

# REMARKABLE AND OUTSTANDING

Interview with MUNYADZIWA RIKHOTSO,  
FOUNDER AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,  
NSOVO ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTING

*The heights by great men*

*Reached and kept*

*Were not attained by sudden flight*

*But they, while their companion slept*

*Were toiling upward in the night*

- Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

## **Please outline the company's gender policies**

As a black woman-owned and managed company, the implementation of policies, procedures, and strategies towards gender empowerment comes instinctively, effortlessly, and it has thus become a norm. From infancy, Nsovo has strived to empower young qualified black women in the field of environmental sciences, and our very first staff intake comprised of two

women who today hold prominent positions in the industry. Nsovo empowers women by placing them at the forefront, and this is evident in the organisational structure where 100% of top management are women.

As a business, we seek to continually create an environment where both men and women enjoy the same opportunities, benefits, rewards, and resources regardless of gender, age, or orientation. Our policy is to hire, retain, and recognise the best-qualified and most dedicated professionals, and afford them opportunities for personal growth, professional development, and advancement.

We continue to build an organisation that seeks to ensure maximum value for our clients, advocating for environmental sustainability and building meaningful relationships and partnerships with our clients.

## **What have been your major achievements?**

The restructuring of the South African economy, support for emerging entrepreneurs as well as preferential procurement has set the impetus for the creation, growth, and emergence of a vibrant mix of various businesses across all industries. It is upon this background that Nsovo Environmental Consulting was founded to become a major player in this exciting time of our country's history.

The company's ability to emerge and thrive in an industry that is racially imbalanced and to have claimed a share of the market in spite of the challenges is a great achievement. We can affirm that, amongst the many responsibilities that we have, one that we continue to accomplish is to convince the world that we are equally capable and competent. It is this spirit of endurance and sustained excellence that earned us our flagship project back in 2012. Nsovo was appointed to provide environmental control officer services over three years for one of the biggest

construction sites in Southern Africa – The Eskom Kusile Power Station. We managed to prove our ability and excellence, and we are currently serving our second term on the same project.

We managed to build a reputable business with a national footprint and over 150 completed projects over the years. The growth of the company has also played a considerable role in addressing unemployment.

We have inspired many black African women to find their niche and embark on their unique business ventures while we support them and build capacity where we can. We consider this a remarkable achievement.

## **What are Nsovo's social responsibility initiatives?**

We fully recognise that we have a role to play within the community - to impact, empower, influence and uplift the lives of those outside our workspace. Over the years, Nsovo has contributed to the community in the following ways:

- Annual bursary for underprivileged university students.
- Platinum sponsor of Vutivi I Ndzhaka ([www.vutivi.org](http://www.vutivi.org)), an NGO based in Tzaneen that is focused on the mentorship of school pupils in the Mafarana circuit.
- Financial support to upcoming companies owned by previously disadvantaged individuals. We have seen a number of these businesses grow to become self-sufficient with multimillion-rand turnovers.
- Support of The Samson and Mavis Makhado Foundation which continues the legacy that Dr. Samson Makhado built for over 45 years in the field of Christian education in Africa and the general community development in rural communities of Limpopo.
- Donation of approximately 100 pairs of school shoes to pupils in different parts of South Africa and beyond.



**MUNYADZIWA RIKHOTSO**  
Founder and Executive Director.

### About Nsovo Environmental Consulting

Nsovo Environmental Consulting was registered in 2007 and has been in operation for 12 years. We are an independent environmental consulting firm that offers a broad range of environmental services to clients throughout South Africa and beyond, and provide advice and solutions to clients by focusing on their requirements, developing close working relationships and understanding their projects and businesses in today's global environment. Our key role in the South African economy is to be advocates and ambassadors of sustainability and the green economy.

### Ownership

Nsovo is 100% black women-owned and managed by Munyadziwa Rikhotso, a 37-year-old from rural Limpopo.

### Growth

From humble beginnings, the company has grown into an integral part of the South African environmental consulting space and has claimed its fair share in the sustainability market. It has witnessed exponential growth in staff complement, assignments and turnover and today is recognised as a principal role player in the sustainability landscape of South Africa and remains one of the fastest growing and preferred consulting firms.

### Vision

To be the preferred environmental consultancy that provides a vehicle to move from the world we live to the world we seek.

### Mission

To provide environmental management services that offer innovative solutions, the highest calibre of services, the best quality products, efficiency, proficient technical expertise, and maximum value for our clients' investment.

### Which female leaders inspire you the most, and why?

Indra Nooyi, the former CEO of PepsiCo from whom I have adopted the 5-C leadership approach, competency, courage, confidence, communication skills, and compass. I admire her leadership style, energy, work ethic, and, most importantly, her humble nature, which is also one of my mother's characteristics. From these two souls I have learned the art of contentment and gratefulness and the art of remaining humble.

They have brought me to the full realisation that you are blessed to be a blessing, and being a blessing is not merely giving material things but giving yourself for the benefit of others.

### Five tips on surviving and thriving in business

#### *Be the purple cow*

As a result of our stringent legislation the sustainability space has seen tremendous growth in the last few years. We have seen companies mushrooming and demanding their share in a price-driven market. Nonetheless, we chose not to compete on price, but continuously reaffirm clients of our highest calibre of service and product.

Our daily mojo is to be the purple cow; we seek to be remarkable and outstanding. Amongst other things this is what drives our business and separates us from the rest.

#### *Our organisational culture*

Who we are, what we are, and how we complete our tasks is our tie-breaker and our first point of difference. We continually nurture and nourish our culture, as it is the only aspect that drives our reason for being and forms the foundation of our success.

#### *Our faith*

This strengthens our core values as a business and it allows us to build solid, meaningful, long-lasting relationships with our clients. Our values drive us to excel in

all that we do, and this alone is a powerful, inexpensive marketing tool as we get repeat clients all the time.

#### *Our work before reward policy*

It is a known fact that one of the key reasons for being in business is to make money, however, unlike many other companies, our focus is to deliver to the client the best quality product and ensure maximum value for their investment. We have a policy that says "work before the reward", all our clients will bear testimony to that.

We are fully aware that the difference between a good and bad business is the relationship with money. We, therefore, are steadfast and refuse to be money-driven.

#### *Passion and focus*

Both these drivers have allowed us to do business with ease. We have mastered our trade and continue to excel in what we do.

We firmly believe and bear testimony to the ideology that says when you pursue the top virtue of excellence, it brings you to a new level of success. As a result, we are gradually becoming a category of one, which has earned us preferred supplier status and allowed us to retain our clients.



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