

2024 ANNUAL REPORT



Bench Marks Foundation

January – December 2024

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Sincere thanks are extended to the funders, Board, staff and community monitors for their contributions in 2024. The achievements of the Bench Marks Foundation reflect this collective commitment.

2024 BOARD MEMBERS



Zithulele Cindi
(Chairperson)



Bishop Victor Phalana



Dr Asanda Benya



Dr Natalya Dinat



Mr Graeme Körner



Mr Henk Smith



Rev Solomon Maans



Moses Cloete
(Executive Director)

STAFF



Moses Cloete



Busi Thabane
General Manager



Dr Nteboheng Phakisi
Researcher



Eric Mokuoa
Project Officer



Simo Gumede
Administration and
Logistics Officer



David van Wyk
Lead Researcher



Olebogeng Motene
Project Officer



Mmathapelo Thobejane
Project Officer

COMMUNITY FACILITATORS

Tshepo Mmusi – Justice in Peace, Klerksdorp in North West

Kgang Moloko – Fatlhoga, Rustenburg in North West

Mpho Tjale – Mogalakwena Concerned and Affected Communities, Mokopane in Limpopo

Thokozile Mntambo – Snake Park Bambanani Cooperative, Soweto in Gauteng

Ronlad Mhlakaza – Vukani Environmental Movement, Emalahleni in Mpumalanga

Zamokwakhe Shabalala – Sisonke Environmental Justice Network, Newcastle in KwaZulu-Natal

Makhotla Sefuli – Gold and Uranium Belt Impact Censoring Organisation, Welkom in the Free State

Victoria Makgoo – Sekhukhune Environmental Justice Network, Sekhukhune in Limpopo

FACILITATORS SUPPORT

Joe Mashilo – Justice in Peace, Klerksdorp in North West

Terrence Ngobeni – Ikemeleng Development and Justice Organisation, Rustenburg in North West

Rebecca Selomo – Mogalakwena Concerned and Affected Communities, Mokopane in Limpopo

Scelo Sithole – Snake Park Bambanani Cooperative, Soweto in Gauteng

John Mthembu – Vukani Environmental Movement, Emalahleni in Mpumalanga

Zanele Mantonsi – Ihawulezwe Social Movement, Newcastle in KwaZulu-Natal

Khanyisile Matsaba – Nyakallong Community Organisation, Allanridge in the Free State

ABOUT THE BENCH MARKS FOUNDATION



The Bench Marks Foundation is a pioneering non-profit organisation promoting corporate accountability in South Africa, with a strong focus on the mining and extractives sector. For over 18 years, we have been guided by the Principles for Global Corporate Responsibility: Bench Marks for Measuring Business Performance, using them as a framework for evidence-based research, community engagement and advocacy for justice.

Our recognised Policy Gap series has shaped national and international debates on corporate conduct, while our research and partnerships have strengthened the capacity of mining-affected communities to organise, mobilise and demand change.

Through our Community Monitoring School, active across South Africa and the region, we have trained hundreds of grassroots activists in community mobilisation and corporate accountability, supporting local struggles through informed, collective action.

From grassroots action to international advocacy, the Bench Marks Foundation remains committed

to building community power, advancing social and environmental justice, and promoting democratic alternatives to extractivism.

VISION: A just and sustainable people-centred world that reflects the restoration of human dignity, freedom, and self-determination for all.

MISSION: To support the agency of communities through research, advocacy, media, collaboration, and capacity building—empowering them to hold government and corporations accountable for upholding human rights, environmental sustainability, and sustainable livelihoods.

VALUES: Accountability, Integrity, Ethical Behaviour, Tolerance, Solidarity, Equality.

1. INTRODUCTION

In 2024, the socio-political environment in South Africa, particularly within mining-affected communities, remained challenging. Human rights defenders continued to face threats, and communities were frequently divided by competition over scarce resources. These factors compounded the already difficult circumstances under which many community members live and organise.

In response to this context, we have remained steadfast in our commitment to advocacy, justice, and community empowerment. Guided by our strategic objectives, we continued to work in coalition with communities and civil society partners, while facilitating direct engagements with corporations and government. Our advocacy extended to the international stage, and we effectively utilised research and mainstream media to raise awareness and drive change.

During the reporting period, we achieved notable progress through joint campaigns, constructive cooperation with several government departments, and meaningful, if limited, engagements with mining companies. Our Monitoring School supported targeted action research projects that applied problem-solving approaches to real issues in communities, often culminating in advocacy actions. Our research efforts have also served to help communities articulate and advance their demands to duty bearers (those who hold power in society).

