

ECA 2025/2026

TRAINING COMPREHENSIVE MEMBERSHIP REPORT



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**ESWATINI
CONTRACTORS
ASSOCIATION**

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FOREWORD

This past year marks a turning point in our Association's journey of contractor empowerment. For the first time, we introduced structured training programs tailored to the needs of our members, embedding continuous professional development as a core part of membership.

These trainings laid a strong foundation for competence, compliance, and innovation. Early sessions addressed estimating gaps, strengthened pre-tender discipline, and improved pricing capability. Members gained practical tools to ensure sustainable growth and demonstrated their commitment to professionalism and excellence.

However, challenges remain. Many contractors still struggle to interpret and administer standard contract forms (JBCC, GCC, FIDIC), leading to lost entitlements, weak claims, and margin erosion during execution. Addressing this gap is our next priority, ensuring contractors can protect their rights and revenues throughout the project lifecycle.

Looking ahead, training will evolve into a structured Continuous Professional Development (CPD) framework, reinforcing our vision of a sector that is compliant, competitive, and inclusive. This milestone signals a new era where training is not optional, but essential to building a resilient industry.

I extend my gratitude to all members, trainers, and stakeholders who contributed to this inaugural effort. Together, we are shaping a stronger industry.

Chairman

SCHEDULE AT A GLANCE

The following is a list of classes offered during the year 2025/2026



**March 2025
Pre-Tender Preparation
& Planning**

**July 2025
Estimating & Pricing
Fundamentals**



**November 2025
(Preliminaries & Generals)**

2025/2026 INSTRUCTORS



HARRIS KAMANGA

INSTRUCTOR-HARRIS KAMANGA

Consulting and Contracting Experience: Has worked in United Kingdom and the Kingdom of Eswatini

Academic Qualifications:

- BSc Quantity Surveying (1990) Glasgow Caledonian University, United Kingdom
- MSc Project Management (2004) University of Pretoria, South Africa
- Masters in Development Finance (2008) University of Stellenbosch, South Africa
- MSc Financial Economics (2008) School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, United Kingdom
- MSc in Risk Management (2013) Glasgow Caledonian University, United Kingdom

Professional Qualifications:

- Council for Architects, Engineers, Surveyors and Allied Professional; Kingdom of Eswatini; Registered Professional Construction Quantity Surveyor (PQS)
- The Association of South African Quantity Surveyors; Professional Member (PMAQS); The South African Council for Quantity Surveying Profession; Professional Member (PrQS)
- The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors; United Kingdom; Professional Member; Fellow (FRICS)



EDWARD DLAMINI

INSTRUCTOR- EDWARD DLAMINI

- Over 21 years managing and administrating projects worth over E12 billion. Served as Estimator, Commercial Director, Managing Director, Project Manager and PQS. Proven track record in preparing competitive bids, contract negotiation, risk assessment, and compliance, successfully securing and executing substantial projects in Eswatini, incl. Roads, Dams, Hotel, Convention Centre, Bank Warehouse, Health Centres, Office Blocks, Shopping Centres, High End Residential Houses etc.
- Qualified Quantity Surveyor, registered PQS (AESAP), with advanced training in Estimating, Contract Management, Corporate Governance, and Risk Management.

Academic Qualifications:

- BSc QS, Wits University, 2003

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Association initiated the 2025/2026 training programme to address persistent weaknesses in how local contractors prepare bids, price work, and manage projects commercially. Across the three training interventions delivered in March, July, and November 2025, a consistent picture emerged: many contractors, particularly small and medium firms and subcontractors, continue to lose money not because of poor construction capability, but because of weak pre-tender preparation, guesswork pricing, limited understanding of contract obligations, and an absence of basic business and cost-control systems. The training series confirmed that these weaknesses are structural and widespread, and that short, standalone workshops can expose and partially address them but cannot resolve them fully.

What Worked

- The training introduced structured thinking and practical frameworks for pre-tender preparation, estimating, and indirect cost pricing.
- Contractors were exposed to first-principles estimating approaches that replaced guesswork with traceable cost build-ups.
- Practical exercises and case studies highlighted the real cash-flow and risk implications of poor pricing decisions.

What Did Not Work

- The three-day training format was insufficient to build mastery in complex areas such as contract negotiation, claims, and live project cost control.
- The training was initially pitched at main contractors, yet most participants were subcontractors with different commercial realities.
- Key business management skills were identified but could not be developed in depth within the available time.



