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COMMERCIAL AND CONTRACTS MANAGER

ABOUT US

BUILDING PATHWAYS. EMPOWERING PROGRESS.

At Zimile, we believe that infrastructure is more than concrete and steel – it is the foundation for opportunity, dignity, and human connection. Since our inception in 2009, we have been on a mission to engineer solutions that build the nation while uplifting its people. Every road we pave, every pipeline we lay, and every community we serve reflects our commitment to reshaping how infrastructure serves society – bridging gaps in access, equity, and resilience.

We are proudly South African – a 100% black-owned and managed Level 1 B-BBEE company – deeply rooted in transformation and committed to meaningful impact. With nearly 45% of our team made up of women, we are actively challenging industry norms and empowering diverse voices to shape the future of engineering. Our team blends experienced professionals with dynamic young talent, guided by seasoned mentors who are passionate about nurturing the next generation.

The name Zimile, derived from isiZulu referring to hopes that are resilient, which embodies our steadfast aspirations and enduring commitment to growth and progress.

Unbounded Engineering is more than a tagline – it's our philosophy. It reflects our belief that true engineering knows no limits. No boundaries between disciplines. No barriers to innovation. No restrictions on who can lead or what's possible. It speaks to our commitment to break new ground, push technical and social boundaries, and create solutions that are imaginative, inclusive, and future-focused.

As a multi-disciplinary consulting engineering and built environment firm, Zimile offers a full suite of project, engineering, and construction management services.

We provide technology-driven solutions across the entire infrastructure lifecycle – from concept development and design to project commissioning.

JOB SUMMARY

The Commercial and Contracts Manager will be responsible for managing and safeguarding the commercial and contractual aspects of all projects, partnerships, and frameworks within the Innovation and New Technologies business unit. This role plays a critical part in ensuring that innovation-led projects move beyond pilots and become scalable, profitable, and contractually sound solutions.

Combining elements of financial modelling, contract negotiation, legal compliance, and risk management, this position bridges the finance, legal and business development functions. It ensures that every offering brought to market is financially viable, legally compliant, and commercially protected. The role supports the commercial structuring of new projects and enables sustainable growth by protecting project margins and aligning contractual frameworks with strategic objectives.

Business unit: Innovation and New Technologies

Location: Midrand Office (Hybrid work model)

Reports to: Business Unit Head of Innovation and New Technologies

Type: Full-time, Permanent

Remuneration: Market related

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Commercial and financial oversight

- Develop detailed pricing models, cost structures, business cases, and financial analyses, including net present value, internal rate of return, payback periods, and margin assessments.
- Support project teams in designing financially viable and competitive offerings across infrastructure, energy, water and technology sectors.
- Structure billing mechanisms including milestone-based payments, mobilisation advances, and receivables schedules to ensure healthy cashflow.
- Monitor and safeguard project and portfolio profitability, with a minimum target project margin of 18% and an overall business unit margin of at least 30%.
- Contribute to annual revenue growth targets (minimum 15% year-on-year) by enabling commercially robust and bankable solutions.

2. Contracts and legal management

- Draft, review, and negotiate contracts, service level agreements, memorandums of understanding, and long-term framework agreements.

- Ensure all contracts and commercial activities comply with relevant South African legislation, including the Public Finance Management Act, the Protection of Personal Information Act, and applicable international standards such as ISO 9001.
- Proactively manage contract risk by addressing common challenges such as scope creep, vendor delays, health and safety responsibilities, and liability exposure.
- Maintain and update a library of standardised contract templates and playbooks to ensure consistency and reduce negotiation timelines.
- Liaise with internal and external legal counsel where necessary to resolve contract disputes or assess risk.

3. Commercial support to business development

- Work closely with the growth and delivery leads to structure commercially sound proposals, bids, and diagnostic reports.
- Stress-test bids and commercial offers for financial viability and legal compliance before submission.
- Participate in early-stage client engagements and discovery workshops to ensure that commercial considerations are integrated from the outset.
- Provide strategic input into client negotiations to protect Zimile's commercial interests while enabling long-term partnerships.
- Support the achievement of at least five new contracted opportunities per year by contributing to the conversion of proposals into signed agreements.

4. Governance and risk management

- Maintain the business unit's commercial risk register, identifying and mitigating risks related to pricing, payment terms, compliance and financial exposure.
- Align with the organisation's project management office processes and approval stage-gates, ensuring that all required commercial documentation is in place at each stage.
- Track and report on contract performance and commercial key performance indicators to the head of the business unit and relevant governance forums.
- Participate in post-project reviews to assess financial outcomes and capture lessons learned.

KEY COMPETENCIES

- Strong communication and interpersonal skills.
- High attention to detail and strong administrative capability.
- Ability to manage multiple priorities and meet deadlines.

- Discreet, professional, and able to maintain confidentiality.
- Problem-solving and conflict resolution skills.
- Proactive and self-motivated with a collaborative approach.

QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

- A bachelor's degree in commerce, law, or a related discipline with a strong focus on contracts or commercial management.
- A combination of legal and financial qualifications would be advantageous.
- At least five years' experience in a commercial or contracts-focused role, ideally in the infrastructure, energy, water, or transport sectors.
- In-depth understanding of financial modelling techniques, including the ability to interpret and apply project finance metrics such as net present value, internal rate of return, and cashflow forecasts.
- Demonstrated experience in negotiating complex contractual arrangements, including engineering, procurement and construction contracts, service level agreements, and long-term framework agreements.
- Familiarity with municipal, government, and development finance institution procurement practices.
- Strong stakeholder engagement skills, with the ability to work with technical specialists, finance teams, legal advisors, and executive decision-makers.

ATTRIBUTES AND PERSONAL QUALITIES

- Highly organised and detail-oriented, with a structured and analytical mindset.
- Able to balance commercial rigour with strategic flexibility to support business growth.
- Comfortable operating in a lean, entrepreneurial environment with fast decision cycles and shifting priorities.
- Strong communicator with the ability to translate complex financial or legal concepts into clear business language.
- Resilient and calm under pressure, particularly during contract negotiations or risk escalations.
- Proactive, solutions-oriented, and collaborative in approach.

POSITIONING WITHIN THE ORGANISATION

This is a mid-to-senior level role that plays a central part in enabling the success of innovation-led projects within the business. The Commercial and Contracts Manager operates at the intersection of finance, legal and business development, helping to translate technically sound innovations into commercially viable offerings that can be scaled across South Africa and the wider Southern African Development Community region.

By ensuring all contractual and financial risks are addressed, this role contributes directly to Zimile's ability to offer repeatable, packaged solutions to its partners and clients – ensuring both compliance and commercial success.

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

- Maintain a minimum project margin of 18% across all contracted projects.
- Ensure that at least 90% of projects are delivered on time, within budget, and according to scope.
- Achieve a customer satisfaction score of at least 85% across contracted engagements.
- Deliver a minimum 30% win rate for proposals and bids deemed commercially bankable.
- Avoid any material legal disputes or instances of non-compliance with procurement or contractual standards.

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