New biometric system to 'clean up' EPWP

A NEW facial recognition and biometric identification system for Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) beneficiaries has been launched.

The Gauteng Department of Infrastructure Development (GDID) recently announced that it would be using a new high-tech system to close loopholes that previously allowed fraudulent and corrupt activities in EPWP projects.

Speaking at the launch in Johannesburg recently, Gauteng MEC for Infrastructure Development, Jacob Mamabolo, said with the new system they will now be able to deal with corruption.

"We will now be able to root out the practice of duplicate beneficiaries where people fraudulently register at multiple sites. We have to deal with the problem of corruption. We are aware that some of the participants in the EPWP projects were using ID documents of deceased people and that some were participating in many EPWP projects," Mamabolo said.

Mamabolo said they were determined to clean up all the corruption in the EPWP projects.

"With the new system, there will be no more allegations that the managers did not capture the hours correctly. People will be paid according to the hours they have worked," he said.

Mamabolo said the manual system used previously to enrol workers and track time worked was open to widespread abuse. "Too often it was cooked, manipulated and corrupted."

The Gauteng province is the first province to launch the new system. The system biometrically verifies the identity of every EPWP beneficiary, records their attendance on site, the hours worked and ultimately generates payment reports.

"You will never again be at the mercy of any official when it comes to receiving your due stipend," Mamabolo said.

According to Mamabolo, the system will be made available in all the EPWP sites in the province.

EPWP beneficiaries have been given three months to register their details on the new system.

For the system to recognise the beneficiaries, they first have to be registered on the system. The system also stores qualifications of the beneficiaries and it can also issue reports about the beneficiary's performance on projects.

The system recognises the beneficiary's face and records the time the beneficiary arrived and knocked off. The system can also be used to issue reference letters.

According to the department, the new system uses facial recognition and fingerprint readers to biometrically verify the identity of every EPWP beneficiary.

The system records their attendance on site, the hours worked and ultimately generates payment reports.

The system will ensure that the right beneficiaries are paid in line with the actual hours worked and that they do so at the site allocated to them.

Sol Plaatje Municipality spokesperson, Sello Matsie, confirmed yesterday that there were no plans currently to implement a similar system in Kimberley.

– Staff Reporter