

# Deadline looms for Bidvest Namibia share offer

The offer to the Namibian public of 50,7 million shares closes today, Thursday 15 October 2009 at 12pm ahead of the scheduled listing of Bidvest Namibia on the Namibian Stock Exchange on 26 October. The listing is expected to raise N\$313.6 million, earmarked for further investment and expansion of local opportunities.

Bidvest Namibia houses the local interests of South Africa-based Bidvest, the internationally represented trading and services group. The public listing will reduce the Bidvest Group stake in the Namibian business from 89% to 52%.

Sebby Kankondi, CEO of Bidvest Namibia, notes: "Distribution of the listing prospectus by our offices in Windhoek and Walvis Bay rapidly turned into a much broader information exercise; sometimes involving people eager to buy shares, sometimes involving customers who just wanted to know what the excitement was all about."

"People latched on to three key issues - the size and high profile of the corporate brands owned by Bidvest Namibia, how strategic these businesses are to the national economy and the transaction's major implications for black empowerment."

"This is believed to be the largest single empowerment initiative ever undertaken in the Namibian private sector and could not identify our company more closely with the country at large."

Bidvest Namibia's brand bouquet includes Walton's, Rennie's Travel, McCarthy, Minolco, Caterplus, Globe Electrical, Manica and several more.

"An operation like Manica is a major player in the national transport industry," adds Kankondi, "while Namsoy is vital to the country's long-term food security."

Black economic empowerment (BEE) was built into the share offer as Bidvest Group is an empowerment pace-setter in its home South African market. The flagship BEE entity at Bidvest Namibia is the Ovanhu consortium. After the listing it will own an anticipated 14,81% of the company's issued share at an estimated initial value of N\$220,6 million.

Ahead of the listing, Namsoy Community Trust and the Bidvest Namibia Investment Community Trust (part of Ovanhu and partners of Bidvest Namibia) were engaged on community upliftment, a key pillar of BEE. Minority interests with a value of more than N\$120 million long featured in the underlying ownership of Bidvest Namibia through empowered entities such as Namsoy, Trachurus, Twafika, Rennie's Travel, Walvis Bay Stevedoring and Walvis Bay Airport Services.

Says Kankondi: "The scale and significance of our planned listing have been a big talking-point for investors, customers, staff and public at large, though it was no secret that a listing has been our strategic goal for some time."

“However, this time last year the looming international credit crisis was a concern. A year down the line, recessionary fears are easing and investor appetite has revived. We're quietly confident the listing will be successful.”

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