ECSA

ENGINEERING COUNCIL OF SOUTH AFRICA

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ENGINEERING COUNCIL OF SOUTH AFRICA

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CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S DESK

Reflecting on 2024 and Looking Ahead to 2025

Dr Bridget Ssamula

As we approach the conclusion of 2024, I am delighted to reflect on the Engineering Council of South Africa's (ECSA) achievements and outline our direction for the future. Guided by our 2023–2025 Strategy, which embodies our mission of fostering a thriving and representative engineering profession that is respected globally, ECSA continues to assure engineering excellence in the public interest through effective regulation. Our core values—Professionalism, Accountability, Collaboration, Transparency, and Innovation—remain integral to all our endeavours.

Organisational Performance

This year, ECSA achieved an 81% organisational performance rating, underscoring our commitment to progress and excellence. We introduced the Application Cycle Calendar for Registration in Professional and Specified Categories, accompanied by a new portal that processed 1,536 applications during Cycle 1. Governance standards were upheld with an unqualified audit opinion, supported by the development of an Organisational Governance Framework to enhance operational accountability. To bolster global partnerships, we crafted a robust International Relations Framework and Policy. In education and accreditation, 42 engineering programs were accredited, and 230 education evaluation applications were processed.

Transparency was promoted by operationalising the Vuvuzela Hotline, our whistleblowing platform, which managed three reported cases this year. We also empowered the next generation of engineers through the Candidate Application Portal, which facilitated the registration of 3,417 new candidates. Stakeholder engagement remained central to our activities, with consultations involving 39 stakeholders on the Identification of Engineering Work (IDoEW) and the realignment of roles and responsibilities through the consolidation of high-impact committees. Collectively, these efforts contribute to Sustainable Development Goal 9, which emphasises industry, innovation, and infrastructure.

Recognition Awards

ECSA's commitment to excellence and transformation was further validated through significant accolades received this year. At the

Built Environment Recognition Awards, hosted by the Council for the Built Environment (CBE) and the Construction Education and Training Authority (CETA), ECSA was honoured with two awards: the "**Council with a Substantial Number of Female Registered Professionals**" and the "**Chairperson's Award for Excellence in the Built Environment**." These awards are a testament to our strategic strides in increasing visibility, elevating the ECSA brand, and restoring its credibility. Additionally, ECSA qualified as one of South Africa's Top Gender Empowered Companies in the Engineering Sector at the 2024 Standard Bank Top Women Recognition Awards. This recognition highlights our progress in gender empowerment, with criteria such as female representation in executive roles, senior management, and women-focused skills development playing a central role. Furthermore, our Governing Council President, Refilwe Buthelezi Pr. Eng, is a finalist in the Top Women Leader in Public Sector 2024 category, further underscoring our leadership in promoting gender parity.

Stakeholder Engagements

Our engagement with Voluntary Associations (VAs) remains a cornerstone of our collaborative efforts. The VA Presidents Forum, chaired by our Governing Council President, Refilwe Buthelezi Pr Eng., provides a platform for meaningful dialogue and cooperation with 52 recognised associations. The final forum for 2024, held on 13 November, included significant discussions on the Biennial Engineering Symposium, showcasing our shared objectives and joint initiatives.

Looking Ahead

As we transition into 2025, ECSA is poised to continue its trajectory of renewal and growth. The incoming Seventh Term Governing Council will build on the foundation laid by its predecessor, ensuring the continuation of good governance. The upcoming ICT project launch will enhance stakeholder services and improve data reporting capabilities. Enforcing the IDoEW regulations will strengthen ECSA's role as an effective regulator, while the finalisation and implementation of our Revenue Framework will ensure financial sustainability. The 2025–2030 strategy, Agenda 2030, will guide us in fostering innovation and emphasising public safety through effective regulation.

