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An assessment of transformation strategies in South Africa: A multi-case study of the accounting, financial services, government, and construction sectors

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Abstract

Globally, transformation is etched in all sectors of the economy. In the South African context, transformation is viewed as the catalyst to address the country's socio-economic problems and their associated impact on different sectors and the economy at large. However, progress on transformation within the built environment has been slow in comparison with other sectors of the economy. As a result, this has led to a need to examine the transformation processes in the country. This article aims to analyse transformation strategies as conceptualised and implemented by various sectors. The article is based on a multi-case study of identified sectors and organisations that have developed and implemented transformation strategies. The materials used to conduct the study include sector transformation strategies, charters, journal articles, articles published in reputable South African newspapers,

organisation reports, information publicly available on the internet, and interviews conducted with sector representatives. The findings show that, for all sectors, transformation strategies are driven through skills development of human resources, with a view to redressing historical imbalances and providing equal opportunities. The process of strategy development involves sector-wide participation and having a champion for the strategy. In order to ensure that strategies are implemented, specific structured training and education programmes from the grassroots to professional level, as well as monitoring of progress are emphasised. Recommendations are made in line with the findings in order to guide the Council for the Built Environment in the development of a strategy for the built environment.

Keywords: Built environment, socio-economic; South Africa; transformation

Abstrak

Transformasie word wêreldwyd in alle sektore van die ekonomie geëts. In die Suid-Afrikaanse konteks word transformasie gesien as die katalisator om die land se sosio-ekonomiese probleme en die gepaardgaande impak daarvan op verskillende sektore en die ekonomie in die algemeen aan te spreek. Nietemin, in vergelyking met ander sektore in die ekonomie vorder transformasie binne die bou-omgewing stadig. Dit het daartoe gelei dat dit nodig is om die transformasieprosesse in die land te ondersoek. Hierdie artikel het ten doel om transformasiestrategieë te ontleed soos gekonseptualiseer en geïmplementeer deur verskillende sektore. Die artikel is gebaseer op 'n multi-gevallestudie van geïdentifiseerde sektore en organisasies wat transformasiestrategieë ontwikkel en geïmplementeer het. Die materiaal wat gebruik is om die studie uit te voer, is onder meer sektortransformasiestrategieë, handveste, tydskrifartikels, artikels wat in betroubare Suid-Afrikaanse koerante gepubliseer is, organisasieverlae, inligting wat op die internet beskikbaar is en onderhoude met verteenwoordigers van die sektor. Uit die bevindinge blyk dit dat transformasiestrategieë vir alle sektore deur vaardigheidsontwikkeling van menslike hulpbronne gedryf word met die doel om historiese wanbalanse reg te stel en gelyke geleenthede te bied. Die proses van strategie-ontwikkeling behels deelname aan die sektor en ook om 'n kampioen te hê wat die strategie dryf. Ten einde te verseker dat strategieë geïmplementeer word, is spesifieke gestruktureerde onderrig- en opleidingsprogramme van voetsoolvlak tot op professionele vlak, asook die monitering van vordering, belangrik. Aanbevelings is gemaak in ooreenstemming met die bevindinge om die Raad vir die Bou-omgewing te lei in die ontwikkeling van 'n strategie vir die bou-omgewing.

Sleutelwoorde: Bou-omgewing, sosio-ekonomies; Suid-Afrika; transformasie

1. Introduction

Progress on transformation within the built environment has been slow in comparison to other sectors of the South African economy (Odendaal, 2017: online). There are varying definitions and interpretations of transformation in different Acts, frameworks and scorecards (Moraka & Van Rensburg, 2015: 672). Essentially, however, it is an intrinsic process that redefines form and leads to the expression of new values, principles and premises of thought (SACPLAN, 2015: online). It entails a fundamental change in an

economy *vis-à-vis* social, economic, industrial, legal and political or technological transformation (Alternative Prosperity, 2017: online). It strives towards creation of employment, expansion of industries, poverty eradication, restructuring of gender and racial inequalities, economic empowerment, social inclusivity, as well as professional growth (SACPLAN, 2015: online; UNESCO, 2017: online; South African Government, 2019c: online).

Transformation in these areas is also related to the National Development Plan of the South African Government, in consonance with the nine-point plan and the 14 priority outcomes, outlined in the Medium-Term Strategic Framework (MTSF) 2014-2019 (SA News, 2019: online). The focus areas include education, health, safety and security, economic growth and employment, skills development, infrastructure, rural development, human settlements, local government, environment, international relations, public sector, social protection, nation-building, and social cohesion (South African Government, 2019a: online; 2019b: online; 2019c: online; 2019d: online). Nonetheless, these areas have two overarching themes: radical economic transformation and improving service delivery (South African Government, 2017: online). As shown in Figure 1, radical economic transformation encompasses productivity, workplace, expanded opportunities for the previously disadvantaged, addressing economic imbalances, education, and skills development (South African Government, 2017: online). This suggests that systemic transformation is contingent on the transformation of the individuals who make up the system. Therefore, practice transformation depends on individuals who practise in a given sector (Ruddy, Thomas-Hemak & Meade, 2016: 624). Progress on professional registrations is a key component of transformation in any sector.

Transformation is necessary for the survival and sustainability of the built-environment profession. The skills pipeline in the built environment is a key enabler for transformation in the industry, with a holistic approach on promoting skills development to alleviate the skills shortage as part of tackling transformative ambitions (Odendaal, 2017: online). Registered professionals are needed to achieve the much-needed economic growth and development. However, 2016 statistics on professional registrations reported by Councils for the Built Environment Professions (CBEPs) show that only 26% of all registered built-environment professionals are from the previously disadvantaged groups, whereas Whites represent 74% (CBE, 2017a: online). Registered African professionals only account for 17%, and women professionals (all races) account for 0.3%. Relative to their population size, Africans have the lowest representation of

registered professionals with 0.02% (that is, one registered African professional per 5,000 Africans), whereas Coloured professionals represent 0.03% of the Coloured population (that is, one registered Coloured professional per 3,300 Coloureds). Indian professionals comprise 0.19% of its population (that is, one registered Indian professional per 526 Indians), and White professionals account for 0.68% of its total population (that is, one registered White professional per 150 Whites) (CBE, 2017a: online). This is in spite of the promising figures on candidate registrations in 2017, with African candidates accounting for 58%, White candidates for 29%, Indians for 9% and Coloureds for 4% (CBE, 2018: 154). Previously disadvantaged individuals (PDIs) at candidacy level make up 71% of the registered candidates for the built-environment professions (CBE, 2018: 154). Total registered candidates increased with 82% over the past six years, with 17,958 in 2011 to 32,698 in 2017 (CBE, 2012: 64; 2018: 154). However, for future transformation, the CBE and CBEP should focus on helping PDIs candidates upgrade to professional status.

