Inform Practice Note #20

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Applying the Register of Contractors to Fencing

cidb’s Inform Practice notes provide guidance and clarity in achieving client objectives in construction procurement and delivery. Practice notes inform clients and practitioners on how to embrace best practice and how to deal with issues that may arise. They are aligned with, but do not replace regulation.

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Synopsis:

Fences and walls are required to enclose, protect or to divide a space or property. Such construction works can fall into a number of classes of construction works. This practice note provides practical guidance on the identification of an appropriate class of construction works to apply the register of contractors to such works.
1. Introduction

A fence is generally regarded as a railing or barrier constructed of posts of any of various materials connected by wire, planks, etc., used to enclose and prevent entry to and exit from a field, yard or other spaces. A wall, on the other hand is generally regarded as a structure of little width in proportion to its length or height which is continuous to enclose, protect or to divide a space or property. The distinction between a fence and a wall is not very clear as both enclose areas and act as barriers.

Fences and walls can be made from a number of different construction materials and combinations thereof, may or may not retain earth and may be open or continuous. They can be:

• Prefabricated off site or in a casting yard on site and erected on site;
• Erected on a site from manufactured components; or
• Constructed on a site.

Furthermore, they can form the substance of a contract or form a small portion of a contract.

The Construction Industry Regulations published in terms of the Construction Industry Development Board Act of 2000 applies where fencing or walling is the subject matter of contract. These Regulations, however, don’t define a fence or a wall.

2. Identifying the appropriate class of construction works

Fencing could fall into one of three classes of works, namely:

• Civil engineering;
• General building; or
• Specialist.

Steel and precast concrete palisade fencing, wire netting fences supported on metal droppers and standards or metal posts and stays or steel sheet fences and precast concrete walls fall into the SQ class of construction works.

Masonry (brick, block or stone) and lightly reinforced or unreinforced cast in-situ concrete walls and timber fences fall into the GB (general building) class of construction works.
Examples

SQ class of construction works

**Palisade fences**
- Steel
- Concrete
- Chain-linked
- Wire mesh

**Wire netting**

**Precast concrete**

**Steel panel fence**

**GB Glass of construction works**

**Walls**
- Brick
- Stone
- Block
- Timber

Plain or lightly reinforced cast in situ concrete
The aforementioned examples clearly illustrate the differences between the SQ and GB classes of construction works, namely:

- **SQ class**: Manufactured concrete and/or steel products are brought onto site and the fence is assembled on site using these materials. Typically only holes are excavated to receive posts, which are concreted in the hole.

- **GB class**: Construction materials are brought onto site and a wall is constructed from these materials. Concrete foundation are required in the case of masonry and cast in situ concrete walls to support these walls.

As a general rule, a single class of construction works must be used when applying the register to fencing. Clearly, the **SQ class** of construction works applies to any form of precast concrete fencing and any type of steel fence while the **GB class** of construction works applies to masonry and cast in situ concrete walls and timber fences.

In the case of tall reinforced walls, contractors registered in either the **GB (General building)** or the **CE (Civil Engineering)** classes of construction works should be invited to submit tender offers. Likewise, in the case of timber fences, contractors registered in either the **GB (General Building)** and **SM (Timber buildings)** should be invited to submit tender offers. Failure to do so could unfairly prejudice contractors who are registered in another class of construction works who are perfectly capable of constructing such works.