

Southern Africa

TREADS DIGITAL

Vol 33 • Apr / May 2026

www.satreads.com



LOCAL TYRE MANUFACTURERS FACE MOUNTING CHALLENGES

NDUDUZO CHALA ON WHY EVEN PLAYING FIELD REMAINS INEQUITABLE

INTERACTIVE POLL!
**HAVE YOUR
TO SAY!**

SA manufacturing
sector under
threat

Global tyre shipments to
top 3.1 billion units
by 2030

When oil price
sneezes, we all
catch a cold



bandag

BUILT FOR BETTER™

SUSTAINABILITY

RELIABILITY

PROFITABILITY

Ongoing investment in processes, rubber compounding, product performance and a global partnership is the blue print of Bandag's Application Specific Range of premium retread products.

Bandag Application Specific Retreads - Built For Better

www.bandag.co.za | +27 11 439 6000

SYNC / 15429



Editor's Corner

A recent article that appeared in moneyweb.co.za sported a hard-hitting headline: "Manufacturing is leaving – and policy uncertainty is not helping." The story attributes this disturbing trend to proposed B-BBEE changes and structural constraints risk, which, it claims, undermines years of industrial development.

In the words of Busi Mavuso CEO of BLSA: "Any aspiration that South Africa has to rebuild its industrial base is disappearing before our eyes. The Department of Trade, Industry, and Competition should take the lead in changing that, if they indeed regard industrialization as strategic to the growth of the South African economy. If it fails, a generation of South Africans will pay the price."

Sage advice, considering the recent exit of several international concerns from South Africa. Our exclusive interview with Nduduzo Chala of the SATMC together with our feature story on the challenges facing the manufacturing sector, delve deeper into the issue.

Enjoy the stories in this issue, and don't forget to make your voice heard in our newest poll.

Yours in tyres



contents

Interview

Local Tyre Manufacturers Face Mounting Challenges 2

Feature

South African Manufacturing Sector Under Threat – Is the System Failing Local Producers? 6

Feature

Global Tyre Shipments to Top 3.1 Billion Units by 20230 12

Feature

BFGoodrich Highlights Performance of New Rally-Raid Tyre at Dakar 2026 14

TEPA Talk

When the Oil Prices Sneezes, We All Catch a Cold 16

Local News

Bridgestone Launches Extra-large Agricultural Tyres, Including 44- and 46-Inch Sizes 18

Retreading

When You're In An Emergency, You Need To Know Who You Can Trust 19

Local News

Automechanika Johannesburg CEO Breakfast Hosted in Durban Shines a Light on Kwazulu-natal's Automotive Sector 20

Interactive Poll

XXXX 21

World News – Europe

Continental Phases Out Coal and Heavy Fuel Oil as Energy Sources in Tyre Production Worldwide 22
 Nokian Tyres Publishes Climate Transition Plan, Targets Net-Zero By 2050 24
 Rolling Noise: How Continental Is Making Tyres Even Quieter 26

World News – Asia

Final Call As Asia's Leading Automotive

Platform Opens Soon 28

Bridgestone Activates Driver-In-The-Loop Simulator For Digital Tire Development 29

World News – USA

Tire Industry Project Publishes Watershed Model For Tire And Road Wear Particles 30



Visit www.satreads.com to see our past issues

Editor: Liana Shaw
European contributor: John Stone
Design & Layout: Simone Anderson
Advertising SA: Liana Shaw – satreads@mweb.co.za
Advertising EU: Sapphire Media
ON THE COVER: Nduduzo Chala





LOCAL TYRE

MANUFACTURERS

FACE MOUNTING CHALLENGES

NDUDUZO CHALA ON WHY EVEN PLAYING FIELD REMAINS INEQUITABLE

When anti-dumping duties on Chinese imports became effective in 2023, the local tyre makers had hoped their implementation would make for a more even playing field. But just how effective did this protection measure prove to be? And what other factors may be threatening their survival? The closure of the Goodyear plant in Uitenhage, last year, points to critical challenges, posing a massive threat to the sustainability and longevity of the country's remaining three tyre producers.

A shifting market dynamic coupled with inadequate support from those in authority, that do not appear fully aware of the consequences, is proving a source of frustration. So, where does this leave Bridgestone, Dunlop and Continental Tyre South Africa? Nduduzo Chala Managing Executive of the South African Tyre Manufacturers Conference (SATMC), weighs in.

The growing number of cheap imports coming in from China is testing the local tyre producers, threatening their ability to compete in a price-sensitive market. What is the current ratio of imports versus locally produced tyres?

Based on 2025 figures, 12.5 million units were sold into the market, with 10.5 million units generated by the replacement market. The South African market is sizeable, but very competitive. Imports have overtaken local producers, with a majority market share of just over 60 percent in 2025.

Have the anti-dumping duties on Chinese tyres had the desired effect?

Regrettably, not. When the anti-dumping duties came into effect,

the industry observed numerous circumventions to the dumping duties. Firstly, the industry observed tyres imported from China as a "tyre and rim" combo, which attracted less duties. These were later stripped and off and sold separately, a practice prohibited by the International Trade Association Commission (ITAC) and the South African Revenue Services (SARS). This was addressed by the industry with import control measures being placed by ITAC on the importation of "tyre and rim" configurations.

Secondly, the industry engaged with ITAC and SARS on certain loopholes in the implementation of the imposed dumping duties, as a result of one Chinese factory being exempt from imposition of dumping duties. The industry has observed an increase of imported brands that are related to the exempt Chinese factory, and this has still not been addressed.

Finally, the industry observed a change in trade patterns, with Chinese producers shifting their operations/imports from China to Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam, in order to circumvent dumping duties. This change in trade pattern is referred to as "Country Hopping"

Imports now dominate over 60% of the market – and without fair enforcement, local manufacturers are fighting an uphill battle.

The issue isn't competition – it's unfair trade, loopholes, and weak implementation that continue to undermine the industry.

and the industry engaged once again engaged with ITAC to conduct an independent assessment, as this was causing significant injury to the local market. After 18 months of intense effort and investigation by ITAC, there was no dumping duties imposed to Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam. This means that local tyre producers will continue to face unfair trade dynamics in the domestic market.

To answer the question succinctly, the impact would have been seen had there been better implementation and less loopholes observed. To be clear, the local tyre manufacturers are not opposed to imports and/or competition for so long as it is fair for all.

Well, yes, after all, the local tyre makers are, by definition, importers themselves.

Correct. The main objective of the SATMC and the local tyre producers was not to limit competition but to address the unfair trade and price undercutting by imports from China, and lately from Thailand, Vietnam and Cambodia as well.

So, what's next?

The loopholes that exist, that allow for rules to be broken, present massive challenges. We need to find another mechanism – aside from imposing anti-dumping duties – to tackle the problem and are currently in discussions with the relevant authorities on this.

The local tyre producers are responsible for over four thousand direct employees, significant investments into SA every year and play a crucial role in the sustainability of the South African Automotive Sector. Speedy collaboration with government to find and implement solutions, is a MUST. The survival of

local tyre production in South Africa is dependent on it.

Have you identified a possible mechanism that could prove effective?

The industry has engaged with the Minister of Trade, Industry and Competition (the dtic) on priority measures that MUST be put in place over the next three to six months, notwithstanding that the SAAM35/APDP policy review is currently being conducted, which should be completed by end of 2026.

The entire industry requires an "All hands-on deck" approach, with all industry players and relevant government department, particularly, the dtic and its units, National Treasury, and Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment to act with agility and support the industry.

What is your view on supply to the OE market, given the proliferation of new vehicle makes from the Far East?

If we compare 2015 to the present, Asian vehicles have grown exponentially. The challenge is that these vehicles come already fitted with tyres. So this limits growth and capacity utilization for local tyre producers.

One of the SAAM35 objectives is to increase localization levels to 60% by 2035. Having a stable local tyre supply to the OEM market is critical to ensure we edge closer to this objective. The SATMC position is that there should be mandated localization for OEMs in order to ensure the progression takes place and this must be tied to government incentives.

In your view, why is it important for us to not lose the local tyre manufacturing industry?



The automotive manufacturing sector contributed 5.2 percent to the GDP in 2024, and the local tyre producers are a key contributor to this.

Unemployment is very high in South Africa, job losses are majorly significant for the country, with one person often bringing in income for an entire family. The knock-on effect is far reaching.

