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Agri-business draws empowerment partner

InteliChem Group, the Stellenbosch-based provider of crop solutions to the agricultural industry, has announced a transaction in which diversified majority black-owned and -controlled investment company Masimong Holdings acquired a 47,6% interest for an undisclosed sum in the company.

The transaction paves the way for one of the first major black empowerment transactions in the agriculture input sector. All suspensive conditions were met, and the transaction became effective on 30 October 2019.

The shareholding originated from the Agri-Vie private equity fund exiting InteliChem due to the expiry of the fund's term.

Making the announcement, InteliChem CEO Gideon Hefer said that the Masimong shareholding will complement the vision of InteliChem to grow its intelligent crop solutions offering and contribute to the inclusive

growth of the South African agricultural industry.

He said: "As a group with a broad footprint in South Africa, we have engaged in a comprehensive transformation plan as part of our future growth path. The involvement of Masimong is an important building block in the execution of this strategy."

"Masimong is an important strategic partner who will not only help to elevate the group and its profile, but also assist the group to expand its leading role in the input sector."

Masimong identified agriculture as a key investment sector, and has already confirmed its intent with previous investments in both the primary and secondary agriculture sectors.

The company is in the process of investigating other investment opportunities in the sector and believes that there are exciting growth opportunities in the South African market space.

Masimong CEO Althea Discala said: "We are excited to join InteliChem as a key



InteliChem CEO Gideon Hefer

shareholder as part of our vision towards making strategic investments in the agricultural industry. The complementary vision of the two enterprises will provide unique opportunities that would be mutually beneficial."

Both parties believe there are a number of opportunities for collaboration, where Masimong could assist InteliChem in its growth initiatives.

About Masimong
 Masimong is a diversified majority black-owned and -

controlled investment company focused on driving sustainable long-term growth, and value creation of sizeable listed and unlisted businesses in its investment portfolio.

Masimong has firm roots in the mining industry, with mining investments comprising the largest portion of its portfolio. It has, however, diversified into agricultural and financial services as well as industrial investments to take advantage of value-creation opportunities.

The group is strategically committed to continuously growing its asset base within these four core sectors, and aims to create a best-in-class investment company that makes a significant contribution to the growth and development of South Africa as a nation.

About InteliChem

The InteliChem group of companies is a provider of crop solutions to the agricultural industry and is represented through a combination of high growth companies in crop protection, speciality plant

nutrition, product development, seeds as well as independent and impartial consultation services.

The group is committed to continuously offering specialist products and services as a holistic set of solutions for crop production. Through the years a unique and differentiated portfolio of complementary businesses and solutions have been developed.

This enables InteliChem to offer a comprehensive value proposition to its customers in order to optimise yields and quality while mitigating risks in the quest to enhance sustainable agriculture.

The InteliChem group strives to remain the trusted business partner to growers by providing intelligent crop solutions. They believe that through their innovative in-house registrations, comprehensive product portfolio and wealth of expertise, the InteliChem group can fulfill this role in a dynamic agricultural environment where sustainable crop production is imperative in ensuring food security.

Fuel price up, down despite 'flat' Rand

October's mixed fuel price scenario has continued into November, with petrol showing an increase and other fuels dropping. This is according to the Automobile Association (AA), which was commenting on unaudited mid-month fuel price data released by the Central Energy Fund.

The association says the underlying fundamentals have been treading water in the first half of November.

This has given rise to a predicted increase of 11 cents a litre for 95 octane petrol, and a seven-cent rise for 93 octane petrol. Diesel is looking at a decrease, with current data showing an 18-cent decrease while illuminating paraffin is set to drop by 21 cents.

"The average Rand/US dollar exchange rate has been essentially flat, contributing a small decrease of about 3.5

cents to fuel prices as it maintains a level around R14.90 to the dollar," the AA notes. "The picture for oil is similar, with the international prices of both petrol and diesel having run neck-and-neck for several days last week."

The association says the economy has taken a breather with Moody's choosing to give South Africa the benefit of the doubt with a change of outlook, rather than a downgrade.

"Petrol price increases at this time of year will come as bad news for many people who will be travelling on holiday in December," the AA concludes. "However, the predicted drop in the diesel price means input costs in for instance the manufacturing and agricultural sectors remain relatively untouched in relation to fuel costs, which is good news."

Architects recognised for design

A design project undertaken by a local firm has received a merit award for architecture from the South African Institute of Architects (SAIA). Of five award winners singled out in the competition, only one hails from the Western Cape.

Marcus Smit Jacobs Architects, which is represented in Stellenbosch and Somerset West, won the SAIA Mpumalanga Region Award for Architecture 2019. The firm scored of 90% for its work on the Silvan Safari Lodge, a luxury property situated in the Sabi Sands Game Reserve, which is part of the greater Kruger National Park.

"We are truly grateful for the recognition that the project has received from SAIA Mpumalanga," says company founder and architect Marcus Smit. "It was a rare opportunity to work with the owners and local building contractors on such a special location. Since the opening of the lodge the feedback has been tremendous. We hope many visitors will experience this special place for years to come."

Commenting on the entry, the SAIA jury said Silvan Safari Lodge "needs to be commended for its contribution to high craft, innovation, and exceptionally engaging spaces, truly an architectural achievement of safari minimalism."

The judges' report also highlighted spaces and flows as "intriguing, generous and engaging", the use of "sustainable technologies without compromising the comfort".

They said: "The entire complex of buildings was meticulously



The main lounge area of the lodge



Marcus Smit (right) and fellow architect Hannes Jacobs

detailed with intricate material connections, achieving high-end, luxurious architecture without gratuitous spending. Novel

applications... break the mould of the traditional safari lodge tectonics."

As winner of a regional award, the project now becomes a finalist in the assessment of national winners.

Marcus Smit Jacobs Architects was established in 1996 by Marcus Smit, and joined by fellow architect, Hannes Jacobs, as business partner, in 2014. The firm is registered with the South African Council for the Architectural Profession, The South African Institute for Architects and The Cape Institute for Architecture.

Over the years its work has been acknowledged with awards for excellence and attention by industry-leading publications.

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