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REGIONAL NEWS

SOUTHERN AFRICA

Editorial

DEAR READERS

Swiss engineering firm ABB is one of several international companies found to have engaged in years of corruption at Eskom and other South African state-owned companies during the presidency of Jacob Zuma, which ended in 2018. Last December ABB agreed to pay

a \$315 million (R5 billion) criminal penalty over bribes to an Eskom official as it sought control and instrumentation contracts at the company's Kusile coal-fired plant. Read the full story.

WARM REGARDS, GISELA PIERCEY



GISELA PIERCEY,
EDITOR «SWISS REVIEW
SOUTHERN AFRICA»

South Africa:

Switzerland fines engineering giant R75m over South African bribery

Swiss engineering giant ABB has been fined four million Swiss francs (R75 million) over bribery linked to the construction of a huge power plant in South Africa.

The attorney-general's office said ABB Management Services, which is

headquartered in Switzerland, admitted not taking "all necessary and reasonable provisions" to prevent bribery payments to officials in South Africa.

"Various ABB employees set up from 2013 on a bribery scheme in order to obtain orders, through excessive

payments to subcontractors, for the construction of a coal-fired power plant in South Africa," the attorney general's office said.

Construction near Johannesburg of the Kusile power station, the fourth largest coal-fired generator in the world, has been fraught with



Swiss engineering firm ABB Group was contracted to work at Kusile in 2015.

Photo: Gallo Images

allegations of graft. South Africa's struggling power utility Eskom commissioned the plant in 2007.

"ABB South Africa received orders for a value of at least \$200 million with bribery payments of at least 1.3 million Swiss francs," the attorney general's office said.

As a result, it said ABB had been slapped with a fine of four million Swiss francs and ordered the group to pay 50,000 Swiss francs for the cost of proceedings.

The firm has already made a compensation payment of \$104 million in South Africa, the attorney general's office said.

South African prosecutors announced that ABB would pay more than R2.5 billion in "punitive

reparations" to South Africa over "criminal conduct" at Eskom.

Switzerland said the US justice department and Securities and Exchange Commission were also expected to resolve with ABB.

Last October eight people, including former Eskom CEO Matshela Koko, were arrested on corruption charges linked to a multi-million-dollar contract with the Swiss firm.

ARTICLE: NEWS24



South Africa's National Prosecuting Authority said ABB had agreed to pay punitive reparations to the country.
PHOTO: ARND WIEGMANN/REUTERS

South Africa:

An elephant-sensing 'smart mic' – new Swiss invention

Monitoring wild animals such as elephants and wolves is increasingly difficult due to growing populations and outdated observation techniques. [Researchers at the Federal Institute of Technology Lausanne \(EPFL\)](#) have invented a device that uses artificial intelligence to record and identify the whistles, howls and other noises of animals roaming at night.

The data is sent automatically via the mobile phone network to a computer server where it is crunched and analysed. The "Smart Mic" can precisely identify a wolf call with an accuracy of 500 metres. The device should save game wardens time and cover larger areas than traditional camera traps. It is also much cheaper; a prototype costs CHF450. The invention has also been successfully



Artificial Intelligence is used to identify sounds of elephants.
(Photo: Colin Bell)

tested with elephants in South Africa and further trials are underway in India, also with elephants. Switzerland is one of the world's most innovative countries with a reputation for excellence in science and technology. It invests 3.15% of annual GDP in research and development (2019 figure), securing seventh place in an international innovation ranking. The Alpine nation is home to 12 public universities, including the two federal institutes of technology, in Lausanne and Zurich, nine Universities of Applied Sciences and Art, and dozens of cutting-edge research institutes.

ARTICLE: UNIVERSITÄT BASEL, ZENTRUM FÜR AFRIKASTUDIEN

South Africa: Cultural Relations Between Switzerland and South Africa, 1948–1994

This conference concludes a research project that shed light on cultural relations between South Africa and Switzerland during the apartheid era. The conference takes place from 3 to 5 May 2023 in Basel, and is a collaboration between the Hochschule der Künste Bern, the Basler Afrika Bibliographien, the ZASB and the Africa Open Institute of the University of Stellenbosch.

The relationship between Switzerland and South Africa has been the focus of extensive research over the past two decades. However, the focus has until now been on the role that Swiss business and politics played as enablers for the apartheid state. A research project running from 2019 to 2023 at the Hochschule der Künste Bern HKB, funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF), has aimed instead to shed light on cultural relations between the two countries from

the beginnings of apartheid in 1948 through to the first democratic elections in South Africa in 1994.

To conclude this project, the Hochschule der Künste Bern will be holding a conference from Wednesday 3 May to Friday 5 May 2023 in Basel in Switzerland, hosted by the Basler Afrika Bibliographien in collaboration with the Centre for African Studies Basel and Africa Open Institute of the University of Stellenbosch.

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The Dollar Brand Trio at a Cellar Concert in St. Gallen in 1962
(Photo: Richard Butz)

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■ JASS EVENTS: This is held on the second Friday of each month and will commence at 2 p.m. and is held at Rolf Klein Jass Stube, 3 Bona Terra Road, Assagay (directions on our website).

■ SPORT TARGET SHOOTING:

Held on the 4th Saturday of each month (weather permitting) commencing at 08:30 a.m.- Nottingham Road (calendar available on our website).

*For more up-to-date information regarding times/venues/directions, please visit our most informative website – www.swissclubnatal.org.za

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