

Bigen Africa expands to Port Elizabeth

Bigen Africa, a thought-leading multinational infrastructure development consultancy, has expanded its South African footprint to include Port Elizabeth, ensuring full-spectrum service capability in the Eastern Cape. Although Bigen Africa already has well-established branches in Cape Town and East London, a presence in the Friendly City will help drive socio-economic change in the region through the company's core capabilities, namely engineering, management consulting, development financing and advisory services.

Bigen Africa's Western Cape clients have had ample evidence of the company's capabilities through its development of many landmark projects, such as Ratanga Junction, the Canal Walk shopping centre and Cape Gate in Cape Town. Other retail projects in the province include the Daimler Chrysler Lifestyle Centre at Century City, BMW Forsdicks offices in Tyger Valley, Audi Centre in Cape Town, Santam head office in Bellville (structural design), the Clock Tower at the V & A Waterfront, Safmarine House and Metlife Centre.

Bigen Africa's offices in East London and Mthatha provide services to clients such as the Department of Roads and Transport, Department of Human Settlements, Eskom Eastern Region, East London IDZ, Amathole Water, Coega Development Corporation, SANRAL, Chris Hani District Municipality, Alfred Nzo District Municipality and the King Sabata Dalindyebo Local Municipality. More recently, Bigen Africa was commissioned by the Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality to undertake the design and site supervision of the Second Creek housing project in East London.

From its new PE office, the company will be assisting Eastern Cape clients with a similar full-spectrum service offering. The Port Elizabeth team is currently involved in a wide range of projects for the public and private sector. Clients include the Nelson Mandela Bay Metro, Transnet, SANRAL, Sundays River Valley, Netcare and Ndlambe Local Municipality. The sectors that the team is involved in cover a wide spectrum, namely housing and land development, roads and transport, energy, structures (Bay West Mall and St Georges PAEDS), waste water treatment works and inner city rejuvenation. The branch officially opened on 30 October, with Dr Snowy Khoza, Chief Executive Officer of Bigen Africa, and Lou Pretorius, PE Office and Regional Manager for the Eastern Cape, addressing some 50 guests at the launch.

"Bigen Africa, with its 42-year history of successfully implementing projects across the infrastructure development spectrum, is in the ideal position to take up any challenging project in the Eastern Cape," Pretorius said at the launch. "Not only is Bigen Africa a level 3 BBBEE contributor with more than 500 professional staff in 15 offices across South Africa, ranging from engineers to management consultants and project finance experts, it can also extend its service offering through strategic partnerships with various highly skilled, respected individuals and companies in the infrastructure industry in South Africa, Africa and abroad.

“That is what makes our strategy so powerful. We can be a top-class service provider while remaining mean and lean, and maximising value to all stakeholders, proudly supporting the Bigen Africa cause of doing good while doing business!”

Although the Port Elizabeth office is new, the team has already identified and continuously supports a local beneficiary for the BIGENCares drive.

“We regard the opening of the Port Elizabeth office as a milestone and we look forward to networking with representatives of best-of-breed companies and forging relationships that will benefit us all as well as the Eastern Cape Region,” Pretorius concluded.

With 14 other branches in South Africa, Bigen Africa has a strong local base and is also in the process of expanding its African footprint, with offices already established in Zambia, Botswana, Namibia and Ghana. With its vision to develop sustainable infrastructure to improve the quality of life for all, the company operates in most sectors, including housing, construction, energy, water and sanitation, roads and rail, education, property, health, mining and industrial, real estate and finance.

“Bigen Africa aims to develop infrastructure sustainably wherever it operates,” said Dr Khoza, CEO of Bigen Africa, “and in such a way that its use emanates socially desirable developmental outcomes, including access to services, reduction of poverty, capacity building, empowerment and the creation of employment opportunities.”

These goals reflect the company’s creed of “doing good while doing business,” which is facilitated by its Intuthuko Foundation. This non-profit organisation is the company’s instrument for mobilising funds for integrated development projects and initiating socio-economic investment opportunities for corporates, by coordinating strategic partnerships. This has been successfully achieved in collaboration with NPOs such as the People Upliftment Programme (POPUP), a training facility providing skills development for unemployed and disempowered individuals, and the Mamelodi Hospice for terminally ill patients in Tshwane.

“Bigen Africa encourages partnership initiatives in all facets of the business, not just corporate social investment,” said Dr Khoza, “and especially in the areas of technical excellence and innovation. The company seeks to build strong development partnerships across the industry through projects, joint ventures, mergers and acquisitions, virtual liaisons, working agreements and social portfolios such as public-private partnerships.”

An example of a successful business partnership is Prodelko, forged with VBKOM, a mining specialist, and Wave International, an Australian firm. Prodelko is positioning itself as the partner of choice for the entire spectrum of project delivery services for mining, industrial and infrastructure clients.

Bigen Africa is also collaborating with the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID), through the Australia-Africa Partnerships Facility (AAPF), to address capacity needs for mining-related infrastructure development in Africa through vocational training.

This year, Bigen Africa instituted an annual partnership conference, the first of which was held in March with great success. It brought a number of hand-picked industry stakeholders and potential partners from across the globe together, and many beneficial business relationships were forged.

Another opportunity for Bigen Africa to strengthen relationships with industry players occurred at the 77th annual conference of the Institute of Municipal Engineering South Africa (*IMESA*) in PE in October, where the company had an eye-catching exhibition stand.

“Forging new partnerships is essential in the infrastructure development industry,” said Dr Khoza, “and so is keeping abreast of industry trends. Bigen Africa aims to respond to clients’ developmental challenges with the necessary insight to provide innovative, tailor-made solutions, as well as full-spectrum capability.”

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