

Press release:

Dekra Industrial SA set to make a splash with expansion of services in the water sector

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Dekra Industrial SA, well-known across a multitude of industries including power generation, nuclear, oil and gas, construction, petrochemical and renewable energy, is braced and ready to expand its existing services to the water industry.

With 96 years in the industry through its global parent company, Dekra Industrial has established a formidable reputation as a leader in ***non-destructive testing (NDT) and inspection services***, including material testing, laboratory, 'one-stop' NDT inspection and corrosion control with rope access, lifting and drone inspections, advanced NDT, asset integrity, and industry training through Dekra Institute of Learning (IOL).

Until 2021, the water sector was a limited part of the Dekra Industrial portfolio, despite running parallel to all of Dekra's existing work. This is however set to change.

"We are certain that the expansion of our service offering in the water sector will become an integral part of our 'one stop' NDT and inspection basket of services, generating valuable new business for the company going forward - as well as adding significant value to the water sector itself," says Johan Gerber, Dekra Industrial SA's Managing Director.

Every industry needs water

In light of the fact that a shortage of water – or the absence thereof - is becoming a concerning threat to South Africa's sustained economic development, Dekra Industrial acknowledges that - with its vast experience in the field of corrosion control and NDT solutions - expanding its expertise in the water sector makes complete sense.

"Our entire services portfolio has a direct correlation with the water sector, and it, therefore, makes perfect sense – both for Dekra Industrial and our clients – to extend our services in this vital sector, as part of our basket of offerings," Gerber explains.

In essence, Dekra Industrial will reposition itself strategically - not only as an NDT inspection services provider - but also a holistic, '*one-stop-shop*' service provider of NDT inspection, corrosion control, welding, water leakage detection, and certification services.

“It makes absolute sense to additionally offer corrosion control, painting and blasting to the water sector,” agrees Dekra Industrial’s General Manager Eddie van Hansen.

“Above-ground pipelines, water purification plants, reservoirs, tanks and dam walls are all areas where corrosion takes place. By offering a multi-faceted approach, we will be able to supply our clients with a complete solution – a true ‘one-stop shop’ offering.”

Drones: pushing the boundaries of inspection

Aside from its standard stable of NDT services, Dekra Industrial is able to offer clients in the water industry more advanced solutions using cutting-edge NDT and inspection technology through the use of drones.

“Drone technology is enabling companies like Dekra Industrial to really push the boundaries of non-destructive testing and inspection,” van Hansen comments, adding that the company aims to use this platform for advanced inspection and testing in a wide range of industrial applications.

“For example, when we do concrete inspections using drone technology, we are able to pick up problems that were previously hard to detect,” says van Hansen.

“In terms of the water sector, drone inspections can be done on dam walls and other cement structures which are affected by water and corrosion. Furthermore, by offering cement inspections on water tanks, we can detect leakages and ultimately save money and large maintenance costs further down the line for both private and municipal water entities.”

Dekra Industrial also believes that loss of water due to ageing or poorly-maintained infrastructure can be solved using automated drone inspections, by using a drone programmed to follow a specific route and digitally map cracks and leakages:

“The camera essentially controls the drone and is able to detect hazards, for example in water reservoirs or tanks. The visual data obtained from the drone is recorded and - thanks to the use of dimension data analytics and thermal imaging – water infrastructure such as tanks, dam walls or reservoirs can then be repaired, section-by-section,” explains Dekra Industrial’s Advanced Technology Manager and Level 3 Custodian MC Liebenberg, who is responsible for the company’s drone inspection services.

“Important water resources such as the Vaal dam would benefit hugely from regular drone inspection. It has been estimated that up to 30% of its water volume is lost before it reaches storage, due to rust and corrosion leakages in underground pipes. Using drone inspection, we would be able to locate the leakages, clean and inspect the area and finish with the powder coating and a final leak check – applying our ‘one-stop’ ethos in a practical water application,” Liebenberg points out.

Other innovative technologies for the water industry

Other NDT methods used to measure and analyse cracks running through concrete water storage tanks, dam walls and similar water infrastructure include the ultrasonic method, which takes place inside the concrete and is not invasive or destructive in any way. In addition to this, Alternate Current Field Measurement (ACFM), Accoustic Emission (AE) and the use of a Hovermap (where an additional thermographic camera with in-built software is attached to a drone), are amongst the other innovative testing and inspection options Dekra Industrial can make use of.

“Infra-red technology, when applied within the context of drone inspections, can also effectively inspect areas at risk of cracks and leakage. For example, ground-penetrating radar is particularly effective when detection of water leaks under substrate such as tarmac is required,” Liebenberg adds.

The ‘Dekra difference’

A key differentiator for Dekra Industrial is the fact that its holistic ‘one-stop’ testing and inspection services can all be applied to the water sector.

“Take a dam wall, for example. Our comprehensive service could include everything from analysis of the concrete for cracks or leakages, to the coating and painting thereof, if required,” explains van Hansen.

“Another differentiator for our clients is the data gathered during for example drone surveillance,” adds Liebenberg. “It is essential to realise that inspection represents only 25% of the data. Adding the necessary levels of value to that data is the pivotal factor and what provides clients with the information required to make critical operational decisions,” he says.

Furthermore, Dekra Industrial envisages that their ‘one-stop’ service will find be in demand on client projects where NDT and inspection is required across many different applications. “The more intelligent our information is, the more we can turn the result of an inspection into an intelligent information solution,” van Hansen emphasises.

“As a company, we have really only just ‘dipped our toes’ in the water sector,” Gerber remarks with smile, adding that he and his team are excited at the sheer volume and variety of opportunities which this crucial infrastructural sector represents in South Africa – and throughout the rest of the continent.

“We envision an impressive synergy of our current services with the water sector both locally and pan-Africa, and believe it will be a market space which is boundless for our ‘one-stop’, sector-relevant services, and we are all set to ‘make a splash’!” Gerber concludes.

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Note to Editors

About Dekra Industrial and Dekra Institute of Learning

With 96 years in the industry through its global parent company, Dekra Industrial SA has established a formidable reputation as a leader in inspection services, non-destructive testing (NDT), material testing, laboratory services, Advanced NDT, and asset integrity services, and offers industry training through Dekra Institute of Learning. With a Group presence in more than 50 countries on five continents, Dekra Industrial RSA provides safety solutions across a multitude of industries, including power generation, oil and gas, construction, petrochemical, manufacturing, fabrication, pulp and paper, rail, mining, steel industry and foundries, within South Africa and pan-Africa.

Dekra Industrial SA is a holistic, ‘one-stop’ services provider of NDT inspection, corrosion control with rope access, lifting and drone inspections, Dekra Industrial SA is Level 3 BBBEE-compliant, with 51 percent black woman ownership.

The company is also RD 0034-compliant, a nuclear safety compliance standard and is one of the few NDT companies locally to hold the ISO 45001 certification.

Dekra Institute of Learning is QCTO-accredited and delivers online learning across all industries, in both public and private sectors, with training pitched to all levels of competency, focusing on HSE, ISO and CPD-aligned courses. Classroom-based and distance learning are also available.

Dekra Industrial strives to be recognised as the ‘heroes of safety’.

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