# The Bigen picture

BIGEN AFRICA

NOVEMBER 2015

**BIGEN AFRICA** recognition for being unashamedly ethical

**BIGEN AFRICA** scoops three of seven top CESA awards

**BIGEN AFRICA** raises R1 million for non-profit organisations

DOING **GOOD** WHILE DOING **BUSINESS**

BIGEN AFRICA

# DOING GOOD WHILE DOING BUSINESS

## On the cover:

The award-winning NSC2 water-transfer system project in Botswana. Read more on page 8.

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# Bigen Africa is standing secure on a strong foundation

Hard work and unwavering ethics have earned the Bigen Africa Group a secure position in the infrastructure development industry from where it continues to pursue strategic growth.

Despite the many global economic uncertainties which have been affecting businesses for a while, the Bigen Africa Group continues to perform at optimum level and has achieved consistent year-on-year growth across the bulk of its sectors. Most importantly, we envisage that the growth curve is sustainable for the foreseeable future.

The group's financial stability is underpinned by a strong balance sheet, a strong management team and the resources it needs to continue aggressive growth. Strong operational efficiencies and cost control are also maintained.

Over the past 10 years, the group has been involved in infrastructure development projects of more than R200 billion in various African countries, and its secured pipeline of work has grown by 18%, with 11 months of work already in hand. This, along with its growing business horizons, bodes well for the future of the group.

## Africa

The drive to expand into Africa in a structured manner continued with the opening of an office in Accra, Ghana in April. The country is an ideal location from which to manage infrastructure development projects in West Africa. Ghana has an impressive and structured development approach and boasts one of the fastest growing economies on the continent, boosted by its resources and agricultural industries, private-sector investments, public infrastructure development and sustained political stability.

Bigen Africa is in the fortunate position that it possesses the capability to provide "African infrastructure development solutions to African countries", in particular through the forging of strategic partnerships across national boundaries which enable the group to extend its capabilities. This forms the core of the group's growth strategy in both geographic and business terms.

## Partnership conference

Bigen Africa's Partnership Conferences are of prime importance in strengthening its industry ties across the continent and its third successful conference – themed "Invented in Africa" – again confirmed the need for a "one-stop-shop offering" into the rest of the continent.

The group's partnership approach is crucial to its success in achieving technical excellence and innovation. The principle is to bring together best-of-breed offerings from different parties on a formal and structured basis.

Bigen Africa aims to build, through strategic partnering, its capabilities in the construction, asset and revenue management, real estate, international finance, renewable energy, health and rail industries.

## BEE rating

The 2015 BEE verification process resulted in Bigen Africa achieving a Level 2 rating, an apt recognition of its efforts to meet transformation goals. Having progressed from Level 3, where the company remained over the past four years, Bigen Africa now enjoys 125% procurement recognition, giving clients and partners the assurance of its BEE compliance.

The higher rating is the result of the management team's ongoing commitment to transformation within the company's ranks through recruitment policies, transferring of skills and employee development programmes.

## 2015 awards

During 2015, Bigen again scooped up numerous industry awards. Amongst these are:

- awards in various categories of the recent CESA awards; and
- Bronze Arrows for Civil Consulting Engineers and for Structural Consulting Engineers and a combined Award for Civil and Structural Engineers.

The Bigen Africa team is very appreciative of these honours as they confirm that it is succeeding in maintaining the high levels of service it continuously strives for.

Personally, I have been deeply honoured to have received, as CEO of Bigen Africa, an Unashamedly Ethical award certificate which recognise an unwavering commitment to ethics, values and clean living. For our clients and partners, this provides a further reassurance of the group's strong ethical stance in all its dealings.

## Doing good while doing business

Over the past few years, Bigen Africa has grown its sphere of corporate social responsibility, formally adopting the creed of "doing good while doing business" as part of its business practice and corporate culture. This has resulted in value add for communities where infrastructure projects are undertaken as well as

significant tangible benefits for several non-profit organisations.

Across the Bigen Africa Group, the individual branches practise "doing good while doing business" on a regular basis and truly got into the "Madiba spirit" during July with a host of activities designed to improve the quality of life of their beneficiaries. Bigen Africa also hosted another successful Golf Day and, thanks to generous donations from partners, clients, employees and the group itself, was able to donate a full R1 million to its adopted charities!

In conclusion, I want to reiterate my pride in being associated with a group that conducts its business in such an innovative and robust manner. As this magazine goes to print, we have reached the final stages of the fourth financial quarter and I have no doubt that Bigen's results will once more exceed expectations and instil a feeling of pride and fulfilment in every one of our employees, partners and stakeholders.

*Dr Snowy Khoza*

**Chief Executive Officer, Bigen Africa**

# Bigen Africa raises R1 million for non-profit organisations

Leading infrastructure development group Bigen Africa is thrilled to announce that, through its Akaretsa fundraising campaign and with the generous support of its clients and partners, a full R1 million has been raised in aid of several highly deserving causes.

"It has been an absolute privilege and joy to distribute these funds amongst the group's beneficiaries," says Anton Boshoff, Chief Operating Officer. "Living by our group creed of 'doing good while doing business', we take to heart the needs of non-profit organisations which provide much-needed services to the destitute, the disabled and other disadvantaged groups of people. In this, we are inspired by our Christian values and principles which also guide us in our business dealings and decision making."

## "Doing good while doing business"

The philosophy of "doing good while doing business" supports the group's vision of improving the quality of life of all through the development of sustainable infrastructure solutions and does not only drive Bigen Africa's corporate social investment projects, but is also put into practice on location during infrastructure development projects, where some of the employment and procurement opportunities are channelled to the local communities.

