

## **The Southern African Coal Processing Society (SACPS) Welcomes Inclusion of Coal as a Critical Mineral in South Africa's New Strategy**

**Johannesburg, South Africa - June 5, 2025.** The Southern African Coal Processing Society (SACPS) enthusiastically welcomes the inclusion of Coal as a critical mineral in South Africa's newly approved Critical Minerals and Metals Strategy 2025, as announced by the Department of Mineral and Petroleum Resources. This strategic decision, endorsed by Cabinet, underscores coal's vital role in the nation's economic framework and paves the way for enhanced processing and beneficiation opportunities within the coal sector.

The Critical Minerals and Metals Strategy 2025 classifies Coal as a high-criticality mineral, alongside Platinum, Manganese, Iron Ore, and Chrome Ore, recognizing its significant contribution to South Africa's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), export economy, and employment landscape. This inclusion highlights coal's strategic importance, with reserves projected to last 200 years at current production rates, and its potential to drive sustainable industrial growth through advanced processing techniques.

### **A Milestone for the Coal Processing Community**

For the SACPS and the broader coal processing community, this designation is a transformative acknowledgment of the sector's potential. Coal, which accounted for 81% of total mining sales and 84% of export sales in 2023 alongside PGMs, Gold, and Iron Ore, remains a cornerstone of South Africa's economic stability. The strategy's focus on cleaner coal technologies—such as carbon capture, storage, and utilization (CCS & CCSU)—and the extraction of rare earth elements (REEs) from coal fly ash (Page 35) offers the processing industry a unique opportunity to innovate and lead in sustainable practices. This aligns with the strategy's circular economy goals and Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) standards, positioning SACPS members at the forefront of a greener coal processing future.

The emphasis on local beneficiation and value addition (Pages 24-28) is particularly encouraging for the SACPS. By prioritizing the development of processing hubs and investments in technologies like coal gasification and REE recovery, the strategy empowers the coal processing sector to transform raw materials into high-value products, reducing dependency on raw exports and creating skilled jobs across the region.

By investing in skills development, infrastructure, and R&D, South Africa can unlock the full potential of its Coal resources. The society commits to driving initiatives that enhance processing capabilities, promote environmental sustainability, and foster regional cooperation, securing a prosperous future for the coal processing fraternity.

**Tebogo Kale** - Chairperson

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