

SOUTH AFRICAN ENGINEERING SALARY GUIDE

2026 EDITION

Recruitment intelligence for employers, hiring leaders and engineering professionals.

ENGINEERING | MANUFACTURING | MINING | RENEWABLE ENERGY | INFRASTRUCTURE

Indicative market benchmarks - not actual or guaranteed salaries.

A practical guide to engineering remuneration

South Africa's engineering labour market is shaped by scarce technical capability, uneven regional demand, project cycles, professional registration and the ability of employers to compete for experienced people. This guide brings those factors together in one practical publication.

The salary ranges in this report are PMG Recruitment Services' indicative market benchmarks. They are designed to support informed conversations, not to prescribe what any organisation must pay or what any individual should earn.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Use the ranges as a starting point. Benchmark the full package, role scope, location, sector, professional registration, project responsibility and scarcity of the required technical experience before setting an offer.

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Executive summary

Engineering remains essential to South Africa's industrial base, but remuneration is not moving uniformly. Employers are paying the strongest premiums where a role combines scarce technical expertise with commercial, operational or statutory responsibility.

Five market signals

- Professional registration and recognised accountability can materially strengthen senior-level marketability, particularly where design sign-off, public safety or client assurance is involved.
- Mining, energy, heavy industrial, automation and complex project environments tend to support the highest remuneration for scarce or site-critical expertise.
- Employers increasingly value engineers who can connect design with delivery: cost control, contractors, commissioning, production, reliability and stakeholder management.
- Regional pay differences are often outweighed by site allowances, travel, housing, bonuses, scarce-skill premiums and the practical difficulty of attracting people to remote locations.
- The strongest offers are not always those with the highest basic salary. Candidates compare total cost to company, incentives, flexibility, career progression, project exposure and leadership scope.

HEADLINE BENCHMARK

Across the selected disciplines in this guide, indicative experienced-level monthly CTC ranges broadly span R40,000 to R100,000+, with significantly higher outcomes possible for scarce specialists, professionally registered leaders and executives.

Methodology and limitations

PMG developed the ranges in this guide by triangulating public 2026 salary information, advertised vacancy ranges, recruitment-market observations and the relative seniority of typical engineering roles. The tables are intentionally expressed as broad ranges rather than single averages.

What the figures represent

- Monthly South African rand cost-to-company (CTC) estimates unless stated otherwise.
- Early career: typically graduate to approximately 3 years, depending on discipline and responsibility.
- Experienced: commonly 4-8 years, often with independent project or operational responsibility.
- Senior / lead: often 8+ years, specialist, lead, professionally registered or management-level responsibility.
- National indicative benchmarks; individual employers and regions may differ substantially.

What they do not represent

- Actual salaries paid by a named employer or earned by a named employee.
- A guaranteed offer, legal minimum, bargaining-council rate or prescribed salary scale.
- A substitute for job evaluation, remuneration consulting, tax advice or legal advice.
- A complete representation of bonuses, overtime, share plans, expatriate packages or site allowances.

IMPORTANT

Two engineers with the same title can have very different market values. Scope, accountability, technology, project value, professional registration and sector experience frequently matter more than title alone.

South African engineering market outlook

The engineering market continues to operate against a mixed economic backdrop. Infrastructure constraints, subdued construction activity and project delays can limit hiring in some areas, while energy, mining, industrial maintenance, automation, water, logistics and selected manufacturing investments continue to create demand.

Demand themes

- Renewable energy, grid connection, electrical infrastructure and energy optimisation.
- Mine expansion, asset integrity, mineral processing and maintenance reliability.
- Industrial automation, controls, robotics, data-enabled manufacturing and process improvement.
- Water, wastewater, municipal infrastructure and environmental compliance.
- Structural steel, warehouses, logistics facilities and industrial construction.
- Engineering project controls, commissioning, shutdowns and contractor management.

Supply constraints

Employers frequently report that the greatest difficulty is not finding someone with an engineering qualification; it is finding a person with the right combination of sector experience, systems knowledge, leadership maturity, location flexibility and delivery history.

ECSA's professional-registration framework remains an important credibility marker in parts of the market, particularly where independent judgement, accountability and public-interest engineering practice are central to the role.

