



TRANSFORMATION INDABA EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

7 – 8 February 2019

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY- TRANSFORMATION INDABA:

“IGNITING THE POSSIBILITIES...”



The Council for the Built Environment (CBE) is a statutory body that has been in existence since the enactment of the Council for the Built Environment Act no. 43 of 2000 in 2000. It is a government organization and reports to the National Department of Public Works (DPW). The CBE is essentially responsible for regulating the following built environment professions in South Africa - Architecture, Engineering, Landscape Architecture, Project and Construction Management, Property Valuation and Quantity Surveying. The CBE is mandated to regulate and ensure consistent application of policies by the Councils for Built Environment Professionals (CBEP).

The CBE is given powers and duties to:

- Provide advice and consultation on national policy that could impact on the built environment and human resource development in relation to the built environment professions
- Advise the professional councils on matters of national importance where the needs of the state require joint and coordinated action by the built environment professions

These statutory requirements have significant implications on the way the CBE and the CBEP operate. The CBE legislation places emphasis on facilitating the participation of the built environment professions in integrated development within the context of national goals. With regard to the Councils for professions, the above statutory requirements directly stress their inherent role as statutory bodies that must further the policy objectives of government as they are an extension of the state. Although legislation recognises the CBEP as regulators of their respective professions, the CBE acts as an umbrella body whose functions are focused on facilitation and coordination across the professions. The Councils for Built Environment Professionals (CBEP) and associated skills are of national interest and key to the existing government infrastructure and planned government infrastructure programme(s). Moreover, the CBE has specifically been tasked by the Public Works Parliamentary Portfolio Committee to provide leadership on transformation within the built environment professions and the sector at large.

South Africa's built environment is arguably one of the sectors within the country that is most in need of transformation. Recent statistics show that the built environment professions are still largely dominated by specific demographics, both at registered professional and candidate levels. Furthermore, despite a high demand for professionals many employers experience great difficulty in filling positions. In effect this highlights an ever widening skills-gap arising from a variety of factors directly contributing to the shortage of experienced, aptly qualified and quality driven professionals in South Africa's' built environment sector.

These factors include but are not limited to (i) a decline in the quality of education (primary, secondary and tertiary levels) directly impacting on the quality of skilled/experienced personnel at the entry level into the professions, (ii) the so called "brain drain" as a result of emigration / retirement and perceptions of unfair discrimination, as well as (iii) a decrease in the number of registrations both at candidate and professional levels. What is important to note from this brief outline above is the importance of controlling for and ensuring sustainability throughout the planning and implementation life cycle of any and all transformational interventions.

The semantics of Transformation

In essence transformation indicates change. This change can occur in various aspects including structure, culture, products or services, diversity (race, age, gender, and backgrounds) or simply doing things differently. Arguably, the term transformation may hold different meanings for various role-players involved in the built environment due to their varying subjectivities. The chaos of potential resistance and differing opinion created by the hype and buzzwords surrounding transformation and its intended outcomes can easily turn a desire for bold, reformative change into a rag-tag collection of discrete, ad hoc initiatives. Less obviously, but perhaps more troublingly, it can also prevent the kind of meaningful discussion that keeps key stakeholders from pulling together toward a uniform approach and mutually beneficial common end. In line with its mandate the CBE is, by definition, the initiator and facilitator of just this sort of top-level "conversation" around transforming the built environment. Without such overarching facilitation and coordination it is argued that no transformation program will stay focused, integrated, in balance. And without balance, integration, and focus, no disjointed set of initiatives will lead to significant improvements and sustainable transformational change.

For practical reasons the CBE adopted a working definition of transformation, which was interrogated with a variety of stakeholders through a lengthy consultation process as one that is defined by its outcome or effect in terms of sustainability for the built environment professions. As such, transformation is described as:

a profound process of change, emanating from a need to redress historical disadvantage with a specific focus on the improvement and provision of equal opportunities and access to quality education, training, mentorship and skills development in an effort to drastically increase the quantity and quality of registered built environment professionals.

It is important to note that not all stakeholders will always agree on all aspects of this definition which is why it has been labelled as a “working definition”. The CBE will further refine this definition as it engages with stakeholders and will review its validity on a regular basis.

