Implementation of the Integrated Emerging Contractor Development Model: Towards enhanced competition for small construction firms

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In assisting small emerging construction firms towards improved profitability, sustainability and global competitiveness, the CSIR has developed and implemented an Integrated Emerging Contractor Development Model (IECDM).

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND
South Africa is a technology colony. A technology colony status means that South Africa is highly dependent on other countries for technological innovativeness. This poster focuses on transfer of knowledge and innovative technologies that elevate small construction firms to new levels of growth, competitiveness and development.

INTEGRATED EMERGING CONTRACTOR DEVELOPMENT MODEL
An Integrated Emerging Contractor Development Model (IECDM) (Figure 2) is a framework for managing a contractor development programme by effectively facilitating the selection of suitable construction firms, implementation of a programme of skills training, mentorship and total quality management. IECDM therefore entails skills development while the contractor is working on a construction project.

In 2004 the model was piloted successfully in the Eastern Cape where 60 construction firms underwent a two-year development programme.

Figure 1: Technology transfer channels in the technology colony (from De Wet)

Figure 2: Structure of the IECDM

Figure 3: Graphical summary of performance

IECDM AS A VEHICLE FOR TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER
Figure 4 illustrates the potential effect of technology flows resulting from ‘backward integration’, and also indicates how the IECDM framework can be deployed to enhance the technology flows from both sources from abroad as well as from local research organisations, thus reducing South Africa’s technological dependency.

CONCLUSION
The IECDM has proven itself to be an effective development framework for small construction firms. The model should now focus strongly on addressing the technology gap faced by small construction firms in order to move South Africa towards strong competitiveness globally.

REFERENCES

BENEFITS OF THE IECDM
The following are key benefits of the model:

• There is an integrated approach in the management of programme activities
• The model ensures that development process and results are quantifiable
• The model promotes continuous performance improvement
• The model is supported by strong research activities that ensure that it is the best international practice.

COLLABORATIVE STRATEGY IN FOSTERING COMPETITIVENESS FOR SA CONSTRUCTION FIRMS
To deliver effective technology transfer programmes, construction clients and sponsors should form effective collaboration with critical key role players, such as the CSIR, CIDB and IDC.

CONCLUSION
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