Bear in mind, that for a country to grow, it needs a strong manufacturing/ industrial base. Should we lose this (local tyre production competence), South Africa will become a consumer of another economy's production, resulting in low economic growth and the loss of skills and competence that we will never get back.

How are local tyre makers responding to this perceived threat?

The three local tyre producers are all implementing their own strategies, based on market dynamics and global direction. However, over and above the direct tyre producers market strategies, the key topics at the moment:

- **Completing the process of the SAAM35/APDP Policy review:** For automotive sector policy to include aftermarket incentives, particularly for tyres.
- **Government support for designation of tyres through the Preferential Procurement Framework:** Government to prioritise purchasing local tyres for government vehicles/fleet.
- **Unlocking and taking advantage of the opportunities that exist through the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA):** Natural Rubber offtake arrangement with West African countries, in exchange for market access.
- **The consumer awareness and decision of buying local is key during these times, please check out the SATMC's "HomeGrown#DrivingLocal".**

To sum up, what do you believe needs to happen to support them and prevent future casualties?

We require a much greater level

of support an engagement from government and their institutions. Bureaucracy is hampering the industry and the systems in place are not effective.

Critical issues such as unfair trading in the domestic tyre market, imports of second-hand tyres – which remain unregulated – and addressing the ever-growing problem of waste tyres and reaching a viable solution to their collection and disposal, need urgent intervention. There is no time to waste. We need swift, decisive action.



Without urgent, coordinated government action, the future of local tyre manufacturing – and thousands of jobs – is at risk.





SOUTH AFRICAN MANUFACTURING SECTOR UNDER THREAT

– IS THE SYSTEM FAILING LOCAL PRODUCERS?

The closure of the Goodyear Kariega plant in Uitenhage last year that resulted in more than 900 job losses, was met with profound shock. No one expected the closure of a manufacturing icon that had operated in South Africa for more than 70 years. Sadly, Goodyear is not an isolated case.



Another iconic brand – Nissan – has exited the country, with its legendary plant in Rosslyn, being sold to Chinese vehicle manufacturer, Chery SA. Other notable exits include British American Tobacco (BAT) which is scheduled to shut down its only manufacturing plant, ending over a century of production in South Africa and Shell and BP which closed the SAPREF refinery in Durban. Shell is also pulling out of its downstream business (600+ service stations).

Also included in the mix are AcelorMittal SA which ceased long steel production at its Newcastle plant and restructured operations, affecting 3 500 workers, FerroGlobe that placed its Polokwane silicon smelter on care and maintenance, citing a 900%plus increase in electricity costs since 2007.

And that's not all. Coca-Cola Beverages South Africa closed plants in Bloemfontein and East London, resulting in significant job losses. Ans for the Automotive Supply Chain is concerned, at least 14 component suppliers for the automotive industry closed in 2025, with several more closures taking place in early 2026.

Worryingly, this disturbing trend is symptomatic of the mounting challenges facing local manufacturers – across all industry sectors – due to extraneous variables beyond their control.

The breakdown of critical infrastructure – affecting power and water supply – rapid deterioration of the roads due to a growing number of goods needing to be transported by road (due to the collapse of the railway system,) South Africa's allegiance to BRICS, which in turn, could affect its AGOA status, low economic growth, expectations for companies to adhere to BBBEE regulations (even multinationals), labour laws, union demands, to name but a few, all point towards a general deterioration that is forcing manufacturing concerns to dig deep, to remain sustainable.

In the tyre sector, three of the four manufacturers are not locally owned, with their headquarters located in Europe, the USA and Japan respectively, a major reason (according to our sources), behind the closure of the Goodyear plant. The South African plant was one of several to be shut down, by parent company – The Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company, based in Akron, USA – as part of a strategic decision to consolidate its operations.

That said, Goodyear senior management remaining in South Africa, confirmed that the company would continue with the supply and distribution of the Goodyear product along an import-based model.

Which begs the question: At what cost, given import duties to which they would be subjected? Will these additional costs be absorbed internally, or will the customer be compelled to fork out more for the product? In short, would the steeper cost jeopardise future sales, especially with the onslaught of Chinese tyre makes – now numbering 109 – coming into the country?

Local tyre makers are under pressure, leading them to apply for protection in the form of anti-dumping duties on imports coming in from China in 2022, and more recently, lodging a

“

A wave of plant closures across industries signals a deeper crisis in South Africa's manufacturing backbone – with jobs and capability at risk.

”

Cheap imports, rising costs and weak policy support are reshaping the market – and local manufacturers are struggling to stay competitive.

new application for protection from tyres coming in from neighbouring countries such as Vietnam, Thailand and Cambodia which provide an easy loophole for foreign tyre makers to circumvent the anti-dumping duties on Chinese factories. This issue remains a hot topic. The original application to impose restrictions on these Asian countries expired without final resolution, but we are told the remaining local three manufacturers will appeal the decision. The appeal is likely to take two-to-three years.

Government's role is crucial

In the face of rising competition from the Chinese, government institutions are being urged to prioritise South African manufacturing firms, easing regulations that prohibit local and export performance.

Sadly, even those that are 100% South African owned and managed – Bandag being a worthy example – are not receiving the support they need to compete and flourish.

“We need government to allow industry players to plug into some of the decision making concerning their own industries and businesses” stated Ndududu Chala Managing Executive South African Manufacturers Conference (SATMC).

“Officials who possess the necessary authority to arrive at solutions swiftly, would also go a long way towards reaching swift resolutions to our issues” he added. “We are proudly South African and do believe that government needs to acknowledge South African owned manufacturing institutions specifically. In the absence of this, the inevitability of losing local manufacturers is a given, in my opinion,” claimed John Laskarides CEO Bandag Southern Africa.

We learnt that Sailun – a prominent Chinese tyre maker – has made their intention to invest in South Africa clear, pledging a commitment to invest in a large-scale plant in South Africa during the 6th Annual Investment Conference. This is in addition to their newly established plant in Egypt. The keen

interest by the Chinese producer to set up a manufacturing presence in the country will likely be followed by other Chinese producers.

Said Marius Simpson Managing Director Sailun Africa: “We are exploring all possible avenues to establish manufacturing facilities in South Africa. Discussion in this regard remain sensitive and confidential in nature with all stakeholders.”

Sailun is only the beginning. We have it on good authority that other possible entrants from China are seriously contemplating setting up plants in South Africa, in a bid to expand their global footprint on the African continent.

Interestingly, Sailun global manufacturing footprints deliver between 80-95 percent local employment, despite unfounded speculation to the contrary, as the cost of foreign employees cannot be justified over the long term, Sailun confirmed. The South African plant will operate along similar lines, thereby providing job opportunities for skilled operators, in the future.

All well and good, but ironically, there is little by way of incentives being offered to wholly owned South African manufacturers, to ensure their long-term sustainability.

Imports versus local

According to the SATMC, the ratio of imported tyres versus locally produced currently stands at 66% on passenger and as high as 73% on truck tyres. A staggering figure, underscoring the local producers' concerns, who must compete against these cheap imports that despite the protection measures in place, retail for a fraction of the cost. In the current economy, with consumers feeling the pinch on all levels, it is hardly surprising that cheap foreign makes are fast replacing legacy brands in the replacement market. Ironically, however, the local new tyre



producers - Bridgestone, Continental and Dunlop – none of which are locally owned), are responsible for a sizeable portion of imports coming into the country, to cater for applications and sizes they do not produce in South Africa.

Therein lies the dichotomy of the position they find themselves in, in that they too are partially reliant on imports to service their customer base.

While the SATMC continues to call for more protection against imports from government, the local tyre makers are in effect, importers themselves.

OE supply under threat

Historically, the Original Equipment (OE) market has served as a steady, powerful trading platform for the local manufacturers. While this remains a core sector of their businesses, recent developments, such as the sale of the

Nissan plant to Chery SA, reinforce a changing market landscape.

With more foreign motor vehicle manufacturers establishing a presence in the country, this is likely to compromise local supply to these new entrants to the market, who will equip their new vehicles with their own foreign tyre makes.

In that event, the replacement market is likely to take on greater significance for the remaining local tyre makers, to make up any losses in the OE segment.

Consequences for the distribution network

The closure of the Goodyear plant has shaken the retail trade, with the dealer network (especially those with fixed alliances to the local manufacturers), facing future uncertainties.

Where the Goodyear product is concerned, again, senior management we spoke with confirmed that their

“

As global players consolidate and shift production offshore, South Africa risks becoming a consumption market rather than a production hub.

