

# WHEN IT COMES TO QUALITY, THE ENTIRE REGION DEPENDS ON ROOFINGS GROUP.

**Winner of Number One Exporter Award at President's Export Awards 2016**

## **There may be people who hear about Roofings Group Limited and not know what it does. What do you deal in?**

Roofings Group has been around since 1994 and started off in Lubowa, along Entebbe Road. Over the years, we have since opened up another US \$125 million plant at Namanve with an annual capacity of 150,000 metric tonnes and employing 1500 people. The total annual investment of Roofings Group is estimated at US \$ 400 million and employs over 3,000 Ugandans. However, it is our commitment to quality production that has mainly seen us grow to become the leading manufacturer of steel and plastic building materials in Uganda, with far reaching influence across the East African region.

## **What helped you emerge as the number one exporter?**

First and foremost, it is important to note that our vision as Roofings Group is to strive to be the largest manufacturer of steel and plastic building products within the East African Community, through adopting the most modern technology, employing a professionally trained workforce and complying with the highest international standards to deliver the best quality products to the market. With exports to 6 countries, adhering to this vision, has helped us streamline some areas of our export process like the loading and delivery procedure to minimize on waiting time and to reduce on the costs that our customers would incur over demurrage. Our sales staff are also well trained to respond quickly to any challenges related to timely documentation. The consistency of our brand also plays a major role in maintaining our share in export markets. In the upcoming year, we plan to make our brand more visible in export countries through advertisement and promotions.

## **How would you rate Uganda's exports against the imports?**

As we all know, Uganda has a trade deficit which is growing. This is mainly due to the reliance on importation of high value goods, and high dependency on exporting unprocessed goods. However, with plants like Roofings Rolling Mills on board, we can look at turning this trend around. Uganda is blessed with natural resources and we can tap into this opportunity, but we require a coordinated effort to take full advantage of the EAC and surrounding markets. What I have noticed, is that the EAC as a common market is still facing challenges through the existence of NTB's. For example, Rwanda is still importing color coated and Galvanised coils from outside the EAC at zero duty. However the common external tariff is officially 25%. Because of these inconsistencies, our company is deprived of the potential to export an additional \$ 3-4 mn per month. These challenges have to be ironed out if we want to take full advantage of the highly strategic position we are in as a country. If the access to the wider market is achieved, and the cost of logistics can be controlled (SGR) than we can seriously look into processing Uganda's iron ore into sponge iron/DRI for further value addition. Since we started Namanve, we are adding 350% value in

making roofing sheets. In the future, we can look at 600% value addition in the production of Rebars and structural steel. With these initiatives, Uganda can reduce its trade deficit whilst ensuring job creation, taxation, and economic growth all together.

## **How can Uganda export more?**

Uganda must critically evaluate her trade deals. From EAC we are now looking at COMESA and finally the tripartite. Currently, as mentioned above, we are not able to fully align our position within the EAC (5 states) in terms of the common market protocol. Trade blocs are complicated with the existence of porous borders on our continent, which distracts the entire scenario. In the case of manufactured goods, it is increasingly hard for

machinery, which requires a huge demand for a consistent and quality power supply. However, despite the improvements in power supply over the past few years, the quantity and quality of power is not yet up to mark. But we believe that with closer interactions with the utility provider, we can streamline this bottleneck.

Secondly, the availability of local knowledge and expertise is still a challenge. Even though we are doing our best to train them, this becomes an additional operational cost since we have to employ foreign professionals. Our other major challenges are structural challenges in the market place, which we are working on.



**Oliver Lalani accepting the Number one Exporter Award from Hon. Amelia Kyambadde and Rt. Hon. Ruhakana Rugunda**

Ugandan industries to compete with manufacturers in countries such as Egypt and South Africa, because the cost of doing business in Uganda is higher (Electricity, tax, logistics, etc). This has to be considered when signing up so that Uganda does not get disadvantaged in joining various

## **Which countries do you export your products to?**

We export to Burundi, Rwanda, DRC, S. Sudan, N. Tanzania and Kenya.

## **What are some of the products Roofings Group Limited produces?**

Our products range from re-bars to roofing sheets, steel fencing items to plastic pipes, etc. Basically, from the foundation of your construction to the roof, we have the products you need in steel and plastic.

## **What are some of the challenges you meet in the production process?**

The nature of our work requires that we operate heavy

## **Any other message you want to share with the readers?**

We, as Roofings group are incredibly proud of our position as the leading manufacturer of steel products and look forward to engaging more with government, export promotion and of course our customers to see that we continue to meet the needs of the growing regional population. The investments which we made at Namanve were geared towards serving the wider region and I believe we need more projects like these which can add to the national purse. With regards to the customers and stakeholders of Uganda who are reading this, I encourage you to look at Roofings as a national treasure. With your support, we have grown into a regional household name. We thank you for your continuous support, patronage and prayers. I wish all the readers, the Roofings team, and the entire East African population a warm and loving festive period. We look forward to engaging further in 2017.