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INFRASTRUCTURE

Lending a Hand

Public Works details efforts to support energy security

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Public Works and Infrastructure Minister **Sihle Zikalala** on August 20 said his department was supporting efforts by the Electricity Minister to improve energy security.

Among its efforts, the department was working to urgently acquire properties for the expansion of State-owned Eskom's transmission infrastructure, as well as accelerating the expropriation applications for Eskom servitudes.

The Department of Public Works and Infrastructure (DPWI) has also processed a request by Eskom for servitudes on State land in various provinces and has received 45 requests from Eskom, of which 25 have been approved by Zikalala.

A further six requests are being processed and are currently at the evaluation and feasibility stage.

The DPWI has also received requests for servitude for portions of land from independent power producers (IPPs) on State land. Two IPPs have made applications, with one requesting about 19 ha and another about 13 ha of land.

"We are processing these requests and we will subject them to a conveyancing process by the department," Zikalala said.

"We are committed to expediting the work of infrastructure development and releasing available State-owned land for all national programmes. To quicken the pace, the DPWI and the Minister of Electricity have formed a task team to fast-track expropriation applications and identify and address implementation challenges.

"Resolving our energy crisis is our collective priority," he said.

Meanwhile, in terms of Strategic Infrastructure Project (SIP) 28, the solar photovoltaic systems and water savings in government buildings programme, also known as the Integrated Resource Efficiency and Renewable Programme (iREREP), the DPWI has released a request for proposals (RFP).

The RFP contains four projects that are spread across the country, with another three projects already packaged and expected to be released shortly.

"There has been broad interest from the market, with a significant number of potential bidders registering for the programme and more than 90 companies having registered



SIHLE ZIKALALA

We are committed to expediting infrastructure development

for the first bid window," Zikalala pointed out.

The first bid window has been extended to allow government to interact with the private sector and various other stakeholders on salient features of the iREREP and the RFP.

"The programme is very important for the South African government as a SIP, and we are working on rolling it out at national and provincial and local government levels.

"Further, in the energy efficiency space, Infrastructure South Africa is currently finalising support for the project preparation of the Solar Water Initiatives Programme (SIP 33).

"Between January and July, the total value of projects reported under the SIP programme include R164-billion worth of projects in procurement, as reported by the various project sponsors and owners, and R245-billion worth of projects are in the construction phase."

Since the gazetting of the SIPs in 2020, some headway has been made, with several projects completed to the value of about R4.63-billion.

Projects completed were mostly covered within the Transport (including the Small Harbours in the Western Cape) and Social Housing Programme. Five out of 12 South African National Roads Agency-gazetted projects and four social housing projects were completed. Additionally, the Scatec Kenhardt 1, 2 and 3 renewable energy projects, in the Northern Cape, under SIP 20, a Risk Mitigation Independent Power Producer Procurement Programme, will be completed during the current financial year, Zikalala said. 🇷🇵