As the year draws to a close, ECSA will officially close for the festive season on 17 December 2024, with skeleton staff available until 20 December. Full operations will resume on 10 January 2025. To the engineering fraternity, I extend my heartfelt gratitude for your unwavering support, engagement, and patience as we collectively shape a stronger, more dynamic profession. The appointment of the Seventh Term Governing Council is underway, and stakeholders will be kept informed of this milestone. May you all have a safe and joyous festive season. We look forward to serving you with renewed vigour in the new year.

Dr Bridget Ssamula Pr. Eng
Chief Executive Officer, ECSA

ECSA Continues with the Application Cycle Calendar for Registration in Professional and Specified Categories

As part of its ongoing efforts to streamline operations and enhance stakeholder experience, the Engineering Council of South Africa (ECSA) has implemented the Application Cycle Calendar for Registration in Professional and Specified Categories. Introduced at the beginning of 2024, this initiative aligns with ECSA's Revised Strategic Plan for 2023-2025, designed to drive renewal and growth.

The Application Cycle Calendar provides a structured timeline for submitting and processing applications for registration in professional and specified categories, ensuring greater transparency and operational efficiency. This initiative underscores ECSA's commitment to high standards of administrative justice and service excellence.

Updates on the 2nd Registration Cycle

The second application cycle, which closed on 15 August 2024, saw significant progress in processing applications:

1. **Vetting and Processing**
All applications received before 15 August 2024 have been vetted and moved to either the Experience Appraisal (EA) or Professional Review (PR) phases, depending on the date of submission and the completeness of the application.

2. **Extended Submission Period**
Applications received during the extended window (15 August to 5 September 2024) are currently in the vetting phase. These applications will progress to the EA phase once ECSA offices reopen on 15 January 2025.

3. **Incomplete Applications**
Applicants whose submissions were found to be incomplete during the second cycle were notified and given 10 days to provide the outstanding information. Those who failed to comply must resubmit their applications through the professional portal when it opens on 22 January 2025.

Looking Ahead: 2025 Application Cycles

Beginning in 2025, all professional registration applications must be submitted exclusively through the professional applications portal.

Emailed submissions will no longer be accepted, although referee reports will still be accepted via engineer@ecsa.co.za for first-cycle submissions.

This transition ensures a more streamlined and digitized application process, further enhancing efficiency and data management.

The 2025 application cycles are as follows:

01 First Cycle

Applications open
22 January - 12 March 2025

Vetting period
27 January - 4 April 2025

EA and PR interview arrangements
26 March - 6 June 2025

Interview sittings
1 May - 31 July 2025

Application outcomes
1 June - 30 August 2025

02 Second Cycle

Applications open
15 July - 30 August 2025

Vetting period
15 July - 5 September 2025

EA and PR interview arrangements
20 August - 26 September 2025

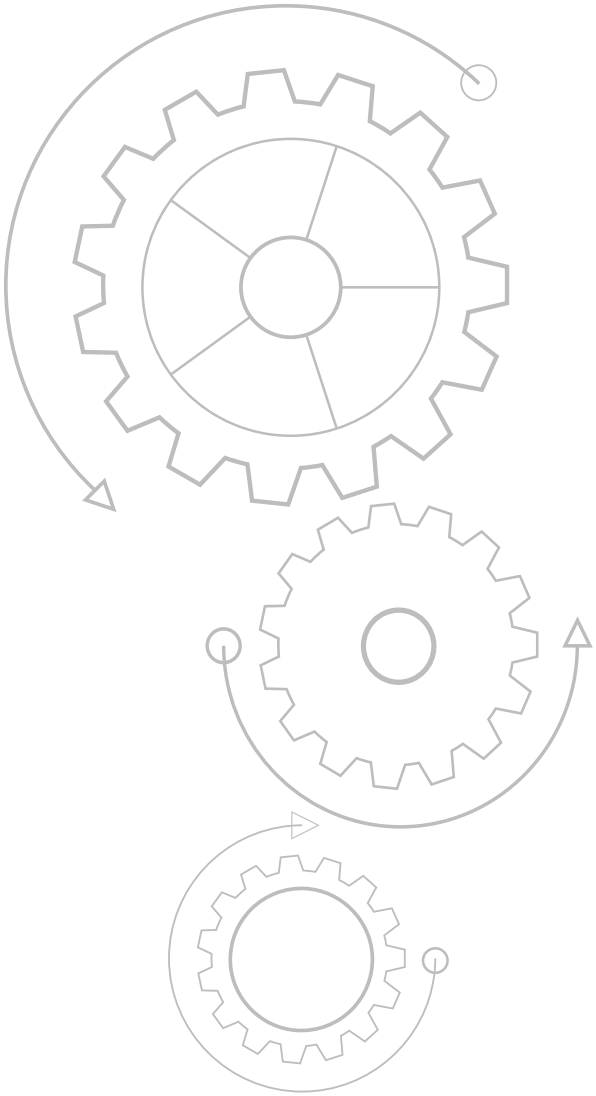
Interview sittings
1 September - 30 November 2025