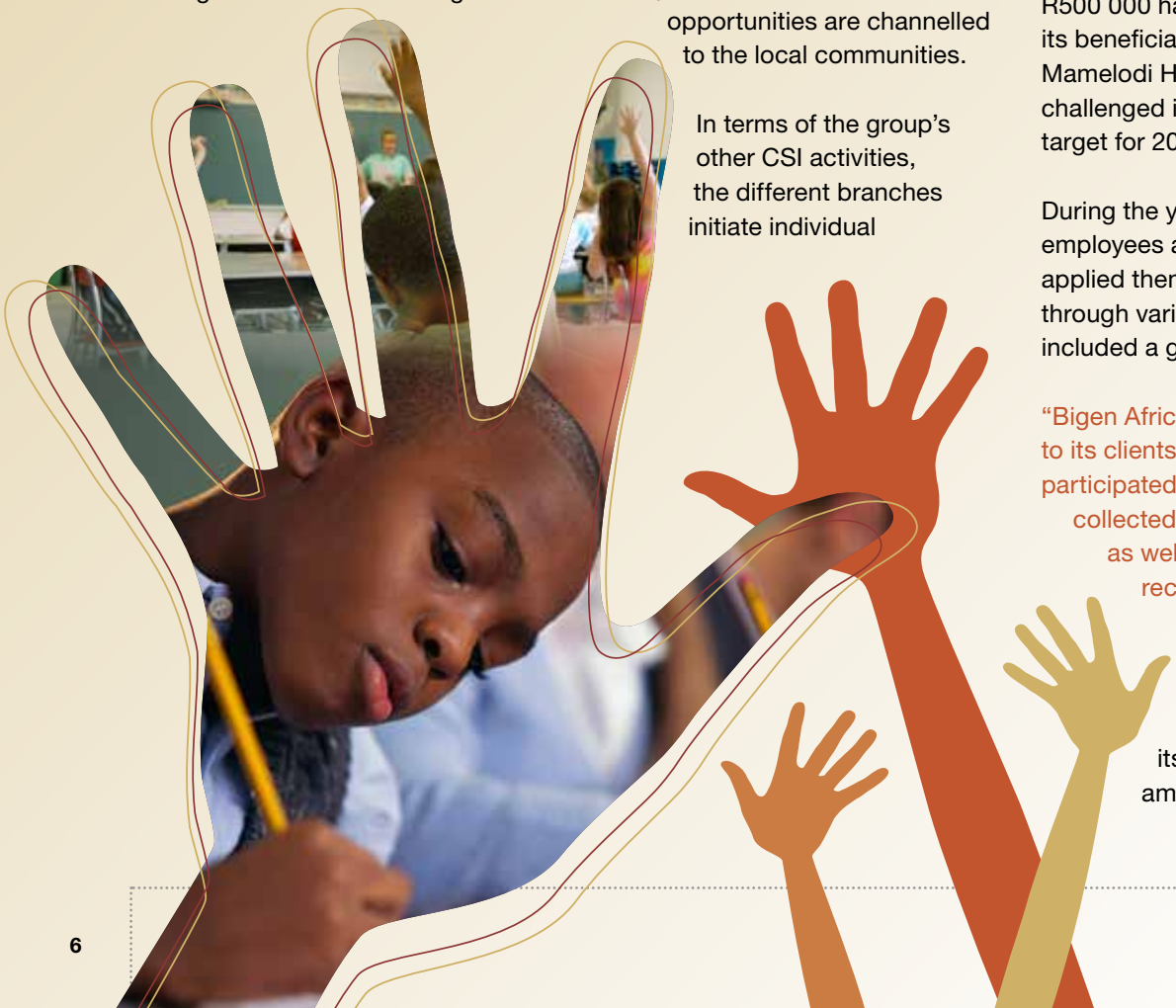
In terms of the group's other CSI activities, the different branches initiate individual projects for making a difference to disadvantaged people in local communities, and also participate in group-wide projects generated at head office, such as Akaretsa.

"The purposes of Bigen Africa's year-long Akaretsa campaign include raising funds for a number of identified beneficiaries and this drive culminates in the group's annual charity Golf Day for clients and partners," says Anton.

Bigen Africa announced at last year's Golf Day that a total of R500 000 had been raised for its beneficiaries, POPUP and Mamelodi Hospice, and immediately challenged itself by doubling the target for 2015.

During the year, Bigen Africa employees across the branches applied themselves to raising funds through various projects, which included a group-wide raffle.

"Bigen Africa is very grateful to its clients and partners who participated in the Golf Day, which collected just over R200 000, as well as other donations received," says Anton. "These took the total raised closer to the target. To close the final gap, the group itself contributed an amount while the executive



directors and divisional management principals also made generous donations – our personal gestures in 'doing good while doing business'."

"The time, effort and funds we sacrificed for these causes will make significant differences in the lives of many people facing the enormous challenges brought about by a disadvantaged background or disability."

Bigen Africa's growth strategy is strongly focused on expanding its African footprint, which includes seeking strategic partnerships with service providers and suppliers to address key emerging public policy priorities, such as human settlements.

Besides having 9 established offices in South Africa, the group has opened offices in Botswana, Namibia, Zambia and, most recently, Ghana. Providing engineering, management consulting, development financing and advisory services, Bigen Africa has completed many cost-effective, sustainable infrastructure projects in these countries as well as Malawi, Angola, Nigeria, Kenya, Congo, Lesotho and Tanzania.

## 2015 BENEFICIARIES

After an exciting and successful Golf Day, well attended by Bigen Africa's business clients and partners despite a challenging wind trying to create havoc on the course, Bigen Africa had the pleasure of handing over its donations to the following beneficiaries:

- ***POP-UP*** in Salvokop, Tshwane, which is primarily a training facility offering skills development to unemployed and disempowered individuals. It also manages a social support services programme comprising three clinics.
- ***Mamelodi Hospice*** provides specialised home-based palliative care to terminally ill patients and support to their families in the Mamelodi community of Tshwane.
- ***Funanani*** is a charitable trust which functions under the auspices of Lewende Woord church in Pretoria. Funanani's vision is to contribute to empowering impoverished communities towards self-sufficiency.
- A scholarship for an individual beneficiary, ***Sifiso Kumalo*** from Orlando West, Soweto, to attend the Michael Surfit Graduate Business School of the University College Dublin in Ireland this year. Sifiso will be studying towards an MSc degree in Management.
- ***Vanani Primary School*** in the Amatole district of East London.
- The funds are also enabling Bigen Africa to assist the ***Word for the Nations Ministries*** in Bon Accord, Pretoria to acquire a 22-seater minibus. This organisation serves a very impoverished community through mainly clothing and food distribution.
- Lastly, with expansion into Africa being a major goal of the group, it has been decided to set apart an amount for its social partners in ***Ghana, Zambia and Botswana*** as well.

Ms Marlene Freislich, CEO of POP-UP receives a cheque of R300 000 from Bigen Africa COO, Anton Boshoff and CFO, Sulette van Graan.

Pastor Hennie Marais from Word for the Nation Ministries receives their donation of R80 000.

