

PRESS RELEASE

Tender irregularities hamper infrastructure development

The Built Environment Professions Grouping (BEPs) collectively voiced their concerns pertaining to infrastructure bottlenecks or lack of infrastructure delivery as well as inadequacies in mechanisms to procure their professional services.

The BEP grouping consists of the Association of Construction Health and Safety Management; Association of Construction Project Managers; Association of South African Quantity Surveyors; Consulting Engineers South Africa; Institute for Landscape Architecture in South Africa; South African Black Technical & Allied Careers Organisation and the South African Institute of Architects.

While, these professionals welcome Government's revised infrastructure budget in terms of the 18 Strategic Integrated Projects as a positive move, they argue that the barrier to infrastructure delivery lies in the lack of transparency during the procurement processes related to the allocation of professional services and tenders. This manifests itself in the form of obscure decision-making processes and unequal distribution of professional services bolstered by a high potential for corruption coupled with weak accountability mechanisms and lack of scrutiny over allocation of public funds.

The BEPs believe that one of the mechanisms to curb possible corruption is by having greater transparency in the whole procurement cycle and construction contracts awarded should be openly published, which will also increase accountability by infrastructure stakeholders. The BEPs further believe that Government must include a compulsory evaluation and monitoring unit tasked to, amongst others, ensure that Professionals and departments comply with legislation and offers made with respect to skills and skills transfer made during the bid stage.

Matching price with quality and preference - professional service providers must be appointed based on a best weighting for price, quality and preference. Best practice in the procurement of professional services is achieved by using a mutually agreed selection methodology (within the legal procurement frameworks) that does not detract from the economic and skills transformation objectives of government.

BEPs are calling for a review of the scoring system for procurement and are of the opinion that the rules that dictate the procurement of general goods and services should be amended to include a specific section that deals with the procurement of professional services. Therefore, a new set of procurement policy systems must be developed for procure BEPs and associated services.

It is vital that the government and the BEPs work together to create a conducive sustainable non-exclusive procurement environment with definitive transformation objectives to ensure efficient project service delivery as well as the sustainable development and growth of the built environment industry.

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