”



Without urgent and coordinated government action, the long-term survival of local manufacturing hangs in the balance.



affiliated network – HiQ – would continue to operate as before, along the import-based model Goodyear has chosen to adopt in South Africa. But when asked whether the current threshold on Goodyear sales would remain in place, they declined to comment.

Bear in mind that all four tyre makers have dedicated distribution allegiances in place, Bridgestone/Firestone to Supa Quick, Continental to Best Drive and Dunlop to Dunlop Zone. And based on reports from the dealer trade, their local manufacturing partners have downsized their sales representatives to a mere handful, sparking concerns.

Should the country suffer a second casualty, with another plant closing, the long-term effects to these distribution networks remain unclear.

Closure of Australia's tyre manufacturing plants signal warning for SA

Australia's tyre manufacturing industry declined over a few decades due to a mix of economic pressure, global competition and structural changes in manufacturing.

Here too, multinational tyre companies consolidated production into fewer, larger plants in Asia, as it made more sense, logistically, to supply Australia from these regional hubs, rather than maintain separate local factories.

Bridgestone Australia closed its Adelaide plant in 2010, with Goodyear Dunlop following suit, shutting down its last Australian factory in 2015.

In addition, that labour, energy and regulatory costs are far higher in Australia than in countries like China, Thailand, or Indonesia, global companies found it much cheaper to produce tyres overseas. Notwithstanding, Australia has imposed serious barriers to entry, thereby limiting damage from dumping and making for a more level playing field.

Should local tyre manufacture cease in South Africa, the adverse effects will be vast and widespread, and not only when it comes to job losses. Cessation of local manufacturing could also entrench players in the market who would only be invested in self-interests. Any perceived

benefits are unlikely to translate to South Africans.

“Fundamentally, the closure of local manufacturers will constitute a more expensive product to the South African consumer as all local safeguards will have been removed. The existence of a local manufacturing presence is the biggest obstacle to open ended costs incurred by the consumer, whether in truck or retail. In addition, the relevance of pricing to value and quality would also fall away, by definition,” commented John Laskarides.

“Government needs to understand the importance of retaining local manufacturers, and afford them more protection, by way of subsidies, export incentives, and the like” reinforced Laskarides. Pledging their commitment to South Africa, Lubin Ozoux, CEO Dunlop Tyres South Africa said: “DUNLOP's presence in South Africa is rooted in a firm belief in the country's manufacturing potential and its vital role in the automotive value chain. Backed by shareholders with a long-term view of South Africa and the African continent, we have invested R1.7 billion over the past three years into strengthening the sustainability, efficiency, and capability of our uMnambithi (formerly Ladysmith) plant. Our strong partnerships with OEMs, local communities, and municipalities, together with continued investment in our people and operational excellence, reflect our intention to remain a committed, constructive contributor to local industry.”

Echoed Managing Director/Plant Manager, Olaf Kreis, Continental Tyre SA: “The tyre market in South Africa has been significantly impacted for several years by intense competition from low-cost imported tyres. Despite operating in an increasingly challenging environment, Continental Tyre South Africa is committed to responsible local manufacturing, product quality and long-term customer value.”

Continental 
The Future in Motion



NEXT-LEVEL DRIVING PLEASURE

ENHANCED BY GERMAN TECHNOLOGY

The Continental SportContact™ 7.
Our most accomplished performance tyre with
world-beating grip in wet and dry conditions.



**GLOBAL TYRE
SHIPMENTS TO TOP
3.1 BILLION UNITS
BY 2030**

The global tyre industry is entering a new era of growth, driven by rising demand for smarter, more sustainable and higher-performance products. While short-term challenges such as tariffs and raw material costs remain, vehicle manufacturers continue to push for innovation – especially in larger rim sizes, electric vehicle tyres and advanced premium models. According to the latest Smithers report, these trends are set to fuel strong market expansion through to 2030, reshaping how tyres are designed, manufactured and used worldwide.

Despite short-term uncertainty linked to tariffs and raw material pricing, vehicle OEMs continue to demand innovation and sustainability in tyres, including for more larger rim sizes and EV-specific models. According to the new Smithers market report – The Future of Global Tyres to 2030 – this will propel demand forward at a 5.4% compound annual growth rate (CAGR) to reach \$367 billion in 2030. Simultaneously volumes will increase at a 4.0% CAGR to over 3.1 billion units in 2030. This, according to Smithers Report.

Despite short-term uncertainty linked to tariffs and raw material pricing, vehicle OEMs continue to demand innovation and sustainability in tyres, including for more larger rim sizes and EV-specific models. According to the new Smithers market report – The Future of Global Tyres to 2030 – this will propel demand forward at a 5.4% compound annual growth rate (CAGR) to reach \$367 billion in 2030. Simultaneously volumes will increase at a 4.0% CAGR to over 3.1 billion units in 2030. This, according to Smithers Report.

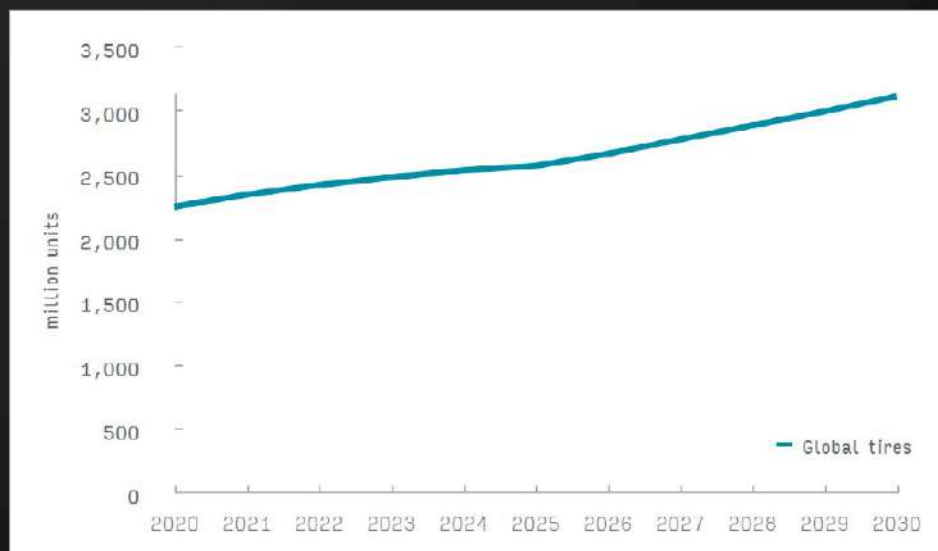
The main catalyst will be the development of more premium, specialized road tyres for passenger and commercial vehicles. These account for 21.5% of volume demand in 2025, but will grow at 10.0% year-on-year across the next five years. The segment is diversifying with a wide range of SUV, winter, all-season, green, EV, and run flat models – allowing more established tyre companies to leverage R&D innovations.

Passenger light truck (PLT) tyres remain the most important market segment, accounting for over two thirds (67.6%) of contemporary demand by volume, ahead of motorcycle tyres (21.3%), and truck and bus radials (9.0%). A very large installed vehicle parc will support generally healthy PLT replacement across 2025-2030, even if OE sales are reduced in the short term; aging car fleets and extended vehicle replacement cycles in mature markets will make replacement channels more important. Simultaneously low rolling resistance (LRR) tyres will grow in popularity, calling for design innovations that improve fuel efficiency, without compromising traction and treadwear.

Across the Smithers forecast period, consumption of tyre raw materials will increase

from 57.2 million metric tons in 2025 to 67.4 million metric tons in 2030. Materials suppliers will feel parallel pressure to develop more sustainable higher-performance rubber grades and reinforcement materials. As more EV tyres are sold this will create new revenue from polymer noise-cancelling foams.

Alongside electrification, automotive production is increasingly moving toward more autonomous features and software-defined vehicles (SDVs). This is generating new opportunities for smart tyres carrying sensors to provide real-time data on road surfaces, inflation, and wear. Tyre makers are increasingly tapping this data to deliver more intelligent, enhanced tyre maintenance services for commercial vehicle fleets.



Note: e = estimated; f = forecast; CAGR = compound annual growth rate

Source: Smithers



BFGoodrich Highlights Performance of New Rally-Raid Tyre at Dakar 2026

BFGoodrich has reaffirmed the performance and resilience of its latest rally-raid tyre following the demanding conditions of the 2026 Dakar Rally, widely recognised as one of the most extreme motorsport events in the world.

