

# Technology for 2010 stadiums and airport projects prioritised

Back Siemens is positioning itself as a technology provider for mechanical and electrical equipment for South Africa's ten soccer World Cup stadiums and also 2010-related airport development.

The division that is doing so is Siemens special infrastructural projects division for the 2010 World Cup stadiums, headed by Dr Raj Siriram, divisional MD of postal automation, parcel and freight systems, airport logistics and special infrastructural projects.

When Engineering News called to interview Dr Siriram, he had just returned from Germany, where he has been studying how best the company can position itself for South Africa's 2010 stadium-development programme.

He regards the company's greatest comparative advantage as its ability to be a one-stop shop for the required mechanical and electrical equipment and services.

"The benefit that we bring is that we are a project management and systems-integration house, which gives us the capacity to pull together the required technologies and offer the benefit of working with a single partner who has competencies in large turnkey projects. "Our comparative advantage comes from being a single source offering a totally-integrated supply, which can be important in meeting tight deadlines.

"There is considerable benefit in clients having to manage only one vendor," he says.

Siemens is, for instance, able to integrate technology for mass stadium access control, communication within stadiums, evacuations from the stadiums, stadium back-up power systems, stadium lighting and a host of ancillary mechanical and electrical products and services.

Sriram says that the company is in an excellent position to draw, not only on its experiences at this year's World Cup in Germany, but also on its experience at the Olympic Games in Athens and on its current involvement in the upcoming Olympic Games in Beijing.

He sees Siemens as being in an exceptionally strong position to migrate global best practice to South Africa's 2010 World Cup, without losing that which is essentially South African.

Although Siemens is able to offer turnkey solutions and favours positioning itself as a turnkey service provider, Siriram emphasises that his division prides itself in its flexibility towards the needs of the market.

"We will fit in with the way that these developments go ahead and, if not turnkey, we will tailor ourselves to meet the needs of our customers," he promises.

The division's other current priority is airport development, which is also 2010-related.

Sriram reports that the company is bidding on work at OR Tambo Airport, Cape Town International Airport and also the proposed greenfield construction of the new Dube Tradeport in Kwazulu-Natal.

The company is partnering selected companies in order to provide full mechanical-and- electrical technology provision to these airport projects, embracing conveyor systems, information-technology systems, communication links, cargo-handling systems and many other ancillary products and services.

“We are well positioned to provide the latest technologies to these infrastructure projects,” Siriram assures, adding that Siemens is, in fact, in a key position to contribute to South Africa’s overall R372-billion capital-expenditure on energy and transport infrastructure.

Postal automation and freight Siriram believes that the division has much to offer in the field of postal automation, parcel and freight systems.

He says that economic growth has placed new emphasis on South Africa’s logistics and freight capability.

In these areas Siemens is able to provide technologies that relate to the movement of people and goods, to radio-frequency-identification technology, to technologies that enhance inventory management and, again, many related aspects. He finds that shorter windows of opportunity are compelling many clients, across the value chain, to espouse technologies that reduce inventories and improve efficiencies.

“The value-added services that we are able to offer in the arena of inventory reduction and efficiency improvement are increasingly bringing benefits, not only to our clients, but also end consumers,” Siriram says.

The Siemens division has been successful in creating one of the southern hemisphere’s largest and most highly automated warehouses in building Sasol’s new R157-million warehouse in its Midlands site in Sasolburg, which is now in the final stages of commissioning. Moreover, the division has installed ten postal and automation machines in Johannesburg, Cape Town and Durban for the South African Post Office.

Siram reports that the Post Office, together with Siemens, successfully completed the R61-million advanced manufacturing technologies (AMT) installation, which demonstrates how successful AMT solutions may be implemented and also provides lessons for managers implementing AMTs.

The division has also contributed successfully to the building of distribution centres for two of South Africa’s leading cellular telecommunication service providers, one of the centres being currently under construction and the other completed some time ago.

The division, which already has a solid order book, is currently bidding R800-million worth of additional work across its offering.

The division has a fully-professional cross-disciplined team, embracing acquisition, design, project management and commissioning.

“We have a huge technology service provider in Siemens Germany and we can draw from competencies throughout the global group,” he says.

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