



# Francois Swart retires as Bigen Africa CEO

Bigen Africa founder and CEO for the past twenty years retired at the end of April 2011. Francois grew the company from a one-man entrepreneurship working from a hangar at the Wonderboom Airport in Pretoria thirty years ago to the current 450-strong, multi-disciplinary infrastructure development company with 14 offices across Southern Africa.



Francois Swart, who retired as CEO of Bigen Africa after 20 years, and his successor Dr Snowy Khoza.

Francois ensured the legacy of the company beyond his tenure as CEO by continuously bringing on board the most diverse talent both from within and outside the industry. He believes in a dynamic work ethic that can continuously adapt to an ever-changing external environment – a belief he applied not only to the company, but also to himself.

His successor, Dr Snowy Khoza, describes Francois as a uniquely talented leader. “He is a visionary, a strategist and an entrepreneur. His legacy is a flourishing company, a leader in engineering consulting. I look forward to building on his success, thanks to a team that is well and suitably qualified to conduct the core business of the company.”

At a glittering hand-over ceremony on 3 May, Francois reflected on the past thirty years. “We have moved from prefabricated offices to world-class facilities, from telegrams, telex and facsimile transmissions to e-mail, from hand-drafted cross and long sections to superfast computer-aided 3D design programmes, from touting

for work by mail to bidding for tenders internationally, from staying at colleagues' houses to sleeping in hotels and guest houses, and from 'shank's pony' to four company aeroplanes and 11 pilots.”

However, some things have not changed: “We continue to listen carefully to our clients' needs instead of just offering solutions, we go the extra mile and we treat our clients like partners. May this never change.”

Francois said the company will continue to grow with Snowy at the helm. “This company has excelled, even in times of change, thanks to our values. These values continuously guided us to set new boundaries in an uncertain world. The values – creativity, commitment, empowerment, fun and integrity – guided me throughout my career and played a crucial role in the way Bigen Africa conducts business with its clients and treats its employees. May our values continue to guide you as you grow the business.” Francois will remain involved in the company in an advisory capacity when required.