Application outcomes
17 November - 15 December 2025

Enhancing Efficiency and Accountability

The introduction of the Application Cycle Calendar reflects ECSA's commitment to creating a transparent and predictable registration process. This framework supports stakeholders by providing clear timelines for each stage of the application journey, enabling applicants to plan and track their progress effectively.

ECSA encourages all applicants to familiarize themselves with the updated process and adhere to the specified timelines. By doing so, the engineering fraternity can collectively contribute to a more efficient and accountable registration system that upholds the highest standards of professionalism and service.



ECSA Strengthens Global Reach with Approved International Relations Policy

The Engineering Council of South Africa (ECSA) has taken a significant step towards bolstering its international footprint with the recent approval of its International Relations (IR) Policy by the Governing Council. This policy is a key milestone in advancing ECSA's mandate to develop, promote, and sustain bilateral and multilateral relationships aligned with its objectives and priorities. It also provides a much-needed framework to enhance global collaboration while fostering alignment with South Africa's foreign policy and domestic imperatives.

A Policy for Global Competitiveness

ECSA's International Relations Policy offers a strategic roadmap to guide its international engagements systematically. By aligning with the International Relations Framework, the policy enables ECSA to participate effectively in global forums and alliances, supporting the African Development Agenda and ensuring South African engineering qualifications remain globally competitive.

At its core, the policy emphasises ECSA's commitment to equipping its counterparts within the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and beyond. By capacitating them to meet international education and competency standards, ECSA facilitates the international mobility of engineering professionals, ensuring their acceptance within the global engineering community. Sections 13 and 14 of the Engineering Profession Act 46 of 2000 further support ECSA's ability to establish and maintain international engineering education and competencies standards, ultimately benefiting Registered Persons seeking global recognition.

Building Stronger Relationships Across Africa

ECSA has consistently prioritised the development of engineering standards across Africa. This is exemplified by the signing of Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) with the Institution of Engineers Mauritius (IEM), the Engineers Registration Board (ERB) of Botswana, and the Engineering Institution of Zambia (EIZ). These agreements signify ECSA's dedication to fostering partnerships that align with its vision of enabling engineering excellence throughout the continent.

One of ECSA's flagship initiatives is its Mentorship Programme, which capacitates African countries to join the International Engineering Alliance (IEA). This programme aims to ensure the international recognition of African engineering qualifications. Mauritius, a notable success story, became the first African country in the programme to secure provisional membership to the IEA's Washington Accord. Following this achievement, ECSA is working closely with Zambia and Botswana to help them conclude their activities during the 2024/25 financial year, further facilitating the seamless mobility of engineers across the African continent.