We remain proud of our leadership role in the Alternative Mining Indaba, where we currently serve

as Chair, and of our continued commitment to a regional solidarity approach.

In line with our five-year strategy, we have made ongoing progress in empowering rights-holders to take collective action around just resource governance. This includes building community structures, fostering active citizen engagement, and enhancing accountability among duty bearers.

Despite persistent challenges—including limited service delivery and government inaction—we have adapted our strategies, deepened collaboration with oversight bodies, and expanded our work with coalitions and international partners. These efforts have yielded important gains, even as we acknowledge the long-term nature of the struggle for justice in mining communities.

Despite the odds, we continue to serve as a pillar of support for mining-affected communities—encouraging resilience, sustaining activism, and pursuing justice.

2. CONTEXT AND CHALLENGES

BMF works in a context where the country's deepening social, economic and environmental crises place severe pressure on vulnerable communities, particularly women, young people and mining-affected communities. These conditions reinforce the need for grassroots organising and sustained advocacy for justice, accountability and environmental sustainability.

South Africa is in the grip of an escalating polycrisis, marked by the convergence of poverty, inequality, trauma, unemployment, and systemic vulnerability. Neo-liberal capitalism continues to drive deep divides, compounded by the rise of toxic nationalisms, the commodification of public services, climate-related disasters, and the erosion of land rights, food security, and basic health and safety systems. These conditions disproportionately affect women and the most marginalised communities, who bear the brunt of environmental degradation and economic exclusion.

While large corporations in the extractive, retail, and banking sectors continue to generate substantial profits, smaller businesses are still struggling in the aftermath of Covid-19. The mining industry remains highly lucrative, with executives reaping substantial rewards even as inequality widens. South Africa's economic challenges, exacerbated by low growth and global trade disruptions, have led to record unemployment levels—particularly among youth, with up to 75% of young people out of work. This has fuelled a social crisis characterised by rising crime, deepening poverty, gender-based violence, amid deteriorating public services, especially in health and municipal infrastructure.

Climate-related impacts have intensified, with floods, droughts, and water shortages now commonplace. Years of underinvestment have led to failing

infrastructure, particularly in poorer communities, where access to clean water is increasingly limited and pollution from fossil fuel extraction persists.

In our work with communities, we have observed the following contextual challenges:

- Widespread dissatisfaction, especially around poor service delivery.
- Persistent community divisions and competition between NGOs.
- The spread of misinformation and propaganda.
- Community fatigue, including perceptions of being over-researched and under-served.
- Internal conflict over material interests and resistance to consciousness-raising.
- Bread-and-butter issues driving a focus on economic opportunities over activism.

In mining-affected areas specifically, additional issues include:

- Ongoing job losses and lack of accountability for mine closures and rehabilitation.
- Gender-based violence, exploitation of women, and their exclusion from decision-making.
- Strategic litigation by mining companies to suppress public participation.
- Weak state oversight of mining companies' human rights and environmental compliance.



- Co-option of community leaders and weakening of trade unions.
- Increasing repression of activists—sometimes with fatal consequences, as seen in Xolobeni and Richards Bay.

These systemic issues were reflected in the 2024 general elections, which coincided with South Africa's 30th year of democracy. The ruling ANC saw its support fall to 40%, down from 57% in 2019, due in part to low voter turnout among the youth (where unemployment rates are as high as 75%). The emergence of the uMkhonto weSizwe (MK) Party, led by former president Jacob Zuma, and the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) eroded ANC support. Many opposition parties campaigned on ethnic, xenophobic or populist platforms, while deteriorating services, economic stagnation, and persistent blackouts and water shortages shaped voter sentiment.

The ANC's decision to form a broad Government of National Unity (GNU) with opposition parties—rather than with the MK or EFF parties—has staved off their provincial ascendancy. However, this ideologically diverse coalition is potentially unstable and is expected to reinforce neo-liberal economic policies.

Despite this, the current political and social landscape presents new opportunities. Civil society organisations, including the Bench Marks Foundation,

have an increasingly vital role to play in challenging government policy, strengthening grassroots movements, and building new alliances to push for justice, equity, and environmental sustainability.



3. OUR IMPACT

Across its programmes, BMF remained focused on enabling communities to defend their rights, challenge harmful mining practices and pursue social, economic and environmental justice.

