

Press release from Jan de Beer, cell 082 456 3677:

S.A. Quantity Surveyors Urged To Explore African Market More Fully

SA Quantity Surveyors should broaden their scope of operations beyond our national borders, says Synergy Property Solutions, a relatively small quantity surveying and project management company based in Port Elizabeth, which has made major inroads into Africa and worked on several high-profile, prestige contracts in several parts of the continent and Indian Ocean Islands.

Led by owner, Grant Hechter, and his Senior Associate, Bruce McNicol, Synergy - an accredited member firm of the Association of SA Quantity Surveyors (ASAQS) - has to date handled the project management, quantity surveying, and property development not only for major local projects but also for multi-million dollar developments in the Seychelles, Kenya, Tanzania, the UAE, and also St Helena.

"In the Seychelles, we have completed work on the US \$150 million Kempinski Seychelles Resort, and have recently concluded the budgets and detailed design for the new Pangia Beach development, a spectacular project that has recently won an award for the Best Residential Development at the African Property Awards," Hechter states.

Synergy managed to secure a firm foothold in the Seychelles market thanks to its past association with the Eastern Cape-based, **The Mantis Collection**, a group that has developed exclusive game lodges and hotels in Africa and other countries including the UK. The Kempinski Resort was developed by European Hotels and Resorts and The Mantis Collection acted as Development Managers because of its internationally respected in-house expertise in hotel developments. "In the Seychelles, Synergy had to face competition from the client's existing network of consultants but fortunately our good track record of successfully completed hotel developments for Mantis that gave the group, and its founder, Adrian Gardiner, the confidence to appoint us. The fact that Synergy is an accredited member firm of ASAQS also endorsed our credentials.

"The initial phase of the Kempinski Seychelles Resort project was extremely complex and challenging and - despite a few changes in contractors - we managed to demonstrate our ability to complete documentation and deliver a good product on time. This enabled Synergy to secure contracts for the subsequent phases as well."

Synergy is currently in negotiations with the contractors for the proposed development of a new luxury hotel on the new tourist attraction of the island of St Helena. " This project - now at tender stage - will include a 30-room hotel on this remote island where the completion of a new airport in a few months' time will undoubtedly unlock significant tourism opportunities.

" Between the Seychelles and St Helena, Synergy has gained experience in working in remote locations and the impact that such locations have on overall building costs. Availability of labour, procurement, shipping, duties, customs clearance, currency fluctuations, accommodation and general transport are issues that have a major impact on the overall building costs which we generally don't have to consider when working in South Africa. Synergy is also handling quantity surveying for the new Melia Lodge in the

Serengeti, another very remote location, which - as first phase - calls for the completion of a 40km access road before any construction work can start," he adds.

Synergy believes South African quantity surveyors should seek more opportunities outside our borders and not be daunted by working in other parts of Africa.

"My associate, Bruce McNicol, recently visited Rwanda and was pleasantly surprised by the general environment, development and construction opportunities. Our message to other ASAQs members is: if you get the opportunity, don't hesitate to explore African options. Admittedly, SA Quantity Surveyors' expertise relates to our intimate knowledge of local rates, building materials and methods, as well as related commercial issues, and this does make working in a foreign country much more difficult. But, if you are prepared to take time and do proper research to gain the necessary knowledge of local conditions, you will have a chance to overcome the competition from other QS practices already established in the area. There are many opportunities out there. In fact, the global market has helped Synergy overcome the cyclical slumps in the local economy," Hechter observed.

Locally, Synergy Property Solutions is currently involved in the development of the award-winning Pearl Valley Golf & Country Estate in the Western Cape, and has in the past provided services for the development of the new Waterfront Business Park in Humewood, Port Elizabeth; and the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University's R57m Life & Physical Sciences Building also in PE; among other major developments.

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Caption: 'asaqs - kempinski' and 'asaqs - melia lodge':

The reception area of the Kempinski Seychelles Resort; and a computerised impression of Melia Lodge, now under construction in the Serengeti. Both are projects for which PE firm, Synergy Property Solutions, was appointed to handle quantity surveying and related services.

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Caption : asaqs synergy:

Grant Hechter (right), owner and MD of Synergy Property Solutions, with the company's Senior Associate Member, Bruce McNicol.

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