

## **Czech software firm wants African opportunities**

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PRAGUE-based software company IBA Group is on the prowl for new business opportunities in SA, with the aim of using the country as a platform to expand into Africa.

IBA provides software that can be used by companies for client and supplier relation management, planning and budgeting, and information security. The benefits of its solutions include effective resource management and reduced expenses.

IBA Group president Sergei Levteev said yesterday SA was a key market for many companies wanting to expand into Africa. IBA was in discussions with potential clients in sectors such as mining, manufacturing, and financial institutions.

"We want to be visible in SA as we believe that our solutions could benefit big South African corporates," he said. SA is not new to IBA Group. Twelve years ago it worked on a project to develop a shopping portal and online card applications for one of the big four banks. Five years ago, IBA decided to partner with local company Diverse IT Connections to speed up its entry in Southern Africa.

Diverse IT Connections executive Helmut Kumnig said there were lots of requests from big companies and although not every enquiry and consultation resulted in a contract, the company would strive to assist local companies to meet their IT needs.

Kirill Degtiarenko, executive director for IBA's business development centre, said geographical expansion of most international companies started in SA and "if you settle well here then you can look for further expansions in the African continent". He said IBA had received enquiries about its software products related to mainframe computing for critical applications and bulk data processing from local companies. "It came as a surprise as we were not sure if there will be a demand for it in SA. We were also not sure if there are a lot of mainframe installations here," he said.

IBA is a dominant player in Eastern Europe and this month it opened an office in Ukraine, becoming the 10th country in the world where the group has a permanent presence.

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