National salary benchmarks

All ranges below are indicative monthly CTC benchmarks. A plus sign indicates that compensation may extend materially above the upper figure for scarce specialists, executives, expatriate-style packages or unusually large accountability.

Position	Early career	Experienced	Senior / lead
Graduate Engineer	R22k-R32k	R32k-R45k	R45k-R60k
Civil Engineer	R28k-R45k	R48k-R70k	R70k-R110k+
Structural Engineer	R30k-R48k	R48k-R75k	R75k-R125k+
Mechanical Engineer	R27k-R42k	R42k-R65k	R65k-R105k+
Electrical Engineer	R28k-R45k	R45k-R72k	R72k-R120k+
Industrial Engineer	R27k-R42k	R40k-R60k	R60k-R100k+
Chemical / Process Engineer	R30k-R48k	R48k-R78k	R78k-R130k+
Mining Engineer	R35k-R55k	R60k-R105k	R105k-R180k+
Project Engineer	R32k-R50k	R52k-R90k	R90k-R145k+
Maintenance / Reliability Engineer	R30k-R48k	R48k-R78k	R78k-R125k+

These bands intentionally extend beyond the narrower advertised-vacancy averages reported in some national salary guides because PMG's ranges distinguish between early-career, experienced and senior accountability. They should therefore not be read as simple averages.

Civil and structural engineering

Civil and structural remuneration is highly sensitive to professional registration, consulting versus contractor experience, project complexity, design authority and exposure to infrastructure, mining, industrial or commercial development.

Position	Early career	Experienced	Senior / lead
Civil Design Engineer	R28k-R44k	R45k-R68k	R68k-R105k+
Structural Design Engineer	R30k-R48k	R50k-R78k	R78k-R125k+
Geotechnical Engineer	R32k-R50k	R52k-R85k	R85k-R140k+
Water / Wastewater Engineer	R30k-R48k	R50k-R80k	R80k-R130k+
Roads / Transport Engineer	R30k-R47k	R48k-R76k	R76k-R125k+
Resident Engineer	R38k-R58k	R60k-R95k	R95k-R145k+
Civil Engineering Technologist	R24k-R38k	R38k-R58k	R58k-R90k+
Structural Detailer / Draughtsperson	R20k-R32k	R32k-R48k	R48k-R70k+

Premium factors

- Pr.Eng or Pr.Tech.Eng registration where relevant.
- Complex reinforced-concrete, structural-steel or geotechnical design capability.
- Client-facing consulting, tendering and multidisciplinary coordination.
- Contract administration, NEC/FIDIC exposure and site-delivery responsibility.
- Experience on mines, plants, logistics facilities, energy or major infrastructure.

Mechanical and manufacturing engineering

Mechanical and manufacturing roles show some of the widest variations because job titles can cover design, production, maintenance, product development, plant engineering, quality, continuous improvement and leadership.

Position	Early career	Experienced	Senior / lead
Mechanical Design Engineer	R27k-R42k	R42k-R67k	R67k-R105k+
Manufacturing Engineer	R27k-R43k	R43k-R68k	R68k-R108k+
Production Engineer	R27k-R43k	R43k-R70k	R70k-R112k+
Industrial Engineer	R27k-R42k	R40k-R60k	R60k-R100k+
Continuous Improvement Engineer	R28k-R45k	R45k-R72k	R72k-R110k+
Quality Engineer	R25k-R40k	R40k-R62k	R62k-R95k+
Plant Engineer / GMR 2.1	R45k-R70k	R70k-R105k	R105k-R160k+
Engineering Manager	R65k-R90k	R90k-R125k	R125k-R180k+

Premium factors

- GCC Factories or legally accountable plant responsibility.
- OEM, automotive, FMCG, packaging, metals or high-volume production experience.
- Lean, Six Sigma, OEE, throughput, waste and cost-improvement achievements.
- CAD/CAE, product industrialisation and design-for-manufacture capability.
- Leadership of artisans, technicians, maintenance teams and capital projects.

Electrical, electronic and automation

Demand is strongest where electrical engineering intersects with energy, controls, industrial automation, protection, commissioning and operational reliability.