A special word of thanks to our sponsors:

**Landrover SA • Afrigis • Standard Bank • Empyreal • Hatch Goba • WBHO • RVN Chartered Accountants • Bridge Capital • Pan African • Cresco • Roadlab • BMW**

Paul Kirby, Marketing Manager of Mamelodi Hospice, was happy to receive a donation of R80 000 from Bigen Africa.

Bigen Africa Executive Director, Otto Scharfetter, hands over a cheque for $10 000 to the Principal of the In Community Care facility in Lusaka, Zambia.

# Recognition for exceptional work on Botswana water-transfer system

Bigen Africa recently won the **Best International Project** category of the Consulting Engineers South Africa annual awards for its work on the 360km North-South Carrier (NSC-2) regional water-transfer system in Botswana.

The company also won the top awards in the categories for Business Excellence and Mentoring Company of the Year. The awards celebrate innovation, quality, outstanding workmanship and professionalism in the consulting engineering sector. The focus is on projects which advance infrastructure development both in South Africa and on the continent.

"Bigen Africa is extremely honoured to have won these awards in recognition of its commitment to quality and excellence," says Mias van der Walt, Divisional Managing Principal: Water and Sanitation at Bigen Africa. "In the NSC-2 project, the group extended itself to meet many challenges in terms of planning, logistics and construction. A high level of innovation and problem solving with regard to both construction and aesthetics was required."

Due to robust economic growth, the republic of Botswana developed a need for water augmentation by regional transfer from its water rich northern resources. Bigen Africa was appointed by the Ministry of Minerals, Energy and Water Resources in 2007 as its Employer's Representative for the conceptual design development, EPC tender documents and construction supervision of the NSC-2 (second phase). The work would entail completion of a water transfer strategy feeding on various dams, existing or newly emerging from the first phase, which was completed in 1999. The direct water transfer route runs primarily alongside north-south traffic route A1 and pass the demand nodes of Palapye, Mahalapye and Mmamabula, where raw water is treated, en route to Mmamashia in northern Gaborone.

The project was intended to ensure an all-pumped system (starting at 45Mm³/a), with four separate pumping systems, along a continuously welded steel pipeline running between Dikgatlhong Dam and Mmamashia, through a storage reservoir at Palapye.

> Bigen Africa is extremely honoured to have won these awards in recognition of its commitment to quality and excellence.

Communication and control signals would be conveyed through a primary fibre optic cable network and a secondary microwave radio network. The project included upgrading of water treatment works at Mahalapye, Palapye and Mmamashia.

From the start, it was realised that the client would rely extensively on Bigen Africa as the Employer's Representative for guidance as to the best possible technical solution for the NSC-2.

"The Bigen Africa team invested substantial time and arranged numerous workshops and meetings in order to understand the needs of the client properly before an engineering solution was developed," says Mias. "Because of the extent of the work, we realised that this is a project of national importance and that the quality and durability of the solution is of paramount importance as a national transfer scheme.

"Our conceptual design of the pipeline, reservoirs and pumping stations went beyond what would normally be expected from conceptual design and addressed all interfaces with existing and future water supply and treatment systems."

The success of the design and the tender documentation is reflected in the quality of the end product. The installed pipeline as well as concrete, mechanical and electrical work is of the highest quality with a pipeline life expectancy of 75 years. A further example is the fact that of the 5 700 welds along the pipeline, only six failed the X-ray weld tests, which amount to only 750mm on 21km of steel welds. Such results have never been achieved before on any similar pipeline across South Africa.

"The project also achieved budgetary compliance, which is unusual for such a large project," says Mias. "At no point, however, was there any compromise on quality or the sophistication of the design."

The R6 billion project has demonstrated engineering excellence, enhanced regional economic growth and significantly improved quality of life in Botswana while, most importantly, averting a major water supply catastrophe in Gaborone, with all the local dams now virtually empty and Gaborone relying solely on the NSC-2 for water supply.

# Bigen Africa scoops three of seven top CESA awards

Bigen Africa was named the winner in three of the seven top categories at the prestigious annual awards event of Consulting Engineers South Africa (CESA), held at Vodacom World in Midrand on 12 August 2015.

Amid steep competition, the well-established group received top honours in the Business Excellence, Mentoring Company of the Year and Best International Project categories, the latter for its work on the 360km North-South Carrier (NSC-2) regional water transfer system in Botswana.

Bigen Africa's entries in four other categories also qualified for the final round of judging – Mentor of the Year, Young Engineer of the Year, the massive Steyn City residential project (project value R50 million to R250 million) and the innovative, "green" Wallacedene taxi rank (project value under R50 million).

## Engineering excellence

CESA is an organisation committed to furthering engineering excellence and the annual awards are the top highlight on the industry's calendar. Sponsored by CESA's long-time partner Aon, the awards celebrate innovation, quality, outstanding workmanship and professionalism in the consulting engineering sector. The focus is on projects which advance infrastructure development both in South Africa and on the continent.

"The Bigen Africa team is extremely blessed to have received these awards for its contribution to ensuring sustainable development in Africa," says Dr Snowy Khoza, Chief Executive Officer. "Bigen Africa is dedicated to ensuring excellence in its operations, changing the lives of millions of Africans and practising its creed of "doing good while doing business" on a daily basis. Receiving accolades such as these is therefore very gratifying and we as a group give all the glory and honour to God Almighty."

The group has completed many cost-effective, sustainable infrastructure projects in South Africa and several other African countries, and is expanding its operational footprint on an ongoing basis.

## Mentoring company of the year

Bigen Africa clinched top honours in the CESA Business Excellence Awards, Mentoring Company of the Year category. Dr Snowy Khoza received this prestigious award on behalf of Bigen Africa.

Bigen Africa's CESA awards entry for Mentoring Company of the Year reflects the high value it places on human capital development, as well as its efforts to advance young professionals, and empower and retain employees.

With a heightened awareness of talent and career management in the workplace, Bigen Africa has designed and implemented strategies which align business objectives with individual expectations of career success through the organisation's Future Integrated Talent (FIT) Programme, a part of the Bigen Capacity Framework. The latter focuses on, amongst others, fostering dual-track career path recognition (management and specialisation), allowing clear methodology for progression and growth in the organisation, consideration of post readiness prior to progression to the next level, active short- and long-term mentorship in the group in line with all programmes as well as recognition of talent.