The Bench Marks Foundation continues to anchor its advocacy on a consistent strategy aimed at achieving its overarching objective: to enable mining-affected communities to defend their human rights and pursue social and economic justice.

This strategy is implemented through four mutually reinforcing programme areas, which combine research, community organising, public advocacy and solidarity-building:

This is pursued through four core programmes:

- **Evidence-based Advocacy:** Research on the impacts of mining and alternative justice frameworks drives BMF's advocacy efforts and informs legal action against corporations and the government.
- **Community Empowerment:** BMF capacitates communities affected by mining to engage with corporations and the state, resist injustices, and assert their rights.
- **Media and Public Engagement:** BMF's advocacy is rooted in its research and amplifies the voices of communities through media and public platforms.
- **Building of regional and international solidarity** in key platforms, including the Alternative Mining Indaba, Plough Back the Fruits, and a key collaboration with Earthworks Canada, co-hosts of the Tailings and Mine Waste project.

Key Outcomes and Impact

During the reporting period, BMF successfully bridged grassroots activism with national and international advocacy. The organisation remains a respected voice in the media and civil society, with the following key highlights:

- **Research and Media Influence:** BMF's work consistently exposed mining-related injustices and shaped public discourse.
- **Community Mobilisation:** Through local formations and trained monitors, BMF fostered awareness and mobilisation around corporate accountability.
- **Global Pressure:** The organisation leveraged international networks to hold companies accountable to global standards and more equitable practices. For example, a dialogue in September took place in Germany between the Bench Marks Foundation, the Wonderkop community, BASF (a German multinational chemical company), and Sibanye-Stillwater. The discussion focused on several contentious issues, including environmental pollution from tailings dam seepage, emissions from the smelter, and the lack of an effective grievance mechanism to provide access to remedy. BASF is being held accountable for its role in Wonderkop by both local communities and German civil society groups.



- **Legal Precedent:** Strategic litigation strengthened communities' rights to resist harmful mining practices, e.g. Mabola coalition and Entembeni.
- **Constructive Engagement:** Some corporations responded positively to BMF's involvement, agreeing to collaborative and independently facilitated dialogue.

BMF continues to add value by building community organisations, developing local leaders through the Monitoring School, and acting as a credible counter-narrative in public discourse, especially around the criminalisation of informal mining. Gender integration in its work is also gaining strength.

Stakeholder Engagement and Alliance Building

During the reporting period, BMF worked with a wide range of interest groups through multiple alliances and platforms, including community organisations that participate in the Monitoring School. Key approaches include:

- Training communities in documentation, advocacy, and the use of digital tools—including in-person sessions and platforms such as Zoom, WhatsApp, websites, and social media. Using action research to help communities define grievances, gather evidence, and develop advocacy strategies.
- Supporting local organisation building, initiating cooperatives, and conducting skills audits.
- Advancing the formation of a Convention of Mining-Affected Communities through sustained community engagements.

Gender, Youth and Disability Inclusion

Gender-based violence and inequality remain pervasive in mining-affected communities. A recent BMF study in Wonderkop (235 respondents) revealed:

- 83% identified GBV as a major issue
- 78% cited transactional sex as a problem
- 76% believe mining activities exacerbate these challenges

Despite these structural challenges, women play a central role in BMF's activities, and gender parity is reflected in the composition of its programmes. Notably:

- 41% of BMF's monitors and facilitators are young people.
- There is a rising number of young women activists.
- Gender-specific materials and counselling skills workshops empowered activists to address trauma and provide basic support.
- GBV awareness and counselling activities have been implemented in five communities.

4. PROGRAMMES

4.1 RESEARCH

Research remains a critical foundation of the Bench Marks Foundation's work. In 2024, we continued to generate evidence that informs community advocacy, policy engagement, and public awareness.

In February, we launched the Survival Mining Report at the Alternative Mining Indaba (AMI) in Cape Town. The report was later presented during a plenary session attended by over 300 delegates from across the continent. It was also shared online to broaden its reach.

