

MINING SUPPLIER

AIMS AT R500M ORDERS

MIP Process Technologies (MIP), a new, 51% black-owned and managed producer and supplier of customised process solutions for the mining, minerals processing and related industries, has made an immediate impact in South Africa and further afield on the African continent.

“Our company was only established last year, and we had a great deal to do in terms of ensuring that all our systems were in place and setting up our administrative and technical network,” explains MIP managing director Philip Hoff. “We literally only started marketing from February this year, and in a matter of five months we have confirmed orders worth close to R25 million, and are tendering for jobs worth a combined total in excess of R500 million.

“Our product range includes: thickeners; clarifiers; attrition scrubbers and flocculent plants, all of which are designed, developed and manufactured by ourselves.”

Hoff underlines MIP’s insistence on excelling at service levels. “Because the loss of skills in South Africa has led to a general deterioration in customer focus, it is our intention to be



MIP Process Technologies managing director Phillip Hoff.

truly customer-centric, with outstanding levels of customer service. Our products are fully and regularly tested at our own pilot plant facility before delivery – so the customer knows he is getting a proven product.”

During the first half of this year MIP was awarded several smaller contracts. “Then in late May we received our first major order from the Luita copper and cobalt mine in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The order is for two 21-metre diameter clarifiers and two fully automatic flocculent plants of our own design, and is worth an overall amount of more than R20 million,” Hoff says.

Luita is the flagship operation of Central African Mining and Exploration Company (Camec), and is located in the Katanga Province. It is the biggest under-roof facility of its kind in Africa, and has a

targeted template capacity of 100,000 tonnes of copper cathode and 12,000 tonnes of cobalt cathode by the end of 2008. This will make Camec one of the biggest producers of cobalt concentrate in the world.

“The application for which our products will be used is the clarification of pregnant liquor solution (PLS), which is received in overflow from the heap leach plant before moving on to the solvent extraction plant. We are looking to produce a clarified overflow with less than 50 parts per million of solids, to prevent reduction in efficiencies in the solvent extraction process.

“We are already manufacturing the equipment, we will start delivery and installation in September,



An 8 m thickener designed, built and installed by MIP in the Witbank area.

and our equipment is scheduled for commissioning in early October,” Hoff says.

The other major order awarded to MIP is from Harmony Gold Mining’s Phakisa mine in the Free State. It is a R1 million order for a linear screen which is scheduled for delivery in November.

“The ore milled at this mine contains a large number of wood chips which have to be removed,” Hoff explains. “The screens are to remove these wood chips and other foreign materials such as plastics, which would impede the leaching efficiency of the gold.”

Quite apart from the design, development, manufacture and marketing of its own products, MIP is also keen to represent companies that fit in with and complement its philosophy and strategy of customer focus and customer service.

“To this end,” Hoff says, “we have managed to secure an agency for mixers from an American-based company, whose name will be announced as soon as we have signed the final documents. This company is among the top mixer suppliers in the world and we will represent it on the African continent. Its strategy goes hand in hand with



A 300 litre test attrition scrubber designed and built by MIP for trials in its pilot plant.

ours in terms of customer focus, superior products and latest technology.

“We also intend looking at similar arrangements with other suitable companies, and we are negotiating with one other company at the moment. We hope to finalise these negotiations by the end of September, and to be representing the new company as of October,” he says. “This means that we will be in a position to supply an entire suite of products to the mining industry.”

MIP is quoting for a large number of projects, and not only in South Africa. “Although our aim – as a 51% black-owned company – was primarily to serve South African industry – we are in fact finding a large measure of success outside South Africa, to the extent that most of our activity is in other parts of Africa,” Hoff says.

“We are quoting for large projects in Zambia, the DRC and as far afield as Ghana. The jobs we are quoting on amount to around R500 million and one project alone is for more than R300 million.”

Hoff estimates that the market for MIP products in Africa is probably of the order of R2 to R3 billion per annum. **MRA**