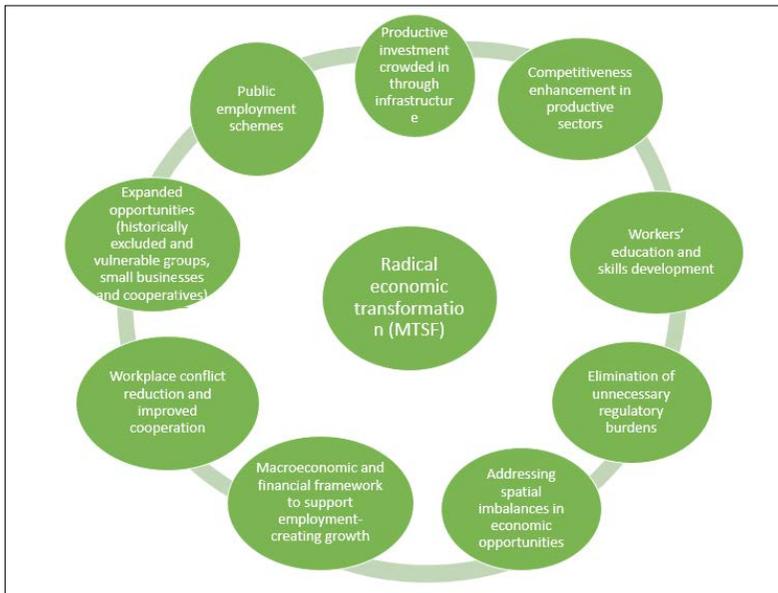


Figure 1: Radical economic transformation elements in relation to the MTSF

Source: South African Government, 2017: online.

Although the number of built-environment registered professionals has been increasing exponentially from 2,400 in 2011 to 45,063

in 2017, the growth in the registration of Africans has only seen a modest increase, compared to their White counterparts in all six CBEP disciplines (CBE, 2012: 64; 2018: 148). Consequently, many constituencies and organisations such as the South African Institute of Civil Engineers (SAICE) contend that racial and related economic transformation in the civil engineering and construction sector is not happening as desired (SAICE, 2017: online; CBE, 2017a: online).

Notwithstanding the sluggish improvement in transformation, efforts have been made by various CBEPs to transform their disciplines. However, transformation goals and objectives are varied among the CBEPs. Findings by the Property Sector Charter Council (PSCC) show that commitment to transformation also varies across the built-environment sector, with the commercial property sector seemingly leading the progress of transformation, as evidenced by the number of BBBEE certificate submissions (BEE Chamber, 2017: online).

The slow progress on transformation within the built environment has been attributed to many reasons, including poor skills development, inadequate funding capacity, market factors, capacity constraints within client departments (various industry sectors at different levels of government), fraud and corruption, as well as data inconsistency and inaccuracy (CIDB, 2017: online; EAAB, 2017a: online). Other reasons for the slow transformation have been cited as professional registration not considered compulsory, delays in the registration process, employer bodies not compelled to employ registered persons, and lack of clearly defined and protected terms (especially in the engineering sector) (Senooane, 2016: online).

It should, however, be noted that transformation-related legislation aimed at enabling the economic empowerment of South Africans, especially women and Black people, is in place. Transformation in the built environment and other sectors is informed by Charters, of which the National Home Builders Registration Council (NHBRC) Transformation Charter guides transformation in the built environment based on Acts such as the Employment Equity Act (EEA), the Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (B-BBEE) Act and Codes, the Skills Development Levies Act, and the Preferential Procurement Policy Framework (Brun, 2017: online; NHBRC, 2017: online). Despite this extensive legislative framework providing for transformation, there is an absence of practical initiatives, mechanisms and clear goals to achieve this objective and to measure or monitor the impact of the expected outcomes (Acemoglu, Gelb & Robinson, 2007: 2).

Consequently, the Council for the Built Environment (CBE), whose mandate is enshrined in the Council for the Built-Environment Act,

No. 43 of 2000, is committed to providing leadership and drive initiatives that engender transformation of the built-environment sector (CBE, 2017b: online). One of its responsibilities is to promote human resources development in the built environment and facilitate participation of built-environment professionals in integrated development within the context of national socio-economic goals, among others. Hence, the CBE recognises that transformation within the CBEPs and the construction sector as a whole is very slow (CBE, 2017b: online). This slow progress presents unfavourable conditions for the CBE's drive towards enabling a transformed built environment, able to contribute to the 2030 National Development Plan (NDP) target for a skilled workforce in South Africa. Therefore, the CBE sought to formulate a transformation strategy for the built-environment sector, taking into account stipulations of the NDP and other legislative frameworks impacting on the built-environment sectors' ability to contribute to national socio-economic goals, specifically, the CBE's target to increase the number of registered professionals from the designated groups (SALGA, 2011: online; CBE, 2017a: online).

Transformation, which broadens and deepens economic benefit and participation, is arguably the best way to facilitate South Africa's growth and development (BUSA, 2018: online). This article analyses and reviews the transformation strategies implemented by other sectors in South Africa to inform and provide guidance for the CBE strategy to be developed on transformation of the built environment.

2. Literature review

2.1 Transformation concepts and drivers

Globally, transformation is etched in all sectors of the economy. In the professional sectors, transformation is related to change with regard to globalisation, sustainability, and technology (Durmus, 2010: 26). In the United States of America, transformation in the health sector has focused on practice transformation and professional development (Maloney, 2016: 107; Ruddy *et al.*, 2016: 624). Efforts to achieve transformation of practice in healthcare service delivery have been directed at technical change as well as transformation of the individuals who make up the system, in order to achieve the quadruple aim of better health, better quality care, affordability, and satisfaction of patients and providers. In the United Kingdom, transformation in the construction industry is related to digitisation or technological advancement to improve the performance,

productivity, and safety of construction through the better use of digital technologies (University of Cambridge, 2017: online).

In Asian countries, structural transformation encompasses a focus on improving industrialisation, technological sophistication, employment generation, foreign investment, and productivity in all economic sectors of the economy (ACI, 2014: online; Srinivasan, 2013: 53). It entails the progressive upgrading of economies' capabilities to produce more complex and higher quality outputs and thus investments in infrastructure, enactment of effectual policies to facilitate the development of sectors and entrepreneurship, as well as education and training are crucial (ACI, 2014: online).

