

SANRAL investment in the country's youth to increase, yet again

Pretoria, 26 June 2016 - SANRAL, committed to developing skills of students interested in studying and building a career within the engineering and road Infrastructure environment, has in addition to its youth programmes increased its contract participation goals for the youth.

The Construction Industry Development Board (CIDB) statistics indicates that out of 33 270 Civil Engineering registered enterprises, 10 112 (30.39%) are youth owned.

"We have presented revised contract participation goals (CPGs) to our Board of Directors in order to increase the participation of youth labour and youth-owned business on all SANRAL contracts. The revised CPGs will be applied to all contracts whether major, routine road maintenance (RRM), or community development (CD) projects," says Vusi Mona, spokesperson for the roads agency.

The new CPGs for major and RRM projects require that 20% of small-, medium- and micro-enterprises (SMMEs) sub-contracted to SANRAL projects must be youth-owned, while 40% of SMMEs on Community Development projects must be youth-owned. As for the youth labour component, 30% of the labour CPGs for major and RRM projects must be allocated to the youth, while 40% of the labour CPGs for CD projects must be allocated to the youth.

In addition, SANRAL has a number of youth programmes that encourage the youth to pursue careers in the engineering industry. These programmes expose students and graduates to the workplace (in-service training) where they acquire the experience, competencies and proficiencies required in order to adhere to the stringent standards to register as professional engineers.

"At SANRAL we are passionate and committed towards development and training. We provide intensive in-service training programmes to ensure that our graduates are competent and at the top of their respective divisions. We provide guaranteed exposure to a broad variety of disciplines in the civil engineering and built environment," says Mona.

The in-service training programmes are carried out under the guidance of engineering mentors who assist graduates to perform to their full potential. Coenraad Claassens, Northern Region Trainee Project Manager, believes that getting an education has empowered him more than he could have imagined. He received a bursary from SANRAL and is currently exposed to in-service training at SANRAL's Centre of Excellence in Port Elizabeth.

"Working at SANRAL has opened a lot of opportunities for me, especially because it requires me to register as a professional engineer within in five years. I wouldn't have received the necessary exposure at most other engineering firms," he said.

"We provide an opportunity for bursary recipients to use the workplace as an active learning environment. Opportunities are provided to graduates who acquire skills that make them employable. These programmes provide SANRAL with an opportunity to compile a database of prospective engineers for future recruitment purposes," Mona explained.

Naa'ilah Mia, a trainee project manager, said that receiving the bursary had the added advantage of employment by SANRAL. "So many of my friends struggled to find work after completing their university studies, but I didn't have that issue," she said.

Consideration is given to students who have successfully completed their first year of undergraduate study, or those currently registered for second, third and fourth year as well as those enrolling for post-graduate studies. In addition, grade 12 learners who average at least 70 percent for mathematics and science and who have applied to a university to study engineering are also invited to apply.

Mona says SANRAL granted bursaries worth over R11-million to 105 tertiary students in the 2014/15 financial year, this in addition to 172 scholarships given to high school students.