

MEDIA RELEASE

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GIBB eyes West African market for consulting services

Buoyed by the completion of a successful master plan project and subsequent design roll-out of housing and bulk infrastructure in Port Harcourt, one of Nigeria's largest cities, leading South African black-owned engineering consulting firm, GIBB have ambitions of further expansion in the West Africa region.

Its regional hub strategy was outlined by Wiero Vogelzang, Managing Director of Arcus GIBB Nigeria, part of GIBB Holdings and the provider of engineering consultancy services in South and southern Africa since 1956.

"Based on our experience in Nigeria, we were invited to present a technical paper entitled, *Port Harcourt Water Sustainability the beginning of an adventure*, to an influential audience at the Water and Sanitation Seminar at the recent Water Africa and West Africa Building & Construction Conference 2014 at the Accra International Conference Centre," said Vogelzang.

"This provided an opportunity to demonstrate our expertise in planning and services delivery to government officials, development agencies, local consultants, suppliers and contractors from across the West Africa region."

According to a United Nations agency, the 15 States that comprise the West Africa sub-region, have a population of approximately 250 million people and cover an area of roughly 5 million km². With an average annual population growth rate of 3%, it is forecast that the sub-region's population will reach 430 million by 2020.

The region presents huge development potential from its human and natural resources, yet generally possesses under-developed infrastructure. Nigeria for example, with its burgeoning population that tops 140 million, is now recognised as the largest economy in Africa.

"We have had a project office in Port Harcourt since 2008 with 50 staff. This coupled with our merger with SVA International last year, who are establishing an office in

GIBB is the leading South African black-owned consulting engineering firm with a Level 2 Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) rating and a reliable network spanning the African continent. The firm occupies a market share of approximately 4% and delivers world-class solutions across a diverse range of markets. With over 55 years of experience, GIBB is the partner of choice for the private sector, parastatals and governments who seek knowledgeable people, expertise and excellence.

Lagos provides the resource base for a formal hub in the region. We are targeting not only the region's Anglophone countries such as Nigeria, Ghana and Sierra Leone but French speaking territories too, such as Côte d'Ivoire where we intend to make meaningful inroads into the consulting services market," continued Vogelzang.

"Despite previous instability, we are encouraged by the re-establishment of the Africa Development Bank from Tunis to its former headquarters in Abidjan – an important catalyst in the development environment in Africa," enthused Vogelzang.

He added that many international firms have sought to exploit the region's development potential but have fallen into the trap of importing expertise for the duration of a project.

"Our strategy has always been to engage and partner with local consultants and through projects build expertise and capacity. Having a permanent office staffed with local and international expertise demonstrates our confidence and commitment to regional governments and development agencies which is an important consideration in the high stakes development environment," he concluded.

Ends

Note to Editors:

Leading South African black-owned consulting engineering firm, GIBB, announced its partnership with the largest architectural firm in the country, SVA. The partnership will strengthen the skillset of both firms and grow its confidence in Africa.

With an impressive track record of delivery spanning over 70 years, SVA International has successfully delivered over 1000 architectural projects.

In partnership with SVA International, GIBB will now be able to offer clients a full range of architectural services including Master Planning, Urban Design and Building Design.

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