

Report of the auditor-general to Parliament on vote no. 11: Department of Public Works and Infrastructure

Report on the audit of the financial statements

Opinion

1. I have audited the financial statements of the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure set out on pages ... to ..., which comprise the appropriation statement, statement of financial position as at 31 March 2020, statement of financial performance, statement of changes in net assets and cash flow statement for the year then ended, as well as the notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies.
2. In my opinion, the financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure as at 31 March 2020, and its financial performance and cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with the Modified Cash Standard (MCS) prescribed by the National Treasury, and the requirements of the Public Finance Management Act of South Africa, 1999 (Act No. 1 of 1999) (PFMA) and the Division of Revenue Act of South Africa, 2019 (Act No. 16 of 2019) (Dora).

Basis for opinion

3. I conducted my audit in accordance with the International Standards on Auditing (ISAs). My responsibilities under those standards are further described in the auditor-general's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of this auditor's report.
4. I am independent of the department in accordance with sections 290 and 291 of the *Code of ethics for professional accountants* and parts 1 and 3 of the *International Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants (including International Independence Standards)* of the International Ethics Standards Board for Accountants (IESBA codes) as well as the ethical requirements that are relevant to my audit in South Africa. I have fulfilled my other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements and the IESBA codes.
5. I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.

Other matter

6. I draw attention to the matter below. My opinion is not modified in respect of this matter.

Unaudited supplementary schedules

7. The supplementary information set out on pages **XX to XX** does not form part of the financial statements and is presented as additional information. I have not audited these schedules and, accordingly, I do not express an opinion thereon.

Responsibilities of the accounting officer for the financial statements

8. The accounting officer is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in accordance with the MCS, the requirements of the PFMA and Dora, and for such internal control as the accounting officer determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.
9. In preparing the financial statements, the accounting officer is responsible for assessing the department's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters relating to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the appropriate governance structure either intends to liquidate the department or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor-general's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

10. My objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes my opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with the ISAs will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.
11. A further description of my responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is included in the annexure to this auditor's report.

Report on the audit of the annual performance report

Introduction and scope

12. In accordance with the Public Audit Act of South Africa, 2004 (Act No. 25 of 2004) (PAA) and the general notice issued in terms thereof, I have a responsibility to report on the usefulness and reliability of the reported performance information against predetermined objectives for selected programmes presented in the annual performance report. I performed procedures to identify material findings but not to gather evidence to express assurance.
13. My procedures address the usefulness and reliability of the reported performance information, which must be based on the approved performance planning documents of the department. I have not evaluated the completeness and appropriateness of the performance indicators / measures included in the planning documents. My procedures do not examine whether the actions taken by the department enabled service delivery. My procedures also do not extend to any disclosures or assertions relating to planned performance strategies and information in respect of future periods that may be included as part of the reported performance information. Accordingly, my findings do not extend to these matters.
14. I evaluated the usefulness and reliability of the reported performance information in accordance with the criteria developed from the performance management and reporting framework, as

defined in the general notice, for the following selected programme presented in the annual performance report of the department for the year ended 31 March 2020:

Programme	Pages in the annual performance report
Programme 3 – expanded public works programme	x – x

15. I performed procedures to determine whether the reported performance information was properly presented and whether performance was consistent with the approved performance planning documents. I performed further procedures to determine whether the indicators and related targets were measurable and relevant, and assessed the reliability of the reported performance information to determine whether it was valid, accurate and complete.
16. The material findings in respect of the usefulness and reliability of the selected programme are as follows:

Programme 3 – expanded public works programme

Various indicators

17. The achievements below were reported in the annual performance report for the listed indicators. However, some supporting evidence provided materially differed from the reported achievement, while in other instances I was unable to obtain sufficient appropriate audit evidence. This was due to the lack of accurate and complete records. I was unable to confirm the reported achievements by alternative means. Consequently, I was unable to determine whether any further adjustments were required to these reported achievements.

Indicator description	Reported achievement
Number of work opportunities reported in the EPWP-RS by public bodies	994 699 work opportunities reported in the EPWP-RS by public bodies (cumulative)
Percentage EPWP participation amongst designated groups (women, youth and persons with disability) reported on the EPWP-RS by public bodies	41,94% Youth 68,33% Women 0,96% persons with disabilities

Other matter

18. I draw attention to the matter below.

Achievement of planned targets

19. Refer to the annual performance report on pages ... to ... for information on the achievement of planned targets for the year and explanations provided for the under-/overachievement of a

significant number of targets. This information should be considered in the context of the material findings on the usefulness and reliability of the reported performance information in paragraph 17 of this report.