In sub-Saharan Africa, with the per capita GDP increasing, between 2000 and 2014, by almost 35% in real terms, doubling in some countries in the region, economic and structural transformation concentrates on diversification of the labour force, improved governance, improved local and foreign investment, education, and high employment growth rates across different sectors (Jayne, Chamberlin & Benfica, 2018: 779).

In South Africa, transformation is viewed as the catalyst to address the country's socio-economic problems and their associated impact on different sectors and the economy at large. Transformation is often driven by compliance considerations (Alternative Prosperity, 2017: online). The mining industry recognises that transformation is not only a regulatory requirement, but also a business imperative (Minerals Council South Africa, 2019: online). In the mining sector, transformation entails a fundamental change in the economic structure of the sector and employment profile (MQA, 2014: 38). Several drivers are at play, which inform the conceptualisation of transformation in various spheres. They include, among others, social, economic, technological, legal, and political factors (Alternative Prosperity, 2017: online).

Social transformation addresses the impact of globalisation, environmental change, as well as the economic and financial state, resulting in growing inequalities, extreme poverty, exclusion, and the denial of basic human rights (UNESCO, 2017: online). According to UNESCO, the need for social inclusion and transformation arising from environmental change, for example, demonstrates the need for innovative solutions conducive to universal values of peace, human dignity, gender equality, non-violence, and non-discrimination, with particular focus on the vulnerable and the disadvantaged.

Economic transformation concerns the socio-economic improvements in the quality of life of all citizens. These include aspects related to equitable access to education, job creation, and reduction of the inequality gap and abject poverty (South Africa First, 2013: online). Economic transformation guidelines in South Africa include, among others, the principles and values enshrined in the Constitution:

- To recognise the injustices of the past;
- To honour those who suffered for justice and freedom;
- To respect those who have worked to build and develop our land;
- To uphold and protect human dignity, the achievement of human rights and freedom;
- To uphold and protect non-racialism and non-sexism, and
- To uphold and protect a government that is accountable, responsive and open.

Economic transformation also entails building an inclusive and more collective economy that will create more sustainable growth, higher investment, increased employment, reduced inequality, and lead to a de-racialised economy (Madia, 2017: online). The notable concepts of economic transformation include Black ownership and empowerment, natural resources development, national food security, economic rights, and access to education (South Africa First, 2013: online). Technological transformation occurred in the higher education sector through the implementation of e-learning (Uys, 2007). Political and legal forms of transformation had to do with enactment and enforcement of laws and policies to ensure that there is fairness, equity, and access to the most basic services (including education) and benefits (Langa, 2006: 352; Rapatsa, 2015).

2.2 Transformation strategies and implementation

Transformation strategies are frameworks put in place to ensure realisation of the process of change (Hernaus, 2008: online). Therefore, transformation strategy should:

- Be specific and practical;
- Be measurable (impact);
- Be realistic within set time frames;
- Determine the position and the impact of the organisation within its industry, region and country, and
- Create shared value (Alternative Prosperity, 2017: online; CPUT, 2017: online)

Consequently, the qualities and aspects needed to adopt and implement a transformation strategy are purpose, drivers, leadership, and impact measurements. Similarly, the process of implementing transformation should be logical, beginning with the establishment of the purpose, baseline, developing the strategy, and providing leadership and oversight to ensure sustainability (Alternative Prosperity, 2017: online).

In South Africa, a number of institutions and sectors have developed and implemented transformation strategies using different concepts and drivers in order to achieve their goals. For example, the Estate Agency Affairs Board's (EAAB) transformation goal is to realise a reflection of the demographics of the South African population in their industry. To realise this goal, the EAAB uses and observes the principles of B-BBEE more in compliance than in breach as a driver for transformation (EAAB, 2017b: online). Likewise, SACPLAN strives to transformation to benefit the PDIs and to ensure legitimacy and effectiveness in the profession. In order to realise this, they emphasise transformation of the mind, space, practice and our society at large, in order to embrace diversity and the empowerment of the previously disadvantaged (SACPLAN, 2015: online). Transformation in the mining sector is viewed as a slow process of transforming the race and gender inequalities, as well as cultural change, a change in mindsets, embracing diversity, equalising rights and opportunities, and attaining social justice (Moraka, 2016: 455).

2.3 Transformation implementation challenges

The transformation process encounters challenges that prevent sectors from advancing or achieving their transformation strategies. Finance or funding is one such challenge. The lack of funds to support training and development of skills of young learners studying towards qualifications in the built environment was identified as a barrier to industry transformation (South African Builder, 2017: online). In the higher education sector, in general, it was noted that financial constraints inhibited capable learners from furthering education (PMG, 2017). Funding is, therefore, critical to transformation.

Capacity constraints within sectors, organisations, and departments are also cited as one of the major hindrances to transformation (IPMAHR, 2006: online; CIDB, 2017: online). The lack of training and, hence, capacity development hinder transformation (South African Builder, 2017: online). Capacity was noted in the mining sector, where there was a shortage of well-qualified, competent, and experienced professionals. This capacity problem was attributed to

the inability to recruit suitable candidates, competition for talent, mining not always being viewed as a suitable career choice, cultural diversity, lack of government support, debate on nationalisation of mines, racial tension, uncertainty about nationalisation of mines, and poor working conditions. Consequently, Moraka (2016: 460) rightly argues that the lack of capacity is a hindrance to transformation. More skilled professionals are needed if all transformation goals are to be achieved in the mining sector and indeed all sectors of the economy (Odendaal, 2017: online). Moreover, critical skills are increasingly needed to keep up with technological development and to support mentorship programmes (World Economic Forum, 2016: online; Odendaal, 2017: online).

Inconsistent reports and statistics make the transformation goals difficult to achieve, as there is usually no real benchmark or goal to attain. In the construction sector, the Construction Sector Charter Council (CSCC, 2014) identified data inconsistency, inaccuracy, and generally the absence of reliable data as being some of the barriers to transformation. Similarly, in the mining sector, hesitance to submit evaluation reports, skills shortage, inadequate mentorship, having unrealistic targets, and practicability of the scorecards used for evaluation were identified as barriers to transformation (Moraka & Van Rensburg, 2015: 673).

The role of political will is also critical to the transformation agenda. The African Development Bank (ADB), for example, identified political will as being necessary for transformation of the agricultural sector on the continent of Africa (ADB, 2017: online). Political will is dependent not only on government, but also on all constituencies and professional bodies. A concerted effort from all is, therefore, needed. CBE recognises this critical ingredient to transformation of the built environment (CBE, 2017b: online).