In order to develop an effective, tangible, and manageable transformation strategy the sector's various role-players will need to translate their potentially differing beliefs into a coherent basis for conversation and learning amongst each other. For this, the right kind of conversation is essential. Which, in turn, means having in place a shared framework for structuring activities and responsibilities, a road map for laying out their proper sequence, and a background set of guiding principles about the "natural laws" that govern transformation. All three of these are necessary for a successful conversation, because all three have a critical role to play in providing the practical means to shepherd through a balanced, integrated and sustainable transformation strategy.

Transformation (both within the built environment and across society at large) is much broader than the promotion of the previously disenfranchised into positions of being socially and economically empowered. Within the built environment, the CBE is of the view that besides the quantitative aspects, transformation should be closely linked to qualitative changes that lead to enhancements and empowerment of built environment professionals and development of new knowledge that enhances the contribution of the built environment professions towards the developmental objectives of the country.

Transformation also needs to be supported by substantial changes in design and application of policy. Policies would have to overcome the historically determined patterns of fragmentation, and inequality, they will have to support new ways of knowledge generation and assimilation and they will have to address the priorities of government while aligning to Constitutional obligations.

Envisaged outcomes of transformation

Transformation in the Built Environment must achieve the following outcomes:

- **A responsive built environment** – transformation within the industry is not only about progressive change in professional and regulatory practices: the ultimate goal is to ensure the responsiveness of the built environment professions industry to the broader national and public policy objectives and goals.

- **Increased participation of the previously marginalised groups in the built environment** – while the CBE’s view of transformation is based on qualitative reforms and changes, there is an aspiration to see a built environment industry that is truly representative of the demographics of South African society. Increased participation of the previously marginalised groups in the industry, without any form of discrimination, prejudice and restrictions imposed, is one of the key objectives of the CBE. Registration statistics and figures indicate that the BEPs are transforming and becoming more. Although there are signs of improvement particularly in the candidature profile, this is not the case for all of the professions; additionally the CBE’s view is that the rate of change has been too slow.
- **Better cooperation between industry stakeholders** – in order to achieve the outcomes mentioned above, different working arrangements and relationships between all the built environment stakeholders must be established.

In 2015 the CBE embarked on a programme to update their 2013 Transformation Model and Action Plan (TMAP). Following the completion of a baseline study and situational analysis, the CBE constituted a Transformation Steering Committee in order to gain active participation from high-level role players in the built environment, to provide guidance on strategic transformation issues and to create a platform where joint knowledge can be shared and cooperation can be fostered.

The baseline study and situational analysis on “The status of transformation within the South African Built Environment (SABE)” was mainly commissioned to provide a substantial foundation on which the CBE and CBEP could base the newly developed TMAP. Besides providing the most up-to-date registration statistics and trends within the six professions, the study also provided an important analysis of the current environment and situation in which transformation is intended to take place. The CBE finalised its revised TMAP in the 2016/17 financial year. This TMAP has been labelled a working document as it will constantly need to evolve in order to stay relevant. The 2017 TMAP lists short- medium- and long term plans, activities and interventions for fast-tracking the pace of transformation in the short term, whilst controlling for difficulties and bottle-necks in the middle of the skills-pipeline and ensuring effective transformation lower down the pipeline. Whilst realising the urgency of fast-tracking transformation with a heavy focus on increasing the representation of specific demographic groups, the CBE also realised the absolute necessity to ensure sustainability in its approach; in order to have a steady supply of aptly skilled, quality assured individuals to meet the future needs of the BEPs, the SABE and the country at large.

The CBE is fully cognisant of the reporting requirements from DPW and Government, emphasising a strong focus on registration numbers and an urgent priority to drastically increase the representation of previously disadvantaged groups among the professions; specifically focussed on black individuals and attaining equal representation as per the country's demographics. Additionally, the CBE also realises the necessity to ensure sustainability, warranting a steady supply of aptly skilled and quality driven professionals to meet the future demands of the sector. This implies a clear focus on the entire skills-pipeline in order to identify and address blockages throughout, streamlining processes and ensuring effective efficiency throughout. Furthermore, the CBE emphasises the importance of active participation and inclusion of all relevant and affected role-players in the development and implementation of our approach and strategy for transforming the professions; not only will this ensure uniformity, but also create a sense of buy-in and ownership.