Capacity Building for International Engagement

ECSA's efforts to strengthen its international presence include a robust capacity-building initiative. On November 5, 2024, ECSA conducted a training session for Registered Persons to prepare them for participation in international reviews and activities under the IEA. These experts, selected for their experience in accreditation, registration, Continuing Professional Development (CPD), and policy development, now form a database of subject matter specialists who will represent ECSA in global engagements.

A Unified Vision for the Future

The approval of ECSA's International Relations Policy marks a turning point in the organization's international strategy. By fostering global partnerships, supporting capacity-building initiatives, and ensuring alignment with international standards, ECSA is paving the way for South African engineers to thrive in a globally competitive environment. This policy is not just a document; it is a testament to ECSA's commitment to advancing the engineering profession both locally and internationally.

Strengthening Professional Excellence: ECSA Updates CPD and Renewal Rules

The Engineering Council of South Africa (ECSA) has introduced a revised set of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and Renewal of Registration Rules (Revision 5), marking a pivotal moment in its mission to maintain and enhance the standards of the engineering profession. These updated rules underscore ECSA's commitment to fostering a culture of lifelong learning and ensuring that registered professionals stay aligned with evolving global standards.

As part of ECSA's mandate under the Engineering Profession Act 46 of 2000, registered professionals are required to enhance their competencies to remain effective and relevant continuously. The revised CPD rules clarify the obligations of members and provide a structured framework to help them achieve compliance, both annually and over the five-year CPD cycle.

Key highlights of the revised rules include requiring registered professionals to accumulate a minimum of 25 credits during the five-year CPD cycle, with at least five credits obtained from educational and developmental activities categorised under Category 1a. To meet compliance, professionals must also ensure that their credits span at least two of the three activity categories: Developmental Activities, Work-Based Activities, and Engineering Communities of Practice. These measures ensure a well-rounded professional development approach, equipping engineers with the skills and knowledge needed to adapt to an ever-changing industry.

Rule 8 of the CPD rules emphasises the importance of proactive planning and engagement in CPD activities. Professionals are encouraged to prioritise their annual targets to avoid falling behind on their cycle requirements. The updated framework also incorporates a robust validation process, ensuring that CPD activities meet the standards set by ECSA. Members are reminded to record their CPD activities through the ECSA portal and retain documentary proof of participation, such as certificates or attendance registers, for audit purposes.

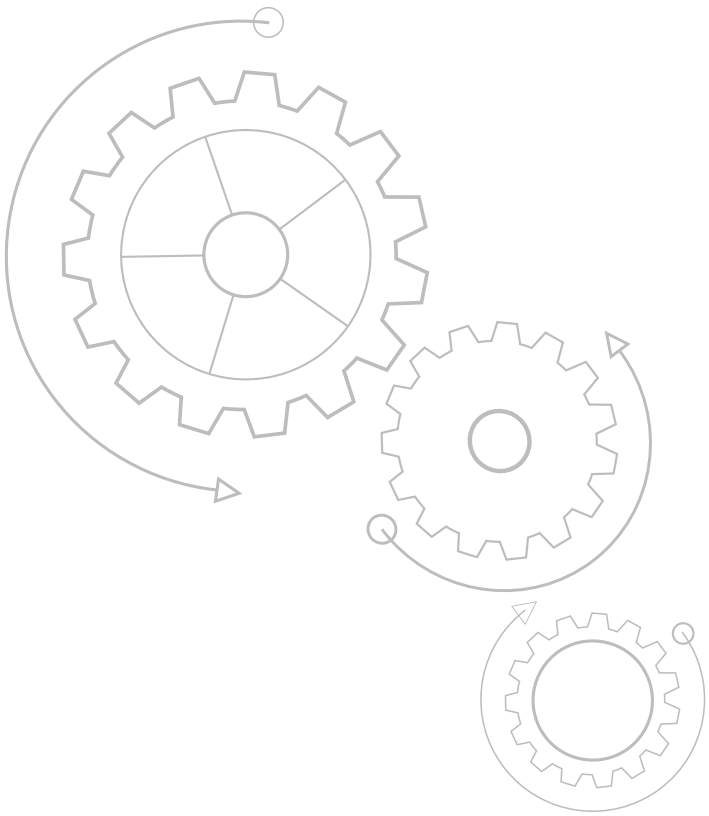
The rules also address exemptions and flexibility for professionals facing exceptional circumstances. Retired professionals aged 65 and above are exempt from CPD requirements, while partially retired members aged 50 to 64 may fulfil reduced obligations. Furthermore, professionals experiencing temporary unemployment, incapacity, or other valid challenges can apply for exemptions, ensuring that the system remains inclusive and fair.

