

Advisian equipped for Special Economic Zones

Advisian, WorleyParsons' advisory business, is gearing its comprehensive suite of advisory and technical services in preparation for the roll-out of Africa's Special Economic Zones (SEZ) programme and associated enabling infrastructure and zone designation requirements.

According to South Africa's Department of Trade and Industry, SEZs are geographically designated areas of a country set aside for specifically targeted economic activities, supported by government or through special measures, and are aimed at increasing the flow of foreign and direct investment and to increase the export of value-added commodities.

The primary objective is to provide capital towards bulk and related infrastructure that leverages investment from third parties, through foreign and local direct investment in both the operations of such enterprises and the infrastructure required, with a secondary focus on providing operator and investor project financial and advisory support.

South Africa's new SEZ policy was passed into regulation in February this year and seeks to boost private investment, both domestic and foreign, in labour-intensive areas in order to increase job creation, competitiveness, skills and technology transfer and exports of beneficiated products. SEZs have already proved highly successful in other developing countries such as UAE, Mauritius, Mexico, Malaysia and China as an effective tool for catalysing sustainable industrial development.

Advisian is a global consulting and advisory business, providing management and strategy advisory services for asset intensive businesses within the hydrocarbons, minerals and metals, chemicals, power and infrastructure sectors. The company operates in the inception and concept phase, providing advice on how to get a project started, identifying the challenges and creating customised solutions for successful, viable projects.

Carol White, Senior Consultant for Advisian in South Africa says that Advisian's parent company, WorleyParsons, has been involved in Special Economic Zones in Africa and abroad for a number of years already. These clients have benefitted from the company's industrial master planning solutions, which are ideally suited for developing of SEZs.

"Master plans are the roadmaps that transform a project vision into a development reality, providing informed solutions for complex issues surrounding industrial development whilst maximising the use of natural resources," says White. "Master planning is a very broad and deep concept that considers the entire picture, a methodology that Advisian's practioners have been using globally for years," says White.

White explains that master planning offers a comprehensive approach to planning for new developments from the initial vision through to construction and operations. Advisian achieves this through assembling multidisciplinary teams led by experienced master planners who are capable of integrating the technical aspects of all of these disciplines into a tailored solution. This includes a complete suite of services from site selection, infrastructure design (roads and rail, ports and harbours and utilities), land use planning, sustainable design, policy, strategy and construction through to operations. This enables the early identification of challenges, which the master plan can respond to through tailored mitigation strategies to ensure that they do not adversely impact on the development of existing communities.

White adds that the company's master planning methodology can be integrated with other specialist services for the development of SEZs, such as Total Transport Solutions and EcoNomics™. She explains that Total Transport Solutions combine the company's strong transport advisory capability with a delivery track record to create complete financial and

sustainable transport solutions, assessing options irrespective of the complexity, asset type, industry, or location to provide front-end advice.

Advisian is also a global leader in the delivery of sustainable solutions. Their EcoNomics™ initiative embeds environmental, social and financial sustainability into all aspects of a project's lifecycle by integrating specialist sustainability skills with leading technical expertise in areas such as power, water, transport, structural and civil engineering. The company works closely with stakeholders in the development sector to deliver sustainable outcomes whilst also improving the profitability.

"With our combined wealth of knowledge across sectors, as well as a strong history of providing business analysis solutions, we have unique capabilities that match the complex services required to develop sustainable Special Economic Zones," concludes White.

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