The rally provided a rigorous testing ground for the BFGoodrich All-Terrain T/A KDR3 EVO 2.0, the brand's newest generation rally-raid tyre designed to deliver increased robustness together with improved traction on loose and unpredictable terrain.

Teams participating in the rally indicated that the higher number of punctures experienced during the event was largely due to the extreme roughness of the terrain rather than any weakness in tyre design. During the rally, Nasser Al Attiyah experienced only four tyre punctures, highlighting the important role played by navigation and driving strategy in managing such challenging conditions.

The BFGoodrich All-Terrain T/A KDR3 EVO 2.0 was developed to meet the evolving demands of rally-raid competition. The tyre made its competitive debut at the 2025 Rallye du Maroc, where its performance was validated under demanding race conditions, and has been available in size 37x12.50R17TL since October 2025.

In rally-raid racing, robustness does not mean a tyre should be "unbreakable". When the wheel of a two-ton vehicle travelling at speeds of up to 160 km/h strikes an obstacle, a significant amount of kinetic energy is generated. A completely rigid tyre would transfer this energy directly to the vehicle, potentially causing major structural damage such as suspension or chassis failure and bringing a crew's participation in the event to an end.



Extreme terrain tests more than tyres – it proves that performance is a balance of durability, traction, and smart driving under pressure.



BFGoodrich therefore focuses on achieving the right balance between durability, traction and energy absorption. Observations from the 2026 Dakar Rally confirm the importance of this balance in extreme rally-raid conditions. The brand will continue to work closely with teams, organisers and partners to analyse performance data and further refine tyre technology for future competitions.



BFGoodrich
Tires

When the Oil Price Sneezes, We All Catch a Cold

When a military strike in the Middle East sends oil past \$100 a barrel and the rand is having one of its moments, the ripple hits closer to home than most people realise — right down to the tyre on the rim and the part on the shelf. In this month's TEPA Talks, we unpack why crude oil is every tyre and parts dealer's silent business partner, what the 2026 energy shock means for your costs, your pricing, and your customers — and why, buried inside all this bad news, there's actually a reason to be quietly optimistic.

Written By: Dylan Petzer (TEPA National Vice-Chairman)

Picture this: a diplomat somewhere in the Middle East has a very bad week, a few missiles get fired, and suddenly the price of the tyre sitting in your stockroom quietly goes up while you weren't looking. Welcome to 2026 — where complex geopolitics is everyone's problem, including yours.

Here's the simple version of what happened. In late February, military strikes on Iranian targets sent oil markets into a mild panic. Brent crude shot past \$100 a barrel and has been sweating up there ever since. Global forecasters are now

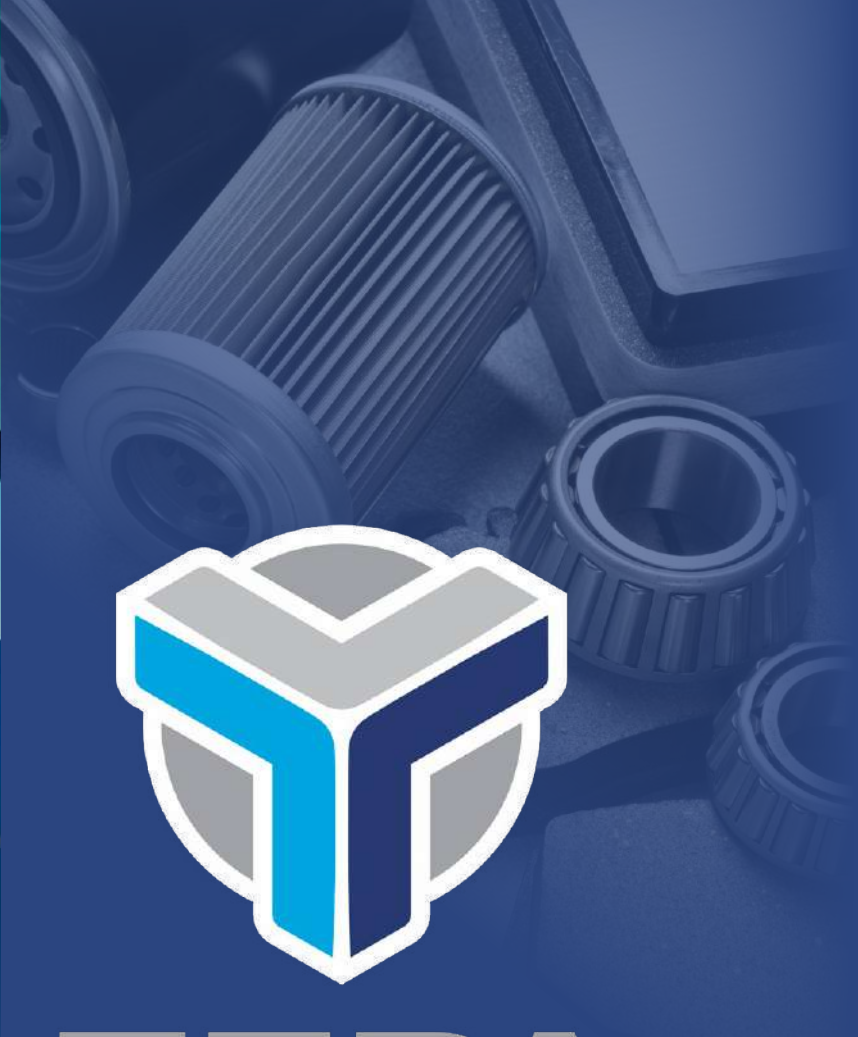
whispering words like "\$130 by year-end" with the kind of straight face that should terrify anyone who's ever had to price a set of 265/65 R17s.

Now add the rand — our beloved, perpetually nervous currency — which dropped to around R16.80 to the dollar around the same time. So we're buying dollar-priced oil with a weakening rand. That's what economists call a "compounding effect." What we call it in the industry is unprintable.

So what does crude oil actually have to do with tyres?

Everything, as it turns out. About a quarter to a third of everything that goes into making a tyre — synthetic rubber, carbon black, processing oils — comes directly from crude oil derivatives. Manufacturers reckon a R100 move in crude can push tyre production costs up by around 10%. They've already started passing that along to the aftermarket. Yes, that's us. Yes, it happened first.

And for parts dealers, it's not much better. Your stock didn't arrive by magic carpet — it came on a ship whose operator has just added a rather enthusiastic fuel surcharge to your invoice.



TEPA

Proud Association of 

The silver lining nobody talks about

Here's the thing though: South African motorists are keeping their cars longer than ever.

The average vehicle on our roads is now over 12 years old. That's not a statistic — that's job security.

Every time someone decides they can't afford a new car, they're essentially investing in your business instead.

Rising fuel costs that scare people away from new car showrooms drive them straight to you for the parts and tyres to keep the old faithful running.

What should you actually do?

Don't panic-buy your stockroom full of product you'll turn in six months. Don't keep your pricing spreadsheet from 2024 either.

Check your supplier agreements, know what landed cost actually looks like this month versus last, and talk to your customers before they see the new price — nothing kills trust faster than a price increase that lands without warning.

Most importantly, stay connected to TEPA. This kind of environment is exactly what the association exists for — collective intelligence, engagement, and making

sure no member is navigating rising costs alone.

The oil price will do what the oil price does. Our job is to be the business that's still standing — and still smiling — when it settles down.

Stay informed. Stay compliant. Stay profitable.

For further details or inquiries, please feel free to reach out to TEPA by contacting Marietjie Smith at marietjie.smith@rmi.org.za.

We look forward to connecting with you!

BRIDGESTONE LAUNCHES EXTRA-LARGE AGRICULTURAL TYRES, INCLUDING 44- AND 46-INCH SIZES

Bridgestone, a global leader in tyres and sustainable mobility solutions, is expanding its premium agricultural offering to meet the demands of the latest generation of high horsepower tractors. The Bridgestone VT-TRACTOR range now includes six additional extra-large (XXL) sizes, spanning 38–46-inch rim diameters and introducing enhanced features and performance.

Bridgestone's new VT-TRACTOR XXL tyres deliver exceptional traction, extended wear life and enhanced durability. The expanded range also delivers an optimised rolling circumference for ideal lead percentage across front and rear tyre combinations.

"Today, farmers operate larger, more powerful tractors and need tyres that can keep up – doing more and going further in demanding conditions," said Andrea Marconcini, Director Agriculture at Bridgestone EMEA. "Our updated VT-TRACTOR range is engineered to enable faster, more efficient work in the field, together with a longer service life that reduces long-term costs."