We undertook several other significant research projects during the year:

- **UJ Dust Study (Riverlea):** This year-long air and water quality study has concluded data collection across all seasons. Field visits continued throughout the year, and data analysis will begin in January 2025, accompanied by a community survey.
- **Policy Gap Report on Sibanye Stillwater:** This is one of our major organisational research initiatives. Fieldwork has been completed, and the draft report is undergoing peer review. Preliminary findings were shared at our Annual Conference and during an engagement with a visiting German State Minister.
- **Short Paper on Subcontracting:** A draft paper exploring the degradation of work through subcontracting was prepared and is currently being revised.
- **Disability Study (Snake Park-Soweto):** This study examines the lived experiences of caregivers raising children with cerebral palsy, with a focus on possible links to mining tailings and waste exposure. It is currently under peer review and will be published in 2025.

These studies not only expand our collective knowledge but also strengthen community-led efforts to demand justice and accountability.

4.2 COMMUNITY MONITORING SCHOOL

Community Empowerment and Monitoring

In 2024, Bench Marks Foundation continued to deepen grassroots engagement and strengthen community voice through its flagship Community Monitoring School (CMS) and related initiatives. A total of 56 new community monitors from 19 organisations across six provinces were trained through the CMS, which remains central to our empowerment model. These participants operate in 33 locations within 13 local municipalities, with coordination provided by eight facilitators. The majority of monitors are based in Limpopo, Mpumalanga, and North West, with others in Gauteng, Free State, and KwaZulu-Natal.

Of the 56 monitors, 43% were women—a 12% decline from 2023—and 23 were youth. Training covered writing, media, advocacy, gender, and research. All facilitators were equipped with laptops, which significantly enhanced the practical application of training content.

Through ongoing partnerships and resource centre support, we engaged over 350 community members in 2024. Of these, 260 community members received regular support via local structures. During the reporting period, the Bench Marks Foundation supported three community centres and the Limpopo Resource Centre recorded 566 users in the first half of the year—most of them young women. In total, 979 individuals used our three community centres, with many returning for repeat visits.

Targeted Investigations and Local Advocacy

Bench Marks supported six community-led

investigations in 2024, addressing critical social and environmental issues. These reports launched at the BMF Annual Conference in October inform local advocacy efforts. The reports covered the following issues:

- **KwaZulu-Natal (Dannhauser):** Water contamination and river dumping
- **Gauteng (Snake Park):** Ongoing impacts of unrehabilitated mine tailings
- **North West (Klerksdorp):** Communities living on wetlands in the Mpho Trust land
- **Limpopo (Sekhukhune):** Continued efforts to promote women's participation in decision-making
- **Limpopo (Mokopane):** Effects of sewage spills on health and business in Mogalakwena
- **Impact of the polluted Voelpan dam on agriculture and community health**

Gender Justice and Trauma Support

Bench Marks also invested in gender justice and psychosocial support. In 2024:

- 22 participants were trained in basic counselling skills, focusing on trauma, grief, and gender-based violence (GBV). This training had a powerful impact, catalysing follow-up activities in Limpopo, North West, and KwaZulu-Natal—including school awareness campaigns, tavern dialogues, and women's support groups.
- 16 gender justice initiatives were carried out in five localities, building awareness and community response to GBV.
- We supported the formation of co-operatives and leadership development across several provinces.

We documented our work and the voices of our monitors in mid-year and end-year Activists' Reports, ensuring that local experiences remain central to our advocacy.

4.3 MEDIA AND ADVOCACY

Our multi-pronged advocacy strategy includes:

- Building coalitions with communities and providing technical skills, legal assistance, and spaces for dialogue.
- Offering capacity building and organisational development support.
- Promoting community-led problem solving and grassroots power building.
- Facilitating direct engagements with corporations and government actors.
- Advancing international and North-South advocacy efforts.
- Amplifying community voices through strategic engagement with mainstream media.

In 2024, the Bench Marks Foundation facilitated and supported a wide range of engagements between communities and duty bearers such as mining corporations, government departments, oversight bodies, and international organisations. We recorded 24 meetings focused on transparency, accountability, and rights protection.

Highlights include:

- Continued engagement with Sibanye Stillwater, including participation in their Annual General Meeting and ongoing dialogue at the local level and at international meetings.
- Participation in the Berlin Dialogue and follow-up meetings with the German State Minister, which helped spotlight the situation in Marikana and Wonderkop and Sibanye's responsibility and role.
- A series of interventions around mine-related relocations in Limpopo, in collaboration with community structures and government departments like the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA) and the Department of Mineral Resources and Energy (DMRE).
- Legal support for the Riverlea Mining Forum, including Water Tribunal cases and pro bono legal assistance.

- Engagements with IRMA (Initiative for Responsible Mining Assurance) to ensure community participation in corporate audits.

