

Skaneem Africa's New Facility in Kenya

A Model of Sustainability and Innovation

SKANEM AFRICA has raised the bar for industrial design with the unveiling of its 8,000m² label manufacturing facility at Tilisi, a master-planned, mixed-use development just outside Nairobi. Designed by Boogertman + Partners, this modern and sustainable factory exemplifies innovation, environmental responsibility, and functionality. We spoke to the architects behind the project—**QUINTUS VAN ECK**, Project Director, and **LEON GATHECHA**, Project Architect—to learn more about their journey in creating this cutting-edge facility.



A Vision for Excellence

From the outset, Skanem Africa was clear about its ambition for the new facility. “Skanem wanted a state-of-the-art building that reflects the quality and innovation associated with their internationally recognized brand,” says Quintus. “They hold themselves to the highest standards, and this facility was designed to match that ethos and set a new benchmark.”

Overcoming Design Challenges

Boogertman + Partners is renowned for its experience in diverse architectural projects, yet this project came with unique challenges. Quintus explains, “Executing a design of international standards within the context of Tlisa’s geography and Nairobi’s logistical constraints required careful planning. Issues like procurement challenges and availability of materials tested our creativity.”

Leon adds that one of the critical hurdles was accommodating Skanem’s rebranding mid-project, which necessitated updates to the interior design to align with the new corporate identity. “We also faced unusually heavy rainfall during construction, but close coordination with the client and a flexible schedule allowed us to meet the deadlines,” he notes.

Site Considerations

Situated on a 5-acre plot at Tlisa, the facility’s design was deeply influenced by the site’s characteristics. “We had to address a significant slope across the land,” Quintus explains. “However, Tlisa’s elevated position provided a favorable microclimate, which informed our approach to incorporating natural light and other sustainability features.”

Achieving Sustainability with IFC Edge Certification

The Skanem facility is a certified sustainable building under IFC Edge, thanks to the design team’s collaboration with Urban Green Consultants. “Passive design principles were a cornerstone of our strategy,” says Quintus. “We combined these with innovative measures to meet the certification criteria.”

Notable green features include a continuous polycarbonate skylight, which provides natural lighting throughout the central production spine, reducing energy consumption. “Vertical slits around the perimeter enhance ventilation and aesthetic appeal, while LED task lighting focuses on areas of activity,” Quintus elaborates.



Quintus van Eck, Project Director



Leon Gathecha, Project Architect



“Skanem’s trust and our close coordination with their team ensured a seamless transition and a fully operational facility that met their goals.”

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Quintus van Eck, Project Director



PROJECT TEAM

Client: Skanem Group

Ole Rugland – Chairman

Maryne Lemvik – CEO

Sachen Gudka – Managing Director, Skanem Kenya

Architect: Boogertman & Partners

Quintus Van Eck – Project Director

Leon Gathecha – Project Architect

Project Managers & Quantity Surveyor: MaceYMR

Simon Herd – Project Director

Jackline Atim – Senior Project Manager

David Gichuru – Project Manager

Givons Juma – Quantity Surveyor

Vishal Chotai – Quantity Surveyor

Structural Engineers: Civil Engineering Design

Hardip Sura – Project Director

Harrison Adera – Civil Engineer

Alfred Maina – Civil Engineer

Kelvin Sanare – Structural Engineer

Mechanical & Electrical Engineer: Load Line Engineering

Gatonye Ng'ang'a – Mechanical & Plumbing Engineer

Peter Kamau – Electrical Engineer

Sustainability Consultant: Urban Green Consultants

Amrish Shah

Main Contractor: *Mahesh & Tirth Construction Ltd*

Structural Steel Subcontractor: *David Engineering (K) Ltd.*

Gary Bangera – Director

Stephen Juma – Senior Project Coordinator

Electrical Subcontractors: *Mehta Electricals Ltd.*

Mechanical & Plumbing Subcontractors: *Allied Plumbers Ltd.*

HVAC Subcontractors: *Air Design Kenya*

Solar power subcontractors: *Chloride Exide*

Project Landscape Architects: *Primescapes Ltd.*

Landscape Architect – Peter Kanyi

Landscaping Subcontractors: *Primescapes Ltd.*

Balancing Production and People

Creating a balance between large-scale production and a human-centered workspace was a priority for the architects. “The production hall is the heart of the facility—light-filled, airy, and designed for comfort,” says Quintus. Leon emphasizes that green spaces and interaction zones were integrated into the design to enhance employee well-being. “These spaces encourage collaboration, support productivity, and create a healthier work environment.”

Innovative Building Practices

Incorporating advanced building techniques was another highlight of the project. “We used materials and methods common in other regions but relatively new to Kenya,” explains Quintus. “This not only elevated the construction quality but also introduced local teams to innovative practices, enhancing their skills.”

A Testament to Teamwork

Looking back, the architects attribute the project’s success to strong collaboration among stakeholders. “Despite challenges like procurement issues, statutory approval delays, and unforeseen disruptions, we delivered the project on time and within budget,” Quintus says proudly. Leon adds, “Skanem’s trust and our close coordination with their team ensured a seamless transition and a fully operational facility that met their goals.”