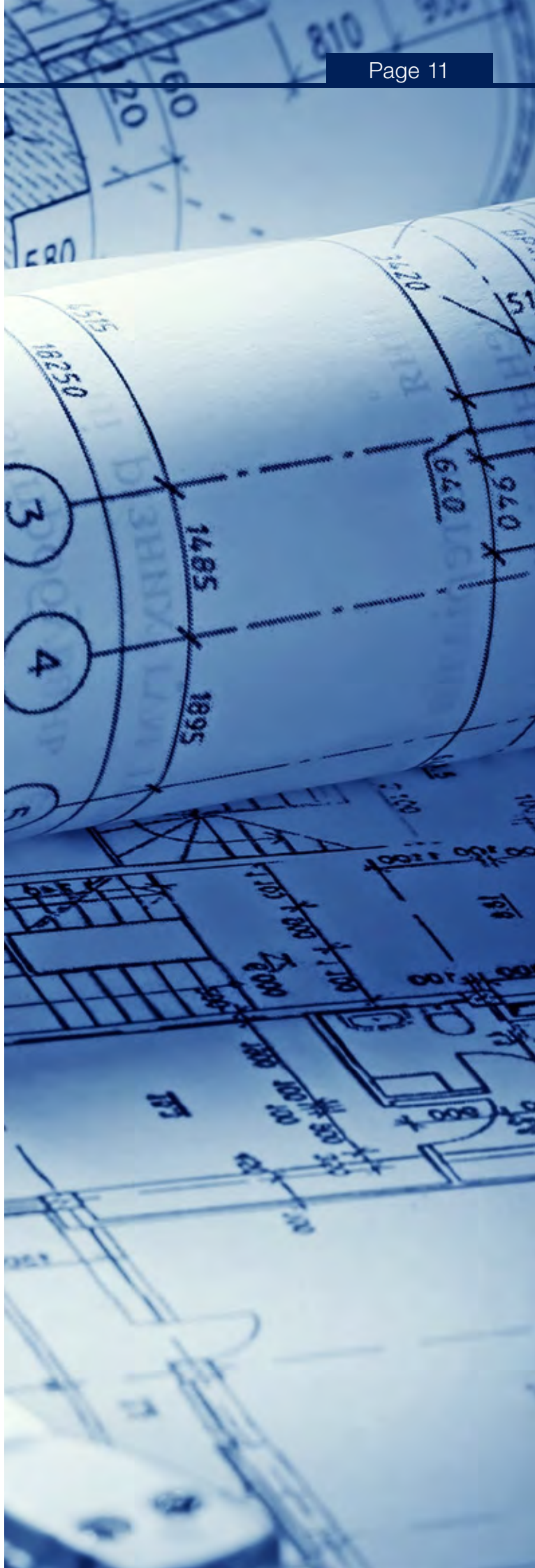
ECSA's updated CPD rules also reinforce its commitment to international competitiveness.

South African engineering qualifications accredited by ECSA are globally recognised, enabling seamless mobility for professionals. This global recognition underscores the need for consistent compliance with CPD requirements to maintain the reputation and credibility of South African engineers on the world stage.

