

Rebosis among bidders for provincial government headquarters

Luyolo Mkentane

JSE-listed property group Rebosis 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.

Premier Oscar Mabuyane has said the project will bring the province's departments under one roof in the capital, Bhisho.

The seven departments are spread across East London, 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," Mabuyane said.

The development of the Bhisho Precinct 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 said.

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

Rebosis CEO Sisa Ngebulana told the FM the company was very keen on the project.

Mabuyane said the completion of the project would save the provincial government money in renting offices from private businesses.

"This current arrangement makes us vulnerable to price escalation. Through this cat-

alytic project, we will be able to reduce those costs and invest money in other development areas that require urgent investment," he said.

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

Public works spokesperson

Prince Mlimandlela Ndamase said 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." – *BusinessLIVE*