The new Skanem Africa facility stands as a testament to what can be achieved when ambition, innovation, and sustainability come together. For Boogertman + Partners, it’s yet another landmark project that reinforces their reputation for delivering world-class designs tailored to local contexts.



Cutting the ribbon to officially open the facility

What Does the New Factory Mean for Skanem Africa?

Skanem Africa, a leader in the packaging industry, has recently completed the construction of a state-of-the-art manufacturing facility in Tilisi, Kiambu County, Kenya. This new plant, covering an impressive 8,000 m², marks a significant step in the company's ongoing commitment to growth and innovation across the African market. In an interview, **Mr. Sachin Gudka** (right), Managing Director of Skanem Africa, provided insights into the strategic importance of this new facility and its alignment with the company's values and long-term goals.



A New Era for Skanem

The completion of the new manufacturing plant in Tilisi represents a major milestone for Skanem as a company. According to Mr. Gudka, this facility will provide a robust platform for increased collaboration with customers, fostering better workflows and faster service delivery. "The new facility is not just about expanding our production capacity," he explains. "It provides an environment that encourages innovation and the exchange of ideas among our teams and with our customers. A better working environment for staff is key to driving these innovations."

This facility is a vital piece of the puzzle for Skanem's growth strategy in the African market, allowing the company to enhance its operational efficiency and continue meeting the growing demand for quality packaging solutions across the continent.

Why Tilisi?

Skanem considered multiple locations within Nairobi, including Tatu City, before settling on Tilisi. The decision to build in this specific location was driven by the long-term needs of the company. "Tilisi offers the right environment and the facilities that we need to operate sustainably and effectively in the long run," says Mr. Gudka. The location offers ample space for future growth and is strategically

positioned to provide access to key transportation networks, enhancing both logistics and customer service capabilities.

For Skanem, the move to Tilisi is not just about proximity to markets but also about positioning the company for sustainable growth. The location offers room for potential future expansions as the company continues to develop its operations in East Africa.

A Commitment to Sustainability

One of the standout features of the new Skanem facility is its sustainable design. The building has earned an IFC Edge rating, a certification that highlights its commitment to sustainability. Mr. Gudka emphasizes the importance of energy and water conservation, which align with Skanem's core values. "The building was designed to minimize energy consumption through solar power and sustainable roofing and wall cladding," he explains. "We also incorporated water-saving measures, ensuring the facility operates in an environmentally responsible manner."

These sustainable features are central to Skanem's broader commitment to responsible business practices. The company believes that sustainability is not just about compliance but about acting as

responsible corporate citizens, planning for the future with a clear focus on minimizing environmental impact.

Operational Efficiency and Future Growth

The new plant is designed to maximize operational efficiency, bringing significant advantages over previous facilities. The state-of-the-art design enhances production processes, allowing Skanem to deliver faster, more reliable services to its customers. The integration of the latest technologies also supports the company's ongoing focus on improving the quality of its products and the speed of its delivery.

Looking ahead, the facility provides ample space for future growth and innovation. "We have designed the plant with the future in mind," Mr. Gudka notes. "If there is sufficient market demand, we are well-positioned to expand further within this facility." This expansion could include additional production lines or the adoption of new technologies as the market for packaging solutions continues to grow across Africa.

Collaboration and Delivery

The successful completion of the Tilisi facility on time and within budget was the result of excellent collaboration among various stakeholders. Mr. Gudka praises the team of consultants, contractors, and subcontractors who worked seamlessly to ensure the project's success. "Everyone involved in this project worked together to ensure

timely and on-budget delivery," he says. This collaboration highlights Skanem's commitment to quality and efficiency, not only in its production processes but also in its infrastructure development.

Looking to the Future

As for the future, Skanem is already making moves to expand its footprint across East Africa. In addition to the new facility in Tilisi, the company has also established a production facility in Tanzania and a warehouse in Uganda. These initiatives are part of a broader strategy to strengthen Skanem's presence in the region and tap into new markets.

The new Tilisi plant is poised to play a key role in this strategy, positioning Skanem for continued success over the next decade. "There is room for further expansion, and we are excited about the future," concludes Mr. Gudka. "This facility is just the beginning of what we hope will be a long period of growth and innovation."

In conclusion, the opening of the Skanem manufacturing facility in Tilisi represents not just a physical expansion, but a strategic move toward sustainable growth, operational excellence, and innovation. With its focus on customer collaboration, energy efficiency, and long-term planning, Skanem is well-positioned to continue leading the way in Africa's packaging industry.





DAVID ENGINEERING (K) LTD

Building a Legacy in Structural Steel Construction

Founded in 1998, David Engineering (K) Ltd has become synonymous with excellence in the steel construction industry across East Africa. From its humble beginnings as a small entrepreneurial venture, the company has evolved into a market leader, renowned for its ability to tackle large, complex, and bespoke projects. Through a relentless commitment to innovation and efficiency, the company has built a portfolio of high-profile clients and successfully delivered projects across the region.