## Business excellence

In its entry for the Business Excellence category, Bigen Africa highlighted various aspects of the business and operations as well as its vision of improving the quality of life of all through the development of sustainable infrastructure solutions. Central to the group's success, in terms of both business achievements and expansion into Africa, is its value proposition to customers, governments and communities – to provide infrastructure development solutions through a holistic approach which encompasses in-house capabilities, strategic partnerships and off-taker needs to optimise project validity and add innovative and sustainable value to the full spectrum of services it provides. These range from feasibility studies through project preparation, management and implementation to development finance and ongoing asset management.

This approach supports the group creed of "doing good while doing business", which includes channelling contract employment and procurement opportunities to local communities, and promotes the delivery of products and services in a way that reinforces key emerging public-policy priorities within sub-Saharan Africa. The capabilities and products of the group have been selected and developed to promote inclusive economic growth and human development.

"With its in-depth understanding of the infrastructure development needs experienced by African companies and its focus on excellence and capability through partnerships, Bigen Africa has delivered a strong financial performance in a year that was characterised by a weakening economic environment," says Snowy. "The majority of the group's divisions have seen growth during the year under review, with revenue from engineering being the most significant contributor. This is attributable to mainly organic growth."

The current five-year strategy, valid until 2016, is reviewed and sharpened annually by the board according to interim achievements, deviations and current issues in terms of the industry environment, financial growth and targets, marketing and brand build, client and customer relationships, group structure, group regional development, development finance capability and human capital strategy.

Dr Snowy Khoza and COO Anton Boshoff receive the CESA Business Excellence Award from Abe Thela (President of CESA) and Terrence William (CEO of Aon South Africa).

"Bigen Africa's comprehensive strategy for developing its employees, along with its emphasis on service excellence, is a key component of successful business strategy," says Snowy. "This, combined with the group's practice of building capability through effective partnerships, whether in the industry or with governments, empowers it for helping to meet Africa's considerable infrastructure development needs."

With its in-depth understanding of the infrastructure development needs experienced by African countries and its focus on excellence and capability through partnerships, Bigen Africa has delivered a strong financial performance in a year that was characterised by a weakening economic environment.

– Dr Snowy Khoza, Bigen Africa CEO

# Best international project

A testimony to the group's creed of "doing good while doing business" was its involvement in the approximately R6 billion NSC-2 project which has demonstrated engineering excellence, enhanced regional economic growth and significantly improved quality of life in Botswana.

Due to robust economic growth, the Republic of Botswana developed a need for water augmentation by regional transfer from its water-rich northern resources. Bigen Africa was appointed by the Ministry of Minerals, Energy and Water Resources in 2007 as its Employer's Representative for the conceptual design development, EPC tender documents and construction supervision of the regional water transfer system.

"The Botswana government recognises the importance of infrastructural investment as a key foundation for national, regional and local economic growth and development," says Snowy, "and that local content is key to ensuring a direct contribution to the growth of the national economy. As these priorities align with the business focus of Bigen Africa as well as its mission of 'doing good while doing business', the group is the perfect choice for this commission."

Bigen Africa CEO, Dr Snowy Khoza, Managing Principal Water and Sanitation, Dr Mias van der Walt, Botswana Country Manager, Ephraim Kelaeng and Executive Director, Strategy, Policy and Planning, Ian Bettesworth, receive the Best International Project Award for the NSC-2 project.

# Bigen Africa appointed to manage extension of Clanwilliam Dam

Bigen Africa has been appointed site supervision and contract management service provider during the extension of the Clanwilliam dam structure in the Cederberg Local Municipality, which includes raising the wall from its current height of 43m to 56m.

The project was commissioned by the Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) this year, and the wall raising will be the second since the concrete gravity dam was built on the Olifants River in 1935, with the first raising occurring in 1964. The total projected cost is more than R2 billion and completion is anticipated within five years.

"Raising the dam wall by another 13m will result in an additional 70 million cubic metres of water a year flowing to farmers downstream," explains Mias van der Walt, Divisional Managing Principal of Water and Sanitation at Bigen Africa.

The improvements to the dam will also entail the construction of a new intake and outlet structure, and a small hydro power station.

"Bigen Africa is thrilled to be leading this project as the local communities stand to benefit greatly from the increased water capacity. With more than 650 jobs being created for these communities as well, the group's creed of 'doing good while doing business' is also being put into practice at Clanwilliam Dam."

Bigen Africa's proposal to DWS included, amongst others, the appointment of BES Africa Engineering & Management Consulting as well as Xpanders (Pty) Ltd as sub-consultants on the project.

The group's scope on the project includes, amongst other roles, design and drafting assistance to DWS Engineering Services, contract administration, quality and progress monitoring, environmental monitoring, health and safety monitoring, cost monitoring and the compilation of an operating manual and completion report.

Although the dam improvements are still far from complete, there is anticipation in the surrounding communities.

"We are waiting for the completion of this dam and the improvement it will make to all our lives," said one of the excited residents.

Bigen Africa provides engineering, management consulting, and development financing and advisory services on cost-effective, sustainable infrastructure projects in several African countries.

## The Group

integrates the entire value chain in an infrastructure development process through in-house capabilities and strategic partnerships – from feasibility studies through project preparation, management and implementation to development finance and ongoing asset management.

# A dream becomes reality – prestigious Steyn City project

Bigen Africa was appointed by Steyn City Properties (Pty) Ltd to provide the complete scope of professional civil services for the construction of Steyn City, a massive, one-of-a-kind residential estate north of Fourways, Gauteng, which has been nominated for a prestigious CESA AON award.

"Bigen Africa was contracted for the design, documentation, procurement and construction monitoring specifically related to the internal and external civil services in the first phase of the development," says Daniel Smit, Bigen Africa engineer on the project.

With a strong presence throughout southern Africa and a growing African footprint, the group provides engineering, management consulting, development financing and advisory services on cost-effective, sustainable infrastructure projects in several countries across the continent.

**Steyn City, an attractive estate lifestyle concept unlike any other in south Africa, caters to the preferences of home owners in all life stages – from young professionals and families to empty nesters and retirees, and comprises 8 341 apartments, including 5 155 townhouses and 3 186 city centre-style apartments; 731 cluster homes; 818 freehold houses situated on 695-4 000m² stands; 120 retirement village units and a golf course with clubhouse.**

In addition, Steyn City is the first golf estate which offers, besides the expected amenities of a golf course, gym and swimming pools, attractive extras such as an on-site fuel station, soccer pitches, fishing lakes, a skate park and an equestrian centre, to name only a few. All of this is set amidst beautiful parks, green belts and water features where long walks and the many recreational activities can be safely enjoyed by young and old.

