

KZN PUBLIC WORKS EPWP COORDINATION EMPOWERS OFFICIALS FOR EXCELLENCY IN THE COORDINATION AND IMPLEMENTATION IN THE PROVINCE – *Story and images by Sphiwe Maphumulo*

The KwaZulu-Natal Department of Public Works organized a capacity building workshop on EPWP Labour Intensive Construction Methods as held on Monday the 7th of March 2016 at the KZN Sharks Board in Durban. Since the provincial launch of the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) on Friday the 20th of March 2015, Public Works is now responsible for the overall coordination and implementation of EPWP in the province. Through this mandate, Public Works monitors and report on the programme's performance by all public bodies as well as on contribution and performance in the Province.



Infrastructure Project Leaders, Professionals and Works Inspectors paying attention to the presentation by International Labour Organisation's (ILO) Mr. Albert Uyiro during EPWP Capacity Building LIC Workshop.

Amongst the guests who attended the workshop were 127 officials from EPWP Head Office, EPWP units from the Regions and Districts including representatives from the International Labour Organisation (ILO), National Department of Public Works (EPWP Large Projects Section) and KZN Provincial Department of Transport.

The workshop was aimed at capacitating officials involved in the coordination and implementation of the EPWP about how to design projects using Labour Intensive Construction (LIC) methods. This will in turn supplement EPWP's efforts in promoting the use of Labour Intensive Methodologies such as the use of appropriate mix of labour and machines in the maintenance and construction of infrastructure projects. The emphasis was on empowering officials to understanding their roles as stakeholders during various stages of the project lifecycle (identification, planning, designing, implementation, maintenance, monitoring and evaluation) thus improving the Departments capability and performance in the implementation of all EPWP projects.



EPWP Coordination Deputy Manager Ms. Ningi Mbanjwa making a convincing point while attending officials listen carefully.

During the session an overview presentation on Public Works' EPWP performance for 2015/16 – including challenges and interventions on improving the implementation of EPWP was done. The workshop also dealt with identification and designing of Department of Public Works' projects that seek to enhance job creation and aligning them to EPWP requirements as well as balancing the technical and socio-economic aspects of the project. In addition, deliberations on the essentials for EPWP compliance and individual roles on EPWP compliance were interrogated. Most attendees were energized and had expressed enthusiasm and willingness to fulfil their individual roles towards the fulfilment of EPWP coordination and implementation.



KZN EPWP Senior Manager, Mr. Xolani Xulu and NDPW Infrastructure Sector Coordinator, Mr. Mfuneko Kango hard at work during the workshop proceedings.

Despite the complexities involved in the coordination, reporting and implementation of EPWP projects, the department is forging ahead in terms of its role with a view of achieving infrastructure delivery in the province. The use of Labour Intensive Construction Methods during the implementation of EPWP projects emphasizes the creation of employment (work) opportunities for the needy local communities without compromising the quality of the project.

As of December 2015 which is the third quarter of 2015/16, the EPWP Phase 3 has created a total of 384 685 work opportunities since the implementation of the EPWP Phase 3 (2014-2019). An amount of R43.077 million has been spent equating to 53% against the total of transferred amount of R80.746 million for EPWP Integrated Incentive Grant Allocation for Provincial Departments.

It must also be noted with appreciation that the programme has registered some pockets of excellence since inception. The KZN EPWP won the Best Province and Best Metro under Infrastructure as well as Best Local Municipality Project (Msunduzi Municipality – WBI Maintenance Programme) under Environment and Culture Sector at the Annual EPWP KAMOSO Awards held in Pretoria on the 26 November 2015.

While the focus of EPWP was on construction, this programme has achieved far more than just the provision of income on construction related activities as it continues to spread its wings in improving the lives of the poor through the provision of a wide range of services and assets such as the road infrastructure for better access to markets, schools and clinics.

The programme in some instances has shifted its focus and provides communities with home-based care for the sick and the elderly, it also provides Environmental sustainability through planting of trees under the KZN Integrated Greening Programme (Sustainable Land based Livelihoods). Beside other programme involvement and activities, the communities of KwaZulu-Natal are guaranteed employment opportunities and skills development through EPWP projects promoting Labour Intensive Construction Methods which are coordinated by the KZN Department of Public Works.