

Murray & Roberts sets its sights on African expansion

Mining, energy and infrastructure yield big opportunities for growth

In November this year, South African construction and engineering company Murray & Roberts will add Mozambique to the list of African countries where it has a permanent presence. This follows operations opened in Ghana and Zambia in the last two years.

The Group's expansion across Africa forms part of its long-term growth plan.

Murray & Roberts is putting this strategy to work by consolidating its operations to take advantage of core global and African growth areas, which include mining (metals and minerals), energy (power, oil and gas) and infrastructure and building.

The company also plans to make good on its growth intentions by leveraging the depth of skills and expertise found throughout many of its operations.

"We see enormous opportunity for the Group in the mining and energy sectors across the continent and we are already gaining substantial traction in these markets. We are using the innovation, skills and expertise gained in other countries to position us as market leaders on the African continent," says Henry Laas, Group Chief Executive, Murray & Roberts.

One example of this is the Group's 61.6% shareholding in Clough, an Australian engineering and construction company that has worked on more than 20 major energy and resources projects across Australasia in the last year alone. The Group recently announced its intention to acquire the remaining shares in Clough. This will allow it to further leverage the company's experience in the oil and gas sectors, which present enormous growth opportunities for the Group on the continent.

Although the Group has worked on projects across the continent for more many years, permanent operations in these three countries will allow it to serve countries in central, east and west Africa in a more sustainable way.

“Our intention is not to dip in and out of projects but to establish sustainable, long-term operations in these countries, that will see Murray & Roberts become a valuable partner in the design, construction and maintenance of large scale projects in these countries,” says Laas.

The Group’s strategy is paying off.

Murray & Roberts has been granted a steady stream of high profile projects in the country and region since becoming a permanent corporate resident in Zambia. These projects include a number of shaft sinking and underground mine infrastructure contracts in Zambia and the DRC.

It is the same for Ghana. The Group’s permanent operation, based in Accra, allows it to serve companies and contracts in west Africa and it is ideally positioned to take advantage of opportunities in the mining, infrastructure, water treatment and oil & gas industries. Murray & Roberts Water achieved early success in Ghana to provide two modular plants at Gold Fields’ Tarkwa Operations.

This doesn’t mean that the Group will dilute its commitment to and presence in the South African market.

“We see opportunity for growth in the local market, especially in the oil & gas and energy sectors and I believe that there will be good opportunity for growth when the infrastructure projects are rolled out.

“A sustainable South African construction and engineering sector will allow us to contribute greatly towards skills development and job creation, as well as our ability to support and advance our small contractor beneficiaries and partners,” says Laas.