The CBE has adopted a PARTICIPATORY approach towards achieving HOLISTIC transformation with a specific focus on the entire skills-pipeline in order to streamline the process of becoming a registered professional and to ensure a continuous supply of quality driven and aptly skilled individuals. PARTICIPATORY in the sense that all stakeholders need to be consulted, considered and involved and HOLISTIC in that every aspect should be considered to ensure a sustainably transformed SABE. To this effect the CBE hosted its inaugural National Transformation Indaba on 29 August 2017. Transformation Indaba 2017 was specifically focused on bringing together the vast majority of stakeholders and role-players in the sector and provided a platform for these high-level delegates to discuss commonly shared challenges, to engage one another face to face and to share knowledge of experience and principles of best practice. Moreover, Indaba 2017 provided a unique space for role-players to collaborate and actively participate in joint initiatives driving Transformation in the sector and was largely successful in gaining commitment from the majority of stakeholders to actively participate and collaborate in such efforts. This commitment was formalised through the signing of a "Declaration of Intent" which the CBE has also been utilising on their national stakeholder roadshows to gain commitment from stakeholders who were not present at Indaba 2017. Essentially Indaba 2017 was largely successful in that it managed to secure the commitment from high-level stakeholders to actively participate in CBE interventions and activities driving transformation, supporting the PARTICIPATORY aspect of the CBEs approach.

SECURING SUSTAINABILITY BY RESOURCING THE BE SKILLS PIPELINE

Indaba 2018 will largely be focused on embedding sustainability in our already adopted holistic approach towards Transformation. “Sustainability” in its broadest sense is a concept that encapsulates the capacity to endure and to maintain a process or situation over time and which specifically addresses the HOLISTIC aspect of the CBEs approach to Transformation. In occupational psychology, a sustainable system is one whose diversity, integrity and productivity are preserved over time. The term is much more than a recent buzzword. While the use of the word has certainly increased in frequency, the concept itself is hardly new, and it is one which forms a central part of the CBEs vision and mission specifically in terms of driving Transformation in the SABE.

Sustainability is important for a very simple, very straightforward reason: we cannot maintain effectiveness and quality unless we embrace it.

Sustainability itself can be defined by three core elements, each of which contains features of subjectivity and must be carefully considered in relation to the others:

- Social Development (Protecting People)
- Economic Development (Perpetuating Prosperity)
- Environmental Protection (Preserving the Planet)

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

People are only interested in sustainability if they are educated about it, and if its overall importance is effectively communicated. Furthermore, human well-being and the well-being of society is part and parcel of what sustainability stands for. Ensuring that human beings have access to basic resources, that their health is being protected, and that they enjoy a good quality of life within a sustainable environment is critical.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Perhaps one of the more controversial of sustainability’s elements, due in part to the fact that economic success is a rather subjective concept, economic development is nonetheless important for several reasons. First, sustainability without economic development simply cannot succeed in order to convince individuals, communities, and organizations to invest their resources in sustainability, there must be incentives above and beyond the long-term advantages. Second, as described above, social development is also an important aspect of sustainability and social development requires (among many other things) economic resources as well.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Supporting and creating a sustainable environment must, of course, place significant focus on environmental protection. After all, our interactions with and within the environment we occupy are only “sustainable” if they don’t destroy the environment and the resources provided by it. Environmental protection entails examining how our use of the environment affects it, and how we can ensure that negative effects are minimized and behaviours that positively impact the environment are emphasized. Of course in this instance the environment relates both to the natural environment as well as the social and occupational environments.

TRANSFORMATION INDABA 2018

With the above summary in mind, the CBE will be hosting its annual Transformation Indaba on the 7 - 8 February 2019 . The theme for this indaba builds on the discussions and outcomes from Indaba 2017 as well as the outcomes from CBEs engagements with all its stakeholders during its national Transformation roadshows. The theme for Indaba 2018 is ***“Igniting the possibilities”***. It is expected that Indaba attendees will include high level delegates from investors, project developers, manufacturers, government, private sector organisations and companies, developmental organisations, state owned entities, national utilities, private sector, non-profit organisations, the public at large, labour organisations and international development partners.

As the Indaba is hosted annually, the event will serve as a ‘past-present-future’ mirror to:

- Gauge the current status of transformation in the South African built environment;
- Provide a platform for collaboration and sharing of knowledge among academia, the public and private sectors;
- Interrogate challenges and possible recommendations / solutions from multi-dimensional perspectives;
- To mobilize resources towards the BE Skills pipeline by the sector and report on how it was utilised including the impact thereof; and
- Track the progress of overall transformation in the South African built environment year-on-year.