3. Research method and design

This article analysed transformation strategies conceptualised and implemented by sectors other than the built environment in South Africa. It used a qualitative research design, in which open-ended questions were employed to elicit information from the participants (Creswell, 2012: 9). In this article, transformation documents from selected case studies of sectors and organisations, which have developed and implemented transformation strategies, were used to guide the CBE strategy to be developed on transformation of the built environment in South Africa. The interviews explored insights into key drivers or enablers, strategies, implementation, and challenges

of transformation from the different sectors and organisations in South Africa. The reason for collecting qualitative data is to elaborate on specific findings from the breakdown of the transformation documents, and explore the views, experiences and motivation on strategies, implementation and challenges of transformation suggested from the interview groups (Gill, Stewart, Treasure & Chadwick, 2008: 292).

3.1 Sample

Through a general literature review and analysis of transformation concepts and strategies within international and national contexts, the multi-case studies for the article were selected and consisted of four sectors that have developed and implemented transformation strategies and that have, to some extent, been successful or made significant progress. The sectors comprised non-built-environment (finance, accounting, government/public sector represented by HRDC) and built-environment sectors (a private construction firm). Five representatives, one each from the financial services, accounting, and public sector as well as two from the built-environment sector were interviewed on the transformation strategies implemented by the respective sectors or organisations. The representatives were selected because they were managing/ executive directors and heads of group transformation and development departments in their organisations.

3.2 Data collection

A breakdown of transformation documents was reviewed, in order to analyse transformation in the different sectors and organisations in South Africa. Transformation documents included the National Development Plan, Sustainable Development Goals Reports and Acts as well as transformation plans and charters of selected sectors and recognised professional bodies/organisations. The information extracted from the documents included general information on the strategies, implementation procedures, and challenges of transformation.

Subsequently, during February and March 2018, face-to-face interviews were conducted with the five representatives. The transformation topics used in the interview schedule were extracted from reviews of the literature. The interview schedule consisted of open-ended pre-determined questions in three sections, which helped define the areas to be explored (Gill *et al.*, 2008: 291). Section A contained two questions regarding the organisation and

portfolio of the respondents. Section B comprised eight questions enquiring on transformation strategy conceptualisation within the sectors, while Section C consisted of 13 questions on transformation implementation considerations, success factors and challenges. Interviewees were asked to indicate the key drivers or enablers, strategies, implementation and challenges of transformation by their respective sectors or organisations.

3.3 Data analysis

The empirical data from the interviews was analysed for themes and descriptions, using text analysis and interpreting the larger meaning of the findings (Creswell, 2012: 16). The analysis was undertaken with the aid of the ATLAS-ti software package for qualitative data analysis to identify common themes emerging from the interviews regarding the transformation aspects (Friese, 2019: 9). Based on frequency of occurrence, the themes were coded in six categories, including transformation imperatives, strategy guides and principles, strategy development, agents/key role players, implementation and tools, and challenges (Smit, 2002: 69-70).

The information extracted from the transformation documents as well as from published material publicly available in newspapers, online and organisation publications was used to triangulate and validate responses obtained from the interviews and vice versa. This process was important to increase the validity and reliability of the data (Creswell, 2012: 259).

3.4 Limitations

Due to time constraints, the research focused on including as many sectors as possible, even if it was one interviewee and representative from the "transformation" or similar department.

4. Case studies

In order to analyse transformation for the built environment, it is important to introduce the background on the selected sectors and organisations.

4.1 South African Institute of Chartered Accountants (SAICA) – Accountancy sector

The South African Institute of Chartered Accountants (SAICA) was constituted and operates in terms of its constitution. SAICA is a voluntary association registered as a non-profit organisation.

The objectives of SAICA are to promote the interests of its members and support the development of the economy and society in South Africa. Accordingly, SAICA is aligned to public interests and the development of a responsible leadership (SAICA, 2016a: online). Accountants may offer professional services only if they are members of SAICA. The Institute has been mandated to register accountants and grant them chartered accountant status. Consequently, SAICA accredits academic programmes in institutions of learning. SAICA is an education and training quality assurance body (ETQA). It accredits programmes leading to qualification as a chartered accountant. Based on this standing, it was deemed to be of similar stature as the CBE and thus considered for inclusion in this study.

SAICA's transformation strategy is strongly influenced and driven by skills development. The Thuthuka bursary fund is one of the tools used to implement the transformation strategy. The Thuthuka programme has been so successful that the newly launched Ikusasa Student Financial Aid Scheme (ISFAP) has been modelled on it (SAICA, 2016a: online). Students highlighted that transport problems and other non-financial personal problems were reported with the Thuthuka model. The ISFAP was thus established to provide a more holistic wraparound support model, providing for tuition, accommodation, meals, books, equipment, stipend, as well as academic, social and psychological support (mentoring and life-skills training) to ensure that students truly thrive (ISFAP, 2019: online).

As of the 2016 reporting year, SAICA had a membership of well over 41,000, where Africans constitute 4,500 (11%), up from 1.5% in 2002. The combined representation for Africans, Indians and Coloureds accounts for 25.6%, up from 7.6% in 2002 (SAICA, 2016a: online). Becoming a chartered accountant is crucial in order to legally practise within the business community at large and benefit from associated gains including access to continuing professional education and up-to-date information centre as well as the SAICA website; membership of leading accountancy institutes in the world; networking opportunities, and committees (SAICA, 2019: online). Therefore, once registered, opportunities to rise to positions of influence are many. Hence, SAICA's strategy is about developing individuals from primary school, high school and tertiary level to become chartered accountants (SAICA, 2016b: online).

4.2 The Banking Association of South Africa (BASA) – Financial services sector

BASA is an industry body representing all banks registered and operating in the Republic of South Africa. Its 37 members consist of all licensed banks. This is a very critical sector, as it is a custodian of the nation's savings; finances major infrastructure projects, as well as provides and enables payment for goods and services overseas. Banks are primary channels through which the Reserve Bank implements its monetary policies. BASA has assets of R4.8 trillion (BASA, 2017: online).

BASA is part of the financial services sector and accounts for the largest share in terms of membership. The financial services sector comprises the banking and non-banking sectors. This sector offers services covering commercial, retail, and merchant banking, mortgage lending, insurance, and investment (BrandSA, 2018: online). The Financial Services Board (FSB) oversees the non-banking sector. This is an independent body responsible for the regulation of financial markets and institutions, including insurers, fund managers, brokering operations, and national credit operations. Since the Banks Act of 1990 governs the sector, the BASA, as a transformation benchmark in the financial services sector of South Africa, was selected.

