

DPWI set to tighten the screws on construction and project management compliance

The Department of Public Works and Infrastructure Deputy Minister, Mr Sihle Zikalala, has indicated that his Department is pressing ahead with setting up the Office of the Engineer-General South Africa as soon as possible. The setting up of this office will promote engineering excellence while providing the leadership required to bridge gaps in regulation. This will ensure compliance with engineering standards and oversee large-scale engineering projects that are critical to South Africa's economic growth.

Deputy Minister Zikalala was delivering a key-note address at the three-day 2025 Construction Business & Project Management Conference held at the UCT Graduate School of Business in Cape Town. The DM's presentation at the conference focused on Policy as a catalyst to drive strategies for integrating sustainability in construction and project management.

In light of recent tragedies such as the George building collapse in the Western Cape, DM Zikalala reiterated the urgent need to bridge the gap between regulation and compliance, placing construction safety, and global standards at the forefront of DPWI's agenda.

"In the aftermath of the tragic George Building collapse last year that left 34 people dead, we need to look to conferences like this to move beyond preaching about safety, to actually ensure that safety is vigorously enforced.

"The conference must stimulate our imagination and push us to adopt innovation and technology to better develop and deliver sustainable infrastructure. We need to revitalize industry efforts of promoting green building designs, and ensuring that technology and sustainability are core to the country's infrastructure plans," he said.

The Deputy Minister pointed out that the government needs the private sector to come to the party in terms of service delivery through the Public Private Partnership (PPP) model.

Deputy Minister Zikalala emphasised the need for the industry to embrace the agenda of transformation in a more vigorous manner. He said that the industry still reflects the legacy patterns of exclusion. He said that many rural communities remain underserved, and women and youth are under-represented in both construction employment and decision-making. The sector must therefore evolve to not just be more productive— but also to be more equitable

He undertook to use more policy enforcement as a tool to influence markets incentivise sustainability and drive systemic transformation. He said that as a sector that underpins South Africa's economic infrastructure and human development, the construction and project management are under growing scrutiny, not only for their ability to deliver, but also for how they deliver.

"Policy is not a constraint but a catalyst. It is the lever through which we can build a resilient infrastructure economy, an inclusive workforce and a climate-conscious construction sector," he concluded.

Ends.