

PRESS RELEASE

Empowering Municipal Engineers

Corruption and tenderpreneurship, fraud, financial mismanagement, lack of understanding of technical issues/ priorities, difficulties with job creation and skills shortages are just some of the challenges that face municipal engineers in South Africa.

Consulting Engineers South Africa (CESA) has frequently lobbied and voiced its concern regarding the incapacitation of municipal engineers, which is perhaps one of the issues at the centre of service delivery protests.

CESA believes that if South Africa is serious about the empowerment of properly qualified municipal engineers, Government should invest in various interventions such as training, development and capacitating of young engineers for employment by the local authorities and make the municipal engineering profession attractive.

Currently municipal planning is done rather superficially and only a real municipal engineer and a competent team of visionary planners can sort that out. This calls for innovation in unlocking projects, a win-win mentality, and an entrepreneurial delivery mechanism with sharing of risks.

CESA calls for the embracing of the municipal engineer as a trusted advisor as well as creating a working environment to attract and retain municipal engineers. The municipal engineers must be incentivized (long term employment, purpose in life, emoluments, respect and freedom) and unqualified people should be discouraged from trying to do the job of the municipal engineer.

Infrastructure delivery's biggest stumbling block is the lack of business integrity which involves among other things; socialising with clients, conflict of interest, use of agents and partners, collusion and bribery and the disregard of procurement regulations.

CESA strongly urges structural changes to the way in which municipal engineers operate including the abandonment of long term employment contracts for key technical and managerial staff. Tender and bid evaluation committees must include technical, legal and financial executives in joint sittings and professional teams must be allowed to compile reports in an independent manner on tenders for the bid evaluation committees.

The South African procurement legislation should include a Bribery and Corruption Act such as the UK Bribery Act of 2010, enabling the Courts to prosecute corruption and related issues more effectively as well as the naming and shaming of firms contravening the requirements of the Act.

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