"Bigen Africa is thrilled to have been a part of this project," says Daniel, "and immensely proud that its nomination for the CESA AON excellence awards for projects larger than R50 million has been accepted."

In the first phase, Bigen Africa's team of top engineering professionals focused on internal civil services such as roads, storm water, sewer and water supply infrastructure, incorporating various attenuation ponds and irrigation storage. Four-lane internal roads link William Nicol Drive with Cedar Road,

and feature a bridge over the Jukskei River as well as turning circles paved with specially moulded blocks with a high concrete strength of 35 MPa.

Upon completion, the bulk sewer upgrade will enable the decommissioning of the existing Beverley and Dainfern pump stations. The pump station, which includes an emergency storage dam, is the largest in the City of Johannesburg, along with that of Zandspruit.

The new outfall sewer from the existing Dainfern pump station, eight to nine metres deep in certain locations, had to be laid through the Dainfern golf course at a working width of 10 metres.

Treated water from the Johannesburg Northern outfall works was conveyed to aesthetically designed irrigation ponds within the development, which supply irrigation and creek water to the entire estate.

A 30-megalitre rectangular bulk water reservoir on the north-eastern portion of the estate is fed from the new Diepsloot reservoir and supplies Steyn City as well as Dainfern, Dainfern Valley, Dainfern Ridge and parts of Diepsloot.

Based on Bigen Africa's management principles, the effectively managed team of 30 full-time civil engineering staff delivered timeously on the requirements of the developer as well as the needs of the community. The land development team comprised five employees.

Risk on the project, which was on a fast track after commencing in 2009, was mitigated through frequent meetings with the client, the appointment of a second, dedicated review team and the use of Bigen Africa's ISO model at all stages of the implementation of the project. Cost and quality control were in constant operation. The total construction cost of first-phase civil engineering services provided, excluding professional fees, amounts to R540 million.

"Bigen Africa has not only ensured, at design stage, that the entire development is supported by a solid hierarchy of infrastructure, but has also focused on aesthetics to meet the client's visual expectations," says Daniel. "Bigen Africa's professional business approach has ensured that the team was flexible enough to respond effectively to a sometimes changing flow of creative ideas and deliver cutting-edge designs."

The team also excelled at blending best practice engineering design with "on-the-job" technology solutions, incorporating the area's natural resources optimally in the construction process. One such example is the use of natural site material in the road layers wherever possible.

"I am proud to say that innovation in planning, design and construction is obvious throughout the estate," says Daniel, "and the result is a unique, visually pleasing and sought-after residential development."

# Bigen Africa shows its appreciation during WOMEN'S MONTH

Bigen Africa used the opportunity presented by Women's Month this year to honour its female employees and clients with a few special treats known to be decidedly appealing to the female nature.

Just prior to Women's Day, a group of selected female clients were treated to breakfast and a tour of historical Pretoria in the footsteps of the brave women who marched against the "pass laws" in 1956.

Amongst the landmarks visited were the Nelson Mandela statue at the Union Buildings, Church Square and Freedom Park. The ladies' pleasure hormones were further boosted by a pamper session at Mangwanani Spa!

Bigen Africa's female employees were also treated to soothing neck and shoulder massages by Fusion Beauty at their own work stations and, after a scrumptious catered lunch, given the afternoon off for some more blissful "me time".

"Bigen Africa embraces diversity and equity with passion and conviction," says Dr Snowy Khoza, Chief Executive Officer. "Even though the group operates in the technical field of infrastructure development, the principle of gender equity is deeply entrenched in the way it conducts business."

"The group is continuously evolving to ensure that the presence of women is felt throughout its ranks, from board level through the engineering function to the administrative functions, and that their contributions to the success of the business are recognised."

> "Bigen Africa believes that female employees must be recognised for their exceptional commitment and the daily sacrifices that they often have to make." – Dr Snowy Khoza, Bigen Africa CEO

Snowy points out that "the fairer sex" notion is outdated and that women have an important role to play in business and in maintaining social responsibilities.

She has long been a champion of women and previously disadvantaged groups and has, in both her private and her professional capacity, worked hard to make a difference to many individuals such as young girls in need of education support.

In 2014, she was one of five South Africans who received the Continental Lifetime Achiever award at the Africa's Most Influential Women in Business and Government and Titans – Building Nations event.

Having been with the group since 2010, she has personally championed the increase in the female component of the workforce which includes the appointment of women in several key roles, such as Chief Financial Officer.

"Bigen Africa's management team recognises that women play a fundamental role in ensuring the success of the business, both internally and in the external environment," she says.

**Snowy's compassionate drive has also impacted the group in other ways. In line with Bigen Africa's creed of "doing good while doing business," female employees were urged to give back to the community during Women's Month by donating women's sanitary products for distribution as care packs to non-profit organisations which support the underprivileged.**

Selected female clients were treated to a day of adventure and pampering in celebration of Women's Day 2015.

# Bigen Africa supports Mandela Day

"The time is always ripe to do right," maintained Nelson Mandela, and Bigen Africa heartily agrees as it seizes every opportunity to "do good while doing business"!

On Mandela Day – 18 July – Bigen Africa employees at the different branches across South Africa made an extra effort to reach out to those in need and bring happy smiles to their faces.

**The most valuable legacy that former President Nelson Mandela has left us is his plea for everyone to have a positive effect on those around them, particularly people in need.**

East London employees dedicated time to purchasing and neatly packing a big batch of sanitary care hampers for distribution amongst various schools in the region. Learning is important, of course, but quality of life comes first!

