

MEDIA RELEASE

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Infrastructure development for Nigeria's greater Port Harcourt takes shape

Nigeria's status as Africa's largest economy has underlined the need to expedite infrastructure development in the country to meet the needs of its burgeoning economy and to attract investment to its shores. With this in mind, the Nigerian government recently announced its N485 trillion (R32.6 trillion) National Integrated Master Plan. The plan will focus on major infrastructure such as transport, oil and gas, housing, water, and information and communication technology.

Nigeria has been aware of its infrastructural deficits for many years and since 2008, leading South African black-owned engineering consulting firm, GIBB, has supported the development of an integrated masterplan for one of Nigeria's largest cities, Greater Port Harcourt.

No stranger to working in the emerging economic hub, GIBB Nigeria Director, Johan de Bruyn works closely to ensure that infrastructure development in the region takes place in a structured way. He said Rivers State established a Greater Port Harcourt City Development Authority to oversee the development of the new city. "The old city was built to accommodate 400 000 people. Today it is home to about 1.8 million and a lot of unplanned development has taken place around the old city," said de Bruyn.

The masterplan, which needed to integrate several infrastructure projects into an overall plan, was completed in October 2008. The plan covered two main areas – the renewal of the existing Port Harcourt city and the building of a new city, which would help with the de-densification of the existing (old) city and will provide new settlement areas for residents.

GIBB produced a layout design for 30 000 residential units with supporting infrastructure such as schools, police and fire stations, hospitals and retail facilities. Construction of the first phase of this township layout (Phase 1A) - to build 2 000 of the 30 000 units – commenced three years ago.

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.

In line with Nigeria's infrastructure development plans, GIBB is also involved in various other projects, which are currently underway. These include bulk infrastructure developments – major water pipelines, roads infrastructure and reticulation services – to support the development destined for the Greater Port Harcourt metropolitan area.

The firm plays an advisory role and works closely with the Authority to oversee successful implementation of the developments. Once tenders are awarded to construction companies, GIBB remains responsible for overall programme management. "To date, the value of the projects awarded (seven contracts) is R3 billion. There are a further four tenders currently in the process of being awarded, worth another R2 billion," said de Bruyn.

According to de Bruyn, some of the bulk infrastructure projects will take years to implement as they are designed for a large area. "To speed up delivery, we commenced with interim bulk services to satisfy the needs of the 2 000 units, as well as some of the other developments underway, which we are not directly involved in, including a university, hospital and sports complex and stadium."

The interim projects include water and electricity supply infrastructures, a wastewater treatment plant, a communication network (fibre optic cables), 10km of freeway and a number of major access routes to the freeway, linking to other existing roads.

In addition GIBB produced detailed planning for a Central City District (CCD). "This is not to replace the Central Business District (CBD) of the old city, rather it will be a secondary business node to complement the old city's CBD," explained de Bruyn.

The projected timeframe for the entire project is 50 years. "While the masterplan provides a blueprint for the long-term development of Greater Port Harcourt, some things may need to be modified to accommodate changes over this period. What is most important is that we take a smart approach to spending on infrastructure development in the short-term – on things that will be catalytic in nature – rather than taking an ad-hoc or scattered approach that would ultimately be wasteful."

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Note to Editors:

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.

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 companies and grow its confidence in Africa.

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

In partnership with SVA, 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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