

ECOSA UPHOLDS PRINCIPLES OF GOOD GOVERNANCE THROUGH ITS FIRST AGM

Over the years, the Auditor General of South Africa (AGSA) has reflected on the lack of accountability, transparency, efficiency, and, ultimately, good governance by government at various levels.

However, this rather devastating state of affairs is not unique to the public sector, as there have been traces of expressed concerns about the private sector's financial health, ethics, and professional conduct.

These low levels of good governance in both the private and public sectors continue to cast good governance as a practise that is difficult to achieve in its entirety, leaving one to wonder whether good governance is simply an ideal coined by scholars and experts, or if it is a practise that can be accomplished and yield stronger returns for an organisation, such as stakeholder confidence, a foundation for a high-performing organisation, and an organisation that is sustainable.

The Engineering Council of South Africa (ECOSA) regards the above benefits, including sustaining relevance among stakeholders, as critical cornerstones in achieving its strategic objective of becoming an effective regulator, assuring engineering excellence.

The strategic objective is based on ensuring that ECOSA strives to achieve key principles of good governance such as accountability, transparency, effectiveness, efficiency, and leadership.

As a result, ECOSA held its first Annual General Meeting (AGM) in this quarter, using a hybrid model to account to stakeholders by providing an annual report on the organisation's activities for the fiscal year ended 31 March 2022.

Although the AGM as a single activity does not attest to the achievement of good governance, obtaining an unqualified audit opinion since the establishment of ECOSA through sound financial management and financial reporting, working towards implementing the Identification of Engineering Work, regulating the profession through investigations conducted against registered persons, accrediting engineering programmes, and registration of persons as professionals in spec

In response, Refilwe Buthelezi Pr Eng, President of the ECOSA Sixth Term Council, stated, "ECOSA is turning a corner and making great strides in transforming the way it works; we are deliberate in embracing the principles of good governance, becoming a responsible and accountable regulator that conducts its work with integrity, and ensuring that our leadership is visible and transparent." Furthermore, "we have improved the way we engage with our stakeholders by soliciting input from them, and we have revived the VA Presidents Forum to ensure we hold each other accountable in ensuring, among other things, that candidate engineers are converted."

Furthermore, she stated that "the current Sixth Term Council and its High Impact Committees have exercised oversight and fiduciary duties that entailed ethical and strategic leadership with clear policy direction."

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As a result, while AGSA reports have painted a bleak picture, with some improvements noted over time, good governance necessitates organisations that are directed, controlled, and held accountable. Furthermore, while it does not guarantee long-term success for an organisation, failing to apply good governance principles to an organisation can result in poor organisational culture, accountability, direction, and control.