Our ability to support communities in these spaces strengthens democratic accountability and amplifies local voices in decision-making processes.

Strengthening Civil Society and Coalitions

The Foundation continued to work actively within six key coalitions and networks, involving at least 52 civil society organisations. These platforms enhance our ability to campaign collectively, share knowledge, and build solidarity.

Key partnerships included:

- The MPRDA Coalition – a loose network of 35 organisations working on mining legislation and policy.
- The MEJCON-SA Network and the National Convention of Mining-Affected Communities – both support unified community voices in national advocacy efforts.
- International partners, such as MiningWatch Canada and Earthworks – co-facilitated a workshop on tailings management standards for 33 activists from seven provinces and continue to co-host the Tailings and Waste Management Project.
- The People's Dialogue – a regional network with members across Southern Africa and Latin America, including our engagement in the Indian Ocean School of Political Ecology held in Mauritius.
- Khanya College's Jozi Book Fair and Winter School – platforms for political education, knowledge exchange, and movement building.

These networks strengthen grassroots organising and enable the Foundation to contribute meaningfully to national and global dialogues on mining and extractives.

Faith-Based Engagement

We continued our collaboration with faith leaders and institutions in promoting social justice and democratic participation.

- We joined the National Dialogue Working Group, convened by the South African Council of Churches (SACC), to contribute civil society perspectives on post-election reconciliation and democratic renewal.
- We participated in the Courageous Conversations initiative, an annual roundtable discussion convened by the Archbishop of Cape Town, where faith leaders, corporations, and civil society engage on pressing national issues.

Policy Influence and Legal Reform

During the reporting period, we engaged in two major advocacy initiatives that are shaping policy reform:

- Artisanal Mining Policy: Our longstanding advocacy contributed to the government's announcement of simplified registration for artisanal miners, the creation of a central buying agency, and increased training opportunities.
- National Mine Closure Strategy: We continued to follow up on earlier consultations and advocate for robust post-mining economic planning.

We also campaigned for compulsory health and social impact assessments before mining begins and challenged undemocratic provisions in the Traditional and Khoisan Leadership Act that sideline communities in land decisions.

Public Engagement and Media Advocacy

Raising public awareness and shaping the national conversation on mining justice, environmental harm, and corporate accountability remained a key focus of our work in 2024. In the reporting period,

BMF's advocacy gained strong public visibility through media coverage that highlighted community-led environmental action, the Stilfontein crisis, illegal and artisanal mining, and the systemic failures that leave marginalised communities vulnerable to corporate and state neglect.

the Foundation recorded 88 media engagements, distributed across radio (52%), television (38%), and print media (10%). These engagements amplified the voices of community activists, highlighted urgent issues in mining-affected areas, and challenged corporate and governmental accountability.

Some notable highlights included:

- Community voices in the spotlight: Thokozile, a community facilitator from Soweto, was featured in the Sunday Times for her work on phytoremediation in Snake Park, earning public recognition for grassroots environmental initiatives ("Sunflower activists plant a seed on big-mining turf", 23 June).
- Sustained national and international coverage of illegal and artisanal mining, particularly around the Stilfontein crisis, included interviews and expert commentary across major platforms such as Newzroom Afrika, ENCA, SABC News, BBC, SA FM, 702, and CBC Canada. These appearances drew attention to the systemic failures enabling illegal mining, as well as the risks faced by marginalised communities.
- Investigative analysis was featured in multiple print outlets, including Sunday Independent, Eyewitness News, and TRT World, unpacking the intersection of state inaction, corporate profiteering, and community vulnerability.

Through these and other engagements, the Foundation contributed to informed public discourse and helped build broader solidarity for mining-affected communities. Media advocacy continues to be a powerful tool in our mission to expose injustice, support grassroots struggles, and promote ethical alternatives to extractivism.



5. LEARNINGS

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

We increased our use of Google Forms and participant registers for community events in 2024, allowing for more detailed data collection disaggregated by gender and age.

An organisational annual plan was also developed for the year, which will be regularly reviewed and will serve as an additional tool for organisational monitoring and learning.

The Bench Marks Foundation commissioned an external evaluation during the reporting period and received the final report in September 2024. A strategic review process was also conducted in August 2024. Both the Evaluation Report and the Strategy Document were completed in 2024 and approved in draft form by the Board, with final approval expected in 2025.