As ECSA members navigate these updates, it is crucial to embrace CPD not only as a compliance obligation but also as a pathway to professional growth and excellence. By actively participating in validated activities, members contribute to the advancement of the engineering profession while safeguarding public trust in their expertise. ECSA encourages all registered professionals to familiarise themselves with the updated rules, prioritise their CPD activities, and utilise the tools and resources available to meet their obligations. Together, these efforts will ensure a vibrant, competent, and globally respected engineering community in South Africa.

The revised Gazetted CPD rules can be accessed here





ECSA's CRM Renovation: Transforming Registration and Enhancing Stakeholder Experience

The Engineering Council of South Africa (ECSA) is proud to announce the ongoing renovation of its Microsoft Dynamics Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system. This strategic upgrade aims to digitise the application process for professional registration and empower Registered Persons with greater control over their personal profiles. The renovations signify a transformative step in ECSA's commitment to innovation and efficiency, offering tangible benefits for applicants and those already registered.

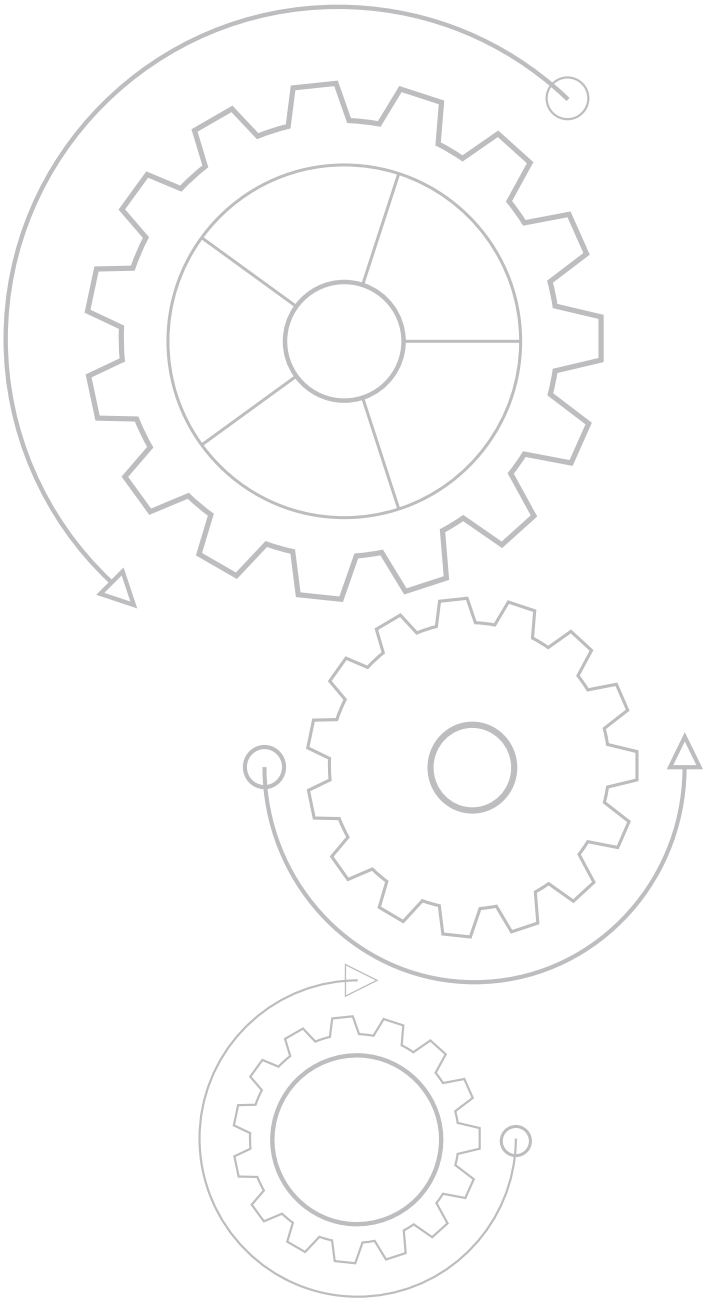
ECSA stakeholders are already familiar with the success of the automated candidacy registration portal. Now, the focus shifts to professional registration, where the new automated process will reduce vetting timeframes, improve turnaround times, and enhance the overall registration journey. The system's features include issuing digital registration certificates, which will replace all previous forms of certification. These certificates, complete with a verification seal, will be updated in real-time to reflect compliance with ECSA's registration requirements.

