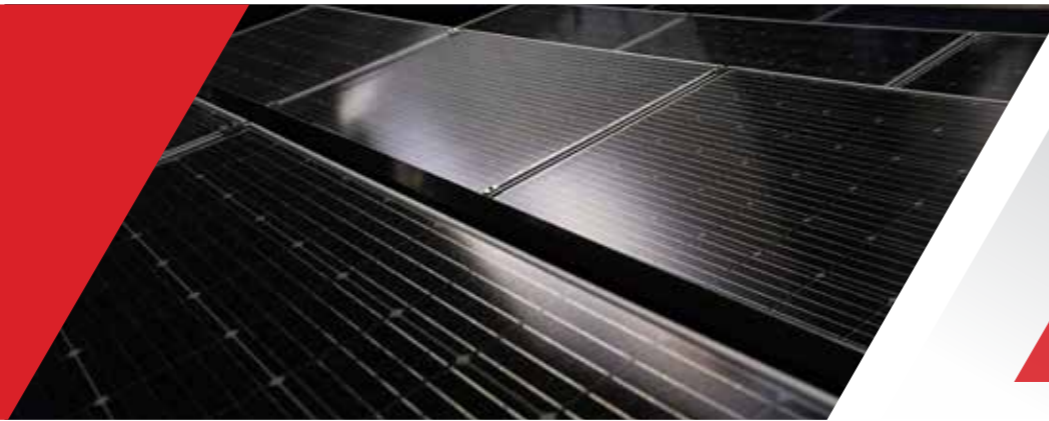


THOUGHT LEADERSHIP



Melusi Maposa
Chief Sales and Marketing Officer

Can SA's energy crisis help pave the way forward for service delivery?

As South Africans continue to face unprecedented load-shedding levels, the government is changing its approach to provide a framework for local businesses to become a part of the solution to transform the energy sector. From state-owned Eskom enlisting experts from the private sector to fast-tracking the removal of red tape that allows private embedded generation projects to sell excess electricity, the president has set the stage for a win-win solution for government and business.

South Africa is rife with individuals that possess the skills and experience required to remedy the country's multiple infrastructure challenges. "Our country's professionals are equipped to be part of sustainable, long-term solutions that alleviate service-delivery shortfalls, create jobs, and build the economy," says Melusi Maposa,

Chief Sales and Marketing Officer at Tsebo Solutions Group. "We've seen first-hand in our company how this can be achieved through successful public-private partnerships (PPPs). Over the years, Tsebo has provided facilities management for numerous government projects."

Perhaps the most important 'P' when it comes to PPP is 'partnership'. "Only through carefully vetted, transparent, compliant and accountable partnering can the private sector and government join forces for mutual success," explains Maposa. "In the case of Tsebo, this could mean creating, repairing and maintaining infrastructure, managing energy and providing engineering and other solutions that allow healthcare professionals, educators, politicians and policymakers to focus on their work".

But for private partners to be able to assist with municipal needs as and when they appear, change will need to first occur at a systemic level. "

As it stands, we need to unburden ourselves from unnecessary bureaucracy and red tape," continues Maposa. "We need creative partnerships that are responsive to any given need, that share the burden of risk and that hold both the public and private sector mutually accountable for the success of the contract."

Furthermore, Maposa believes that the responsibility of private entities to use their skill and expertise to improve the country should include taking ownership of uplifting the communities in which they operate. "PPPs should also inherently provide positive long-term outcomes for our underserved communities that go beyond 'hiring local' or ticking off tender requirements," he explains. "At Tsebo, we've made it our professional mandate to 'leave a legacy' in the communities we work in. We've made the development and care of people a strategic imperative – be they employees, partners, or community members."

The country's energy shortage is just one of many problems that call for South Africans to come together and help a public sector that is under increasing strain. Choosing the right consortium of partners and instilling policies that promote flexibility to deploy private solutions as and when needed will form the backbone of a united front to face service delivery shortfalls.

Maposa echoes this sentiment, concluding that "South Africans are, by nature, resilient and hardworking people. It's time we all rolled up our sleeves and found ways to get past the challenges. I believe I speak for many in the private sector when I say that collaboration with government is the solution to making our country the world-class powerhouse it has the potential to become."