RAPID PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH AFRICA

2026 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

October 28th, 2026

RAPDASA

Annual General Meeting

PROTEA HOTEL POLOKWANE RANCH RESORT,

SOUTH AFRICA

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1. Introduction

The Rapid Product Development Association of South Africa (RAPDASA) was formally established at its inaugural Annual General Meeting (AGM), held on 8 November 2000 at the CSIR International Convention Centre in Pretoria. This year marks the 27th edition of the annual RAPDASA conference, reflecting the Association's longstanding commitment to advancing additive manufacturing and related technologies in South Africa. Over the years, RAPDASA has experienced significant growth, embracing new opportunities, collaborations, and initiatives that continue to shape the industry.

The 2026 RAPDASA-AMI Conference was held at Protea Hotel Polokwane Ranch Resort in South Africa and co-hosted by MINTEK and the University of Limpopo (UL). The conference was held under the theme "*From Prototype to Production: Translating Research into Reality*", highlighting the importance of bridging the gap between research, innovation, and industrial application.

This report provides an overview of RAPDASA's activities during the year, reflects on the key outcomes and highlights of the 2026 conference.

2. RAPDASA Management Committee

The RAPDASA management committee for 2026 was elected during the Annual General Meeting held on 29 October 2025 at the CSIR International Convention Center in Pretoria, South Africa. In addition to the elected members, several individuals were co-opted during the year to support the committee. The members of the 2026 Management Committee were as follows:

- Washington Makoana (Chairperson)
- André van der Merwe (Vice Chairperson)
- Imdadullah Adam (Treasurer)
- Rynette Coetzer (Secretary)
- Marandela Mulaudzi (Conference Host)
- Heinrich van der Merwe (Industry Day)

• Daniel Kirkman	(Technical Support)
• Londiwe Motibane	(Marketing)
• Francis Monaheng	(General)
• Bathusile Masina	(General)
• David Mauchline	(General)
• Willie du Preez	(Conference Editor)- Co-opted
• Deon de Beer	(Sponsorships)- Co-opted

RAPDASA Management Committee meetings were held on:

• RAPDASA MANCOM 01-2026	07 November 2025
• RAPDASA MANCOM 02-2026	05 December 2025
• RAPDASA MANCOM 03-2026	06 February 2026
• RAPDASA MANCOM 04-2026	24 April 2026
• RAPDASA MANCOM 05-2026	31 July 2026
• RAPDASA MANCOM 06-2026	09 October 2026
• *RAPDASA SPECIAL MANCOM MEETINGS*	*28 October 2025*
	23 January 2026

RAPDASA Executive Management Committee meetings were held on:

• RAPDASA EXCO 01-2026	29 May 2026
• RAPDASA EXCO 02-2026	23 September 2026
• *RAPDASA SPECIAL EXCO MEETINGS*	*15 May 2026*
	7 July 2026
	02 October 2026

3. Industry Day

This year, RAPDASA, in collaboration with MINTEK, successfully hosted its mid-year Industry Day on Wednesday, 24 June 2026, at MINTEK in Randburg, Johannesburg. Under the theme *"From Prototype to Production: Translating Research into Reality,"* the event focused on bridging the gap between research and industrial application, while strengthening collaboration between academia and industry. It provided a platform for students, academics, and industry professionals to exchange knowledge, showcase innovations, and explore opportunities for collaboration, technology transfer, and translating research into practical industrial solutions.

The second Industry Day took place alongside the annual RAPDASA Conference on 27 October 2026, at the Protea Hotel Polokwane Ranch Resort. This event built on the momentum of the mid-year initiative by giving industry professionals, researchers, and academics another opportunity to engage, collaborate, and forge partnerships that advance South Africa's industrial innovation and educational development.

4. 2026 Annual Conference

This year, RAPDASA partnered with the Advanced Materials Initiative (AMI) to host its annual conference. The theme, "*From Prototype to Production: Translating Research into Reality,"* highlighted the importance of collaboration between research institutions and industry in driving innovation, facilitating technology transfer, and strengthening industrial competitiveness.