Report on the audit of compliance with legislation

Introduction and scope

20. In accordance with the PAA and the general notice issued in terms thereof, I have a responsibility to report material findings on the department's compliance with specific matters in key legislation. I performed procedures to identify findings but not to gather evidence to express assurance.
21. The material findings on compliance with specific matters in key legislation are as follows:

Expenditure management

22. Effective and appropriate steps were not taken to prevent irregular expenditure, as required by section 38(1)(c)(ii) of the PFMA and treasury regulation 9.1.1. The value, as disclosed in note 25 to the financial statements, is not complete as management was still in the process of quantifying the full extent of the irregular expenditure. The majority of the irregular expenditure disclosed in the financial statements was caused by expenditure on state funerals where payments were made in excess of the contract amounts.
23. Effective internal controls were not in place for approving and processing payments in certain instances, as required by treasury regulation 8.1.1.

Other information

24. The accounting officer is responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the annual report. The other information does not include the financial statements, the auditor's report and those selected programmes presented in the annual performance report that have been specifically reported in this auditor's report.
25. My opinion on the financial statements and findings on the reported performance information and compliance with legislation do not cover the other information and I do not express an audit opinion or any form of assurance conclusion thereon.
26. In connection with my audit, my responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements and the selected programmes presented in the annual performance report, or my knowledge obtained in the audit, or otherwise appears to be materially misstated.
27. The other information I obtained prior to the date of this auditor's report are the foreword by the Minister, report by the accounting officer and the overview of the financial results, the governance report and the human resource management report information. The statement by Deputy Minister and the audit committee report is expected to be made available to us after 30 September 2020.

28. If, based on the work I have performed on the other information that I obtained prior to the date of this auditor's report, I conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, I am required to report that fact. I have no findings to report in this regard.
29. When I do receive and read the audit committee report, if I conclude that there is a material misstatement therein, I am required to communicate the matter to those charged with governance and request that the other information be corrected. If the other information is not corrected, I may have to retract this auditor's report and re-issue an amended report as appropriate. However, if it is corrected this will not be necessary.

Internal control deficiencies

30. I considered internal control relevant to my audit of the financial statements, reported performance information and compliance with applicable legislation; however, my objective was not to express any form of assurance on it. The matters reported below are limited to the significant internal control deficiencies that resulted in the findings on the annual performance report and the findings on compliance with legislation included in this report.
31. The department was impacted by a number of investigations which implicated officials occupying senior management positions. In addition, there were vacancies at senior management level in a number of key programmes. This combination of instability in leadership and lack of effective leadership culture contributed to irregular expenditure by the department.
32. Inadequate monitoring of action plans to address the previous year's findings resulted in similar findings on programme 3: expanded public works programme in the current year.
33. Inadequate review and monitoring of compliance when approving payments to suppliers resulted in irregular expenditure.

Material irregularities

34. In accordance with the PAA and the Material Irregularity Regulations, I have a responsibility to report on material irregularities identified during the audit.

Material irregularities in progress

35. I identified material irregularities during the audit and notified the accounting officer thereof as required by material irregularity regulation 3(2). By the date of this auditor's report, the responses of the accounting officer were not yet due. These material irregularities will be included in the next year's auditor's report.

Other reports

36. In addition to the investigations relating to material irregularities, I draw attention to the following engagements conducted by various parties which had, or could have, an impact on the matters reported in the department's financial statements, reported performance information, compliance with applicable legislation and other related matters. These reports did

not form part of my opinion on the financial statements or my findings on the reported performance information or compliance with legislation.

37. The Special Investigation Unit has been authorised to investigate the affairs of the Department of Public Works, with respect to supply chain management irregularities within, *inter alia*, the Prestige branch at the department, which covered the period 2003-04 to 2010-11. The report was finalised in 2018-19. The investigation was then extended to cover the period 2010-11 to 2015-16, and further extended to cover the period 2015-16 to 2019-20. These investigations were still in progress at the date of this auditor's report.

Auditor-General

Pretoria

30 September 2020



Auditing to build public confidence

Annexure – Auditor-general’s responsibility for the audit

1. As part of an audit in accordance with the ISAs, I exercise professional judgement and maintain professional scepticism throughout my audit of the financial statements and the procedures performed on reported performance information for selected programmes, and on the department’s compliance with respect to the selected subject matters.

Financial statements

2. In addition to my responsibility for the audit of the financial statements as described in this auditor’s report, I also:
 - identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error; design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks; and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations or the override of internal control
 - obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the department’s internal control
 - evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the accounting officer
 - conclude on the appropriateness of the accounting officer’s use of the going concerns basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements. I also conclude, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists relating to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the ability of the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure to continue as a going concern. If I conclude that a material uncertainty exists, I am required to draw attention in my auditor’s report to the related disclosures in the financial statements about the material uncertainty or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify my opinion on the financial statements. My conclusions are based on the information available to me at the date of this auditor’s report. However, future events or conditions may cause a department to cease operating as a going concern
 - evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and determine whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation

Communication with those charged with governance

3. I communicate with the accounting officer regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that I identify during my audit.
4. I also confirm to the accounting officer that I have complied with relevant ethical requirements regarding independence, and communicate all relationships and other matters that may reasonably be thought to have a bearing on my independence and, where applicable, actions taken to eliminate threats or safeguards applied.