

CONSTRUCTION COVID-19 RAPID RESPONSE TASK TEAM



06 April 2020

Ms. Patricia de Lille
Minister of Public works and Infrastructure
Per email: Patricia.delille@dpw.gov.za

cc: Minister Jackson Mthembu
Per email: musj@dpme.gov.za

Honourable Minister de Lille

CONSTRUCTION COVID-19 RAPID RESPONSE TASK TEAM REQUEST FOR ENGAGEMENT

The global economy has been thrown into turmoil as the world struggles to combat the spread of COVID-19 with a number of countries in lockdown or isolation. South Africa has responded very decisively and in an exemplary fashion, implementing a total lockdown which is a critical measure to curb the spread of the pandemic in the country.

This is commendable, however the economy been particularly hard hit by the double blow of the lockdown and the Moodys and Fitch downgrades. This is unprecedented and has placed the country in a very challenging position, requiring sacrifice by the population and businesses to comply with the lockdown, but at the same time requiring definitive action by government to implement structural economic reforms and address poor economic growth whilst dealing with the pandemic. New partnerships will be required to navigate through these turbulent times.

The successful lockdown and the tremendous positive support being received from civil society will, ironically, be felt by the development and construction industries who support the President in his initiative and leadership. We turn to you, in your role of Public Works and Infrastructure, knowing that you have practical knowledge of our industry and is acutely aware of the impact that the lockdown is having on property developers, built environment consultants and building and civil contractors and their labour force.

In recognition of the challenges facing the Built environment and Construction industries, and acknowledging the role this industry can play in support of efforts to combat the pandemic, a COVID -19 Construction Rapid Response Task Team has been established with participation

from key industry bodies to look at the recovery of the industry post the lockdown. The Task Team aims to collectively unblock relief measures for the industry to remain sustainable and to help the industry navigate its way through these 'unchartered territories.' The Task Team is being formed at a time of current industry challenges against the backdrop of an already ailing construction industry calls for serious interventions by all stakeholders in the industry.

To this end we seek an urgent engagement with the Minister to discuss the following:

- i. Identifying opportunities where the Rapid Response Task Team could assist 'the national disaster and relief effort' both on a volunteer and professional basis.
- ii. Interpretation of Regulations during lockdown and the absence of clear reference to the construction industry.
- iii. Explore relief measures specific to the sector.
- iv. Supporting emergency procurement for the next 12 months.
- v. Discuss interventions for the recovery of the industry.
- vi. As part of the recovery, engage Government on the commitment to pay service providers within 30 days.
- vii. Partner with Government to ensure effective and integrated rollout of infrastructure projects.
- viii. Engagement with the Presidential Infrastructure Coordinating Commission for a consolidated roll-out plan and other relevant matters.

We therefore humbly request a meeting with the Honourable Minister to collectively and in the spirit of partnership and consultation, engage as key industry stakeholders towards a sustainable construction industry during and post the COVID-19 lockdown.

We look forward to hearing from you soon in this regard.

Yours sincerely

John Matthews

Chairperson