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Not your face? Then City of Joburg won't pay you

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The biometric identification validation system, 20 November 2018. Picture: Tracy Lee Stark

The new biometric technology will deal with several issues that 'plagued' Gauteng's Expanded Public Works Programme previously, including corruption.

The Gauteng department of infrastructure development (DID) turned to technology for a solution to increased corruption within Gauteng's Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) and unveiled the identification validation system yesterday.

This new biometric system verifies the identity of every beneficiary through facial recognition and fingerprint data. It then provides a record of the beneficiaries' attendance and hours worked, and generates payment reports.

DID MEC Jacob Mamabolo said the new technology would deal with several issues that "plagued" the EPWP previously, including corruption. It would also streamline administration that previously allowed identity duplications and ghost beneficiaries.

"The auditor-general has consistently highlighted concerns that the EPWP system was not secure enough and that there were too many loopholes allowing the system to be manipulated," Mamabolo said. "There are many crooks who are benefiting from this system, and we need to put an end to this."

“We have worked for a long time to come up with a solution and we have now been able to add another level of technological innovation to our work here at GDID ... the facial recognition platform.

“Coupled with the fingerprint data, it ensures that we are able to authenticate the identity of every person working in EPWP and detect and prevent duplicates, eliminating the chance of ghost beneficiaries being created.

“You can’t beat this system. It is going to clean up EPWP.”

In addition to cleaning up the system, Mamabolo also said the new technology would assist the department in its commitment to its critical poverty alleviation programme to create a million job opportunities.

“By cleaning up EPWP, we will ensure that those who are intended to benefit from this programme are able to do so with dignity.

“They will no longer be at the mercy of those who have been able to hijack the programme for their own corrupt purposes.

“We are bringing the bright light of transparency, efficiency and accountability to shine into this programme that is all about empowering our people with opportunity,” said Mamabolo.

By Chisom Jennifer Okoye – news@citizen.co.za