

IDT launches investigation into municipality corruption

MAYIBONGWE MAQHINA

THE Independent Development Trust (IDT) has launched an investigation into one of the projects it was implementing on behalf of the Msunduzi Municipality in Pietermaritzburg.

The probe relates to a R489-million tender that the implementing agent awarded for an electricity infrastructure programme in KwaZulu-Natal's capital city.

Briefing Parliament's public works committee recently, IDT chief executive Coceko Pakade (pictured) said irregularities were uncovered on the IDT projects within the Msunduzi Municipality, where it was the implementing partner in delivering social infrastructure and social development programme management services.

"The total allocated budget for the programme was R489.4m. Of this amount, R291m was physically transferred to the IDT, with the last tranche paid in April 2013.

The bulk of this was spent, and unspent funds of R208 851 were refunded to ULM on January 8, 2015."

Pakade said certain irregularities relating to the project were reported with regards to the procurement process followed in the hiring of the service provider, incorrect management fees charged and overpayments made to the service provider.

"The IDT board enlisted the services of the National Treasury's Audit Investigation Unit to conduct a forensic investigation. The National Treasury was finalising the matter and its report was expected to be presented to the board of trustees soon," he said.



IDT board chairman Somadoda Fikeni said a whistle-blower had informed IDT of corruption happening with its projects at the municipality and the matter was immediately handed over to National Treasury.

The IDT has already met with investigators, who were given powers to investigate everything, including taking laptops of all the executives and pursuing criminal charges if possible, he said.

The Asset Forfeiture Unit and the police would be brought on board, he added.

Fikeni assured the committee that there would be no "sacred cows", no matter how highly placed those involved were.