Position	Early career	Experienced	Senior / lead
Electrical Engineer	R28k-R45k	R45k-R72k	R72k-R120k+
Electronic Engineer	R28k-R44k	R44k-R70k	R70k-R115k+
Control & Instrumentation Engineer	R32k-R50k	R50k-R82k	R82k-R135k+
Automation / PLC Engineer	R30k-R48k	R48k-R78k	R78k-R125k+
Power Systems Engineer	R32k-R52k	R52k-R85k	R85k-R140k+
Protection Engineer	R35k-R55k	R55k-R90k	R90k-R145k+
Commissioning Engineer	R32k-R52k	R52k-R85k	R85k-R135k+
Electrical Engineering Manager	R65k-R92k	R92k-R130k	R130k-R185k+

Premium factors

- High-voltage, protection, substations and grid-connection experience.
- PLC, SCADA, DCS, robotics and industrial-network expertise.
- Renewable-energy commissioning and utility-interface capability.
- Hazardous-area, mining, petrochemical or heavy-industrial exposure.
- Ability to lead design, construction, commissioning and handover.

Mining, energy and process engineering

Mining and process roles can command substantial premiums because of production impact, technical scarcity, statutory responsibility, travel, roster patterns and remote-site conditions.

Position	Early career	Experienced	Senior / lead
Mining Engineer	R35k-R55k	R60k-R105k	R105k-R180k+
Rock Engineer	R45k-R70k	R70k-R115k	R115k-R185k+
Metallurgical Engineer	R32k-R50k	R50k-R82k	R82k-R135k+
Process Engineer	R30k-R48k	R48k-R78k	R78k-R130k+
Energy Engineer	R30k-R48k	R48k-R78k	R78k-R128k+
Renewable Energy Engineer	R30k-R50k	R50k-R82k	R82k-R135k+
Solar PV Design Engineer	R28k-R45k	R45k-R72k	R72k-R115k+
Environmental Engineer	R28k-R45k	R45k-R70k	R70k-R110k+

Package design matters

For remote, cross-border or site-intensive appointments, compare the full package: accommodation, flights, roster, vehicle, allowances, bonus, medical cover, pension, tax treatment and family relocation. A lower basic salary may still produce a stronger total proposition.

Project, maintenance and technical leadership

Technical leadership roles are priced according to financial accountability, team size, project value, legal responsibility, operational criticality and the consequences of failure.

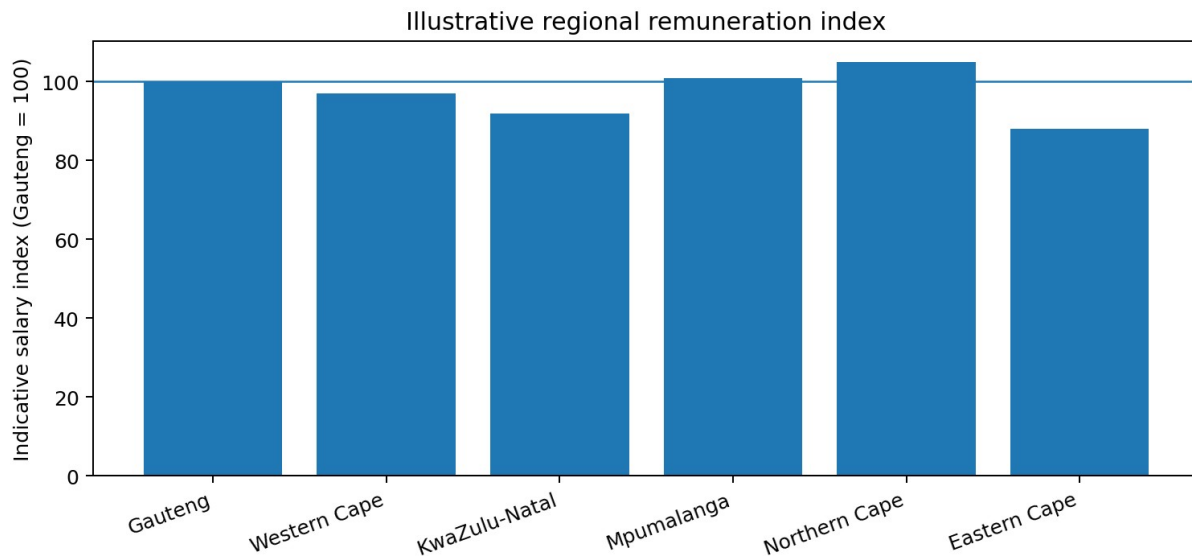
Position	Early career	Experienced	Senior / lead
Project Engineer	R32k-R50k	R52k-R90k	R90k-R145k+
Project Manager - Engineering	R45k-R68k	R68k-R105k	R105k-R165k+
Maintenance Engineer	R30k-R48k	R48k-R75k	R75k-R120k+
Reliability Engineer	R32k-R50k	R50k-R82k	R82k-R130k+
Engineering Superintendent	R55k-R80k	R80k-R115k	R115k-R165k+
Engineering Manager	R65k-R90k	R90k-R125k	R125k-R180k+
Technical Director	R95k-R130k	R130k-R180k	R180k-R250k+
Head of Engineering	R90k-R125k	R125k-R175k	R175k-R240k+

