

## **Department of Roads and Public Works: Eastern Cape rolls out successful head count project with Datacentrix**

Following its recent merger with Roads from the Department of Roads and Transport, the Department of Public Works in the Eastern Cape needed to undertake an employee head count in order to compile a reconciled, verified database of its payroll system to ensure rightful salary payments and prevent wastage in terms of paying salaries to non-existent staff. The project was completed successfully with the assistance of Datacentrix, a provider of high performing and secure ICT solutions, within a phenomenal nine working days.

"Over 5,000 employees were counted in a span of nine working days, at 23 locations spread across the Eastern Cape. The actual physical head count was backed by digital means through a biometric process that ensured that the count was verifiable and the data was non-redundant and integrated," explains Mohan Balaga, regional manager at Datacentrix.

Originally, the department considered undertaking the head count using the standard method of issuing cheques and requiring employees to physically collect them within the same month. The issuing of cheques to over 5,500 staff, however, brought with it a number of complications. Not only was additional security (SAPS protection) required, but arrangements with National Treasury for the method of payment to be changed from electronic to manual had to be made. An order for a batch of cheques had to be submitted to Provincial Treasury and, the various financial institutions needed to be informed that employees would cash cheques or deposit their salaries by means of cheque, allowing the standard cash release date of 14 days to be waived, and so on.

"Fortunately though, the digital verification of each employee using a biometric process meant that no employee details could be duplicated on the system, thus eliminating any scope for errors or identity theft," says Balaga. "Since each employee would be uniquely identified and physically verified, it was decided that there was no need to use the cheque payment method."

The counting project took place at 23 counting stations and was carried out by Datacentrix, in conjunction with regional coordinators. These coordinators were given preliminary training by Datacentrix on the equipment prior to the project kick off, with full training completed afterwards. Part of the agreement included retention of the equipment by the Department after the head count was over, in order to electronically register all new employees hired after the project. All registered employees' information is contained on a dedicated server, also provided by Datacentrix.

A significant feature of the Datacentrix service offering was the engagement of an independent audit firm, Gobodo Incorporated, that would audit both the project and the processes. This ensured integrity of the project and its processes while dealing with the sensitive issue of employee information and helped provide the much-needed independent veracity of the outcomes for the customer. A project steering committee meeting was held at the end of each day during those two weeks where successes and problems were analysed.

"Datacentrix was provided with the details of 5,570 employees," he adds. "Of this number, a total of 5,062 employees were counted successfully during the project."

The data from the head count project includes scans of the fingerprints of four fingers, each employee's identity document, a digital photo, and certain PERSAL data. The server is updated with the new data on a quarterly basis. "It should be noted that the Auditor General team conducting the audit of the 2010/2011 financial year has accepted the scanned copies of employees' information from regions other than the head office as part of their verification of personnel audit, which greatly saves the Department in respect of travelling and administration costs."

"With all information stored on the server now verified, we have been able to eliminate any 'ghost' employees from the system, resulting in sizeable savings to the Treasury," states Johan van Eck, manager: salary administration at the Department of Roads and Public Works.

"Not only this, but future savings will be realised, as the Department now has the equipment to conduct further head count exercises by itself, negating the need to enlist the assistance of a service provider."

According to Van Eck, Datacentrix' experience and solid track record in head count projects was highlighted by the ease and speed with which this project was completed. "Datacentrix certainly completed our head count project with the greatest level of professionalism and the ongoing technical support and equipment maintenance received from them has added great value to our experience," he adds.

**About Datacentrix:**

Datacentrix is a South Africa-based black empowered company that provides full high performing and secure ICT (information and communication technology) solutions to the country's corporate and public services sectors. Its comprehensive offering ranges from the core areas of infrastructure and business solutions, to outsourcing and other related IT services, positioning it as a strategic long term partner of choice to customers. The company listed on the JSE Securities Exchange in 1998 and operates from regional branch offices in Samrand, Cape Town, Port Elizabeth, East London and Durban. For more information, please visit [www.datacentrix.co.za](http://www.datacentrix.co.za)

**CONTACTS**

Datacentrix, Stephanie Reynolds, 087 741 8711, [sreynolds@datacentrix.co.za](mailto:sreynolds@datacentrix.co.za), [www.datacentrix.co.za](http://www.datacentrix.co.za)

PR Connections, Nicola Read, 083 269 2227, [datacentrix@pr.co.za](mailto:datacentrix@pr.co.za)