The renovated CRM system will streamline registration processes by automating key workflows, reducing delays, and improving application turnaround times. It will enhance customer engagement by providing a user-friendly platform for stakeholders to interact with ECSA, ensuring a seamless and innovative service experience. Registered Persons will benefit from improved data integrity as they update their personal profiles, enabling ECSA to produce accurate analytics and reports. Additionally, the system's integration capabilities will support efficient, interconnected workflows accessible anytime and anywhere, providing greater flexibility for staff and users.

For applicants, the portal simplifies the registration process by allowing direct uploads of required documentation and evidence of competencies. Registered professionals, meanwhile, must use the portal to update their profiles, ensuring that personal details on digital registration certificates are accurate and up-to-date. Incorrect information will reflect on certificates and may incur costs for rectification. ECSA's collaboration with its renovation partner also includes improvements to the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) module. The updated module will allow Registered Persons to manage their CPD profiles online, offering convenience, automated reminders, and centralised tracking for CPD activities. By streamlining compliance and reporting, the module ensures professionals meet their requirements efficiently and effectively.

ECSA's CRM renovations are a testament to its commitment to providing all stakeholders with a modern, efficient, and user-friendly experience. By digitising and automating critical processes, ECSA reduces administrative burdens and strengthens its ability to support the engineering community effectively. As these enhancements roll out, Registered Persons and applicants alike are encouraged to embrace these changes and leverage the new tools for a more seamless and enriching interaction with ECSA.

The implementation of this initiative will go live in 2025.



ECSA Takes the IDoEW National Roadshow to the Public

In November 2024, the Engineering Council of South Africa (ECSA) embarked on a nationwide Identification of Engineering Work (IDoEW) National Roadshow. This initiative is geared toward driving awareness and fostering engagement with the public and the engineering fraternity. Thus far, the roadshow has successfully engaged stakeholders in Gauteng and the Western Cape, with the City of Joburg being the latest stop.

The roadshow's central aim is to inform and consult on implementing the IDoEW Rules, gazetted under Government Gazette Number 44333. These rules delineate the scope of work exclusively performed by registered professionals across various categories, including Professional Engineers, Professional Engineering Technologists, Professional Certificated Engineers, Professional Engineering Technicians, and Specified Category Practitioners. By codifying these responsibilities, ECSA ensures that engineering services are rendered by competent professionals who adhere to the highest standards of ethics and technical proficiency.

At the heart of the IDoEW is the drive to professionalise the engineering sector. ECSA Chief Executive Officer, Dr. Bridget Ssamula, remarked, "By engaging directly with stakeholders, we are ensuring that the implementation of the IDoEW gazette is comprehensive and collaborative. These consultations represent a significant step forward in professionalising the engineering fraternity."