As the mandated representative of the banking sector, BASA was thus chosen for this study. They achieve their goals through lobbying and advocacy; policy influence; guiding transformation in the sector; being a catalyst of constructive and sustainable change in the sector, and engaging with critical stakeholders. BASA implements transformation through:

- Human resources development (HRD);
- Procurement;
- Enterprise development;
- Access to financial services;
- Empowerment financing;
- Partnership in financial sector, and
- Corporate social investment.

The performance in the banking industry in terms of racial and gender equity has somewhat improved. In 2007, women formed approximately a quarter of the executive and senior managers in the financial services sector, with the figure increasing from 16.7% in 2004 to 27.8% in 2007. However, most of them were White (Research Focus, 2009: 22). Ownership by Blacks, measured by voting rights

and enterprise development, exceeded the target of 25%, reaching 26.7% by 2015 (BASA, 2018: online). In management control, Black people constitute the majority of all the managers in the banking industry (mostly at junior to middle management levels).

4.3 Human Resource Development Council (HRDC) – Government/public sector

The Human Resource Development Council of South Africa (HRDC) is a national, multi-tiered and multi-stakeholder advisory body chaired by the Deputy President of the Republic of South Africa. The Ministry of Higher Education and Training manages the HRDC. The HRDC was established in March 2010 to facilitate conditions that promote the optimal participation of all stakeholders in the planning, stewardship, monitoring, and evaluation of HRD activities in the country. One of the Council's key responsibilities is to build the human resource development base required to ensure a prosperous and inclusive South African society and economy, with the focus on the development of strategy. The HRDC was chosen for inclusion in the study, because it advises the Government on human resource development strategy and its priorities. Its main aim is to develop institutional synergies for an integrated human resource development strategy of South Africa, able to stimulate a culture of lifelong learning and, therefore, transform South Africa into a knowledge economy.

The HRDSA strategy (2010-2030) was developed and focuses on:

- Educational attainment;
- Skills development;
- Science and innovation, and
- Labour market/employment policies.

4.4 Aveng Group

Aveng, a private-listed company, has operated for over 125 years and employs over 14,000 people. It has a turnover of R30 billion per year. It lists Aveng Grinaker-LTA, McConnell Dowell Construction, Aveng Mining, Aveng Manufacturing, and Aveng Steel as its companies. Aveng was chosen for the study, because it was the first company in the construction sector to conclude the Qakazana Consortium, a high-level Black empowerment economic transaction in 2005. Aveng strives to achieve a high-level B-BBEE contributor status. It has exceeded the ownership target allowed for in the construction charter. Black representation in middle management increased by 55% to 40.3% in 2018; inclusion of Black- and women-owned suppliers

increased by R3.1 billion and R839 million spent on Black- and women-owned suppliers, respectively (Aveng, 2018: online). In addition, one of Aveng's long-term objectives is to invest in people. It enrolled 643 candidates on a range of learning programmes and invested R17.8 million in education-focused socio-economic development in 2018. For these transformation efforts, Aveng was included in this study.

5. Findings and discussion

5.1 Conceptualisation and transformation imperatives

The accountancy sector conceptualised transformation and had as its imperatives the need to develop its skills for the 21st century. The interview respondents from SAICA explained that their focus in driving transformation is on occupations in high demand and an assessment of the skills that will be needed in the 21st century. Equally, the urgent need to address the historical imbalances in terms of the previously disadvantaged in South Africa from ownership of means of production and participation in the economy, weighed heavily and, hence, was a critical factor in conceptualising the transformation strategy.

Transformation for BASA and its sector was primarily informed by the realisation that transformation was a business imperative. According to the interviewees, "economic inclusivity and balance was sustainability". The banking sector needed to adopt new ways of doing business that included economic inclusivity and balance. Inclusivity and balance entail educational outcomes at all levels, Black enterprise development, diversity, supportive enterprise development, skills to meet the needs of a growing economy, poverty eradication, increasing productivity within sectors, increasing income, women primarily involved in increasing productivity, economic transformation, and how things can be done practically (ODI, 2017: online; BUSA, 2018: online).

In addition, it was critical for the sector to keep and maintain the performance record and global stature that it had attained. Therefore, any transformation strategy had to be framed around the need to continue with its best practice and to achieve economic inclusivity and balance, knowing that transformation was a business imperative. In confirming the views of the interviewees, the CEO of ABSA noted that broader financial access and inclusion is necessary, in order to attain economic opportunity and growth (McKinsey, 2010: 46). Equally, the National Treasury to the Financial Services Sector Charter

Council (FSCC) indicated that the sector should “ensure that the financial sector is not only transformed, but [also] transformative”. It must focus on access and inclusion (with improved overall financial inclusion in addition to employment equity); ownership transformation, and procurement (National Treasury, 2017: online).

The Standing Committee on Finance (SCOF) and the Portfolio Committee on Trade and Industry (PCTI) affirmed BASA and the financial services sector’s transformation conceptualisation, advising that the transformation agenda should equally accommodate the creation, growth and maintenance of financial stability, robustness, competitiveness, as well as being effective enough to allow it to “facilitate domestic and international commerce”. They argued that the more developed a country’s financial system is, the greater is its potential to reduce poverty and income inequality (SCOF & PCTI, 2017: 3).

The HRDC’s conceptualisation was found to be similar to that of SAICA. The transformation strategy and its conceptualisation were informed by the need to develop skills for the envisioned transformed society, whereby there is equitable participation by Black people, with an emphasis on the most disadvantaged (women, youth, people with disabilities, and those living in poor households in townships and rural areas), a view supported by BUSA (2018: online). In addition to focusing on the nature of the transformed society and its needs, the HRDC interviewee noted that conceptualisation of their strategy recognised the fact that transformation should be about skills development, because this contributes to economic growth. Commenting on the issues that have a negative impact on transformation, the HRDC interviewee noted that there is a need to focus on the scarce skills: “[W]e need engineers to be engineers ... Most of you are not working within your field ... to attract them back to the professions ... and most of the practitioners are de-registered and then you can’t practice.”

The movement of engineers or other technical professionals to administrative roles as a result of acquiring non-engineering-related degrees, mostly in the fields of business administration or project management, thus impacts on transformation (ECSA, 2014: online). In addition, the complexity and time-consuming registration process may be a deterrent to renewal of registrations (ECSA, 2014: online).

The Aveng group’s conceptualisation of transformation was viewed to be a business and social imperative, in line with safety and care, environmental stewardship, investing in people, and transformation beyond compliance (Black representation in

middle management, B-BBEE contributor status, and expenditure with Black- and women-owned suppliers). However, Aveng's head of transformation emphasised that when the transformation strategy was being formulated, they "refrained from making transformation to be a Black issue".

