

Mozambique has a rapidly growing resources sector.

## Mozambique magic

A fortuitous meeting between two Mozambique-focused companies is set to help lay the framework for the African nation to take control of its growing resources sector.

By **Andrew Snelling**

**F**uturo Skills is a subsidiary of Australian minerals explorer Rubicon Resources, which has begun turning its focus towards establishing a presence in the Mozambican resources services sector.

To this end, Futuro has been working towards constructing a medical and resources training facility in the port city of Pemba in Mozambique's north, with the aim of helping meet local content requirements at resources projects in the region.

Through mutual contacts in Mozambique a connection between this project and the work of skills competency standards and workforce development organisation SkillsDMC was established.

SkillsDMC is undertaking an Australian government-funded project to develop a skills competency framework for the Mozambican government that will determine the skills profiles and competency requirements of resources companies in relation to local and expatriate workforces.

Rubicon CEO Richard Carcenac and SkillsDMC deputy CEO Danika Bakalich met face to face at the Africa Down Under Conference in September, and the ball started rolling quickly from there.

"We are looking to go to the resources and gas companies, essentially with a package where we will take the project from the

cradle to the grave for them from a local content and human resources perspective," Carcenac said of the resulting partnership between the companies.

"We will create the workforce plans for them and make sure all their plans are entirely compliant with the legislation at the time.

"We'll develop the qualifications and skills frameworks that they need to make sure that people are trained to Australian standards and then Rubicon, through its subsidiary Futuro Skills, will step in and develop all of the training packages, provide all of the trainers and issue the certificates."

According to Futuro, its Pemba facility will cover a 2.4 hectare site and offer a fully integrated training facility with pre-employment medical screening and on-site candidate accommodation.

The facility will have a capacity to process up to 10,000 enrolments per year and is scheduled to receive its first intake by mid-2016.

By training local workforces in the north of the country, Carcenac hopes to combat pervasive illiteracy and innumeracy in the population and boost the number of local skilled workers available in the largely north-based resources industry.

"The skills that are available in Mozambique are in the wrong place," Carcenac told *Australia's Mining Monthly*.

"If you look at the country, it's very long along the north to south axis. Most of the skills and infrastructure sit in the southern half of the country and most of the opportunities sit in the north. That's where all the mineral wealth is."

Mozambique, which is number 10 on a World Bank list of the world's 13 fastest-growing economies, has put strict local content laws in place to make sure it is not left out of the resources boom.

Proposed LNG projects in the region have the potential to create 15,000 direct jobs and 685,000 indirect jobs, while generating approximately \$US39 billion per annum for the Mozambican economy.

On the mineral resources side of things, the country plays host to coal, graphite, minerals sands and gemstones.

Mozambican labour laws set a local employment ratio requiring companies to employ up to 19 locals for every expatriate worker, though this figure changes depending on the size of the company.

For SkillsDMC, its work with its counterpart within the Mozambique Ministry of Education to build skills and competency frameworks through industry engagement is integral to supporting this push for local content.

"It's critically important that industry is an advisor to governments when building competency and skills standards because if it doesn't relate to what happens in the work environment then there's no point," SkillsDMC's Bakalich said.

"The project that we're delivering in Mozambique is to take the expertise we have as an industry skills council and apply that to the Mozambique environment.

"The value of that is the Mozambique government, through the Ministry of Education, will be able to consult with industry operating in Mozambique and define and shape competency standards that will underpin the education and training environment and meet the workforce needs of industry."

Acting as a conduit for this engagement with industry has been a Skills Advisory Group, which is made up of significant stakeholders, one of which is Futuro, thanks to the partnership with SkillsDMC.

"For us it's a very strategic and positive partnership," Bakalich said.

"The way Futuro operates is with full transparency and their business model, in our view, turns out and provides the solutions that the Mozambique environment is seeking right now.

"I think that the value we have is in Australian standards being applied in a rapidly growing market. So I think it's a good partnership all round."

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