

Gaborone sewerage upgrades

Halfway through ACE GIBB's massive project to upgrade Gaborone's sewerage, an update from the front line is that the project is geared for success.

The refurbishments to the systems are set to make a meaningful difference in the lives of ordinary, hard-working citizens of Botswana.

Gaborone's sewerage systems have been strained for some time. As can be expected, human activity, industrial waste, agricultural run-off, municipal dumping and oil spills all have a negative effect on water supplies. Owing to rapid growth in the capital, the capacity of its existing bulk sewerage infrastructure will soon be exceeded.

According to project manager Vernon Joubert, "The project involves the decommissioning of certain pump stations, refurbishment and construction of other pump stations and construction of trunk and main sewers in Gaborone to provide capacity up to the planning horizon of 2030. Furthermore, we are tasked with the sewerage of some 6 000 remaining self-help housing area (SHHA) plots, which currently run on septic tanks."

Recently, African Consulting Engineers, known as ACE, was rebranded as ACE GIBB to become part of the GIBB portfolio. In a 2008 joint venture with Pula

Consultants, it was appointed by the Department of Waste Management and Pollution Control as consulting engineer to plan, design and supervise construction of the Upgrading of Gaborone Sewerage Reticulation Project. The three-year project is contracted to China Jiangsu International Botswana.

Shalini Dube, GIBB project co-ordinator, handles the day-to-day project management. "Our relationship with Pula Consultants is an especially welcome development. When government initiated the project, it was important that it drove Botswana's citizen empowerment goals. The project is so much more than simply laying down sewerage: it's about transforming communities, providing opportunities and addressing the needs of the future. We're proud to be working with Pula as a local empowerment partner." Pula Consultants, formed in 1998, is a leading and expanding consulting engineering company dealing mainly in structural design and construction supervision. It is 100% citizen owned.

Referring to the pollution that has also become a problem in the SHHA communities in Broadhurst, Dube says: "There is

a need to reduce groundwater pollution from septic tank effluent in order to make safer and healthier community living. Overall improvement of water quality will also, more importantly, establish Gaborone as a more viable investment destination. It will be cleaner, safer and self-sustainable."

ACE GIBB is proud of its strategic involvement in bringing about these changes to the water systems in Botswana's largest city. With the backing of GIBB, it is able to tackle any engineering challenge, Dube maintains, and is looking towards expanding its construction expertise and consulting capabilities into Africa. "This project, with a value of approximately R1 billion, is a strong example of the company's approach to solving Africa's infrastructural challenges in innovative ways. In this case, it's about creating water that works for the city and its people."

Initially, the completed project was to be handed over to the Gaborone City Council; however, the responsibility for sewerage systems has recently been overtaken by the parastatal Water Utilities Corporation, in line with recommendations from the National Water Master Plan Review. During the construction stages of the project, locals will also benefit from employment opportunities in different areas of operation. Joubert concurs with Dube that the success of the project so far can be attributed to ACE GIBB enjoying synergistic relationships with the contractors and the communities involved. "As Africa rebounds from the recent global recession and its economic potential is unlocked, it will increasingly look to new construction opportunities and upgrading solutions to meet the demands of the future.

"Working with local empowerment partners, we are well placed to bring to bear our many years in helping governments and businesses grow. We're able to provide consulting and project management, as well as planning, design and construction," concludes Joubert. ■



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