Underpinned by Advanced Tyre Engineering

The performance benefits of Bridgestone's new VT-TRACTOR XXL tyres are enabled by a range of advanced design features.

Developed using robust Bridgestone design criteria and virtual 3D simulation, the tyres incorporate a deeper tread depth and wider tread width, ensuring excellent cooperation between traction and wear. A patented involute lug design delivers up to 12 per cent more lug volume than competitors¹, maximising traction while



minimising energy loss and maintaining performance over time.

The enhanced durability of the expanded range is enabled by Bridgestone's unique S-LINE bead profile. This provides greater flexibility at lower pressures, helping to reduce soil compaction while maintaining durability under heavy and changing loads, and preventing rim slip. The strong bead profile combines with a high durability casing construction that ensures even pressure distribution over soil footprint, improving both field performance and tyre longevity, and preventing both circumferential and shoulder cracks. The new XXL range's optimised rolling circumference ensures proper traction, reduces tyre wear, prevents driveline stress and improves fuel efficiency, while maintaining steering precision and overall vehicle stability.

The XXL tyres are compatible with Central Tyre Inflation Systems (CTIS), allowing operators to adjust pressure easily for different applications.

Bridgestone's €10 Million Manufacturing Investment

The introduction of the VT-TRACTOR's XXL sizes is supported by a significant €10 million investment in Bridgestone's Puente San Miguel plant in Spain. This investment has enabled the development of new manufacturing capabilities, including advanced production technology and specialised equipment to produce large-diameter tyres up to 44 and 46 inches. The investment has also increased Bridgestone's production capacity for large agricultural tyres.

Bridgestone's new VT-TRACTOR XXL sizes will be introduced progressively from April 2026, expanding coverage for high-horsepower tractors and ensuring compatibility with a wider range of modern agricultural machinery.

¹ Based on Bridgestone measurement tests conducted on Bridgestone VT-TRACTOR, Michelin AXIOBIB2 and Trelleborg TM1060 VF750/70R44 and VF900/65R46 tyres.

EMERGENCY HOTLINE

0800 30 40 50



National
Pricing
Consistency



Monthly Tyre
Breakdown
Reports



Dedicated
Call Centre



24/7 Tyre
Breakdown
Service



Daily Tyre
Breakdown Alerts

When you're in an emergency, you need to know who you can TRUST. You need to know who to call. And you need to know that your emergency is high priority!

For more than three decades, Bandag's Emergency Tyre Assistance (ETA) has given fleets peace of mind.

With consistent service delivery, national pricing across SA and most importantly, a single contact point, Bandag's ETA provides the professional on the road tyre service that your fleet deserves.

Don't just take our word for it—put us to the test!

With Bandag you don't have to be a tyre expert. You just have to know one!

Bandag specialises in the manufacture of retreads and best-in-class after sales service. That's what we do.

For more information, please contact Bandag on **011 439 6000** or visit the website at **www.bandag.co.za**

bandag
BUILT FOR BETTER™

AUTOMECHANIKA JOHANNESBURG CEO BREAKFAST HOSTED IN DURBAN SHINES A LIGHT ON KWAZULU- NATAL'S AUTOMOTIVE SECTOR

KwaZulu-Natal's Automotive Strengths take Centre Stage at Automechanika Johannesburg CEO Breakfast South Africa's automotive sector is brimming with opportunity, and KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) is positioning itself at the forefront. That was the central message from the Automechanika Johannesburg Q2 CEO Breakfast, held on 17 April 2026 at the Durban Chamber of Commerce and Industry

Convened by Messe Frankfurt South Africa and sponsored by Nedbank, the event gathered senior executives, policymakers, and industry specialists ahead of Automechanika Johannesburg 2026, the flagship trade fair for the automotive aftermarket.

A Province Firing on All Cylinders

Meschack Zwane, Company Economist at Trade and Investment KwaZulu-Natal opened with a compelling picture of provincial momentum. KZN's GDP grew 1.4% in 2025, underpinned by a 21% rebound in agriculture and a surge in vehicle and parts exports of more than 50% year-on-year. Business confidence reached a record 60 points in Q4 2025. "KwaZulu-Natal is open for business, and the numbers back that up. Belgium has overtaken the United States as our largest export partner, and the UAE recorded export growth of nearly 180 per cent," he indicated. "These are not incremental gains; they signal a seismic shift in how the world sees KZN as an automotive hub. The conditions are right. The question is whether we are bold enough to seize them."

South Africa's National Opportunity

Tshethe Litheko, Chief Policy Officer at naamsa, highlighted South Africa's production of 618,077 vehicles in 2025 and domestic sales growth of 15.7%. While acknowledging a 22.8% decline in vehicle exports, he framed it as a catalyst for strategic repositioning. "South Africa has the industrial



base, the policy framework, and the talent to be a serious player in the global transition to new energy vehicles," he argued.

"The 150 per cent investment allowance for Electric Vehicle (EV) production is a direct signal from government that this is a priority. Disruption creates space for those who are prepared and South Africa has every reason to be prepared."

Financing the Future

Takatso Sello, Senior Manager for Manufacturing at Nedbank, addressed cost pressures facing manufacturers while making a strong case for sustainable operations.

"The manufacturers who will thrive are those who treat sustainability not as a compliance exercise, but as a competitive advantage. Nedbank is committed to being a financing partner for that transition because the business case is clear, and the window of opportunity is now."

Building an Inclusive Aftermarket

Anton Fiets, Executive Manager for Industry Development at the AIDC, highlighted the aftermarket as one of South Africa's most significant growth opportunities.

The AIDC's Township Automotive Hubs initiative provides workshop bays, diagnostic tools, and technical training to township-

based businesses, while its Manufacturing Centre of Excellence builds skills in mechatronics, EV systems, and Industry 4.0 technologies. "The aftermarket is not a footnote in South Africa's automotive story, it is a chapter in its own right," stated Fiets. "When we invest in township workshops and advanced technical training, we are building an economy that works for everyone."

Connecting Industry, Driving the Future

"What we heard today was a clear recognition of where the opportunities lie and a determination to act on them," said Michael Dehn, Managing Director of Messe Frankfurt South Africa. "KwaZulu-Natal has the exports, the confidence, and the infrastructure to lead. Automechanika Johannesburg exists to give industry leaders the platform, the data, and the connections to turn that potential into results."

The next CEO Breakfast takes place on 7 May 2026 in Gqeberha. Automechanika Johannesburg 2026 opens at Gallagher Convention Centre, Midrand, from 27 to 29 October 2026.

For more information about exhibiting Automechanika Johannesburg 2026, please visit www.automechanikasa.co.za or contact Tracy Gounden at tracy.gounden@za.messefrankfurt.com

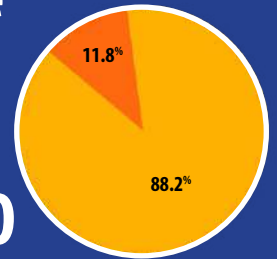


In our previous issue, we asked...

Are you being affected by the skills shortage in the industry?

HERE ARE THE RESULTS...

11.8% YES 88.2% NO



HAVE YOUR SAY...

Do you believe the local tyre manufacturing industry needs greater government support?

[CLICK HERE TO VOTE](#)



YES



NO



Results will be published in our next edition. *NB: Your identity will remain confidential



By John Stone

For the past two decades Sapphire Media has supported the worldwide tyre and automotive industry as a unique Business Media Consultant delivering professional editorial and marketing/PR services to a global client base and as a regular columnist in leading publications.

CONTINENTAL PHASES OUT COAL AND HEAVY FUEL OIL AS ENERGY SOURCES IN TYRE PRODUCTION WORLDWIDE

As of January 2026, all Continental tyre plants have transitioned to alternative energy sources, including biomass, biogas and electricity from renewable sources. Plants also use alternative fuels such as liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) and natural gas to ensure a constant energy supply. Process-related CO₂ emissions reduced; operational resilience of plants increased. “For us, coal and heavy fuel oil are a thing of the past. The future lies in renewable energies,” says Dr. Bernhard Trilken, head of Manufacturing and Logistics at Continental Tires.