MINTEK and UL jointly hosted the conference at the Protea Hotel Polokwane Ranch Resort, South Africa. A total of 168 delegates attended, comprising 96 full-conference participants and 72 students.

Two pre-conference seminars were hosted as part of the technical programme:

> Design and Additive Manufacturing of Sailplane and Jewellery part. This seminar was coordinated by the Central University of Technology, Free State (CUT) and co-funded by the Department of Science, Technology and Innovation (DSTI) through the Collaboration Programme in Additive Manufacturing (CPAM). The seminar comprises of the following:

- Welcome address by Dr Lehlohonolo Francis Monaheng from CUT
- Opening address by Ms Wilna du Plessis from DSTI
- 1 keynote address by Prof Attie Jonker from the Jonker Sailplane Pty Ltd
- 6 technical presentations

Computational and Data-Driven Modelling

- 1 keynote address
- 10 technical presentations

The main conference featured 98 presentations, comprising:

- 9 keynote addresses
- 3 Invited speaker presentations
- 4 Industry presentations
- 17 poster presentations
- 65 technical presentations

Following a rigorous double-blind peer-review process, 76 full papers were accepted for publication. Of these, 4-6 papers will be published in the South African Journal of Industrial Engineering (SAJIE), while the remaining papers will appear in the official RAPDASA Conference Proceedings.

We sincerely thank all the sponsors and exhibitors whose generous support and participation contributed to the success of the 2026 RAPDASA-AMI Conference.

Category	**Sponsors/Exhibitors**
Platinum Sponsors	Department of Science, Technology and Innovation (DSTI); MINTEK
Gold Sponsors	University of Limpopo (UL); Central University of Technology (CUT)
Silver Sponsors	Anton Paar; Advanced Materials Initiative (AMI)
Bronze Sponsors	Collaborative Programme in Additive Manufacturing (CPAM); Necsa SOC Ltd
Exhibitors	Anton Paar (Pty) Ltd; Verder Scientific (Pty) Ltd; Central University of Technology Centre for Rapid Prototyping and Manufacturing

	(CUT-CRPM); Advanced Materials Initiative (AMI); Necsa SOC Ltd; MINTEK; University of Limpopo; Akani Paints

I also wish to thank all members of the conference organising committee for their dedication, hard work, and commitment to making the 2026 RAPDASA-AMI Conference a success.

Institution / Organisation	**Organising Committee Members**
RAPDASA	Marandela Mulaudzi (Chair); Andre van der Merwe (Co-Chair); Heinrich van der Merwe; Willie du Preez; Daniel Kirkman; Imdaadulah Adam; Bathusile Masina; Londiwe Motibane; Francis Monaheng; David Mauchline; Rynette Coetzer
MINTEK	Joseph Moema; Maje Phasha; Ramogohlo Diale-Boshielo; Mandla Ndlovu; Boitumelo Lekalakala; Mpho Khiba
University of Limpopo (UL)	Hasani Chauke; Raesibe Ledwaba; Clerence Mabaso; Peter Tlouane; Maria Moja; Lebogang Mokaze; Thabo Lebelo; Thipa Comfort Kganyago
CSIR AMI	Ntombi Mathe-Maleboho
NECSA AMI	Milton Makhofane
Industry	Paul Naudé; Devon Hagedorn-Hansen; Marius Vermeulen

Finally, special thanks to the following people who made a tremendous contribution to the association:

- Willie du Preez, who served as the editor for the RAPDASA-AMI proceedings, oversaw the academic aspects of the conference, including the paper review and publication processes. We also extend our gratitude to the Track Chairs, Reviewers, and all the individuals who chose to submit their papers to our proceedings.
- Rynette Coetzer, for her dedicated service to RAPDASA over the past seven years, managing the Association's administration and coordinating the annual conference. As

she prepares to step down from her role, we extend our sincere gratitude for her hard work, commitment, and invaluable contribution to the Association. Her dedication and professionalism have played an important role in supporting RAPDASA's activities and success over the years, and we thank her for the lasting contribution she has made.

