

Ubunye Mining Services crowned global Rio Tinto Contractor of the Year

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Ubunye Mining Services, a wholly owned subsidiary of [Unitrans](#), a leading name in the mining logistics industry, has been awarded the prestigious Rio Tinto Safety Award for Best Contract Partner at Richards Bay Minerals (RBM). This remarkable accomplishment holds special significance, considering the vast scope of operations by Rio Tinto, a multinational giant engaging over 18,000 contractors globally.



Surrounded by their excited team and proudly holding the award of their Rio Tinto Safety Award for Best Contract Partner at Richards Bay Minerals, Mpho Dirpe, operations manager: Unitrans with Werner Duvnhage, managing director of RBM, and Richard Zikhali, RBM's full-time HSE representative.

The coveted Rio Tinto Safety Award is a testament to the unwavering commitment of Ubunye Mining Services and Unitrans to consistently exemplify unparalleled standards in safety, operational efficiency, and responsible practices. Unitrans emerged as an outstanding contract partner to RBM, setting a sterling example of upholding the highest operational benchmarks.

The significant achievement represents Unitrans' transformation into a global safety exemplar. The diligent efforts of Unitrans' workforce have cultivated a culture of enhanced safety within the organisation. Daily meetings, a focus on safe practices, and an unwavering dedication to implementing safety protocols, have all contributed to this accomplishment.



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Kobus Burger, operations executive for the mining division at Unitrans, expressed his pride in the achievement, saying: "This award is a testament to the dedication of our team and the transformative journey we've undertaken to prioritise safety above all else. Our commitment to fostering a culture of accountability and our collaborative efforts with RBM have been pivotal in achieving this recognition. This accolade will be a powerful tool as we expand our business and uphold the highest safety standards."

At the end of 2022, Unitrans received the Best Contract Partner Award, following a meticulous audit of its safety

performance based on RBM's Safety Maturity Model. This award underscored Unitrans' safety track record, particularly in the demanding operational landscape of Richards Bay Minerals, where a workforce of over 5,000, including employees and contractors, operates. It also seamlessly propelled Unitrans into contention for the Rio Tinto global awards, which ultimately emerged triumphant as the winner.



"We are proud to see one of our contractors achieve this recognition," says Werner Duvenhage, managing director for Rio Tinto Iron and Titanium Africa Operations. "This accomplishment validates our unwavering commitment to fostering a safety-first culture and underscores the collaborative efforts with Unitrans. As their success story becomes a beacon of safety excellence, it resonates deeply within our organisation, as we continue to find better and safer ways to operate. Unitrans' achievement reinforces our belief that strong partnerships and a shared commitment to safety can yield transformative outcomes, setting new benchmarks for the industry."

According to John Kettlewell, Unitrans chief operations officer: mining, the Leadership in the Field (LIF) initiative, introduced by RBM, provided a framework for Unitrans to collaborate with RBM's management, identify areas of improvement, and work together to drive safety and operational excellence.

Kettlewell emphasises that the symbiotic partnership between the two organisations has been pivotal in achieving this remarkable milestone. The global acknowledgement by Rio Tinto further elevates the intrinsic value of this achievement. Unitrans' success in earning the Rio Tinto Global Best Contract Partner Award reflects its determination to ensure the safety and well-being of its workforce and its dedication to maintaining world-class operational standards.

"This award proves our unwavering dedication to safety standards. It validates that our actions speak louder than words. We proudly uphold our commitment, and this accolade is a testament to our conviction – not merely talking the talk, but undeniably walking the walk," concludes Kettlewell.

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