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Ghanaian officials on study tour of S/Africa's public works programme

APA-Pretoria (South Africa)

Ghana has deployed a team of senior officials and engineers to South Africa on a study tour to learn about construction of roads using labour intensive methods of this country's Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP), a senior official from the West African state said on Wednesday.

According to the Ghanaian delegation's leader Kwasi Osafo Ampadu the tour is aimed at increasing the number of people employed in the construction of feeder roads in Ghana.

Ampadu, who is deputy director responsible for planning in the Ghanaian Ministry of Feeder Roads, said the delegation kicked off its week-long study tour with a meeting with South Africa's deputy director general responsible for the EPWP in the Ministry of Public Works, Stanley Henderson, to discuss the EPWP in detail.

"Ghana is undertaking labour-based technology in the construction of our feeder roads in order to create more work opportunities for our people.

"In our research, we realised that South Africa is advanced in the creation of work opportunities through the EPWP's labour based construction method, hence our undertaking this study tour," Ampadu said.

He explained that while in the country, they have been visiting EPWP projects to see how labour-based technology is implemented.

"We are also interested in the knowledge and technology that you have developed in the implementation of your EPWP," Ampadu said.

He added that the meeting with Henderson had given them new ideas on how to ramp-up their labour based technology, which is currently at its infancy.

"By the end of our study tour on Friday we hope to have learned as much as we can about the programme. In fact, whatever we learn we will replicate it when we get to Ghana," Ampadu said.

Commenting on the study tour by the Ghanaian delegation, Henderson said the visit was vital because it offered the government of South Africa an opportunity to share its experiences on the EPWP with other countries in the world.

"The study tour of the Ghanaian government ties in neatly with the EPWP's focus on the construction and maintenance of low volume roads through labour intensive methods.

“Constructing and maintaining roads labour intensively creates much needed work opportunities for our people, especially the poor, unskilled and semi-skilled,” Henderson explained.

He said as the Ghanaian delegation tour the EPWP projects in various parts of the country, they are being exposed to different types of roads that are constructed using the EPWP’s labour intensive method.

On Tuesday, the delegates, together with local EPWP officials, visited one EPWP project in Soshanguve in Pretoria and on Wednesday they are visiting another project in Cape Town.

The Ghanaians are also accompanied by officials from the International Labour Organisation. They will also visit the Council for Science and Industrial Research and will on Friday conclude their visit with a debriefing meeting at the offices of the EPWP in Pretoria.

The EPWP is a government initiative aimed at reducing poverty and unemployment through the provision of training and short term to medium term labour intensive work opportunities to the poor and unemployed South Africans.