5. Marketing and Electronic Media

We acknowledge and thank Mrs Londiwe Motibane and Digi-Guru for their efforts in promoting RAPDASA's presence across Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn throughout the year. We sincerely appreciate their contributions to the Association's social media marketing and visibility.

6. Dimitrov Scholarship

The Dimitrov Scholarship supported Samson Singo. RAPDASA sincerely thanks all contributors and sponsors for their generosity in empowering talented students to pursue their academic aspirations and contribute to the future of additive manufacturing.

7. Financials

RAPDASA demonstrated growth in income during 2026, reflecting continued engagement through membership and conference activities. While increased expenditure resulted in an annual deficit and a reduction in cash reserves, the association continues to maintain a positive financial position, supported by a favourable audit opinion. Going forward, strengthening expenditure management, improving cash-flow planning and addressing outstanding financial matters will help enhance financial sustainability and support the association's continued activities and growth.

8. Insights

CRPM's Perspective on the Future of Additive Manufacturing in South Africa

CRPM promotes the translation of South Africa's additive manufacturing (AM) research into industrial applications and societal benefits. Through a DSTI-funded CPAM project with Jonker

Sailplanes, it is developing and qualifying 3D-printed aircraft components, with two technical papers presented at the 2026 RAPDASA-AMI Pre-Conference Seminar. Its ISO 13485-certified medical device manufacturing has supported over 5,383 patients, including more than 300 pro bono cases. These achievements highlight AM's potential to advance industrial innovation, improve healthcare, and drive sustainable growth. RAPDASA supports this progress through collaboration, technology transfer, and the adoption of local innovations.

HH industries and AMT3D

HH Industries expanded its advanced manufacturing capabilities in 2026 through the introduction of precision Wire EDM, complementing its metal additive manufacturing services. It hosted technical workshops, contributed to the international NeDMEV collaboration on sustainable electric-vehicle manufacturing, and participated in Mintek Circular Economy research and a CPAM grant.

AMT3D strengthened its position as an integrated advanced manufacturing solutions provider, delivering five metal AM systems in one month and expanding its technology portfolio through partnerships with SWICE, BLT, Meltio and MX3D. Key achievements included producing a 500 mm titanium rocket ring for an aerospace project, supporting Africa's first commissioned Meltio robot arm at Petrawell, and receiving the 2026 Above and Beyond EMEA Award from Bright Laser Technologies. AMT3D is also developing a flagship LPBF facility in Germany housing nine BLT machines. Together, these initiatives demonstrate progress in industrial innovation, technology transfer, skills development and international collaboration.

9. Conclusion

As we reflect on 2026, RAPDASA continues to play an important role in advancing additive manufacturing and advanced product development in South Africa. Through initiatives such as the Industry Day events and the successful 2026 RAPDASA-AMI Conference, the Association has strengthened collaboration between academia and industry, promoted knowledge exchange, and provided platforms for translating research and innovation into practical industrial applications.

We extend our sincere appreciation to the RAPDASA Executive and Management Committees, our partners, sponsors, exhibitors, members, and the wider additive manufacturing community for their continued support and contributions. A special word of thanks goes to Rynette Coetzer, who steps down as Secretary after seven years of dedicated service. Her commitment to RAPDASA's administration, coordination of the annual conference, and support for the Management Committee have been invaluable. We are deeply grateful for her contribution, professionalism, and the lasting impact she has made on the Association.

Looking ahead, RAPDASA must continue to strengthen partnerships, encourage industry participation, support emerging researchers and students, and promote the adoption and commercialisation of additive manufacturing technologies. I thank everyone who has contributed to the Association's progress during the year and look forward to RAPDASA building on these achievements under the leadership of the incoming Management Committee.



Dr Washington Makoana
(Chairperson)