Hanover, Germany, March 2, 2026. Continental has reached an important milestone in its global sustainability strategy: Coal and heavy fuel oil have been fully phased out across all tyre production sites. Since January 2026, all plants have adopted alternative energy sources to generate the steam required for manufacturing tyres and heating. These alternatives include biomass, biogas, electricity from renewable sources, and alternative fuels such as liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) and natural gas in order to ensure a constant energy supply.



“For us, coal and heavy fuel oil are a thing of the past. The future increasingly lies in renewable energies,” says Dr. Bernhard Trilken, head of Manufacturing and Logistics at Continental Tires. “By relying on a smart mix of energy sources – increasingly renewable and ideally generated directly on site – we are making our manufacturing more independent and therefore more resilient.”

Until the early 2020s, seven of Continental’s 19 production facilities worldwide relied on coal and heavy fuel oil to generate steam. This approach ensured constant thermal output and high

operational reliability even in regions with limited gas or electricity infrastructure. Today, all Continental tyre plants draw on a diversified mix of alternative energy sources, enabled by systematic and long-term investments.

In tyre manufacturing, a significant share of energy is required for heating processes such as vulcanisation, which gives rubber its elastic properties. While this step has long used steam produced directly from fossil-based energy sources, new advanced electric technologies make the process far more flexible and more energy efficient.

In addition, since 2020 Continental has purchased electricity exclusively from

renewable sources and is continuing to expand its own renewable energy generation. The company reduced the greenhouse gas intensity of its production by more than 10 percent in 2025 compared to the previous year and by around 70 percent compared to 2019. Especially by switching to lower-emission energy sources, Continental has cut around 180,000 metric tons of CO₂ from tyre production over the past four years.

Milestone achieved: alternative steam generation at all sites

Today, Continental uses a combination of different energy sources to reduce overall CO₂ emissions from tyre production, including biomass, biogas, electricity from renewable sources, and alternative fuels such as liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) and natural gas. "We have significantly reduced our production-related CO₂ emissions, thanks to continuous investments in electrification and changing the energy sources used for heat generation at our plants worldwide," explains Henning Mühlenstedt, head of Future Technologies and Sustainable Infrastructure at Continental Tires.

The energy mix at Continental's global production sites varies widely, shaped by regional infrastructure, available resources, and local energy markets. Yet one common thread runs through all locations: the company's clear commitment to phasing out coal and transitioning to energy sources with lower CO₂ intensity. At the plant in Gqeberha, South Africa, for example, coal had long been part of the site's steam generation. Today, the plant has switched to biomass, with liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) covering the remaining energy demand.

The tyre plant in Kalutara, Sri Lanka has undergone a similarly transformative journey. With the commissioning of a second biomass boiler last year, the site successfully eliminated the use of heavy oil and now generates all of its steam exclusively from renewable biomass. At its Otrokovice site in the Czech Republic, Continental worked closely with its regional energy supplier to align steam generation with the company's climate targets. As part of this collaboration, the local power plant gradually shifted its fuel mix from coal to biomass and natural gas. As a result, Continental's tyre plant in Otrokovice can now be supplied with steam generated predominantly from biomass. This switch will also have a positive impact on the surrounding communities, which will now receive district heat from a more environmentally friendly mix.

Transitioning to alternative energy sources is a key part of Continental's sustainability efforts. The company continuously works to improve energy efficiency and increase the use of renewable energy sources in its production processes further. Switching steam generation to alternative energy sources across all production sites is a concrete step – a commitment that is also recognised externally by the independent organisation CDP, which awarded Continental an A- rating in 2025 for its climate transparency and CO₂-reduction measures.



**THE TYRE AND AUTOMOTIVE
MARKET'S ONLY INTERNATIONAL
DEDICATED MEDIA SPECIALIST**

**Sapphire
Media specialises in
professionally handling
Editorial, Discounted
Advertising and General
Marketing and Public Relations
projects for companies without
in-house facilities for
promoting their products
and services.**

**Whether
you are looking for
national or global
penetration why not let
Sapphire Media see if
they can help you move
forward with an initial
non-committal chat by
phone or email.**

**We can
expertly manage all
business presentation
to the international
business media at highly
competitively low prices
(by monthly retainers or
individual price
schedules).**

**Whether
you are looking for an
increased business profile
in South Africa or attract
import and export enquiries
from around the world.
Sapphire Media has the
experience and expertise
to ensure you can
make an impact.**

Contact JOHN STONE on

+44 1206 822320

+44 7837 920420

john.stone@sapphire-media.co.uk

www.sapphire-media.co.uk

NOKIAN TYRES PUBLISHES CLIMATE TRANSITION PLAN, TARGETS NET-ZERO BY 2050

The company's near-term target calls for a 42% reduction by 2030. Nokian Tyres published its climate transition plan, outlining how the company plans to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and reach net-zero by 2050.

The plan is based on the company's near- and long-term climate targets approved by the Science Based Targets initiative in 2024. Nokian Tyres' net-zero target for Scope 1, 2 and 3 CO₂e emissions aligns with limiting global warming to 1.5 C.

Nokian Tyres Climate Transition Plan Targets 2030 Reductions

By the end of 2025, Nokian Tyres reduced its absolute Scope 1 and 2 emissions by more than 38% from the 2022 base year.

The company's near-term target calls for a 42% reduction by 2030.

The climate transition plan identifies the company's main emission sources. It outlines key levers for reductions in its operations and across its value chain. The plan details actions aimed at meeting the 2030 targets and achieving net-zero greenhouse gas emissions status by 2050.

"Our work toward net-zero emissions



is not only about us, but also about drivers worldwide," said Paolo Pompei, president and CEO of Nokian Tyres. "We reduce the environmental impact of tire manufacturing while delivering the safety and quality that define Nokian Tyres,"

Governance and Implementation of the Climate Transition Plan

Nokian Tyres' board of directors approved the climate transition plan. The company said the plan and additional information about its climate work are available on its website.

Nokian Tyres said it may adapt and update the plan as methods and

technologies for reducing greenhouse gas emissions develop.

Romania Plant Highlights Sustainability Progress

Nokian Tyres said its factory in Romania is the first full-scale zero-CO₂-emissions (Scope 1 and 2) tire factory in the world.

In 2025, Nokian Tyres was selected as one of the World's Most Sustainable Companies by Time magazine. The company also received its sixth consecutive leadership-level score from CDP for actions against climate change.

BOTO *OTR* *RADIALS*

CHOOSE AFFORDABLE QUALITY

**THAT'S BETTER FOR
YOUR BUSINESS**



TESTED & PROVEN

***BOTO OTR Radials are
designed for enhanced traction,
hourage and durability for greater
efficiency & reduced operating costs***

GET THE BOTO ADVANTAGE FOR YOUR MACHINERY:

- Suitable for all OTR machines
- Full size range in 25" to 35" 'E' and 'L' type radials
- Robust steel belted radial construction
- Abrasion-resistant tread compound
- Steel belt reinforced tread area
- Modern tread patterns for a wide spectrum of OTR applications
- Manufactured to global quality standards
- Manufacturer's warranty.

**It all adds up to a lower cost per
operating hour**

FOR ORDERS AND INFORMATION:

