

Public Works' Ethekwini Region garners support to contractors

By Vusi Shabalala

The contractors' workshop kicked-off with that unsuspecting enthusiasm as it was officially opened by the Development Officer: Extended Public Works Programmes (EPWP), Mr Sipho Msomi from the Ethekwini Regional Office, Mayville in Durban. The session objective was to amongst others ensuring that the current and potential public works construction clientele have the required financial knowhow and the technical knowledge and expertise to prudently and professionally perform all their respective projects in a workman-like ways. In addition, to improve their knowledge of understanding all relevant contractual requirements when making any deals with government and in this case the Department of Public Works.



Seen here above is Mr Sipho Msomi, the Development Officer: EPWP during his address at the workshop.

It is commendable that the management for Public Works' Ethekwini Regional Office from Ethekwini Region saw this befitting and thus coordinated a positive and fruitful work session for the benefit of the current as well as newly and emerging contractors within the Ethekwini region. It was also quite encouraging seeing such numbers of attendees with approximately 32 newly emerging contractors who attended the workshop.

As Public Works' Ethekwini Region garners support to contractors it was also thought provoking when direct and prescriptive presentations were conducted by both representatives from Public Works and stakeholders the private sector. A presentation by Ms Babongile Mkhize from AQRate Verification Services which mainly focused on pertinent contractor related matters was indeed "spot-on" in addressing the under mentioned issues:

- BBBEE verification;
- Training and awareness of contractors;
- Scenario development planning and strategic planning;
- PT re-deal ownership verification;
- Exempted micro enterprise (EME) certificates; and
- Procurement validity training.



Ms Babongile Mkhize, a staunch Public Works' stakeholder from AQRate Verification Services making her presentation while Ms Thandi Ngcobo, Development Officer: EPWP looks on.

Making a good start is important, however ensuring that the end result is achieved is what really counts and although we are confident this will happen, there is still much work to be done by all parties involved in this financial year 2012/2013 to make this achievable and a reality.

Mr Lindani Ngcobo, a departmental official from the Supply Chain Management (SCM), based at the Ethekwini region was the relevant and pillar respondent and gave clear elucidations to all major and thorny issues that were voiced by most contractors during the session. This was when it was realised during a "question-answer" session that indeed there is still a lot of work ahead to be done.



Mr Lindani Ngcobo from Public Works' Supply Chain Management (SCM) responding to contractors during the "Q&A" session. Seated is Mr Msomi making notes.

"One of the major issues about contractors is that we are not reporting on all jobs created and the President made mention of this matter in his State of the Nation address" remarked Mr Sipho Msomi from EPWP. He further emphasized "A million rand contract should at least create a minimum of ten jobs". Among the issues raised by contractors which needed urgent attention was the personal involvement of the MEC for Public Works at most contractors' forum sessions if not all. According to them the active participation of the leadership also contributes to the effective success of the department and the delivery of its mandates.



Here above are some of the contractors who had the opportunity to attend the workshop

To a lay mans' point of view one would attest the importance of this typical workshop which in essence is a process that should be scheduled continuously because Public Works' projects are evolving and within the contractual environment one would need to adapt to new developments and changes. Debates or discussions of this nature and magnitude are itself a tool that inculcates in a contractor (as a client) and a project manager (Public Works' representative) the responsibility to conform to integrity and sound leadership when running a project with government.



Ms Thandi Ngcobo a Development Officer: EPWP from Ethekwini Region played a sterling role for the coordination of the contractors' works

It is acknowledged and understandable that government has a lot offer but equally so, the community and all sectors involved should play their role in ensuring that government meets its mandates by working together for a better future. The continuous of stakeholder involvement and participation at all Public Works' projects and programmes remains a lifeline for a never ending lifetime. It is up to all parties to commit to the course.