

Paying three percent of costs saves you 30 percent of budget

Quantity surveyors charge legally controlled fees for their services as contained and stipulated under the Architects and Quantity Surveyors



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When something is free, human beings are bound to either abuse it or disregard its value. They even pigeon-hole it with the not so important things in life.

For this reason, the quantity surveyor, (or QS as they are fondly referred to) charges a legally controlled fee for their services as contained and stipulated under the Architects and Quantity Surveyors ACT of Laws of Kenya.

Notably, the fees stated here are complete and are deemed to include all services deemed as quantity surveying services and those that appertain to cost management as far as that project is concerned. Unlike other businesses, one may claim later that a particular bit of the services was not included in the charged rate. Unless of course the negotiations contravened this law.

The stated fees are about three percent of the total cost of the construction project, all taxes inclusive. The same fees are exclusive of taxes, which are considered separately.

These fees are payable in stages and although the law is not very clear on this, the practice is such that the consultant has earned up to 70 percent, give or take of their fees by the time construction is starting. The rest is thereafter paid regularly as agreed.

Reference

The need for consultants' agreements shall not go unmentioned. It is vital to have everything on paper to be used as reference whether or not there may be aggravations.

Similarly, it helps if the consultant holds a valid professional indemnity, the insurance that would take care of the acts of negligence, commissions and omissions just to mention but a few.

Needless to say, the Qs services fall in the category of professional services, which means they are licensed to offer specialised services. These services are broadly those of construction cost management. Included in this list of specialised services are doctors, architects, law-



A quantity surveyor at work. PHOTO: COURTESY

yers and so on. Categorically, these sets of professionals are not allowed under law to explicitly promote their services for its assumed that their accreditation alone is loud enough. You will thus not find a quantity surveyor running, say a Rocky! or Ricky! Best driving school kind of business. The professionals in the construction industry are regulated by the Board of Registration of Architects and Quantity Surveyors (Boraqs). This board, which also controls the registration and the general practice, is also well placed to deal with practice disputes.

A client who may unjustifiably dismiss a consultant could be reported to the board at the detriment of the project. This is because there are contractual obligation and consequent financial implications when consultants' contracts are annulled. For the comfort of a client, some construction standard agreements such as the JBC allude

to the fact that the consultant may be replaced within reasonable facts.

Professional misconduct

On the procurement of the quantity surveying services, I feel obligated to touch on competition on fees for consultants. In a nutshell, this is not allowed. Invariably, it is considered professional misconduct to charge less than the allowable terms because this alludes and may amount to undercutting. Further, without this enforcement, professionalism may not be guaranteed arising from compromises due to the occasioned underpayment. It is for this reason we have seen numerous responses on public tenders that seek financial competition especially from the Institute of Quantity Surveying of Kenya (IQSK) and Architectural Association of Kenya (AAK) guiding the clients.

The Public Procurement and Oversight Authority (PPOA) has in

the past seemed to contravene this very requirement and with good intentions though. Their argument was respectable to the existing laws clarifying that the structured fees were bare minimum and competitions would sieve out ambiguous fees. This makes sense of courses especially where the procurement policy in an organisation demands for best price possible.

Construction industry

In conclusion, the quantity surveying practice is both key and vital to both the existence and wellbeing of the construction industry. In manner of speaking, by paying three percent of the total fees is a good leverage for having a possibility to save up to 30 percent of project cost escalations.

So there you have it, make your choices wisely.

The author is a member of the Institute of Quantity Surveyors of Kenya.

QUALITY CONTROLS

Bamburi roots for solutions to catastrophes

Kenya's cement firm, Bamburi Cement Limited, has embarked on a rigorous mission to sensitise construction stakeholders to observe quality controls and prevent construction disasters in the country.

Bamburi Cement CEO, Mr Hussein Mansi, said the cement firm has embarked on a rigorous mission to sensitise construction engineers, contractors, developers, quantity surveyors and architects on the value of using quality construction materials especially cement and concrete products, with reference to the latest contemporary standards.

Mansi who spoke during a meeting noted that long-term benefit and value of using high quality products was often overlooked by builders across the country and that general professionalism was lacking. "Most of the contractors do not take note of the performance attributes of cement and concrete products they buy but rather focus on price of the product which does not always give them value especially when constructing robust structures."

Collapse buildings

The sensitisation comes amidst incessant challenges in the sector as buildings collapse due to poor workmanship and use of sub-standard construction materials that have not only injured but resulted fatalities. There are also fears that poorly constructed buildings could collapse if contractors fail to make allowances for additional drying time in wet weather.

Mansi said the company had a responsibility to ensure that the construction industry not only observed quality controls and standards but upheld and enhanced professionalism. The company was also raising awareness on its recently launched products PowerMax Cement and Bamburi Ready Mix Concrete (freshly mixed concrete delivered to sites in transit truck mixers)

PowerMax Cement is a high strength product designed to be used in bridges, silos, dams, and any fast moving multi-storey projects. Speaking on the benefits of Bamburi Ready Mix Concrete the company's quality expert Sakwa said "because of our computerised production process of concrete, human error has been eliminated and product quality is assured."

He further explained that "Bamburi Ready Mix Concrete saves on time, reduces cost, minimises wastage of material and eliminates the need for stockpiling."

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