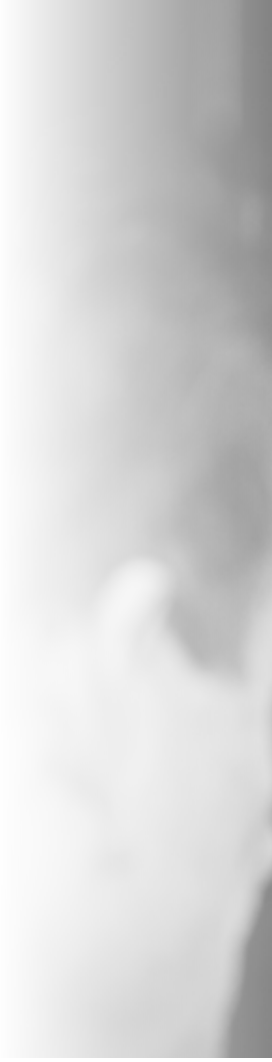
Pretoria Bigenites set (and met) a unique goal for themselves – to knit 500 scarves without using needles in the week preceding Mandela Day! Using only their hands as tools, they produced beautiful and colourful scarves for the residents of the TKSO home for the aged and the Pholoso drop-off care centre.

Bloemfontein Bigenites were moved by the Madiba spirit to refurbish the Vrystaat Nasorgsentrum.

Cape Town Bigenites joined forces with Shiloh Synergy on an "amazing race" through different social work project sites, where they helped out as needed.

Durban Bigenites distributed desperately needed potable water to 420 families in the Emalangeni, Cibane and Wosiane area. We thank Bigenites who opened their hearts (and purses!) to assist in this initiative.

# An inside glimpse of : Anton Boshoff, Chief Operating Officer



The Bigen Africa Group has been steadily extending its business and operational footprint under the capable hand of **Anton Boshoff, Chief Operating Officer** since 2011. An experienced civil engineer and project manager, Anton has fulfilled the roles of Chief Risk Officer and Commercial Director of the group. In his current role, he manages all strategic aspects of the group as well as various programmes, including the Africa Expansion Programme, the Strategic Partnership Programme and the Capital Investment Programme.

## What are your core responsibilities as CCO of Bigen Africa?

My responsibilities cover a few areas.

Firstly, I am responsible for the group's overall strategy for expanding into Africa, which is part of its S-Vision 2016, the five-year strategy for business and organic growth. The immediate focus areas are SADC and West Africa and, eventually, East Africa.

Secondly, I am responsible for our Strategic Partnership Programme, which is an important aspect of the group's growth strategy. Its value proposition stresses that it integrates the entire value chain in infrastructure development through in-house capabilities and strategic partnerships. Bigen Africa is therefore of the view that the key to expanding and sustaining its business across the African continent lies in forging and maintaining effective strategic partnerships which will reinforce the participation of the group in African mega-projects.

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The group's partnership programme gained momentum during 2012 on the back of a highly successful partnership conference of industry representatives from across Africa, and during a year in which existing partnerships were strengthened and several new partnerships were formed and formalised. These partners include, amongst others, Zulu Development Consultants in Zambia, Western Forms in the USA, Parsons Brinkenhoff in South Africa, Cardno in Australia and a Chinese based partner, Thirteen divisional partnerships were also signed during the year. Bigen Africa's Accra office in Ghana was furthermore opened on the back of strategic partnerships. The group has contracted with a Ghanaian business associate to pursue joint projects and have also recently signed up a renowned practise of

Anton Boshoff, COO of Bigen Africa:
A leader with vision and passion.

Associated Consultants. Over the past year, key strategic regional expansion objectives in terms of assignments were achieved in Namibia (housing), Botswana (water sector) and Zambia (roads).

Thirdly, I am responsible for mergers and acquisitions within the partnership strategy, including the inorganic growth of the organisation. This is defined as breaking into new geographical areas and new capabilities, especially in the renewable energy, health, and financial services sectors.

The Bigen Group continues to investigate potential merger and acquisition transactions under its inorganic growth strategy.

## In your own words, what does Bigen Africa do and why should other companies get involved with the group?

Bigen Africa is essentially a professional services entity at its core. It does not have blue-collar workers or undertake any construction. As the Bigen Africa team, we specialise in crafting solutions for the infrastructure market and ensuring delivery through involving all stakeholders. By applying the group creed, "doing good while doing business", also in the business sphere, we ensure that the communities where projects are launched also benefit. Bigen Africa does not merely add value – it is committed to revolutionise the way the business is conducted by providing infrastructure – development benefits beyond commercial value, at all levels of society in particular environmental, social and economic development impacts.

Operationally, the group has proven success in managing and adhering to indigenisation and local content requirements, including utilising local labour. Its established base reduces the duplication of overhead costs and administration.

We are not only doing business on the continent but also service a lot of communities and other stakeholders apart from our project beneficiaries.

## What changes do you see in Bigen's near future and how do you see yourself facilitating those changes?

I think any company that is challenged with an African expansion programme and wants to diversify from a South African base would need to align its capital structure with its growth aspirations. A lot of organisations are focusing purely on the organisational

structure, as managers, and do not take shareholder views on the expansion programme.

One of the major challenges for us going into Africa, therefore, is to diversify our capital base. This would include a capital base also located elsewhere on the continent. We are very keen to investigate partners which are not only supplementing the technical and institutional side of the business, but also the financial ability of the business, which is required as normal professional services practices do not have the balance sheet for extraordinary expansion.

## Can you provide more information regarding the Africa Expansion Programme and the Capital Investment Programme?

The African Expansion Programme is two-pronged and can therefore be described as having a "pushing" and a "pulling" agenda. We would push our normal capabilities that we currently have from a South African base into the continent and we would draw clients on the back of projects and partnerships.

The second leg of our approach is what we call a "pulling" agenda, which enables us to follow capital on the continent. At present, the group already has offices in Zambia, Botswana, Namibia and Ghana, our base in West Africa, besides those in South Africa.

**Lastly, we are focusing on East Africa. We are still considering the office location as there are various drivers for that decision. We have an established partnership footprint in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania. The most likely suitor from a partnership perspective would inform our decision on where to locate that office.**

There is also a strong focus on energy projects in the SADC as well as West and East Africa, with prospects of assignments in Namibia, Nigeria and Tanzania being secured. Real estate contracts have been secured in Namibia, the DRC and Ghana, and a host of housing projects are likely to be secured in both West and East Africa.

The Capital Investment Programme is focused on the "pulling" agenda of the business as it would be funded by shareholders' investment without necessarily having fully funded mandates in those countries. To open these offices and start exploring the markets on the back of our partnerships will mean investing time, effort and money, and require obtaining local knowledge which we know takes approximately 12 to 24 months to establish.

