

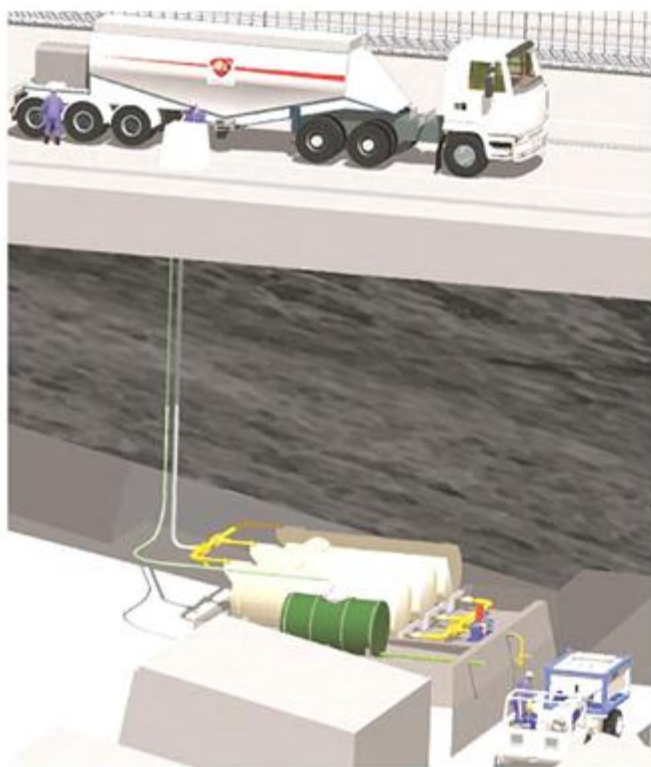


Underground storage facilities for bulk emulsion and sensitiser.

first emulsion was successfully pumped underground and the system later commissioned. RSV was appointed as the project engineer for the entire project.

The emulsion and sensitiser report to an underground silo where they are stored in separate tanks. Three 18 tonne isotainers were installed for emulsion storage. The sensitiser is stored in a separate 1,000 litre tank adjacent to the emulsion isotainers.

"The volumes of emulsion and sensitiser delivered to the underground silo are tracked on surface, underground and as they are consumed, for control purposes," Cross says.



While the project has already proven successful, the mine and AEL are in the final process of evaluating the full benefit of such a system.

"What is clearly evident is that in addition to solving Bathopele's primary logistical concern, the system also reduces the potential safety hazards created by too many vehicles and people travelling on the underground roadways at any given time, as well as the time savings, diesel and maintenance reduction costs and turnaround times", AEL regional manager, Deon De Wet, explains.

The mine has already shown interest in financing the same system at its Eastern shaft as well.

AEL has resolved to take the technology to the next level and will continue to evolve this offering to meet the needs of the customers. "The next challenge is to take the system to greater depths for use in the deep level gold and platinum mines by placing the pipeline in the shafts," Cross says.

Avoiding substantial pipe pressures is a critical challenge and is expected to incorporate the application of sophisticated logistics and control measures. AEL envisages further consultation with specialists who will provide guidelines in terms of research for improving the system and investigating the best method of taking the system deeper. **MRA**

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