

SA government honours GE with Siyabonga Business Award

The South African government has awarded the Siyabonga Business Award to General Electric (GE). The inaugural award was created to recognise US businesses and individuals who are making an exceptional contribution to South Africa's economy.



Finance Minister Nhlanhla Nene (left) presented the award to Tim Schweikert, president & CEO of GE South Africa (right) at a gala dinner in the USA.

Since first establishing a presence in South Africa more than 100 years ago, GE has been committed to driving local innovation, investing in South African talent through training and skills development programmes, supporting and scaling small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and uplifting communities through corporate social investments. Through its transport, healthcare and energy infrastructure projects, the company has helped to create a more sustainable future for all South Africans.

Working with its BEE partner, the Mineworkers Investment Company, GE South Africa Technologies (GESAT) has implemented a series of important programmes to bolster South Africa's railroad industry and enable exports of South African-made locomotives. GESAT is currently working with Transnet Engineering to build next-generation locomotives at a facility near Pretoria.

Skills development

To date, GESAT has worked with Transnet Engineering to upskill its employees through 150,000 hours of skills development training worth more than R480m. In addition, the company has invested R1.7bn over the last three years in preferential procurement as part of a competitive supplier development programme.

In June 2014, GE announced a R700m investment in two initiatives, which will enable the development of critical skills and small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in South Africa. An investment of R500m has been allocated to the creation of a research and development facility that will become GE's local centre of excellence for innovation and technology transfer. A further R200m was invested in a supplier development vehicle aimed at supporting and enabling an environment for SMEs to thrive and be active participants in growing the economy.

"We are deeply honoured by this recognition from the South African government. For more than 100 years, GE has been committed to developing local solutions to the challenges facing South Africa," said Tim Schweikert, president and CEO of GE South Africa and of GE Transportation for sub-Saharan Africa.

Child healthcare

In addition to driving localisation through its business, GE has also demonstrated an impressive track record of investment in South Africa's communities. Earlier this year, the company donated R10m to the Nelson Mandela Children's Fund to help realise the dream of the late former president Nelson Mandela to improve quality child healthcare.

Also in support of young South Africans, the company recently handed over two fully-equipped, state-of-the-art classroom containers and a service container to the Kromdraai community, north-west of Johannesburg, to improve the lives of children who may otherwise not have access to basic education facilities.

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