

Company Impact Spotlight:

metier

Blinkwater Meule

February 2026



Company Overview



Company name	Blinkwater Meule
Sector	Maize Milling
Geography	South Africa
No. of employees	717 Full-time Employees
Type of Investment	Replacement/Growth Capital
Year of Investment	2024

Company description

Blinkwater Meule (“Blinkwater”) is one of the largest privately-owned maize mills in South Africa. The family-owned company started operating in 1995, manufacturing high-quality maize meal products exclusively under its own brands to meet the nutritional needs of millions of consumers predominantly residing in the Mpumalanga (“MP”) and Limpopo (“LP”) provinces in South Africa.

The business was established in 1995 by the van den Berg family and has a unique distribution network which includes its own logistics solution to c. 346 corporate-owned spaza stores in informal settlements and independent wholesalers in the north-eastern provinces of South Africa.

Company highlights

- **Strong farmer relationships:** Blinkwater's unique procurement strategy has fostered ~30 years of preferential relationships with maize growers, consisting of c. 5,000 subsistence farmers and 80 commercial farmers.
- **Established market position:** Blinkwater's maize meal brands are well-established with a market share of >6% of across South Africa, concentrated in the LP and MP provinces.
- **Vertically integrated business model:** Blinkwater's unique distribution network consists of 73 trucks and includes 346 spaza stores that are largely located within informal settlements throughout MP and LP that have historically been underserved.
- **Significant social impact benefits:** Blinkwater provides staple food products at competitive pricing in low-income areas and supports historically disadvantaged farmers through its unique barter system.
- **Strong commitment to ESG:** Community empowerment, food security, job creation and environmental sustainability are core principles at Blinkwater.

Company Impact Highlights

Promoting food security

Rural communities across LP and MP face high unemployment, poverty, and severe food insecurity, with a [2023 survey](#) in rural LP indicating that 52% of households have—food insecurity and 32% had experienced hunger in the previous 30 days. Blinkwater addresses these challenges by improving access to high-quality maize meal fortified with essential vitamins and minerals, including vitamins A and B12, iron, and zinc. Through state-of-the-art refined milling techniques that remove contaminants and mycotoxins, Blinkwater ensures the delivery of safe, nutritious staple foods to vulnerable communities.



Sustainability for future generations

Blinkwater has demonstrated a commitment to sustainability throughout its operations. The company utilises 100% of the maize it processes and sells the byproduct, hominy chop, as animal feed to local farmers, reducing waste and supporting circular agriculture.

Environmental sustainability is a core focus of Blinkwater's operations and its milling operation in Stoffberg, MP, is highly automated and energy-efficient, powered in part by 2 MW (megawatts) of installed solar panels. This has cumulatively saved 2,637 tCO₂e/MWh in electricity from installations up until December 2025.

Water usage is sustainably managed through a borehole, reducing reliance on municipal systems. Usage is monitored and filtered according to company policy, with biannual testing that meets national drinking water standards.

"Blinkwater was built on a simple belief: when communities thrive, business does too. Every grain we mill and every job we create is part of a larger commitment to uplift, empower and develop our communities." - Attie van den Berg (CEO)

Empowering farmers

Blinkwater recognises the challenges faced by subsistence farmers as (i) traditional farming methods are slow, labour-intensive, inefficient and prone to pests, resulting in post-harvest losses and (ii) a lack of access to capital or formal milling equipment to convert maize into maize meal.

Blinkwater actively partners with >5,000 subsistence maize farmers per year to provide a solution to these challenges by offering a unique barter model allowing each subsistence farmer the flexibility to trade their raw maize in exchange for maize meal, cash, seeds or fertiliser.

This barter model empowers subsistence farmers through better nutrition, lower milling costs, and stable access to market infrastructure, while providing Blinkwater with maize and allowing it to support the livelihoods of subsistence farmers in its communities.

Blinkwater also offers farmers training workshops on sustainable agricultural practices, post-harvest handling, and financial literacy. This holistic and community-focused system strengthens local food security and positions Blinkwater as a socially responsible partner in rural South Africa.

Impact Metrics	
	43,230 farmers supported since inception
	5,126 currently active farmers
	~60% cheaper than traditional milling
	500-950 kg maize per farmer annually
	50 farmers per training cohort in financial literacy and sustainable farming programme

Investment Impact Highlights

Decent jobs

South Africa is challenged with a high unemployment rate, measured at 32.7% in Q1-2026. Blinkwater is a large employer of >700 full time employees, providing a steady source of income and financial autonomy to the local community members it recruits, trains, and employs. The Company also integrates the local community as suppliers, distributors, and vendors as part of their procurement and supply chain management.

Promoting female inclusion as well as community empowerment

Blinkwater's commitment to employing women, who currently make up 50% of its 717 full-time workforce, is demonstrated in promoting gender equity and decent job creation within LP and MP. By actively hiring women across its distribution network of spaza shops, Blinkwater not only empowers individuals but also contributes to regional economic development and social transformation.

Creating employment opportunities for women, especially within informal settlements, is vital for reducing gendered unemployment, thereby also strengthening local economies.

Blinkwater also runs community-focused initiatives, including sanitary awareness drives to combat period poverty as well as career support programmes that inform learners about the maize milling industry. Other initiatives include a fashion showcase using Blinkwater's packaging materials to encourage self-expression and talent development amongst the youth.

Emphasis on health and safety

Blinkwater ensures safe and dignified working conditions for all employees through employing diligent occupational, health and safety practices. Standard operating procedures are implemented and employees are trained to ensure ongoing improvements in line with industry standards.

Accordingly, Blinkwater has reported only one lost time injury since Metier's entry in October 2024.



"Metier partnered with Blinkwater because the business combines strong commercial performance with real community impact. Working with the founding family and management team, we are focused on building capabilities and driving sustainable growth that continues to uplift the communities Blinkwater serves." - Trishanta Dheepnarayan (Metier)

Metier's commitment to responsible investment

Metier has always been committed to responsible investment and implements its ESG principles via detailed requirements and procedures. More information on Metier's Responsible Investment Framework, ESG, gender and climate commitments can be found via [link](#).

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