



THE RISE OF EKO ATLANTIC NIGERIA'S VITAL NEW CITY

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A mile and a half offshore from the Atlantic battered coastline of Victoria Island in Lagos, a bold transformation of reclaiming eroded land from a violent ocean is well under way.

A mighty sea wall has been extended to a kilometre in length, protecting newly created land that has already grown in size to an impressive one million square metres – two engineering milestones in a dramatic new city development project that promises to open a vital new gateway into Africa.

Eko Atlantic is more than the name of the new city. It is a way of life that will embrace a unique design concept for West Africa, tailored to make Eko Atlantic a pleasure to live in and work.

The multibillion-dollar project is funded by international as well as local banks – notably First Bank, FCMB and GT Bank in Nigeria. Together with private investors the development incorporates imaginative and environmentally conscious plans from Royal Haskoning: one of the world's leading companies of consultants, architects and urban planners from Amsterdam in the Netherlands.

The Financial Centre of Africa

Eko Atlantic will be a new home to 250,000 people and the workplace of another 150,000 in the nine square kilometre development. Its waterfront areas, tree-lined streets, efficient transport systems and mixed use plots will make the city a superb example of urban development and will propel the status of Lagos as the financial centre of Africa.

The first-phase International Financial Centre will stand at the heart of the Financial District in Eko Atlantic. The city will also have six more districts, linked by 20 kilometres of internal waterways offering eco-friendly public transport, efficient tramways and clear, open roads.

Each of the proposed seven districts will display its own characteristics but the infrastructure design will be standardized across the city. The districts are

spread across six square kilometres of prime development land which is for sale. They are known as Ocean Front, Harbour Lights, Financial District, Eko Drive, Marina, Avenues and Downtown. One of the most innovative aspects of the urban design is a total ban on street parking. Every building will be sized according to the integral parking space it can accommodate, preventing traffic jams and noisy polluted streets from blighting the new city.

Energy Self-sufficient and Clean Water

Perhaps the most important aspect of all is that Eko Atlantic will have its own self-generated electricity grid, sewage treatment plant and, it is planned, safe drinking water for all as well as state of the art communications. 'There is unlimited investment potential across every aspect of creating this city,' says David Frame the Managing Director of South Energyx Nigeria, the city planners and developers of Eko Atlantic. 'We are not looking for people coming in to build single-storey structures,' he adds, 'We are looking at selling plots where high-rise buildings would be constructed with such facilities as hotels, office and residential complexes, shopping malls and entertainment areas. With a 7 kilometre ocean front promenade as wide as the Champs Elysees in Paris,' says Frame, 'perhaps only the sky is the limit in Eko Atlantic.'

Lagos Population: 25 million by 2015

A key driving factor behind the project is the intense and growing pressure within and around the saturated commercial centre of Victoria Island where resources are already stretched beyond capacity, not least the availability of highly priced land to develop which is in desperately short supply.

Lagos is already creaking under the strain of the 15 million people who live and work there now but resources will be stretched to breaking point by the population explosion to 25 million expected by 2015. The new Eko Atlantic city will create highly valuable space, a wealth of much needed

jobs and countless business opportunities, heralding a new era of modern urban living in Nigeria. 'This is real,' said Prince Adesegun Oniru, State Commissioner for Waterfront and Infrastructure Development in Lagos. 'This is going to change not only the face of Lagos, but of West Africa as well.'

Today Eko Atlantic is evolving rapidly from its visionary design concept into an impressive and tangible reality. Substantial parts of the future city have already been acquired by investors. Major progress is being made on building the vast foundations of the new city, which will form an African Manhattan. 'We are just celebrating two major milestones,' says David Frame of South Energyx, 'We have one million square metres of land that has now been reclaimed, reversing a hundred years of coastal erosion and The Great Wall of Lagos, a fantastic feat of modern engineering, is now one kilometre in length.'

The Great Wall of Lagos

The Great Wall of Lagos, as it has become known locally, is a rock-solid revetment that will protect the fragile coastline and the newly reclaimed land from the surge of the Atlantic. This major wall construction undergoes a growth spurt of about 6 metres each day and dredging work continues round the clock. The newly appointed Belgian company, Dredging International, a leader in this field, is fast-tracking the sand-filling work, aiming to move 140 million tons or 95 million cubic metres of sand on which Eko Atlantic will start to stand by the end of 2016. 'The major part of the wall will be completed within the next four years,' says Frame, adding, 'It will eventually span 7 kilometres and stand 9 metres above sea level.'

The feats of skilled engineering works and the inventiveness of the international development teams are impressive. For example, rigorous testing in Denmark has shown that the design of The Great Wall will cope with everything that the Atlantic can throw at it. 'Our tests demonstrated that the Eko Atlantic revetment is completely safe,' says Flemming Schlutter, urban engineer at DHI,

the world-renowned Danish hydraulic research centre where scientifically controlled scale model tests were successfully conducted. 'The structure was able to withstand the very worst Atlantic surge expected to occur in 100 years,' he adds.

Positive Environmental Impact

The positive environmental impact of the wall is a phenomenon in itself; the land on which Eko Atlantic will be built is land that has been lost to the sea over the last century. By building the wall, the developers are not only securing the seaward boundary of their new city but the whole of low-lying Victoria Island of Lagos has been arrested and this has been converted into a great asset or prosperity,' says Bola Tinubu, the former Governor of Lagos, under whose term in office the concept originated.

His successor, Governor Babatunde Fashola, also a strong supporter of Eko Atlantic, says, 'The city demonstrates a commitment of the government to protect lives and properties.' The coastal erosion challenge that Lagos recognizes today represents fallout from the increasing threat to the environment from climate change leading to rising water levels. 'As a coastal city we remain absolutely committed to ensure that we safeguard the future for the next generation,' stresses Fashola.

Recognition of the project by the Clinton Global Initiative (CGI) sparked international interest in Eko Atlantic late last year. 'I think that the Clinton initiative has become one of the biggest forums, if not the biggest, for discussing issues surrounding the global challenge to the environment,' notes Governor Fashola.

'The design of the new city reflects our responsibility to the environment,' says David Frame from South Energyx. 'Eko Atlantic will be a sustainable city, clean and energy efficient with minimal carbon emissions. A truly 21st century city to be proud of.'