Transformation in the mining industry was conceptualised as a result of the inequitable and deleterious consequences of the industry for the majority of (previously disadvantaged) South Africans (Moraka & Van Rensburg, 2015: 670). The transformation imperatives in the mining sector may be construed from official documentation as "[s]ystematic marginalisation and exclusion of the majority of Historically Disadvantaged South Africans (HDSAs) from ownership of the means of production and meaningful economic participation in the mainstream economy, through concerted application of exclusionary apartheid-era policies" (South African Government, 2016: i).

In summary, transformation was conceptualised based on social, economic and business imperatives in the sampled organisations.

5.2 Transformation strategy guides and principles

For all the sectors reviewed in this study, it was reported that transformation is inevitable. The only question was how to develop and implement the transformation strategies. For SAICA, the voluntary commitment of all its members made it easier to develop the strategy. However, the real and evident skills demand for both present and future needs shapes and guides the transformation strategy. Compliance was also a factor in guiding the strategy development and, therefore, the interviewees noted that it was important for them to refer to and comply with the B-BBEE provisions. Equally, the respondents advised that the transformation strategy was informed and aligned with the accountants' demographics in South Africa.

Having embarked on the journey of developing the strategy voluntarily, BASA used a financial services sector-wide summit to shape the strategy. Nedlac hosted and facilitated the discussions. As with the accountancy sector, the B-BBEE was a key tool and guide in developing the strategy for compliance with the sector codes. According to the interviewee, the constant reminder in developing the strategy was the "need to do business differently".

The HRDC strategy development guide was far more elaborate than the other sectors. For its strategy, the B-BBEE was consulted, including Government policies and ILO conventions. In envisioning the skills for

the future transformed state, the NDP's 14 priority outcomes and the Government's 9-point plan were guiding principles, upon which the transformation strategy was based for the public sector. "The NDP especially. Remember it was published in 2011, but after the strategy was published. So, it was the main thing that the consultants looked into because they were saying; 1) whatever was in the old strategy is now old, so let's look at the goals of the NDP to align them. 2) Also to look at the MTSF of government; 3) to look at the 14 outcomes of government; 4) the Skills Development Act, what was it saying in terms of how is the country supposed to be developing the skills. Remember it is also now being revised based on the fact that skills are now changing within the country. 5) the 9-point plan of government was another document that was consulted".

In terms of Aveng, the group's long-term objectives were key to developing the strategy. The Aveng interviewee also emphasised that it was important to have buy-in to the strategy from the entire organisation. Therefore, one of the tools they used to guide the transformation strategy was results from a survey they had conducted within the company on their objectives and boundaries, in order to deliver sustainable outcomes. In addition, the construction sector charter and the Department of Labour's prescripts were pivotal in developing the strategy.

In summary, transformation, in the sampled organisations, was guided by the demographics of South Africa, compliance with regulations, skills demand, contribution to the community and society at large, as well as the long- and short-term objectives of the organisations.

5.3 Strategy development process

The development of the transformation strategy for SAICA started with its holding consultative meetings with a number of stakeholders from both private and public sectors. The consultations were held with other professional associations such as Business Leadership South Africa, the Engineering Council of South Africa, and other stakeholders.

A similar approach was taken by BASA. Long before many others were considering a charter, the financial services sector voluntarily established the Financial Services Sector Charter (FSCC) Council and developed an agreement to which all members voluntarily subscribed. The FSCC Council drove the transformation agenda and processes and, as the B-BBEE evolved, it likewise adapted to suit the current legal framework. In addition to consultation, the respondent

advised that it is important to allocate responsibilities to specific individuals: "our role, ... we serve on the board of the Charter Council ... but we have a group of charter facilitators in each of the banks we bring together regularly to look at targets for a whole range of issues, from housing to infrastructure, to SME finance and to access to financial services, to internal HR related issues and so on".

Although the charter exists, whereby all organisations in the sector including BASA abide, BASA conducted research to determine strategies for financial inclusion and tracking. The strategy development process was multifaceted as BEE legislative environment evolved and the needs of the sector and industry changed.

Similar to BASA, the HRDC has specific teams and individuals tasked with developing strategies for specific aspects of the transformation strategy. These technical teams were called standing committees. The respondent explained that "[t]here was a technical task team looking at different aspects ... for example, at production of academics. Another one was looking at Entrepreneurship and Education, and then they came up with results that were saying 'entrepreneurship must start at foundation level; curriculum must change' and it did."

The Aveng group's development of the transformation strategy involved conducting workshops, seminars or conferences with employees in various businesses. The Aveng interviewee explained: "[W]e embarked on quite an extensive transformation workshop/conference, where we engaged all the senior leaders of the organisation from the various businesses, and from junior management to top management."

In addition to using a consultative approach, Aveng also used the carrot-and-stick method. This meant that transformation development was linked to the core business activities. The respondent explained: "[W]e decided to push the buttons immediately, with consequences, meaning that if you don't start to align your business with ours, you could fall off the bus." Transformation was, therefore, a performance issue.

In summary, the transformation development processes in the sampled organisations entailed engagement with stakeholders and employees for strategies and plausible solutions to achieve transformation, as well as establish committees to drive the transformation agenda.

5.4 Transformation strategy agents/key role players

Findings from all the sectors show that transformation needs a proper structure with authority, one that can play an oversight role. In addition, it was clear that a very senior person should be in charge of the transformation structure.

In the accountancy sector, the strategy implementation and monitoring primarily rests with SAICA. The choice of SAICA to oversee the transformation strategy implementation in this sector appears to have yielded the desired results. SAICA is an ETQA and, therefore, it accredits academic programmes at universities and institutions of higher learning that offer qualifications leading to chartered-accountant status. Consequently, SAICA is able to influence curricula, quality of educational offering, and employer buy-in. In addition, SAICA registers accountants for professional practice; it thus commands significant authority within the sector. In addition, the person in charge is at a very senior level and can, therefore, sit in strategic meetings for the sector.

The financial services sector council drives its strategy on transformation. This was agreed upon by all members at the National Economic Development and Labour Council (NEDLAC) Financial Sector Summit held during 2002 (DTI, 2017: online; SA Government, 2017: online). Similarly, the HRDC secretariat is driving the transformation agenda assisted by what they call transformation agents. These include universities and Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges, Sector Education and Training Authority (SETAs), the DTI, the Department of Small Business, and the Department of Science and Technology (DST). The deputy president of the country chairs the HRDC. "The departments that are responsible for implementing the strategy are the government departments and business."

The HRDC also uses what they refer to as the HR Coordination Forum within the HRDC. This committee monitors and evaluates progress on transformation initiatives being implemented.

