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PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP

Hey, big spenders

Bidders have been invited for the construction of a multibillion-rand building in the Eastern Cape

Luyolo Mkentane
mkentanel@businesslive.co.za

● JSE-listed property group Rebo-sis is among the bidders gunning for a mega public-private partnership to develop new headquarters for the Eastern Cape government. The province wants bidders to build, finance and operate the multibillion-rand project, though it expects to contribute R1.1bn of state money to the cost of construction.

Eastern Cape premier Lubabalo Oscar Mabuyane says the project will bring the province's departments under one roof in the capital, Bhisho.

The province's seven departments are spread across East Lon-

don, Bhisho and King William's Town. "This has hindered the effective and efficient co-ordination of the government's work in rolling out development programmes," says Mabuyane.

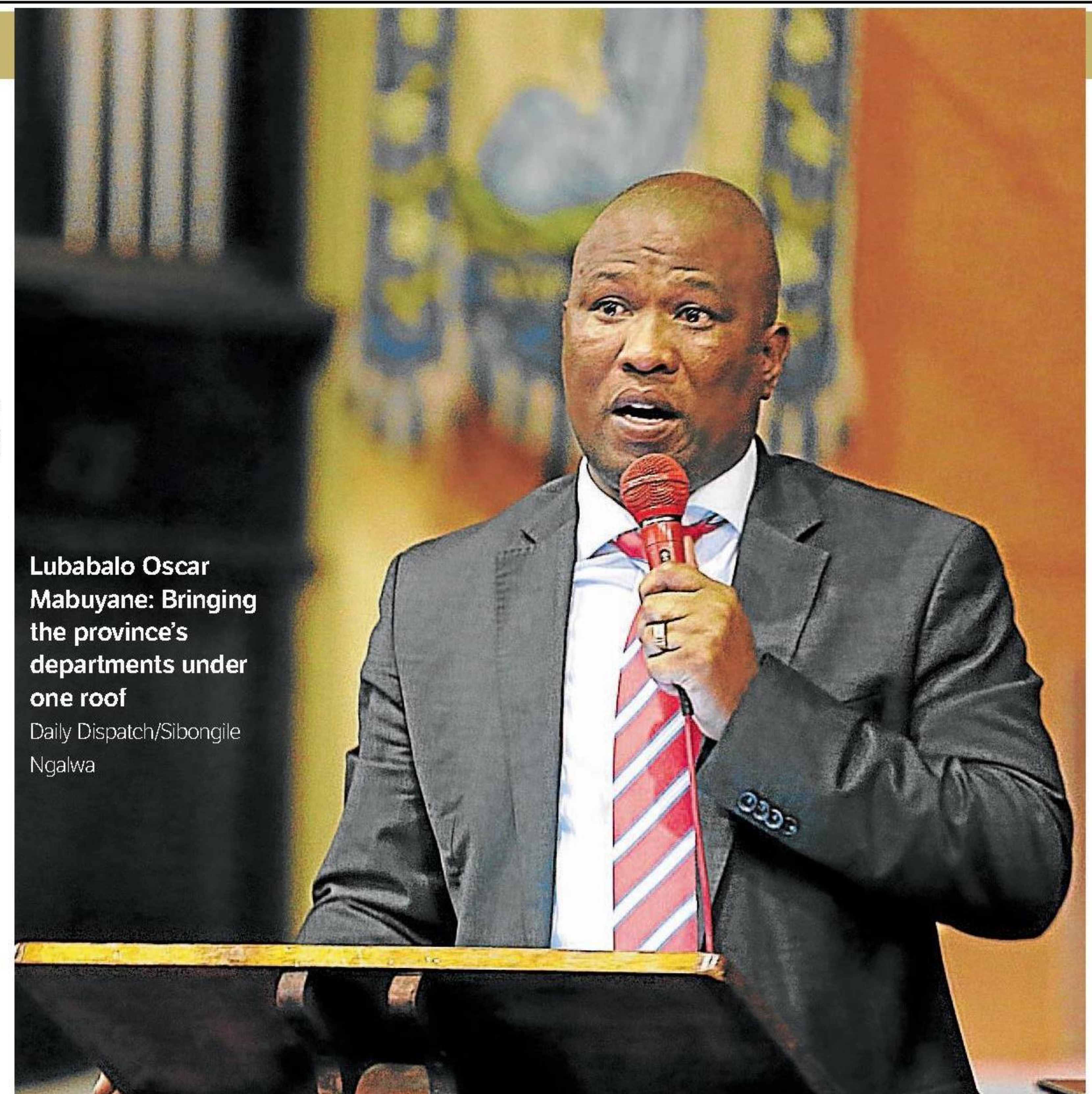
The development of the Bhisho Precinct, he says, will allow people better access to government services.

"We are looking for capable businesses that have the skill, resources and capability to work with us to finance, build, operate and transfer the new office precinct in Bhisho," the premier says.

A deadline to submit bids was extended from October 31 to January 2020 following a request from bidders, due to its size and nature.

Rebo-sis CEO Sisa Ngebulana tells the FM the company is "very keen" on this project.

Mabuyane says the completion of the project will save the provincial government money in renting



Lubabalo Oscar Mabuyane: Bringing the province's departments under one roof
Daily Dispatch/Sibongile Ngalwa

offices from private businesses, noting: "This current arrangement make us vulnerable to price escalation. Through this catalytic project, we will be able to reduce those costs and invest money in other development areas that require urgent investment.

"Our priority is to use this project to stimulate the local economy by creating opportunities through the value chain for businesses from the province."

Public works spokesperson Prince Mlimandlela Ndamase says 162 potential bidders attended the compulsory briefing session of the project. Construction is expected to take three years.

"The project is a large development and will bring opportunities for SMMEs in the construction sector and other related services that will arise during the construction and post-construction phases," he says. ✕