A LEGACY OF INNOVATION AND GROWTH

David Engineering's journey to prominence reached a new milestone in 2021, when it joined forces with Tononoka Group, integrating the advantages of being part of a larger group. This partnership has provided David Engineering with a seamless supply of quality steel at competitive prices and access to their vast experience in running and optimizing business processes and therefore reinforcing our capabilities in the structural steel construction market. Specializing in the design, fabrication, and assembly of steelwork, the company delivers comprehensive solutions for warehouses, multi-storey buildings, roofing structures, stadiums, canopies, bridges, mezzanine floors, and much more. Its operations extend beyond Kenya to several East and Central African countries, including Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda, Ethiopia, and Mozambique.

We continuously integrate cutting-edge technology and industry trends to offer unparalleled services. By leveraging the versatility of structural steel, we enable faster timelines and solutions tailored to our clients' unique needs.

ENGINEERING EXCELLENCE IN EVERY DETAIL

David Engineering invests heavily in cutting-edge tools to streamline the design and fabrication process. By adopting green practices, like

prefabrication, we minimize on-site waste, optimize resource use, and uphold the principles of sustainable construction.

Our ability to merge advanced technology with experienced craftsmanship allows us to bring even the most ambitious designs to life. It's about enhancing client satisfaction through streamlined solutions and exceptional outcomes.

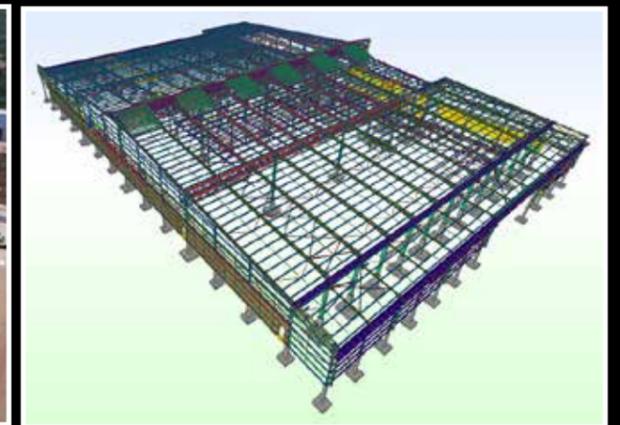
AN INTEGRATED APPROACH: TEAMS AND CLIENTS

David Engineering understands that great projects result from seamless teamwork. With a workforce of over 500—including expert engineers, project managers, and skilled artisans—we believe our greatest strength lies in the talent and dedication of our workforce.

To maintain high standards and foster innovation, we invest in ongoing training programs designed to enhance skills across all levels of the organization. From safety protocols and advanced fabrication techniques to the latest industry technologies and quality management systems, our training initiatives ensure that our team is equipped to meet evolving customer demands and industry challenges.

In addition to technical training, we emphasize leadership development and career progression. By cultivating a culture of continuous learning, we empower our employees to take ownership of their roles, contribute meaningfully to the business, and grow alongside the company.

Due to the exceptional synergy between David Engineering's team and Tononoka Group, the company adopts a one-team approach to problem-solving and execution. This collaborative ethos extends from planning phases through to commissioning, delivering projects on schedule and exceeding expectations.



CASE STUDY: THE SKANEM AFRICA PROJECT

One of David Engineering's standout projects is the recently completed Skanem Africa facility in Tilisi. Spanning 8,000 square meters, this project involved the design, supply, and installation of over 250 tonnes of structural steel. A key highlight was the incorporation of castellated rafters for the roofing system, which combined strength with aesthetic sophistication.

Additional features included the installation of 9,800 square meters of roof and side sheeting, using imported high-performance insulation materials and polycarbonate sheets that offer exceptional durability and natural lighting.

This project reflects our ability to not only deliver complex engineering solutions but also handle intricate logistical and material challenges. It underscores our readiness to go the extra mile to meet and exceed client expectations.

FUTURE-READY VISION

David Engineering's long-term vision revolves around capacity building and diversification. Investments in state-of-the-art equipment, expanded fabrication capacity, and staff development reflect our long-term commitment to meeting market demands. Our commitment to quality, innovation, and customer satisfaction ensures that we remain a step ahead in the industry.

CONCLUSION

David Engineering (K) Ltd has set a benchmark for excellence in structural steel construction. With a focus on quality, innovation, customer-centric solutions, and growth of our people, the company continues to redefine industry standards while contributing to the development of transformative infrastructure projects in East Africa and beyond. Whether tackling large-scale industrial projects or crafting intricate architectural masterpieces, David Engineering remains steadfast in its mission of delivering *excellence in structural steel engineering*.



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Mahesh & Tirth Construction Ltd. (M&T) is a leading Kenyan construction firm. Known for its commitment to integrity, quality work and timely delivery, M&T specialises in commercial, industrial and institutional projects. The company has earned a stellar reputation for cost-effective solutions, innovation, and sustainable practices.

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