## In your capacity as COO, what approach do you use with regard to risk management?

I am also the Chief Risk Officer for Bigen Africa. As a group, we have adopted an approach called "combined assurance", which takes care of the quality issues within the business, the financial and strategic risks involved. The board has agreed on 10 risk areas in the business which we monitor on a continual basis. We are also positioning the business to be the first consulting engineering practice or infrastructure professional services business to qualify for the ISO31000 standard and that is, in essence, a risk management accreditation according to international best practice.

## What are the major deciding elements when assessing potential partnerships?

It has taken us a couple of years to refine the criteria for a potential partner and they are essentially based on values and culture. We spend a lot of time researching the partners that we are aligning with to ensure that they are aligned with Bigen Africa's Christian-based values and work ethics.

Our strategic partnership strategy will continue to accommodate different types of stakeholders as we commit to work with them on critical projects. We believe in "together we can do more" – thus our partners will remain important to us.

Potential partners include complementary product or service providers, even competitors and clients. Further criteria include the market or project focus, tenure of relationship, risk-sharing and liabilities, intellectual property, branding, and the type of contracting envisaged.

## In your time with Bigen Africa, what has been your biggest achievement?

I have been with the group for 25 years and it has been such a blessing to be part of it growing from a 20-man practice to a workforce of more than 500. I see my role at Bigen Africa not in terms of my personal achievements, but as a member of a whole, contributing to this growth and impacting the standard of living of all involved.

# DR SNOWY KHOZA RECEIVES
## 'Unashamedly Ethical' recognition

Dr Snowy Khoza, Bigen Africa CEO, received recognition from Unashamedly Ethical, an international organisation driving the Unashamedly Ethical campaign to encourage a return to ethics in the spheres of business, church, education, health, government, non-governmental organisations, sport and youth.

Snowy was nominated by her colleagues for her exemplary moral and ethical behaviour. A committed Christian who currently leads the non-profit Agape Christian Women's Network International as international president, Snowy has not hesitated to infuse the entire Bigen Africa with her passion for ethical business practice. The group is known for its strong ethical stance, which includes zero tolerance for theft and corruption.

Snowy ascribes her personal code of ethics to her Christian principles and the influence of her grandmother, who raised her. "She instilled core values in me and impressed the culture and ethics on me which I still strive to share with those around me," she says.

"I am tremendously honoured to be recognised for the principles I value so much and also because it reflects on Bigen Africa. The team of 500 employees have responded most enthusiastically to my effort to ensure good business ethics across the group."

The Unashamedly Ethical Campaign honours men, women and organisations who/which are making an impact in their community or sector as a result of an unwavering commitment to ethics, values and clean living.

Unashamedly Ethical is a Christian-based campaign founded by South African businessman Dr Graham Power, founder and chairman of the Power Group of Companies and founder of the Global Day of Prayer. The campaign challenges individuals and organisations to sign a pledge as a public display of their commitment to ethics, values and clean living.

**Their names are added to a global database and they agree to be held accountable by Unashamedly Ethical-appointed ombudsmen or -women should a complaint be raised against them. Launched internationally in 2010, the campaign now has around 5 000 organisational and 25 000 individual signatories in more than 100 countries.**

The campaign recognises those "extraordinary people whose names have almost become synonymous with 'good moral principles and/or values' within different spheres of society," says Marcel Versveld, South Africa coordinator for Unashamedly Ethical.

"This is accompanied by a deep and sincere desire to impact other people's lives or communities in a profoundly positive manner and their approach to life is: 'How can I make a difference in someone else's life?'"

UNASHAMEDLYETHICAL

INDIVIDUAL
CERTIFICATE

Unashamedly Ethical
hereby presents

Snowy Joyce Khoza
with a Certificate of Commitment

The holder has made the following commitments

1. To be entirely truthful in all I say.
2. To be faithful to my family relationships.
3. To do nothing out of selfish ambition or conceit, but to look out for the interests of others.
4. To refuse to elicit, accept or pay any bribes and to encourage others to do the same.
5. To be diligent without being harsh, and striving to be just and fair.
6. To be a peacemaker.
7. To do my work wholeheartedly.
8. To submit myself to just and ethical governing authorities.
9. To remember the poor by investing generously and sacrificially in the broader community.
10. To collaborate with my peers to impact our community and nation.

Signed: Graham Power
Chairman
Date: 25 Aug 2015

For Snowy, this is indeed the core purpose of her life, as it is her passion to proactively champion those in need, from the thousands of people in Africa who benefit from Bigen Africa's infrastructure development projects and the job opportunities they create, to non-profit organisations sorely in need of funding and, last but not least, individuals whose lives are changed by her tireless work to create sustainable support systems for those in need.

OPINION PIECE

# Revenue management – a smarter business approach

## Smart municipalities

manage their 'own revenue' effectively to deliver sustainable services and infrastructure.

Wallie Louw, Bigen Africa Principal – Revenue and Financial Management shares his opinion on revenue management.

The financial position of most of South Africa's municipalities is in dire straits. According to National Treasury a combined debt burden of R95 billion exist in Local Government, indicating a pervasive inability to deal effectively with financial challenges. The total debt owed to most local authorities escalated drastically over the last year alone. This means that many of them are kept afloat by government grants and other external funding assistance.

Why have municipalities been struggling for so long to deal with these challenges and how can they overcome them? We know that most municipalities are faced with a magnitude of revenue-related problems.

It seems that the main reasons for this untenable situation relate to legacies of the past, such as abject poverty that led to a culture of non-payment and the loss of skills and operational capacity. Generic challenges such as poor data integrity in municipal systems, ineffective indigent management, the inability to properly maintain infrastructure for service delivery, and a serious lack of financial and management proficiency have added to the burden. Consumers who tap into the electricity and water grid illegally and the deficiency of existing credit control measures also exacerbate the cash-flow problems.

Local authorities are starting to realise that the reasons for non-delivery of services, as well as corruption and poor governance, are why they have reached a point where the situation has become almost unmanageable. Surely, the time is long past for acknowledging that 'more-of-same' does not provide any sustainable solutions, and that decisive action to find smarter solutions and innovative ways of overcoming financial ineptitude to improve cash flow is no longer debatable?