The Aveng group executive director also echoed the need for transformation to be recognised in the organisation or sector structures. He argued that "[t]here is a key to transformation and I spoke at a conference about my views on who are the people that should be driving transformation; transformation agents; transformation managers; transformation practitioners ... a very senior person with influence and able to report directly to the CEO."

In summary, the key role players in the sampled organisations include persons capable of driving and monitoring the transformation strategy implementation and progress.

5.5 Strategy implementation and tools

For most of the organisations, transformation strategies have ended up on the shelf without any meaningful impact. In contrast to the sectors and organisations studied for this benchmarking report, it was clear that, in order to avoid redundancy of initiatives, it is important to engage in real activity-based programmes that advance transformation.

SAICA has the Thuthuka programme for their skilling for the 21st century strategy. In our interview, the director for nation-building at SAICA clearly stated: "I have been in the profession for 23 years, and if anybody thinks that you're going to get transformation for your top skills occupations which are in high demand without doing anything, it's not going to happen. So we in 2002, SAICA, embarked on Thuthuka."

In addition to the bursary scheme for university students, SAICA has a structured candidacy programme, which exposes graduates to three years of training in different business units in SAICA-accredited organisations, to develop as well-rounded finance professionals. The SAICA respondent pointed out that, "[b]ecause your biggest problem in the engineering profession is this damn candidacy and nobody is listening. You have people registered as candidate for years and every time I speak to the same people, ... I said we have to have a structured candidacy programme!"

SAICA also oversees curriculum development and ensures that the developed courses meet the standards. In addition, SAICA has appointed Thuthuka programme managers who are educators, not simply teachers.

BASA also utilises a number of programmes and tools to drive and see the transformation agenda to reality. These include evaluation tools to monitor transformation in the financial sector and business and to evaluate the human resources performance and other initiatives such as the Youth Employment Service (YES) initiative. The FSC Council, which is the independent regulatory agency, also monitors and evaluates the transformation progress. It is tasked with the role and mandate of engaging with policymakers to ensure that legislation enables transformation. It conducts research to understand challenges; it identifies opportunities to

expedite transformation, and it reports on transformation progress. It also enables the interpretation of guidelines and standards to promote understanding of the FSS Codes. The FSS Code commits all participants to promote a vibrant, transformed, and globally competitive financial sector that reflects the demographics of South Africa, and contributes to the establishment of an equitable society by providing accessible financial services to Black people and by directing investment into targeted sectors of the economy (FSC Council, 2017: 187). A respondent commented thus: “[W]e felt that we can’t monitor our own progress; it needs to be monitored by an independent body. And on the Board of the Charter Council sits labour, community groups, government (in the form of DTI, Treasury and the Presidency), and the representatives of Black interests – particularly the Association of Black Securities and Investment Professionals (ABSIPs) – to represent the Black interests in the sector and industry”; “and part of that is something we called the YES Initiative: which is the Youth Employment Service initiative ... aiming to employ for training 330 000 youth, not just the financial sector”.

Partnerships with other stakeholders as well as reforming human resource policies were also cited as effective implementation tools, as stated by the respondent: “Our role up to now has been to bring the banks together to put together stretched targets for our banks, and the banks then perform against that and they report to the Charter Council; and an annual report is presented on performance.”; “I think you need to engage the people you oversee, I think you need to engage the various professions and if necessary through some of the other bodies they belong to ... And my view is that you need to engage these bodies to impress upon them how transformation is important to their future sustainability”; “We want to change competition laws to promote transformation and growth, transformation must happen and some of the businesses respond that we’ll do transformation here.”

Transformation implementation and tools in the HRDC sector include skills and capacity development through the YES programme driven by business, partnerships with universities and TVET colleges, education and training of labourers to acquire artisan skills and the New Generation of Academics Programme (nGAP). This programme involves recruitment of highly qualified scholars as new academics, against carefully designed and balanced equity considerations and in light of the disciplinary areas of greatest need (South African Government, 2015: online). On other programmes, the HRDC respondent listed support for the following programmes: “Foundational learning, in Science, Technology, English and

Mathematics, TVET colleges, Higher Education and innovation, and Developmental state ... the nGap programme is encouraging, because it is focused on predominantly black women, making sure they get to higher degrees ... We also get reports from Universities on the Bursaries, the YES programme, and another, Tshepo 1 Million programme in the Gauteng province"; "Then there's one for artisan skills in the KZN ... Labour (is) supposed to encourage workers to study and get exposed to all these issues. Within the strategy, we also refer to the ILO conventions. As long as labour is aware of the convention, we'll be able to train more and more workers."

HRDC also identified partnerships with training institutions as a strategic tool to drive transformation. The respondent explained: "Encouraging partnerships with universities and TVET colleges ... I can proudly talk about the nGap programme because it was one of the recommendations to say DHET work together with the DST"; "We partner with other businesses like SASOL and Sedibeng TVET College, working together to try and look at the demand ... with state of art equipment."

The HRDC boasts partnerships with both public and private entities for hands-on practical training on relevant fields (for example, with Ford, Nissan, and so on), using state-of-the-art equipment from all over the world. These tools and programmes are yielding transformation results as envisaged. The respondent explained: "We work together with the NRF to provide bursaries and do whatever. It was one of the recommendations. We also spoke to the DST, how far are they with the NRF and the funding that are supposed to be distributed to the PhD students we collaborate with HRDC and DST on 5 programmes on foundation learning, innovation, and science and technology."

On monitoring and evaluation, the respondent answered: "We are responsible for the overall management and leadership of secretariat ... Monitoring and evaluation. There's monitoring and evaluation and reporting, the HRD, through the HR Coordination Forum ... we put measures in place for quality assurance"; "the technical teams ... for instance on development of academics, we ask 'what were the results of the study in terms of production of academics'."

In the same way, the Aveng Group has specific programmes in which they participate to drive the transformation strategy. These include the YES programme, and the Maths and Science education and teacher-training programmes, which aim to provide quality high-school education to learners from disadvantaged communities. The respondent informed that, "[w]e support two schools that focus on Mathematics and Science, one in Limpopo and the other in Diepsloot".

Aveng conducts what they refer to as training of entrepreneurs. The respondent said that "they do training of Black business entrepreneurs ... giving back".

Another programme they have is Enterprise Supply Development (ESD). The respondent stated that one aspect of enterprise supply and development is preferential procurement. In addition to monitoring and evaluation, compliance and lack thereof, is taken very seriously. The respondent explained that, for strategies to succeed, there have to be consequences because, "[w]hat we found was a general lack of compliance to policies and processes in the organisation because there were no consequences".

