tough questions about our culture of safety and how our leaders live and drive safety. It is not about more regulation, audits, people or equipment; it is about behaviour. At IC&T we help to ask those tough questions – and to get honest answers!”

IC&T is now spreading its wings with the launching of a Mozambique operation. As we are constantly reporting in these pages, this is an industry that is very sensitive when it comes to safety, and Intertek helps participants to approach it as something they believe is the right thing, not because they have to or for fear of reprisal.

Greg Dinkelman, Business Development Manager for Calibration and Metering Services, Sub-Saharan and West Africa, joined the team in 2012, bringing more than a decade of industry experience both in management and in the field. “We are very positive about the potential to grow the calibration and metering business across the continent,” he says. “Intertek has many services that are active in the region and our exploration and production team has identified the need for further development of our metering and calibration services.”

Where products and processes are being inspected, measured or monitored, it is essential that the instrumentation being used is accurate and reliable, he adds. “The calibration process determines that the



measuring equipment is performing within specification and is fit for purpose.” Working with Intertek on calibration and metering brings increased value to its customers’ products and processes, he adds. “For example, these services are highly important for oil and gas companies to improve their measurement accuracy which ultimately reduces errors and saves money.”

Over the past three years, Intertek has invested substantially in equipment and training to support upstream and downstream measurement services in Nigeria, Ghana, Tanzania and Angola as well as South Africa, Dinkelman emphasises. “In 2014, we will be taking delivery of a high-specification mobile calibration unit to support the upstream and midstream industries. This will be the first of its kind for Intertek in Africa, offering clients increased scope when deciding on a service provider and keeping Intertek at the forefront of these industry services.”

Intertek’s services go way beyond testing. It has earned a reputation for helping its customers increase the value of their products, gain competitive advantage, develop trusted brands and minimise the adverse health and environmental impact of its products and processes. Over the coming year it will continue to extend its footprint in Africa. “A newly established lab in Johannesburg will allow our customers in the agriculture sector to enjoy the professional quality experience currently enjoyed by our petrochemical and petroleum clients,” concludes Karin Ovari. **BE**

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