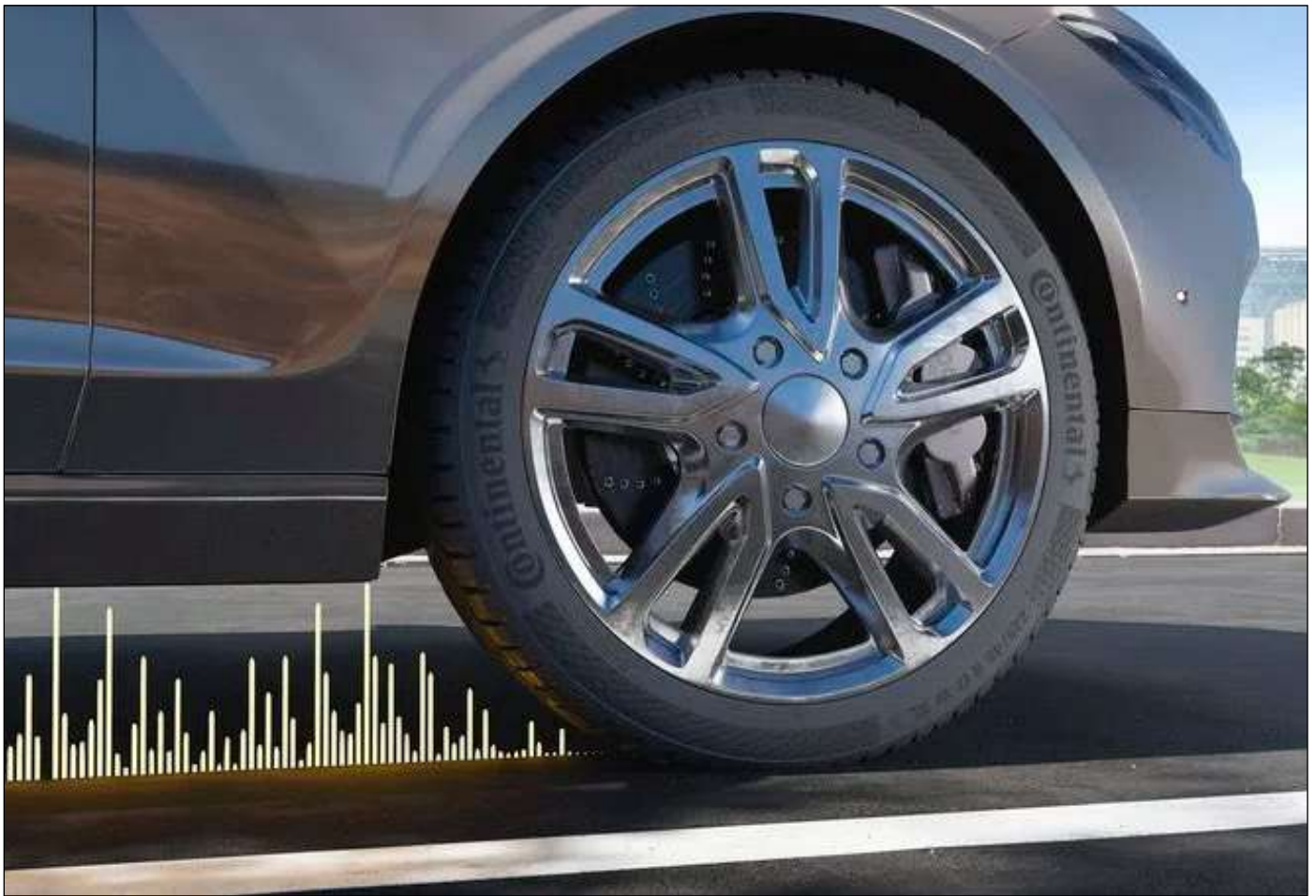
Ken Martin on 083 387 8403 or ken@tafrica.net • Marlin Pillay on 071 880 9247 or marlin@tafrica.net

ONLY AVAILABLE FROM

Transafrica Tyre & Wheel

EXCLUSIVE DISTRIBUTOR FOR RSA, LESOTHO, SWAZILAND, BOTSWANA, MOZAMBIQUE, ZIMBABWE AND ZAMBIA

ROLLING NOISE: HOW CONTINENTAL IS MAKING TYRES EVEN QUIETER



Special tread design noticeably reduces rolling noise of Continental tyres. ContiSilent technology reduces interior noise for a much quieter, more comfortable in-car experience. "Noise, especially traffic noise, is a major burden for people and the environment. With our tyre technologies, we are

actively reducing rolling noise without compromising safety," says Achilles Tsotras, head of Continental's Tire-Vehicle Interaction department

Hanover, Germany, March 20, 2026. Continental is developing tyres with exceptionally low rolling noise, helping

reduce overall traffic noise and improve comfort inside the vehicle. This is made possible by innovative technologies and tread designs. Alongside air pollution, noise is one of the biggest burdens for people and the environment – especially in urban areas. The World Health Organization (WHO) ranks traffic noise

as Europe's second-largest environmental health risk. In megacities across Asia and Latin America, noise is a daily challenge. Reducing overall noise emissions is therefore crucial – and tyre noise is no exception.

Tyre noise typically becomes audible to the human ear at moderate driving speeds. At lower speeds, engine noise dominates. With the shift toward electric mobility – and the much quieter motors of electric cars and buses compared with combustion engines – the importance of low-noise tyres has grown significantly.

"Noise, especially traffic noise from cars, buses and delivery vehicles, is a major burden for people and the environment. With tyre technologies like ContiSilent and innovative tread designs, we are actively reducing rolling noise without compromising safety," says Achilles Tsotras, head of Continental's Tire-Vehicle Interaction department. "This makes every ride noticeably quieter, benefiting drivers, pedestrians, residents and the environment alike."

Continental places a strong focus on developing quiet tyres without sacrificing safety or performance. Rolling noise occurs when tyres come into contact with the road. The resulting sound is only audible within certain speed ranges – typically from about 30 to 50 km/h up to 80 to 100 km/h. The exact noise level depends on factors like road surface, drivetrain, tyre type and driving style. Generally, at lower speeds, engine noise masks tyre noise, while at higher speeds, wind noise tends to dominate.

Silent Pattern tread design reduces rolling noise

To specifically target tyre noise audible to humans, Continental has developed the Silent Pattern tread design. This tread is

optimised for sounds that occur at around 50 km/h, the speed at which rolling noise is most noticeable. To reduce this noise, the spacing and angles of the tread blocks have been deliberately varied.

On conventional tyres, evenly spaced tread blocks hit the road at regular intervals, producing an audible humming sound. By contrast, the irregular arrangement of the Silent Pattern blocks breaks up this regular rhythm, reducing the humming noise. In addition, the pattern is specifically tuned to cancel out noise emitted by the different tread elements – similar in effect to noise-cancelling headphones. The result is reduced road traffic noise in urban areas, making busy streets noticeably quieter for pedestrians and residents.

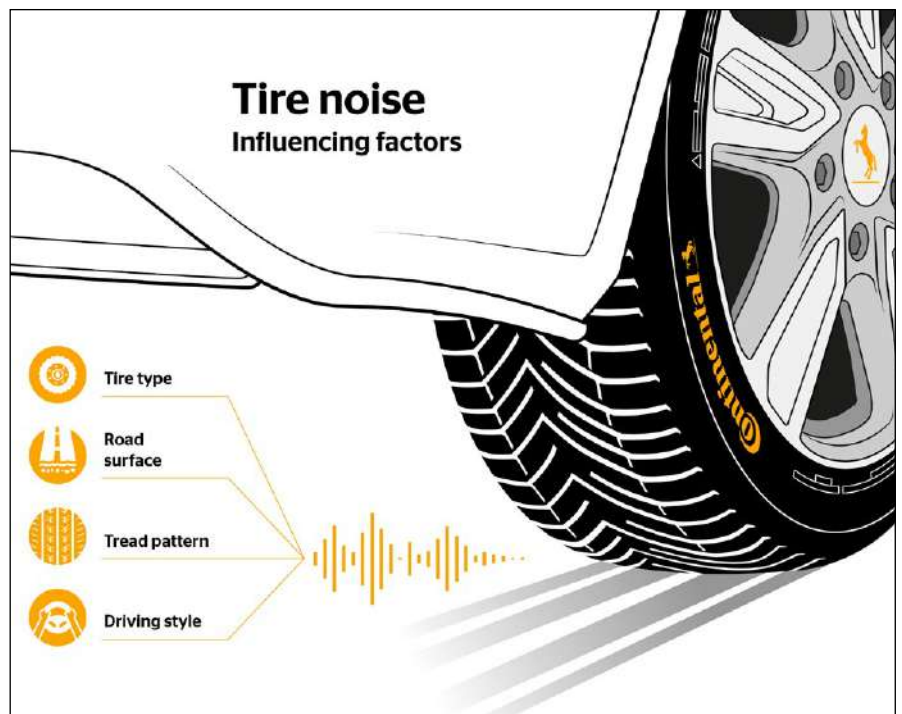
ContiSilent: special foam inside the tyre absorbs noise

To reduce noise inside the vehicle and enhance comfort, Continental offers its ContiSilent technology. This can reduce rolling noise in the vehicle cabin, caused

by air vibrations inside the tyre, by up to nine decibels. Since the human ear perceives a 10-decibel reduction as halving the volume – regardless of the surrounding noise levels – ContiSilent has a major impact on driving comfort.

The ContiSilent technology uses a special, ultra-light polyurethane foam applied to the inside of the tyre during production. This foam absorbs part of the tyre's vibrations, preventing them from reaching the vehicle interior. Driving performance, fuel efficiency, load capacity and top speed remain unaffected. Designed for summer tyres, ContiSilent is available on various products, including the ultra-high-performance SportContact 7.

