

Postmasburg SMME excelling in the Tech space

Anglo American's Kumba Iron Ore's Inclusive Procurement programme gives company the boost it needs.

For six long years, a small earthmoving company in the Northern Cape town of Postmasburg struggled with the typical challenges facing South African SMMEs: inconsistent work, poor cash flow, and an inability to plan for growth.

That all changed for Matsietsa Brothers Earthmoving and Equipment when they became part of Anglo American's Kumba Iron Ore's Inclusive Procurement programme in 2017. Today, the company has six full-time employees – four technicians and two artisans – and they're looking to grow as they increase the scope of their work with Kumba Iron Ore's Kolomela Mine.

Matsietsa Brothers, a technology business currently installs and maintain collision avoidance systems at Kolomela and are rapidly establishing themselves as experts in the field. Their work plays an important role in the mine's broader safety focus, as the systems help vehicles of all sizes avoid collisions in a busy open-cast mining environment.

"This is a brand-new project at Kolomela, which presents a learning and development opportunity," said co-owner Tuelo Matsietsa. "Kumba Iron Ore has been incredibly supportive in many ways – from providing business incubation training to ensuring consistent cash flow by paying us promptly. This is not only critical to the running of the project, but the sustainability of the business as a whole."

The emergence of small companies like Matsietsa Brothers is what makes it all worthwhile for Kumba Iron Ore's General Manager Supply Chain, Vusi Maseko. As Maseko is a driving force behind the company's Inclusive Procurement programme, which aims to create meaningful entrepreneurial and employment opportunities in the communities surrounding its mining operations to help people to build sustainable livelihoods.

In 2017, Anglo American's Kumba Iron Ore's inclusive procurement and enterprise development initiatives saw it spend more than R36bn with BEE-compliant companies, including small suppliers around its operations. For towns like Postmasburg, which has a population of around 40 000, the impact has been significant.

"Our goal, as part of our vision of 're-imagining mining', is to ensure our host communities become sustainable and will thrive long after the mining operations they serve are gone," says Maseko. "One of the ways we do this is through inclusive procurement and entrepreneur development. This not only builds small businesses in their own right but increases economic activity in the surrounding communities by creating employment opportunities."

For Matsietsa Brothers, the next step is to build on the services they currently provide to Kolomela Mine as they embark on a growth journey. "We would never have been able to get to this point without Anglo American. Enterprise development gives small businesses like us the boost we need to become big businesses."