



Date of Issue: 01 July 2022

Place of Issue: Pretoria, South Africa

Embargo: Nil



## **CBE SUPPORTS INFRASTRUCTURE BUILT ANTI-CORRUPTION PLEDGE**

It has never been more important to stand firm against any form of corruption in the country – and the Council for the Built Environment (CBE) reaffirms this stance as a co-signatory to the Infrastructure Built Anti-Corruption Forum’s anti-corruption pledge.

The pledge was signed in Pretoria on 30 June 2022 by all the members of the Infrastructure Built Anti-Corruption Forum (IBACF), including the Minister of Public Works and Infrastructure, the head of the Special Investigation Unit (SIU), the HAWKS, the CBE and the entire built environment family.

In the main, the IBACF will serve as a platform to develop innovative and preventative measures and advisory and awareness initiatives using the latest data analytics tools to help find loopholes in procurement legislation that renders it vulnerable to corrupt practices.

According to the Minister of Public Works and Infrastructure, Patricia de Lille, it was crucial to put in place effective systems to detect and prevent corruption, which will allow for a greater level of transparency and credibility in the implementation of the Infrastructure Investment Plan.

This signing of the pledge is symbolic in many respects, showing a common determination to ensure the built environment is a sector that “*does the right thing*” at all times – it symbolises a rebirth of the built environment industry in South Africa.

This demands agile leadership across the board that must ensure that the Minister De Lille’s message that “corruption is a societal problem and fighting it is everyone’s business” is amplified.

The signing of the anti-corruption pledge provides a moment for the entire built environment sector to pause and re-imagine the future of the sector free of corruption and bribery. It must do so with

an appreciation that the industry is currently experiencing job losses, companies are shutting, and the number of unemployed young graduates has never been higher.

To respond to these intractable challenges, the built environment sector must act speedily, with agility, to address the current challenges in the country. It must:

- Tackle the consequences of Covid-19 and act to protect jobs in the sector
- Restart the sector and turn the economy around by expanding output and increasing employment
- Identify projects that will help drive the economy by opening up the sector, unblocking access, and creating jobs
- Re-build, drive demand and increase productivity
- Focus on transformation, build partnerships and collaborations, and add value
- Support the skills pipeline, find ways of ensuring job retention and stabilise the industry through providing opportunities for reskilling and upskilling

However, the challenges faced in the sector have been exacerbated by negative perceptions that have engulfed the industry, including the disruption and hijacking of projects by “Business forums, Construction Mafia or Amadela Ngokubona”.

The CBE is determined to tackle these perceptions.

The Council has a mandate to ensure the consistent application of policy by all Councils for the Built Environment (CBEP) with regard to codes of conduct. With the recent developments in the industry, the CBE, in consultation with all the councils, is now in the process of developing a Transformation and Sector Code of Conduct which will encompass all applicable legislative prescripts to regulate the behaviours of stakeholders, including professionals, and to strengthen the ethical duties of members.

The code will ensure that the industry as a whole has a system of ensuring that all corrupt or suspected corrupt activities are handled in accordance with the relevant laws, including the Public Finance Management Act and the Prevention and Combating of Corrupt Activities Act, which require that such activities be reported to law enforcement agencies.

With regards to the protection of the public, and to ensure that whistleblowing is encouraged, the CBE also has a complaints platform for complaints from any person against any role player in the industry. Such complaints are assessed internally to ensure that where possible, any corrupt activities are handled in accordance with the applicable laws and reported to law enforcement.

The built environment sector must always remember that everything it does impacts our people. The work is not just about development or infrastructure provision but is about inspired projects that uplift the quality of life of our fellow South Africans.

We as a sector have a duty to work together to transform the built environment by creating the sustainable world of tomorrow – in everything we do we must act locally but think globally – and understand that the repercussions of our actions will be felt by the generations to come.

We must never forget that by being called professionals, be it a professional engineer, a professional town planner, a professional construction manager, professional quantity surveyor or a professional architect, comes with a higher order obligation. We must act professionally, ethically and morally to eliminate time delays when implementing projects. We must eliminate wastages, the inflation of project costs and any corrupt practices in our industry. This is the criminality we must collectively eliminate in the built environment and construction industry.

**ENDS**

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**About the CBE:**

The Council for the Built Environment (CBE) is a Schedule 3A Public Entity that reports to the National Department of Public Works and Infrastructure. It is a regulatory body established under the Council for the Built Environment Act 43 of 2000 (the CBE Act) that coordinates the following six Councils for the Built Environment Professions - Architecture, Landscape Architecture, Engineering, Property Valuation, Project and Construction Management, and Quantity Surveying – and through memoranda of understanding these include Town and Regional Planning, Land Surveying, and Environmental Assessment Practitioners.

The CBE was established for the purpose of instilling good conduct within the Built Environment Professions, mobilising transformation in the Built Environment Professions, protecting the interest of the public and advising the South African Government on Built Environment related issues.

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