Continental offers a wide range of tyres engineered for low rolling noise, including the EcoContact 6 Q summer tyre for passenger cars. When shopping for tyres, customers can easily identify low-noise options by checking labels – such as the EU tyre label – which clearly indicate noise levels in decibels.



FINAL CALL AS ASIA'S LEADING AUTOMOTIVE PLATFORM OPENS SOON

With less than a month to go, over 7,000 trade professionals and 150 international exhibitors from over 80 countries and regions are set to visit Bangkok for the 15th edition of TyreXpo Asia Bangkok 2026, which will be staged alongside the inaugural AutoMROtive 2026.

The twin shows will take place from the 13th to 15th May at the Bangkok International Trade & Exhibition Centre (BITEC), and co-locate with INTERMACH, SUBCON Thailand, Plastics and Rubber Thailand, and Future Mobility Thailand. Together, this integrated platform will span the full automotive value chain, including manufacturing and components to aftermarket services and future mobility solutions.

As the industry navigates supply chain shifts, technological advancements along with evolving market demands, the need for cross-sector collaboration has become increasingly critical.

Mr. Sukumar Verma, Managing Director, Informa Markets says "The co-location of TyreXpo Asia and the launch of AutoMROtive comes at a pivotal time for the industry. By uniting these complementary sectors, we are creating a platform where businesses can not only connect, but actively respond to market changes, discover new opportunities, and accelerate growth."

A Platform Designed for Business Outcomes Beyond the exhibition, the event is set to deliver tangible business value for participants across the tyre and automotive ecosystem through a dedicated Buyer Programme facilitating over



1,000 pre-arranged business meetings. Directly connecting exhibitors with qualified buyers and decision-makers and reinforcing the event's role as a leading platform for business exchange.

At the same time there will be an Autotech Aftermarket Summit featuring a series of industry expert speakers who will be sharing insights on key trends, innovations, and opportunities shaping the automotive aftermarket.

Across three days, visitors can expect programmes featuring technical sessions, knowledge-sharing, and targeted networking opportunities designed to support business growth and partnerships.

Industry Support and Regional Significance

The show will be supported by key industry associations including the Thailand Automotive Parts Aftermarket Association (TAPAA), allowing the event to further strengthen its role as a central meeting point for the regional automotive community.

Mr. Kamol Juengluckmia, President of TAPAA adds "TAPAA is pleased to support initiatives that strengthen collaboration and knowledge-sharing within the automotive aftermarket sector and TyreXpo Asia Bangkok and AutoMROtive 2026 will enable businesses to stay ahead of market trends whilst building partnerships that support sustainable growth."

With multiple industry segments represented under one roof, the events will provide a timely platform for companies to access new markets, source solutions, and engage directly with global and regional stakeholders, further reinforcing Thailand's position as a key automotive and aftermarket hub in Asia.

With the event fast approaching, this is the final opportunity for trade professionals to secure their complimentary passes and plan their visit to one of Asia's most comprehensive automotive industry platforms.

Register here: <https://ers-th.informa-info.com/trx26?cid=pr>

For more information contact: www.tyrexpoasia.com | www.automotive.com

BRIDGESTONE ACTIVATES DRIVER-IN-THE-LOOP SIMULATOR FOR DIGITAL TIRE DEVELOPMENT

The simulator features a large mobile platform with a five-meter range of motion and a carbon-fiber cockpit.

Bridgestone announced that its driving simulator is now fully operational at the company's R&D center near Rome, Italy. The VI-grade DiM500 Driver-in-the-Loop (DiL) simulator enables the company to assess tire performance in a virtual environment.

"Bridgestone is already considered a pioneer in digital tyre development – leveraging Virtual Tyre Development for more than a decade. By integrating the driver into the digital development cycle, this investment adds a crucial new piece to our evolving ecosystem," said Mattia Giustiniano, R&D senior vice president at Bridgestone West. "The simulator's introduction marks a significant step in enhancing the efficiency and sustainability of our R&D processes, while unlocking unprecedented opportunities to foster innovation."

Bridgestone Driving Simulator Capabilities

The simulator features a large mobile platform with a five-meter range of motion and a carbon-fiber cockpit. The system immerses the driver in an environment that imitates real-world driving. The motion range reproduces forces equivalent to physical tests for analysis.

Bridgestone said it combines high-fidelity simulations with subjective driver feedback, historical data and artificial intelligence technologies. The company said this system enables earlier and more accurate design decisions.



Engineers can evaluate more tire specifications than with traditional physical testing. The system also allows testing in less time and across a broader range of conditions. Physical testing remains part of the process and can serve for final validation.

Prototype Reduction and Environmental Impact

The DiL simulator reduces the need for physical tire prototypes. Bridgestone said it expects the system to save up to 12,000 experimental tires each year, reducing environmental impact.

Bridgestone said its Virtual Tyre Development technology already enables up to a 60% reduction in raw material consumption and CO2 emissions during development of original equipment tires.

Time to Market and Industry Collaboration

Bridgestone said the driving simulator also supports faster product development. The technology allows engineers to develop tires and vehicles in parallel.

Bridgestone said this approach supports closer collaboration with vehicle manufacturers. It also strengthens the company's ability to custom-engineer tires to maximize each vehicle's performance potential.

Evaluation Scope

The simulator mainly supports dry handling evaluations. Bridgestone is expanding its capabilities to assess a broader range of performance conditions.

The work is backed by the company's global investment in R&D. Bridgestone said the effort aims to meet the evolving needs of vehicle manufacturers and end users.

TIRE INDUSTRY PROJECT PUBLISHES WATERSHED MODEL FOR TIRE AND ROAD WEAR PARTICLES

TIP said the TRWP mass balance model addresses how these particles move through waterways, an area that remains understudied.

Tire Industry Project (TIP) announced the publication of a scientific study introducing a TRWP mass balance model for understanding the movement and concentrations of tire and road wear particles in land and freshwater.

The mass balance model presents a methodology to track and predict, with high spatial granularity, how particles move through watersheds across diverse climates and regions.

TRWP are particles unintentionally generated at the frictional interface between the tire and roadway during vehicle use. As scientific and regulatory interest grows, tools that generate reliable data are essential to understanding environmental pathways. TIP said the model addresses how these particles move through waterways, an area that remains understudied.

Data Sources Used in TRWP Mass Balance Model

The TRWP mass balance model uses global and local datasets and open-source modeling frameworks, including the ERA5 global climate dataset by the Copernicus Climate Change Service and the Wflow catchment hydrology model by Deltares. Researchers validated the model against field measurements from watersheds on three continents.

Validation sites include the Seine River basin, the Chesapeake Bay basin and the Yodo River basin. The model applies at a watershed scale across regions with



varying climates, basin characteristics and stormwater systems.

Findings From the Mass Balance Model

Results from the three watersheds show variation in how much TRWP reaches surface waters. Amounts reaching estuaries range from 2% to 18%, depending on basin size, urbanization levels, climate and stormwater infrastructure.

The study indicates that improvements in stormwater systems can reduce TRWP transport to surface waters by up to half. These findings highlight the role of infrastructure in mitigating environmental impact.

TIP Statement

"Having a robust, reproducible model for TRWP transport and fate that can

be applied worldwide is essential for advancing both scientific understanding and practical solutions," said Nicolas Tissier, director of research at TIP. "Our role at TIP is to support rigorous, transparent science that helps researchers, policymakers, and industry make evidence-based decisions. By making this model open access, we aim to support broader collaboration across the scientific community around TRWP in the environment, and to enable the development of more effective mitigation strategies."

The TRWP mass balance model builds on earlier work and extends the modeling approach to a global scale. The next phase of development is underway. TIP said it will focus on making the model accessible to users beyond the scientific community.

HAVE CONFIDENCE FOR THE LONG HAUL

**TRUCK TYRE
INSURANCE**

18 months

All Road Hazard Guarantee

Enjoy 18 months of free truck tyre insurance with Dunlop's SP320A, a durable, long-haul truck steer and trailer tyre.



With a 5-rib design, the SP320A has been engineered for long distance usage providing good mileage and resistance to irregular wear.

BENEFITS INCLUDE:

- Low rolling resistance for better fuel economy
- Longer life with reduction in uneven wear
- A compound designed to provide a more wear-resistant tread
- Good retreadability
- Excellent CPK
- DECTES technology, especially apparent in the steer and trailer positions

TAKE THE ROAD

Visit www.dunlop.co.za for full T&Cs.

 **DUNLOP**

