

## Changing construction industry creates challenges

The changing landscape of the engineering and construction sectors will expect from those involved in the industry to drive innovation, diversity and collaboration to make the change a positive one.



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"This is not necessarily a negative situation," says Themba Moyo, COO of MMQS. "It just means that we need to think differently about the industry as a whole and the role that both the public and private sector need to play to ensure we continue to gain momentum, roll out infrastructure plans and contribute to GDP growth."

To unlock investment opportunities, a sound investment climate is needed, together with a focus on local and regional synergies that addresses the challenges of infrastructure. "As such, risk management is key," adds Moyo. "We need to create a stable yet enabling environment - labour stability and productivity is a prerequisite - all based on sound governance."

Traditionally, there has been limited quantity surveying (QS) involvement in infrastructure projects. These projects were left mainly to the engineers to run, however, due to the changing industry complexities and larger budgets, the role of the QS is starting to be seen as an integral part of any infrastructure development right from the planning phase of the project.

### Multi-use projects

"We are starting to see more large scale multi-use projects such as Waterfall Estate which not only has residential units, but a school, a hospital, retail blocks etc," says Moyo. "Companies are no longer just building a single-use structure - they are focused on more large scale infrastructure projects and this does differ from our African and international counterparts. It just means we are catching up with the rest of the continent and the global market, and that the role of the QS is evolving."

"We are moving away from being the one that typically only manages budgets and spreadsheets, to being cost manager - a person who is able to provide invaluable consultation and cost management services to clients and contractors," continues Moyo. "In fact, the emerging cost manager is intrinsically involved in defining, managing and cementing all four pillars - scope, quality, time and cost - towards the overall success of any project which with the changing industry has certainly become more dynamic."

"The role of the QS has changed substantially from about 30 years ago when all we did was provide the quantities and costs of materials that would be needed for projects. Now, we have to play a more strategic role - one of cost and contract advisor - as technology has made the traditional role of the QS redundant."

## **Collaboration is needed**

On larger or more complex projects, for instance, having a cost engineering specialist within the consortium who can assist in optimising processes and putting efficient financial control measures in place, will be beneficial overall and help ensure specific project objectives are met.

"Going forward construction and engineering consortiums will need to complement each other from a skill strength point of view in order to be effective. Times are changing - budgets are tighter, expectations are higher and risks are amplified - so to ensure that the construction industry is on the right path to meeting its expectations in terms of driving growth, those in the industry need to drive innovation, diversity and collaboration to make the change a positive one," concludes Moyo.

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