SECTION I — CONTEXT FOR THE 2025 TRAINING PROGRAMME

The 2025 Training Programme was delivered against a backdrop of increasing pressure on local contractors. ECA initiated the 2025 training programme in response to industry demand and observed contractor under-performance. The intent was to strengthen contractor survival, sustainability, and competitiveness by addressing foundational weaknesses in tendering, estimating, and commercial management. Training materials consistently framed the local contracting environment as one in which margins are thin, competition is intense, and errors made at tender stage have immediate and often irreversible consequences during construction.

Tendering and Pricing Realities

Contractors operate in a competitive tender environment where price remains a dominant evaluation factor. Training content highlighted that many bids are prepared under time pressure, with limited analysis of scope, risk, and cost drivers. As a result, pricing decisions are often driven by precedent rather than current project realities.

Cost Pressure and Thin Margins

The training repeatedly emphasised that rising material prices, labour costs, and compliance obligations have reduced tolerance for error. In this environment, even small omissions or under-pricing of indirect costs can eliminate profit entirely and place projects under immediate cash-flow strain.

Missing Skills and Systems

Across the training series, it became clear that many contractors lack:

- Structured pre-tender decision-making processes;
- Reliable estimating systems grounded in first principles;
- Basic tools to monitor cost, cash-flow, and profitability during construction.

SECTION 2 — PROBLEMS OBSERVED BEFORE AND DURING THE TRAINING

The training revealed several structural gaps within the three-day format, underscoring limitations in both content coverage and participant engagement.

Estimating & Pricing Weaknesses

The training confirmed that guesswork pricing remains common. Contractors often rely on historical rates without adjusting for project-specific risks, scope differences, or current market conditions. Indirect costs are frequently treated as a percentage allowance rather than being built up from first principles, resulting in inadequate provision for site establishment, supervision, compliance, and time-related costs. The absence of cash-flow visibility means that contractors only discover pricing errors once construction is underway.

Contract & Commercial Weaknesses

Limited understanding of standard contract forms was evident. While JBCC, GCC, and FIDIC contracts are commonly encountered, many contractors struggle to interpret their commercial implications. Risk allocation, time-related entitlements, and claims mechanisms are poorly understood, leaving contractors exposed to unrecovered costs and unmanaged delays.

Subcontractor-Specific Challenges

The majority of attendees were subcontractors. These subcontractors typically operate under conditions where:

- Rates and terms are imposed by main Contractors.
- There is little opportunity to negotiate.
- There is no transparency on how rates are built up.
- Commercial and time-related risks are transferred without compensation.

The training exercises and discussions exposed this vulnerability clearly, particularly during pricing and simulations

Business Management Gaps

- The training revealed that many contractors have not been trained to run construction as a business.
- Systems to track cost versus revenue during construction are either weak or absent.
- Profitability is assessed retrospectively, if at all, rather than being actively monitored and protected as work progresses.

SECTION 3 — HOW THE 2025 TRAINING ADDRESSED THESE PROBLEMS

March 2025 — Pre-Tender Preparation & Planning

Objective: To introduce a structured approach to pre-tender decision-making and bid preparation. The training addressed weaknesses in tender preparation by presenting a step-by-step pre-tender process with defined decision gates. Contractors were guided through opportunity assessment, document review, risk identification, and internal capability evaluation. This directly targeted the tendency to pursue unsuitable tenders without adequate preparation or self-assessment.

July 2025 — Estimating & Training

Objective: To replace guesswork pricing with traceable, first-principles cost build-ups. This training addressed estimating weaknesses by breaking down projects into tasks, resources, and production rates. Contractors were shown how to calculate labour, materials, and plant costs from scratch, making assumptions explicit and risks visible. The approach directly challenged reliance on historical rates and highlighted the link between estimating accuracy and cost control during construction.

