

PASA raises the architecture bar with Level 1 B-BBEE accreditation



Paragon Architects South Africa (PASA), part of the Paragon Group of architecture and interior architecture companies, has been awarded a Level 1 rating for 2018, in accordance with the Construction Sector Code issued under Section 9(1) of the Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (B-BBEE) Act No. 53 of 2003.

The latest accreditation was verified by Siyandisa Verification Services, PASA Director Thulani Sibande confirms. Reviewed on a yearly basis, it reflects PASA's ongoing transformation and development in the key areas of ownership, skills development, and preferential procurement and supplier development.

“It is going to be a good year. We have never had so many enquiries,” Sibande comments. He attributes the uptick due to an

improved political and economic environment, which has resulted in renewed confidence in the South African construction industry in particular.

The Paragon Group, with the assistance of PASA, has been streamlined to take maximum advantage of the current situation, with the latest accreditation playing a major role in positioning itself as a market leader. “This is a major achievement for a company of our size. With some of the larger players struggling to retain traction, we have achieved a critical mass that has allowed our expansion and growth to continue apace,” Sibande elaborates.

The achievement is a reflection of the culture of inclusivity at the Paragon group, which strives continuously to set a new benchmark for the industry and the country as a whole. “It is definitely a team effort. There is no doubt about that. I am very happy we are able to make our own ongoing contribution to meaningful improvement in the lives of the previously-disadvantaged,” Sibande affirms.

For example, the Paragon Group has committed to funding five bursaries for 2018 as part of its skills development programme. It forms part of its larger obligation of contributing a certain percentage of its annual turnover to such initiatives. “Many companies see B-BBEE as an added expense, rather than as a business imperative.”

Level 1 is a “no-brainer” in terms of maximising business opportunities. “It also plays a critical role in motivating those clients that are not as confident about their own empowerment status to become part of this process.” Beyond South Africa, it will also give PASA invaluable experience in dealing with the specific empowerment requirements of other countries in which it has secured projects.

In terms of future goals, Sibande points to the ongoing upskilling and motivation of existing staff, especially as the Paragon Group continues to secure more work as a result of its reinvigorated market presence. “We have to ensure that, going forward, we do not drop the ball if we are suddenly awarded a slew of major projects. We have to ensure we are able to deliver at the same level

of excellence we have always been proud to deliver. We must leverage 