KEY RISKS AND MITIGATION

Financial sustainability remains an area to keep on working continuously. We are a leaner organisation with more streamlined programming, but we need additional capacities to implement all programmes as intended. We conducted skills audits and had one-on-one staff development plans worked out on that basis. This will help with addressing some of the existing challenges; however, some significant staffing gaps will remain, especially when the Seconded Personnel and the Lead Researcher exit the organisation in 2024. In addition, financial administration, procurement processes and fundraising were identified as areas needing further attention. In order to ensure knowledge retention when staff exit the organisation we have made progress in terms of a unified filing system.. Divisions within communities remains a challenge that we are continuously mindful of in our work.

CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

Gender Focus and Women's Leadership

Our work continues to strengthen its gender focus, reflected in the growing presence of women in leadership roles. Looking ahead, we aim to be intentional in selecting participants, building the capacity of women, and expanding networks with like-minded organisations. Our advocacy will increasingly use social media to raise awareness on women's issues, particularly gender-based violence in mining communities, the health impacts of mining on women, and the development of gender-responsive post-mining strategies.

Conflict Sensitivity and Advocacy

Bench Marks employs a conflict-sensitive approach to problem-solving by recognising power dynamics among stakeholders and securing community mandates before engaging. Empowering local structures is central to this work. Where appropriate, adversarial advocacy methods are used when they align with our commitment to upholding human rights and advancing the interests of mining-affected communities.

Environmental Justice and Disability Rights

Environmental concerns are often at the core of community grievances related to mining. Our work integrates these issues, with a specific focus on how pollution, such as mine dust, may contribute to disabilities—especially among children. We support communities in documenting and addressing these links with mining companies.

ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The Bench Marks Foundation's 2024 Annual Conference, themed "Accountability in the Age of Transitions: Who Gains and Who Loses?", took place on 15–16 October 2024 at the Holiday Inn Johannesburg Sunnyside Park. This hybrid event brought together community leaders, civil society organisations, policymakers, and researchers to examine the social and environmental impacts of global transitions—such as the shift to renewable energy and digital economies—on marginalised communities.

The conference fostered critical discussions on corporate and governmental accountability, highlighting the importance of inclusive policies to ensure that the benefits of these transitions are shared equitably. By exploring who stood to gain or lose, the event promoted transparency and justice in the face of ongoing socio-economic change.

embedding safeguards in clean energy policies to ensure equitable access and fair benefit-sharing for frontline communities.

The AMI also underscored the significance of inclusive decision-making processes, emphasising the roles of women, youth, and sexual minorities. Sessions explored topics such as tax justice in Africa's resource-rich countries, the health impacts of extractives in Southern Africa, and the role of standards in promoting environmental and social governance.

ALTERNATIVE MINING INDABA

The 2024 Alternative Mining Indaba (AMI), held from February 5–8 in Cape Town, marked its 15th anniversary by convening over 450 delegates, including mining-affected communities, civil society organisations, and faith-based groups. Themed "Energy Transition Minerals: Putting Communities First for an Inclusive Feminist Future," the event emphasised the importance of centring community voices in discussions about the extraction of critical minerals essential for the global shift to renewable energy.

Key discussions highlighted the need to address inequitable access to energy, with projections indicating that by 2030, 660 million people—85% of whom will be in Sub-Saharan Africa—may lack electricity access. Participants advocated for



6. AUDITOR'S REPORT

BENCH MARKS FOUNDATION NPC
(Registration number 20021026620/08)

ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024



To the Directors of Bench Marks Foundation NPC

Opinion

We have audited the Annual Financial Statements of Bench Marks Foundation NPC set out on pages 7 to 16, which comprise the Statement of Financial Position as at 31 December 2024, and the Statement of Comprehensive Income, statement of Changes in Reserves and Statement of Cash Flows for the year then ended, and notes to the Annual Financial Statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies. In our opinion, the Annual Financial Statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of Bench Marks Foundation NPC as at 31 December 2024, and its financial performance and cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with International Financial Reporting Standard for Small and Medium-sized Entities and the requirements of the Companies Act 71 of 2008.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Annual Financial Statements section of our report. We are independent of the company in accordance with the Independent Regulatory Board for Auditors Code of Professional Conduct for Registered Auditors (IRBA Code) and other independence requirements applicable to performing audits of financial statements in South Africa. We have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the IRBA Code and in accordance with other ethical requirements applicable to performing audits in South Africa. The IRBA Code is consistent with the corresponding sections of the International Ethics Standards Board for Accountants' International Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants (including International Independence Standards). We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Key audit matters

Key audit matters are those matters that, in our professional judgement, were of most significance in our audit of the Annual Financial Statements of the current period. These matters were addressed in the context of our audit of the Annual Financial Statements as a whole, and in forming our opinion thereon, and we do not provide a separate opinion on these matters.

