

QS Association: change irregular expenditure by changing the watchdog



The News24 report of irregular expenditure on the on Winnie Madikizela-Mandela Brandfort is very concerning, but commonplace. The Association of South African Quantity Surveyors (ASAQS) says this will only change if the right mix of professionals is appointed at the tender phase of infrastructure projects of all kinds.

The report by News24 states that “the quantity surveyor’s report found fruitless expenditure of R593,622 with regard to the Winnie Mandela House Project.” (<https://www.news24.com/SouthAfrica/News/exclusive-this-is-where-the-money-for-the-winnie-madikizela-mandela-brandfort-museum-went-20180413>)

“The appointment of a Quantity Surveyor to calculate and oversee projects should not be an afterthought when budget allows,” warns Larry Feinberg, executive director of the ASAQS. “We strongly recommend that the appointment of a Professional Quantity Surveyor becomes part of the legislated tender process for all projects.”

A Quantity Surveyor (QS) is best placed to identify deviations from original tenders in terms of both scope and pricing. As such, they act as the client’s watchdog. In the case of public projects, the client is ultimately the taxpayer.

One of the key issues in any public project is to ensure that the tender is awarded to the right contractor at the right price. The training undertaken by Quantity Surveyors enables them to manage the financial and legal processes of a project.

“Professional QSs are also bound by a code of conduct,” explains Feinberg. “If they are found to have contravened the code, they will lose their licence to practice as a QS.” ■

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