LEADERSHIP PREMIUM

A senior engineer is not automatically an engineering leader. Employers pay more where the person can set technical standards, manage risk, lead teams, govern capital, influence executives and deliver measurable business outcomes.

Regional and sector considerations

Location should be treated as one input, not a fixed multiplier. Gauteng has the broadest concentration of corporate, consulting, industrial and project opportunities. Western Cape demand is supported by technology, energy, food manufacturing, infrastructure and design-led industries. Mining provinces can exceed metropolitan packages for site-critical skills.



Illustrative only. Regional differences are role- and sector-dependent and are not statistical estimates of actual salaries.

When location changes the package

- Remote mine or construction site.
- Scarce local skill pool.
- Rotational or cross-border work.
- Daily travel, vehicle and fuel requirements.
- Housing, relocation or family-support requirements.
- Cost-of-living and hybrid-working flexibility.

Skills attracting a premium

The following capabilities frequently strengthen remuneration potential when paired with credible delivery experience.

Professional accountability

Pr.Eng, Pr.Tech.Eng, GCC, statutory appointments, design sign-off.

Digital engineering

BIM, Revit, Tekla, advanced CAD/CAE, simulation and digital twins.

Automation

PLC, SCADA, DCS, robotics, industrial networks and systems integration.

Energy

Grid connection, protection, solar, wind, storage, energy efficiency and commissioning.

Operational excellence

Lean, Six Sigma, reliability, asset management, OEE and maintenance strategy.

Commercial delivery

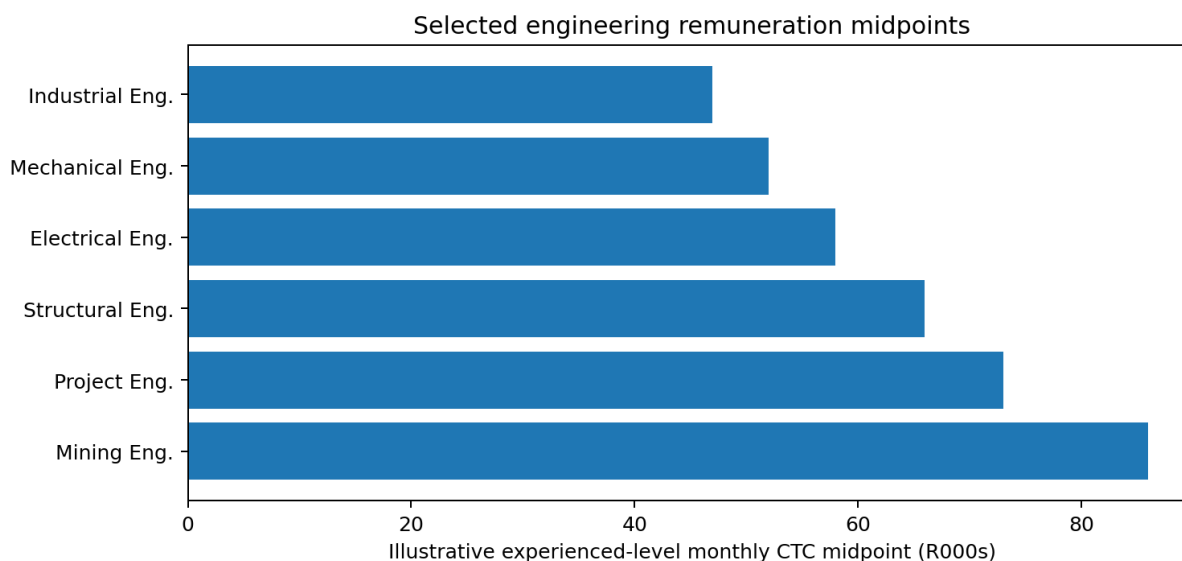
Estimating, tendering, contract management, project controls and client development.