We have determined that there are no key audit matters to communicate in our report.

Other Information

The directors are responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the Directors' Report as required by the Companies Act 71 of 2008, which we obtained prior to the date of this report. Other information does not include the Annual Financial Statements and our auditor's report thereon.

Our opinion on the Annual Financial Statements does not cover the other information and we do not express an audit opinion or any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with our audit of the Annual Financial Statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the Annual Financial Statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit, or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact. We have nothing to report in this regard.

Responsibilities of the directors for the Annual Financial Statements

The directors are responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the Annual Financial Statements in accordance with International Financial Reporting Standard for Small and Medium-sized Entities and the requirements of the Companies Act 71 of 2008, and for such internal control as the directors determine is

necessary to enable the preparation of Annual Financial Statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the Annual Financial Statements, the directors are responsible for assessing the company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the directors either intend to liquidate the company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the Annual Financial Statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the Annual Financial Statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with International Standards on Auditing will always detect a material misstatement when it exists.

Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these Annual Financial Statements. As part of an audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing, we exercise professional judgement and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the Annual Financial Statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness

of the company's internal control.

- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the directors. Conclude on the appropriateness of the directors' use of the going concern basis of accounting and based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the company's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the Annual Financial Statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion.

Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the company to cease to continue as a going concern. Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the Annual Financial Statements, including the disclosures, and whether the Annual Financial Statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We communicate with the directors regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

David Douglas RA (IRBA:605581)

Douglas & Velclch, Chartered Accountants (SA)

(IRBA:926930)

6 June 2025

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

	Note	2024 R	2023 R
Assets			
Non-Current Asset		130 642	163 061
Deposits		40 164	40 164
Property, Plant and Equipment	2	90 478	122 897
Current Assets		1 747 157	3 854 375
Account receivable	3	103 057	34 516
Accrued income	11	319 096	1 239 314
Cash and cash equivalents	5	1 325 003	2 580 545
Total Assets		1 877 799	4 017 436
Reserves and Liabilities			
Reserves		955 209	1 766 319
Fixed asset reserve		90 478	122 897
Sustainability fund		566 350	566 350
Operating reserve		298 381	1 077 072
Liabilities		922 590	2 251 117
Current Liabilities		922 590	2 251 117
Accounts payable		135 105	7 665
Grants to be repaid	4	-	181 134
Deferred income	11	740 328	2 015 161
Provision for leave pay	6	47 157	47 157
Total Reserves and Liabilities		1 877 799	4 017 436

DETAILED INCOME STATEMENT

	Note	2024 R	2023 R
Revenue		9 874 638	8 158 437
Grants	11	9 874 638	8 158 437
Investment income		187 084	289 609
Interest received	8	187 084	289 609
Expenses		10 872 832	8 132 858
Direct Project expenses		5 735 250	4 747 414
Africa round table		288 308	187 597
Community monitoring and media		675 818	529 514
SADC mining research and advocacy		320 093	667 377
Voice power		1 694 289	1 277 410
PSS / capacity fund		160 654	87 879
Tailings project		568 432	
Programmes' human resources		2 027 656	1 997 636
Administration expenses		5 137 582	3 385 445
Annual duty and tax services		11 393	6 546
Audit fees	9	186 525	123 050
Bank charges		22 914	14 533
Cleaning and Offices costs		114 623	187 680
Communications		63 360	70 695
Consulting fees		320 677	232 041
Courier services		6 531	7 695
Data system management		107 504	64 744
Depreciation		66 317	61 461
Directors' meetings		26 083	23 753
Employee costs	7	1 916 292	1 737 525
Equipment hire		139 257	120 643
Insurance		39 422	28 610
Grants reduced	11	637 676	-
Lease rentals on operating lease		353 928	270 219
Organisational development		989 867	249 314
Penalties and interest		11 510	
Printing, photocopying, stationery and literature		92 964	77 445
Staff welfare		-	97 487
Subscriptions		14 583	-
Travel		16 156	12 002
Net (deficit)/surplus for the year		(811 110)	315 188

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