

B R A N D S T H A T M A T T E R

# FAST COMPANY

SOUTH AFRICA

**PLUS**

NEXT BIG  
THINGS  
IN TECH

**FRANCISCO  
BAUDRAND**

THE DYNAMITE  
BEHIND

**ENAEX MINING**

SOLUTIONS  
IN AFRICA

INSIDE:

✕ CITIES BUILT  
BY TECH  
BILLIONAIRES

✕ THE FIRST AI  
MUSIC ALBUM  
IS HERE

RSA: R60 (INCL VAT)  
NAMIBIA: NS65 (INCL VAT)



# C O N T E N T S

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Francisco Baudrand  
is transforming  
Enaex Africa into a  
high-tech blasting  
powerhouse







# Francisco Baudrand:

The leader  
transforming  
**Enaex Africa**

into a  
high-tech  
blasting  
powerhouse



" We ' re building the  
blasting company  
of the future —  
not only  
globally, also  
here in Africa . "

# W

**When the world was sinking into Covid-19** gloom, Enaex was doing something else entirely: turning around an ailing explosives business in South Africa and reimagining it as a high-tech leader in modern blasting.

At the centre of that effort was Francisco Baudrand. He arrived in South Africa just two weeks before borders closed, offices emptied, and global supply chains froze. His assignment was daunting. Enaex, the Chilean explosives company, had just acquired Sasol's blasting subsidiary—a business widely viewed as an awkward inheritance. The company had to start functioning right away, with no time for adjustment or settling in, despite its systems, culture and identity undergoing a total transformation.

Baudrand didn't flinch. Slight, soft-spoken and perpetually alert—like someone scanning the horizon for the next mountain—he had built a career on ambitious transformations.

Over fifteen years at Enaex, he helped guide the company from a regional Chilean player into one of the world's three largest blasting firms. His background was in finance; his instincts were strategic.

He completed his MBA, attended Harvard, and discovered early in life—following his parents' divorce and his father's bankruptcy—that security is never certain.

As a young man, he sold cheese to survive. Later, he sold ideas.

Those ideas became Enaex's international expansion strategy, targeting mining regions across the Americas, Australia and Africa. When Sasol decided to divest its explosives business, Baudrand was deeply involved in the negotiations.

Following the completion of the deal, he stepped into his inaugural chief executive position as CEO of Enaex Africa—a role widely regarded as his most challenging yet.

Facing immediate and complex challenges, Francisco Baudrand assembled a strong executive team—bringing in two



leaders from Chile, integrating leadership from Sasol, and building a robust South African executive team.

Starting on July 1, 2020, the company had to run its operations while rebuilding its systems, procedures and identity from scratch. South Africa's mining sector added further layers: a deeply historical industry shaped by regulation, labour dynamics and the imperatives of transformation.

Compliance with black economic

empowerment (BEE) wasn't optional; it was existential.

Baudrand chose to lead the process personally, embedding inclusion into the company's operating fabric rather than treating it as a compliance exercise. Enaex Africa achieved a level 4 BEE rating in its first year, progressed quickly to Level 2 and eventually reached Level 1—an accomplishment attained by only a small fraction of mining companies.

# "INNOVATION, RESPONSIBILITY AND PEOPLE WILL DEFINE THE NEXT DECADE OF MINING."



Safety, meanwhile, was non-negotiable. Enaex inherited responsibility for more than a thousand employees operating in one of the world's most hazardous industrial environments.

Baudrand made "Life First" the company's central value, investing in systems designed to reduce human exposure to risk.

Under his leadership, Enaex Africa became a proving ground for technologies that once felt like science fiction: digital initiation systems; AI-driven fragmentation analytics; robotic and remote-operated charging; and mechanised blasting solutions that keep people far from danger. Innovation became a cultural anchor.

Baudrand established a dedicated innovation team and formalised partnerships with institutions such as Stellenbosch University, where research into autonomous systems and artificial intelligence feeds directly into mining applications.

One project deploys autonomous robots to map and mark blast points in narrow reefs—precision work performed without a human body in harm's way.

Another focuses on reduced-emission explosives and vibration control, responding to both environmental pressures and community concerns.

What distinguished Baudrand's approach wasn't technology alone—it was tempo.

He rejected the familiar turnaround excuse of delayed profitability.

The challenges faced by Enaex were intensified by supply constraints within the South African mining industry. Nevertheless, the company overcame these difficulties and built a successful, profitable operation.

Equally important was the work of persuasion. Enaex—an unfamiliar name with a challenging pronunciation—had to earn trust in a conservative industry. Baudrand invested in brand-building, placing the company at the centre of forums

# HUMANIZE MINING



## ENAEX AFRICA:

### THE JOINT VENTURE

#### Formation:

In July 2020, Sasol concluded a deal with Enaex, the Chilean-based global explosives company, to form a new joint venture.

Enaex is the majority shareholder and controlling partner.

#### Services:

Enaex Africa produces and distributes a wide range of explosives and blasting accessories, delivering value-added solutions for opencast and underground mining, quarries and civil construction projects.

#### Footprint:

Manufacturing sites in Secunda and Rustenburg, headquarters in Rosebank, and regional offices and operations across Southern Africa, including Namibia, Lesotho, Botswana and Zambia.

such as the Mining Indaba, and in South Africa's business press.

Enaex Africa relocated its headquarters from Sandton to Rosebank, securing naming rights to its building—an architectural assertion of arrival.

At home, Baudrand settled into South Africa with his wife, Marcela, and their four children. He often notes the country's resemblance to Chile: its diversity; its contradictions; and the uneasy coexistence of promise and inequality. That sensitivity underpins one of his most enduring commitments—the development of African talent.

Through academies, simulation tools and leadership programmes, Enaex Africa is training a new generation of blasting specialists, engineers and executives.

The future Baudrand imagines is radical: a mining industry that is 100% autonomous. Blasts designed by algorithms, executed by machines, monitored remotely—humans overseeing systems rather than standing beside them.

It's a vision that unsettles some people and energises others. Baudrand appears unfazed. Achievement, for him, is less a destination than a vantage point.

As soon as he conquers one peak, his

sights are already set on the next challenge.

Today, Enaex Africa stands as a global benchmark for safe, intelligent and sustainable blasting—a company shaped as much by software and data as by explosives. Its transformation is inseparable from Baudrand's own journey: from a young man selling cheese after family collapse to a leader quietly reshaping how mining is done on a continent.

"Innovation, responsibility and people will define the next decade of mining," he says.

It sounds less like a forecast than a plan already in motion.