

15 August 2016

## **CIF launches Series of SME Events**

The Construction Industries Federation of Namibia (CIF) held its first structured small-to-medium sized enterprises (SME) networking event, “Growing Namibia’s Future”, on 10 August 2016 at the federation’s offices in Klein Windhoek.

Five SME contractors and five established contractors participated in the business-to-business networking event. After a quick light lunch at the CIF offices, a total of 25 meetings took place in the afternoon between the respective participating members of the CIF.

With over 450 members, half of which are small to medium sized enterprises, the CIF aims to continuously align its services and benefits in the interests of its members. The low-key but effective event, was the first of its kind and is part of a series of regular “Growing Namibia’s Future” networking events.

Bärbel Kirchner, consulting general manager of the CIF said: “The two-hour speed meeting programme served for members to introduce and get to know one another. It also provided swift opportunities for information sharing and may lead to ongoing business relationships, or connections that provide mentoring, encouragement and support”.

“We are starting off small and the frequency and size of the networking events will depend largely on the demand of our members. However, our next event is scheduled for 17 November this year”.

Mr Nico Badenhorst, acting president of the CIF said: “The higher level goal is ultimately that Namibian construction companies work together more closely. Currently, the industry is affected by constantly increasing involvement of foreign contractors, which can threaten the long term sustainability of our industry.

“It is important that the Namibian construction industry and members of the CIF we work together more closely and support each other so that we build our own local capacity and so that Namibian companies become increasingly self-reliant and create joint ventures.

“Contrary to common belief, current local capacity allows us to handle all types of projects even up to large-sized projects of N\$500 million”.

Participating SME's at the event were: Angel Building Renovations and Retail, D-Square Trading Enterprises, Geckoh Fifty Eight Investments, Gom Ho Investments and Rosebank Investments. Participating contractors included: Aqua Services and Engineering, KL Construction, MPP Civils Namibia, Namibia Construction and Oshipe Turnkey Projects.

#### **Comments from Participants at the Event**

- Mr Ivan van Wyk, owner of Angel Building Renovations and Retail said: “The event was very good and informative. It was good to talk with and listen to the big role players in the industry. It was good for us as SMEs to promote ourselves to the bigger companies”.
- Owners of Gom Ho Investments, Mr Rothny Hoeseb and Ms Sylvia Hoeses commented: “It was awesome meeting some of the big contractors and to get to know them personally. It will help us a lot by communicating with them more often and lift us up to further improve gradually”.
- Mr Engelbert Mwanyanga, owner of Geckoh Fifty Eight Investments, mentioned that he enjoyed obtaining the wealth of information from the big construction companies, which will assist him in overcoming some of the challenges in the way to success.
- Mr Pierre De Wet from Oshipe Turnkey Projects reflected on the earnestness of all to work together and experienced the event as very positive with regard to networking and possible joint ventures in multi-discipline projects.
- Owner of Rosebank Investments, Mr Mondi Tjonzongoro emphasised the importance of being able to meet with the larger contractors: “The event creates the opportunity for networking

with major players in the industry and created the platform to enable me to work with them in future”.

- Mr Ananias Ashipala and Ms Petrina Josef from D-Square Trading Enterprises addressed the need for support and mentorship: “This event was important as this is where industry players get time to coach and share their experience. We also got the chance to meet and to know more about each other”.
- The large-size contractors also enjoyed being introduced to SME’s which they would not have met otherwise. It would provide access to companies that could be considered for subcontracting or possible joint venture opportunities in the future.
- Achim Lück, owner of KL Construction commented: “It is good to see there are a lot of capable SMEs. I enjoyed meeting business owners I would not have met otherwise”.
- Mr. Panashe Daringo, partner and managing director MPP Civils Namibia said: “It was an opportunity to share experiences and knowledge with the SMEs. It was also nice to meet aspiring businesses and hear what their challenges are.

“Mentorship and networking are important aspects of any business. Many obstacles in the industry can be avoided and approached better with the guidance of someone who has experienced and encountered similar issues.

“It gives us access to required SMEs for our projects. On most projects the engagement or appointment of an SME is a requirement. Events such as these gives us a chance to network and meet potential SMEs for our projects”.

End