November 2025 — Preliminaries & Generals (Indirect Cost Estimating)

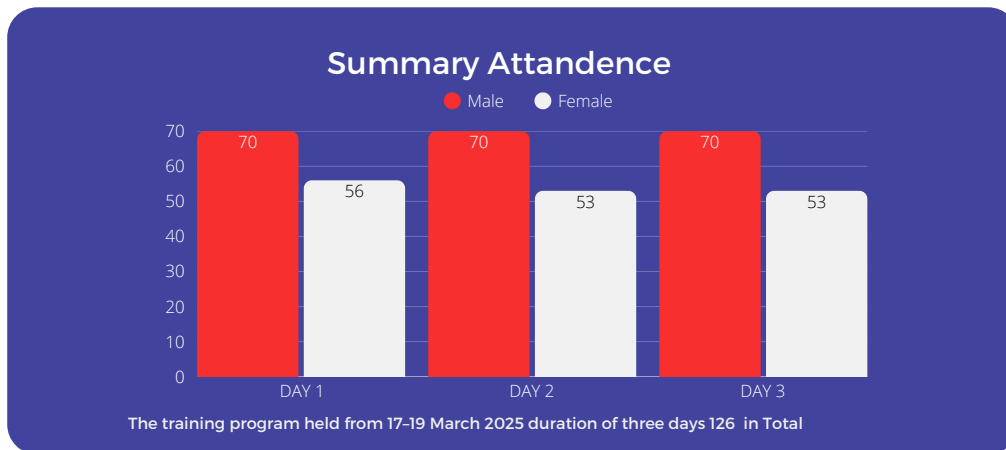
Objective: To equip contractors to price indirect costs accurately and understand their cash-flow impact. The training addressed poor understanding of indirect costs by classifying Preliminaries & Generals into fixed, time-related, and project-specific components. Practical exercises demonstrated how under-pricing these items leads to early cash-flow strain and unrecoverable costs. The training linked indirect cost pricing to contract duration, risk, and tender strategy.

SECTION 4 – ATTENDEES PROFILING

Participant Profile / Training Exposure

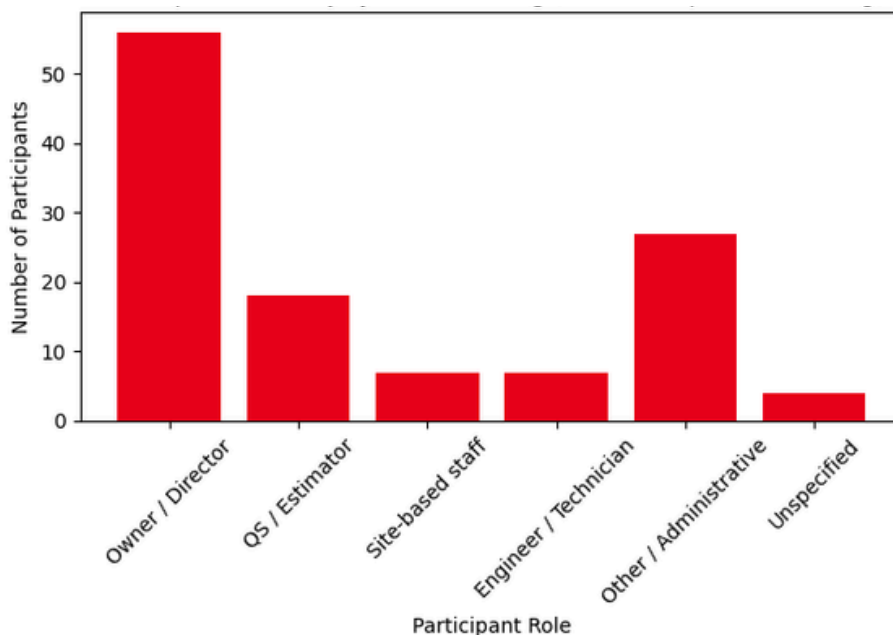
Attendance records for March, July and November 2025 Training include participant roles and company affiliation, allowing a quantified role-based profile of training exposure.

