

Commission names worst government departments for non-payment of invoices

Nonkululeko Njilo

The Public Service Commission (PSC) has identified the departments of water and sanitation alongside public works and infrastructure as the most delinquent government entities for the non-payment of invoices.

This was an indication of an overall lack of internal controls and consequence management mechanisms to uphold accountability, it said.

These sentiments were expressed by commissioner Mike Seloane yesterday, when the commission released its quarterly bulletin, which focused on the professionalisation of the public service and non-payment of government suppliers by departments, among other things.

Seloane said though there had been a slight improvement in certain departments settling their invoices, some continued to pay suppliers late or not at all.

“What is concerning to the PSC is that some departments even fail to submit compliance reports to the National Treasury despite this being a specific requirement of the PFMA [Public Finance Management Act] and the National Treasury’s instruction.

“During that period of monitoring, the PSC has been inundated with requests for assistance by suppliers that have not been paid by government institutions.

“This shows the overall lack of internal controls and consequence management mechanisms to ensure the upholding of accountability within these departments and/or government institutions.

“The PSC has on numerous occasions engaged these departments to propose measures and mitigate the challenges experienced by these departments,” Seloane said.

The commission slammed the department of agriculture, land reform and rural development, alongside the department of environment, forestry and fisheries, which failed to submit the required exception reports as required by the Treasury.

“What is more, the department of environment, forestry and fisheries has not submitted its exception reports to the National Treasury for the whole of

the 2020/2021 financial year,” Seloane said.

“This is despite the PSC consistently highlighting its concern in this regard, suggesting that the ... department is not taking the advice of the PSC as a constitutional body seriously.”

A provincial breakdown of non-payment of suppliers as of March revealed the Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal, the North West, Mpumalanga and Gauteng as the worst culprits and repeat defaulters.

The Eastern Cape failed to settle 64,711 invoices between January and March, worth more than R7bn combined.

“The PSC wants to express its concern regarding the significant increases in the Eastern Cape for both the numbers of invoices and the related cost,” Seloane.

The commission said it had recorded 872 cases of alleged corruption in the fourth quarter of the 2020/2021 financial year. This was a decrease compared with 1,591 cases recorded in the previous year.

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