Leadership

Team building, technical governance, succession, stakeholder influence and change.

Cross-border experience

African project delivery, relocation readiness, multicultural teams and remote operations.



Guidance for employers and candidates

For employers

- Define the real accountability before choosing the title. A vague brief produces a weak benchmark and an unfocused search.
- Benchmark total reward, not basic salary alone. Include bonus, vehicle, pension, medical aid, allowances, flexibility and professional development.
- Prioritise the three capabilities that are genuinely non-negotiable. Over-specified wish lists reduce the reachable talent pool.
- Move quickly once a credible engineer is identified. Scarce candidates often run several processes at the same time.
- Explain the engineering challenge, investment plan and leadership support. Strong candidates assess whether they will be able to deliver.

For engineering professionals

- Document outcomes, not duties: savings, uptime, throughput, safety, project value, commissioning, quality and delivery.
- Maintain professional registration and continuing professional development where relevant to your discipline.
- Understand your total package before comparing opportunities.
- Build commercial and stakeholder capability alongside technical depth.
- Be realistic about location, travel, roster and site requirements before entering a recruitment process.

A BETTER SALARY CONVERSATION

Employers should explain the value and accountability of the role. Candidates should explain the evidence behind their market expectations. The strongest outcome is a sustainable match, not simply the highest number.

Outlook for 2026-2027

PMG expects demand to remain selective rather than uniform. Hiring should continue to favour engineers who support energy security, industrial productivity, maintenance reliability, infrastructure delivery, automation and commercially disciplined project execution.

Likely areas of continued opportunity

- Renewable energy and grid infrastructure.
- Mining expansion and mineral processing.
- Plant maintenance, reliability and asset integrity.
- Industrial automation and manufacturing optimisation.
- Water and environmental infrastructure.
- Structural steel, logistics and industrial facilities.
- Engineering leadership, project recovery and operational turnaround.

What could change the market

Salary pressure may strengthen where investment accelerates faster than the supply of experienced people. It may soften where projects are delayed, capital is constrained or employers redesign work around contractors, remote teams, automation or international capability.

For this reason, PMG recommends that organisations refresh role-specific benchmarks when a vacancy is approved rather than relying on a static annual number.

About PMG Recruitment Services

PMG Recruitment Services is a specialist recruitment consultancy supporting employers and professionals across South Africa and the broader Southern African region. Our focus includes engineering, manufacturing, mining, renewable energy, logistics, technical sales, finance and executive leadership.

We combine careful search, practical market insight and a partnership-led approach to help organisations appoint people who can make a measurable contribution.

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FOR EMPLOYERS

Contact PMG for a role-specific salary discussion, candidate-market assessment or specialist recruitment assignment.

Sources, disclaimer and copyright

Selected reference sources

- PNet, 2026 Salary Guide and Job Market Trends reporting. PNet states that its national averages are based on actual salary offerings from thousands of vacancies posted on its recruitment platforms.
- Engineering Council of South Africa (ECSA), Annual Report 2024-2025, registration resources and professional-practice guidance.
- Statistics South Africa, Quarterly Employment Statistics and construction-industry reporting.
- Publicly advertised South African engineering vacancies and salary ranges reviewed during 2026.
- PMG Recruitment Services market observations and role-structure analysis.

Full disclaimer

The salary information in this publication is provided for general market-information and recruitment-planning purposes only. The figures are indicative PMG Recruitment Services benchmark ranges compiled from publicly available salary information, advertised vacancy data, recruitment-market observations and general industry trends at the time of publication.

The figures are not actual salaries paid by any named employer or earned by any named person. They are not guaranteed, prescribed, standardised or legally binding remuneration levels. Actual remuneration may be materially lower or higher depending on industry, employer, location, qualifications, professional registration, experience, technical specialism, role scope, project value, benefits, incentives, market conditions and individual negotiation.

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