March 2025 Attendance



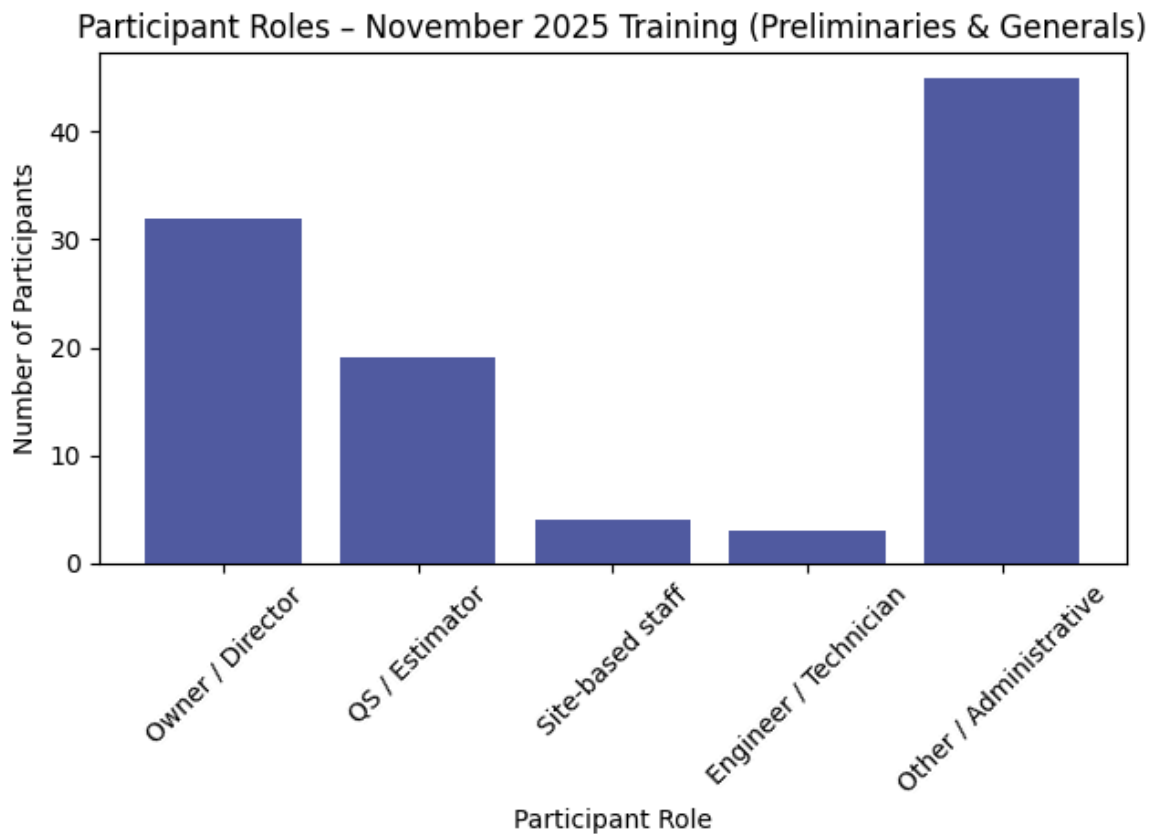
July 2025 (First Principles Estimating): 119 participants were recorded.

- Owner / Director level: 56 participants,
- QS / Estimator: 18 participants,
- Site-based staff (site managers, supervisors, foremen): 7 participants,
- Engineer / Technician: 7 participants,
- Other / administrative roles: 27 participants,
- Unspecified / unclear designation: 4 participants.



November 2025 (Preliminaries & Generals): 103 participants were recorded.

- Owner / Director level: 32 participants
- QS / Estimator: 19 participants
- Site-based staff (site managers, supervisors, foremen): 4 participants
- Engineer / Technician: 3 participants
- Other / administrative roles: 45 participants.



Across both sessions, participation was concentrated at Owner / Director and QS / Estimator level, with very limited site-based representation, highlighting the disconnect between tender-stage pricing decisions and site-level commercial control. Based on company representation in the attendance lists, contractors were typically represented by one to two individuals per training, rather than multi-disciplinary teams.

SECTION 5— FUTURE TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAMME

Training Structure

ECA should move towards longer, staged programmes that allow progressive skill development. Separate learning streams should be developed for main contractors, subcontractors and various trades to reflect their differing commercial realities.

Priority Courses

Future programmes should prioritise:

- Contractor-level contract fundamentals (JBCC, GCC, FIDIC).
- Subcontractor rate negotiation and commercial positioning.
- Claims and variations preparation.
- Construction business management.
- Cost control and cash-flow management during construction.

Delivery Model

Training should be anchored in real project case studies and subcontractor-specific scenarios. Practical templates, tools, and checklists should be provided, supported by follow-up clinics or mentoring to reinforce learning.

CONCLUSION

The 2025 Training Series confirmed that ECA addressed real and pressing industry problems. The programme exposed foundational weaknesses in tendering, estimating, and commercial management, and provided Contractors with practical frameworks to begin correcting them. However, it also demonstrated that short workshops alone are insufficient to achieve lasting change. Going forward, ECA can position itself as a serious Industry Development Body by implementing structured, long-term capacity-building programmes that move beyond awareness to sustained competence.