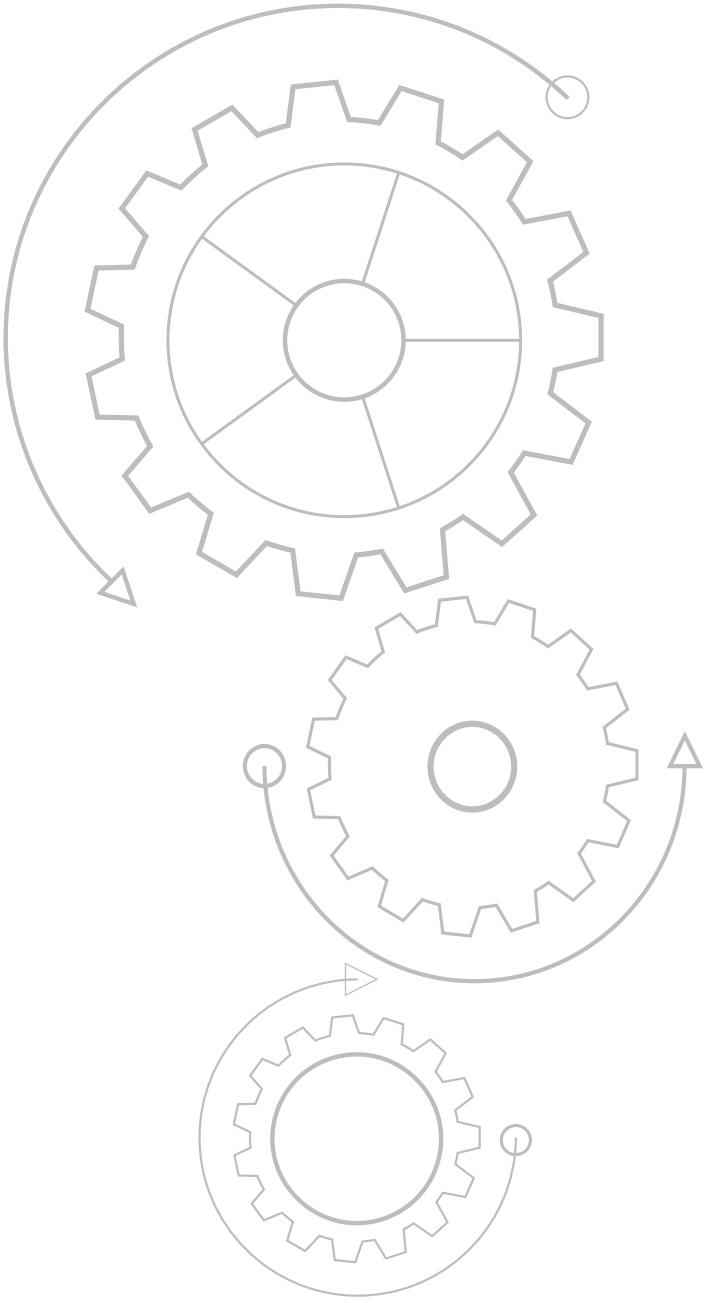
Through the roadshows, ECSA is meeting its obligations under Section 26 of the Engineering Profession Act (Act No. 46 of 2000) and creating a platform for meaningful dialogue. This dialogue involves a wide range of stakeholders, including engineering practitioners, government representatives, academia, and the general public. Such engagements are crucial for building a shared understanding of the IDoEW and its implications for the profession and society at large.

One of the notable support measures accompanying the IDoEW is the development of discipline-specific codes of practice. To date, eleven such codes have been finalised in collaboration with Voluntary Associations and are available on the ECSA website. These codes serve as vital tools for capacitating registered professionals, ensuring accountability and adherence to the defined scope of work.

The roadshow's benefits extend beyond raising awareness. It reinforces ECSA's commitment to strengthening the regulatory framework that governs the engineering profession. By

fostering compliance and supporting technical competence, the IDoEW initiative safeguards public safety and enhances trust in engineering solutions provided by Registered Persons.

As the roadshow continues across the country, ECSA invites all stakeholders to participate actively in these consultations. By working together, the engineering fraternity and the broader public can contribute to a more professional, accountable, and impactful engineering sector that serves the nation's development goals.



In the News

Engineering council investigating Neo Victoria implosion

Consulting engineer placed on precautionary suspension following building collapse

ECSA CEO's visit to TUT stimulates in-depth dialogue with Faculty of Engineering

New CPD rules add flexibility for SA engineers

Women in engineering can help build a better South Africa

South Africa's infrastructure at a crossroads – council

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