Further, in a practical way, Aveng linked performance on transformation programmes to businesses. The respondent explained: "We also changed to a point where we now have structured KPIs in the system performance management, and in cases of senior people, it is directly linked to their bonuses as well."

In summary, to ensure progress towards transformation in their organisations, there was a concerted effort to engage individuals, employees, stakeholders as well as the community in education and skills development with a view to achieving transformation targets.

5.6 Strategy implementation challenges

The study revealed some common challenges in implementing the transformation strategies in all the institutions studied for this report. Some of the challenges were reported as inadequate funding; demographics (age and gender) of those in senior positions; inadequate career awareness; academic training, and inadequate incentive structure to motivate and retain human resources.

Other challenges included low levels of participation and meaningful progress in the transformation agenda by some of the sector institutions; lack of effective monitoring and evaluation of transformation progress; prevalence of incoherent and inconsistent data; market concentration, monopolisation and ownership; lack of imposed penalty (punitive fines) arising from non-compliance; inadequate skills development and capacity, and resistance to change. Some of these were evident in respondents' statements: "[S]ome (staff) do move out and go into other opportunities which is fine, but I think in the whole human resource side we need to look at the incentive structures and so on. So I think it needs to be part of people's career to be trained and developed and so on." The Science Technology English and Mathematics problem: "For example, now

we have a problem with the STEM. So the standing committee that is looking at M&S is looking at who is supposed to be teaching M&S, what kind of teaching is supposed to take place."

Therefore, in aiming to achieve transformation, it is important to tackle the barriers, with formal and informal structures (ODI, 2017: online). Transformation strategies should be developed so as to respond to the challenges. Developing and planning for transformation in any sector should take cognisance of the barriers that could hinder progress, and address them during planning and implementation. In order to achieve sustainable transformation, a proactive, innovative and scalable approach to transformation is needed in the short to long term (BUSA, 2018: online).

6. Conclusion and recommendations

The objective of the study was to establish transformation strategies implemented in various sectors in South Africa. Four organisations were selected based on their transformation processes and progress, as evidenced from secondary research (desktop study). Information was obtained on transformation strategies, as conceptualised and implemented by the sectors. Transformation in the identified four organisations representing different sectors revealed some level of success with their strategies. The organisations with similar regulatory functions included BASA and SAICA. The HRDC and the Aveng Group were selected based on their performance and significance in the South African economy.

Findings revealed that transformation among the sampled organisations was conceptualised based on social, economic and business imperatives, guided by the need to achieve equity in the demographics (racial and gender) of South Africa; compliance with regulations; skills demand; contribution to the community, and objectives of the organisations. Other findings showed that persons who were responsible for driving transformation and for monitoring the progress of implementation engaged stakeholders and employees, in developing the strategies. The establishment of committees to drive the transformation agenda was key in ensuring that transformation goals are achieved.

Recommendations were made in line with the findings of the study, as depicted in Figure 2, to guide the development of the built-environment transformation strategy. Transformation should be conceptualised with a view to redressing historical imbalances and providing expanded opportunities for worker education and skills

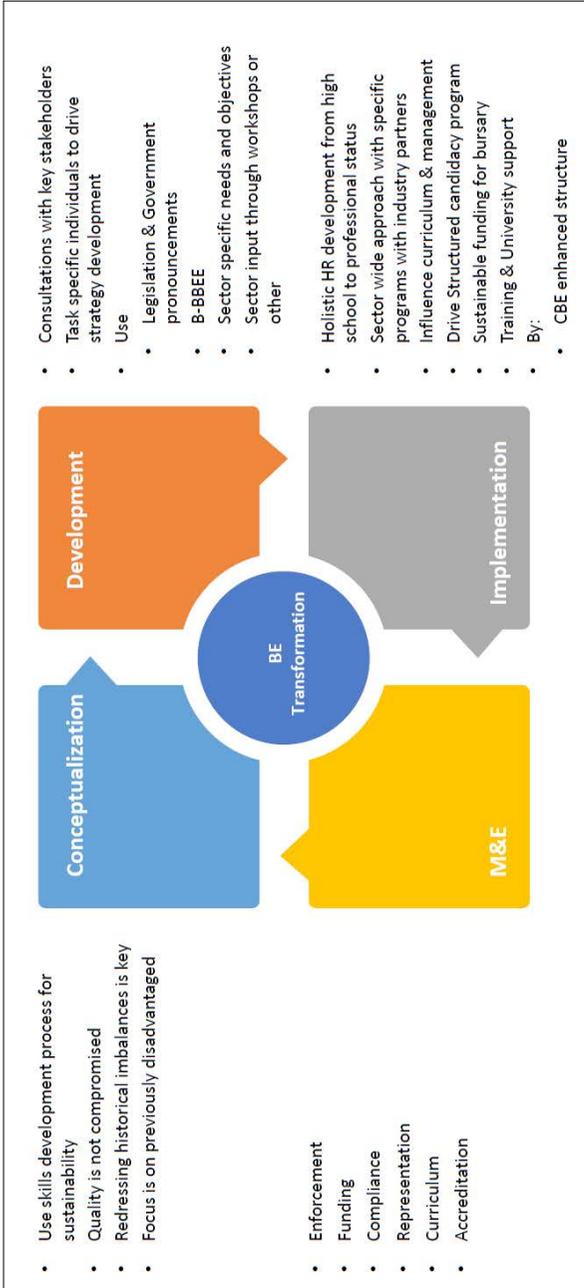


Figure 2. Recommendations for the built environment strategy development

development from the grassroots, with attention to the previously disadvantaged. The development of transformation initiatives should be based on established codes, legislation, sector needs as well as key stakeholder inputs. Implementation of transformation strategies could be achieved through specific structured training and education programmes from the grassroots to professional level. The importance of monitoring compliance and progress on transformation was emphasised and, therefore, recommended.

The limitations of the study lie in the fact that few participants were involved in the study; therefore, the generalisability of the findings is limited. Further studies could employ a larger sample and/or incorporate other economic sectors to decipher if different findings could emerge.

In addition, alternative research methods such as quantitative techniques could be adopted to investigate transformation strategies and their impact on, and effectiveness in organisations. Further, the scope of the current study encompassed providing evidence for the development of a strategy by the CBE. The subsequent strategy developed by the CBE was, therefore, not part of the study. Further studies may focus on the CBE strategy developed for the built environment.

Notwithstanding the limitations, the current study presents evidence on transformation strategies as conceptualised and implemented successfully in various organisations, the drivers and processes, role players and tools that could be adopted by all and sundry, especially the built-environment sector, in achieving transformation objectives.

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