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Fewer employment opportunities for mining professionals

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South Africa-based resource sector recruitment specialist Mecs Africa, a subsidiary of JSE-listed company MICROmega Holdings, notes that, in the last nine months, there has been a reduction in appointments, such as operational and project positions, within their domestic and international mining portfolio.

Mecs Africa MD **Roland Glass** notes there has been a particular shift in the demand for mining project staff, compared with 2011 and 2012. "There has been a short-term decline in the volume of new requests for employees on mining projects and in the demand for project teams across the sector. Several of the projects for which Mecs Africa has provided labour resources have slowed in their labour demands and

in new appointments for skilled technical resources indicative of the trend in the industry of placing a hold on further expansion or construction projects," he says.

With mining companies not progressing with certain expansion projects, engineering and construction companies do not require the human-resources, compared with the demand in previous years, he adds.

"Mecs Africa has recognised the short-term downturn in human resource demand within each tier of a mining project, such as engineering and construction. "Although the short-term downturn is only in certain geographical areas of Africa, South Africa has been particularly impacted on," says Glass.

He believes this is due to a lack of investment in the industry, as a result of commodity prices slowing down, the high domestic risk profile and labour unrest currently impacting on the South African mining sector. Glass adds that, subsequently, many of the employment opportunities for South African mining professionals are in other parts of Africa, such as Katanga province, in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Mozambique and Zambia, although these countries are not without their own inherent challenges.

"The growth in the mining sector across the continent should re-establish itself in the near future and the trend of employing mining professionals on African mining projects should create significant demand for technical resources in the future," says Glass.

Recruitment

Mecs Africa specialises in providing employment for highly skilled, professional individuals in the mining industry, as opposed to providing general or semiskilled labour. The company provides human resources for mining companies, engineering and construction companies contracted to mines, as well other service providers, such as camp management and health, safety, environment and quality industry specialists. In addition to mining, Mecs Africa services the power generation, agriculture and oil and gas sectors across the continent.

Mecs Africa has three recruitment hubs – Mumbai, India, for skilled artisans; Perth, Australia, for multinational professionals; and South Africa, from which most of the labour supply comes.

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