**To my mind, the reasons for the current situation are less important than the failure within municipal structures to understand the link between revenue management and sustainable service delivery.**

Revenue management, credit control and debt collection are integral to sustainable infrastructure development and infrastructure asset management. Frequent interaction with many municipalities has made it abundantly clear that those willing to focus on 'thinking smarter' to gain control over their own revenue generation, can stop the downwards cycle and start converting debt into infrastructure. Debt collection alone will not address these challenges. A holistic revenue management approach must be followed for solutions to become sustainable.

Models for such corrective interventions exist. An example is the Bigen Africa municipal revenue management model, developed specifically for municipalities in South Africa. The differentiating factor is a focus on both revenue management and infrastructure development.

The approach is implemented through:

- a revenue management software tool developed specifically for municipalities in South Africa.
- working inside the municipality and 'shoulder-to-shoulder' with municipal staff.
- training municipal staff and providing scholarships to create capacity, enabling the municipality to continue with the corrective implementation after the intervention comes to an end.
- creating awareness in local communities through campaigns and regular meetings with ward councillors and other role players.

- combining credit control, debt collection, legal, indigent management, query management and data cleansing activities into a single, well-managed operational process.

Tackling pervasive problems head-on can fast-track the overall improvement process and, if sustained, will result in long-term benefits. This includes:

- preventing municipal debt growing in the first place.
- instilling financial discipline with the requisite checks and balances.
- ensuring that the right people with the right skills are deployed where they are most effective.
- using the corrective intervention to transfer the skills required to sustain implementation.

Can municipalities afford such a 'rescue' package? In effect, the interventions can be virtually cost-free. Commission is normally paid on revenue generated as a result of the implementation of the management model, such as improved cash flow and income from accounts in arrears.

The intervention process also helps municipalities to find sources of additional revenue, such as identifying the areas where they are providing services but not rendering accounts.

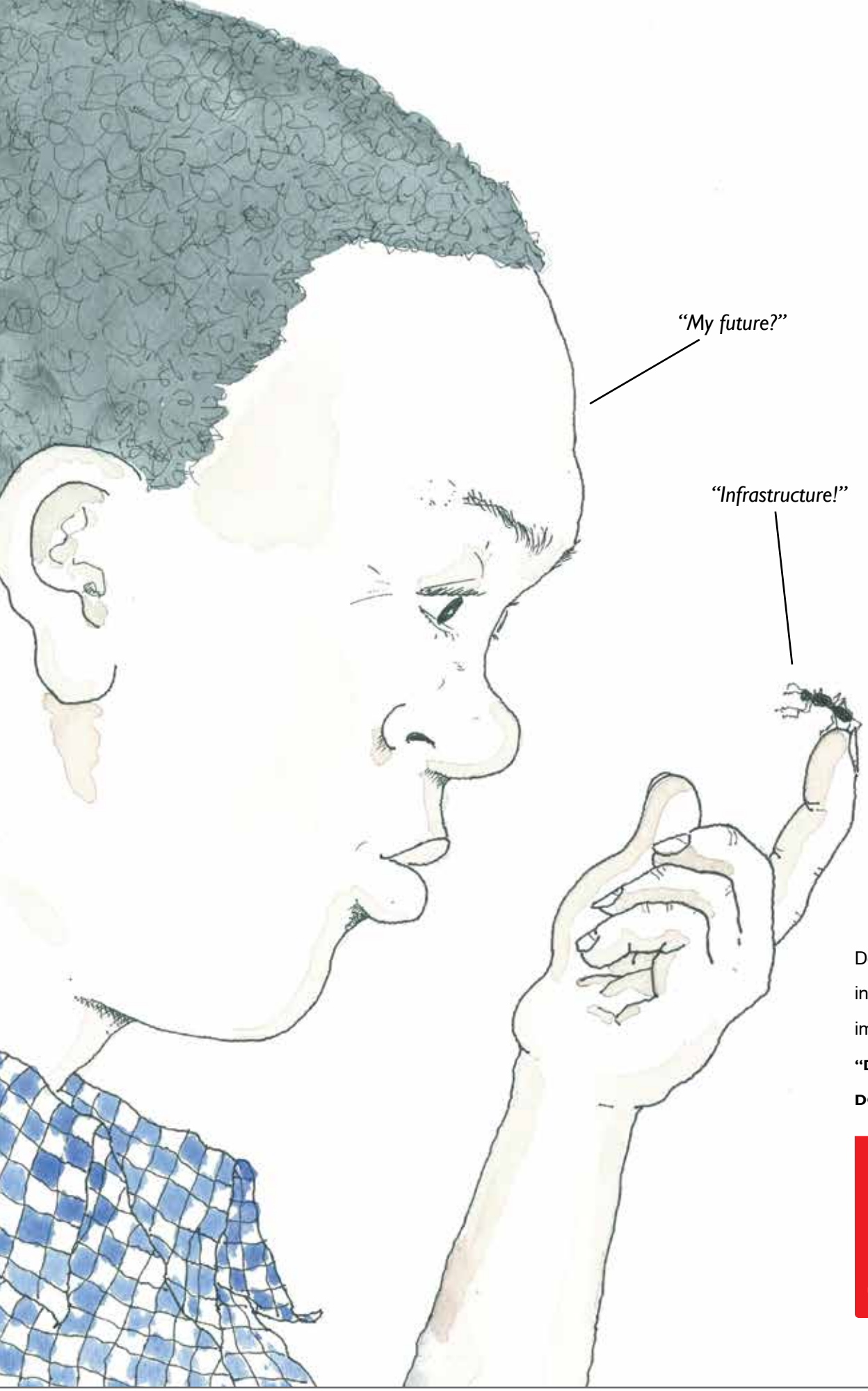
This has proven to be a significant source of additional income in a number of municipalities where the smart thinking approach has been implemented.

As I see it, the big picture is about ensuring that municipalities can deliver effectively against their mandates, in a sustained manner, supported by sound financial systems and efficient management. In the short-term, however, it is clear that the choices they make now, as individual authorities, will affect their future and the quality of life of civil society at large.

### RESULTS FROM THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BIGEN AFIRCA MUNICIPAL REVENUE MANAGEMENT MODEL INCLUDE:

- increase in payment rates
- reduction in outstanding debt
- increase in credit worthiness
- increase in number of municipal accounts rendered
- policy changes to enable best practices
- effective credit control
- in-service training of municipal staff
- confidence in the use of software tools to sustain implementation
- cost saving due to streamlined processes
- job creation in communities by using local labour and skills

# BIGEN IN THE NEWS

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