

## DB ZIMBABWE - DEALING WITH CONSTRUCTION PERMITS

### CLARIFICATION ON REFORMS INTRODUCED IN RESPECT OF STAGE INSPECTIONS

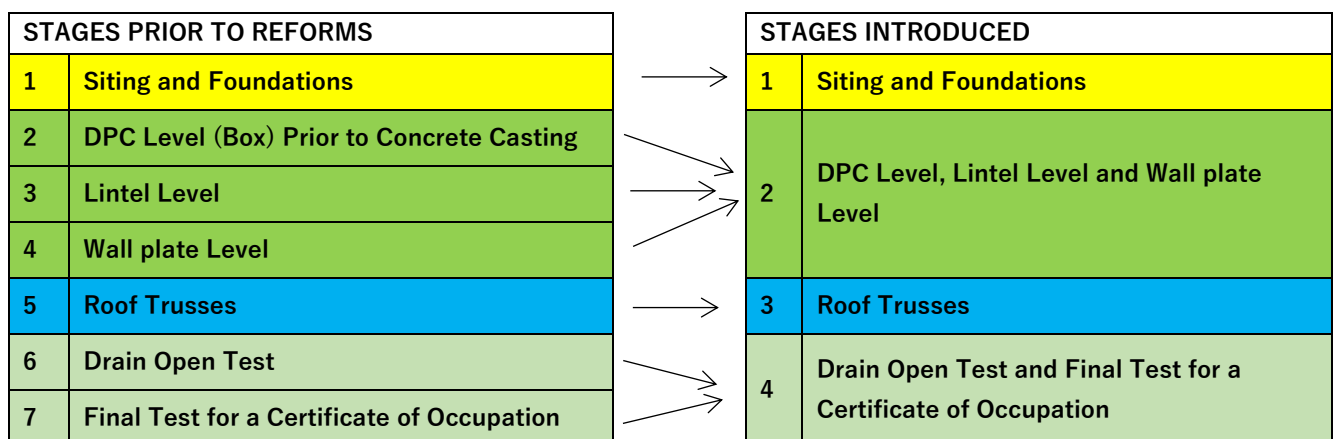
In the construction process, a Harare City Council Building Inspector visits a construction site to check on compliance with local authority Building Bylaws, approved design specifications and quality standards. Prior to the reforms introduced, the Inspector would be booked by the developer/contractor to carry out a total of 7 stage inspections from Setting Out of the building up to the Final Test that would lead to the issuance of a Certificate of Occupation. The stages comprised :-

1. Siting and Foundation Level
2. Damp Proof Course Level (Box) Prior to Concrete Casting
3. Lintel Level
4. Wall plate Level
5. Roof Trusses
6. Open Drain Test
7. Final Test for a Certificate of Occupation

Each stage had to be approved by the Inspector before a Contractor proceeded to the next. The high frequency of stage inspections coupled with low capacity of the Building Inspectorate Section (in terms of staffing levels for inspections and records management as well as vehicles for mobility) resulted in undue delays being experienced by developers. It used to take, on average, 4 months for the 7 inspections to be accomplished.

The Technical Working Group on Construction Permits, as part of its DB Reforms agenda, recommended to City of Harare the reduction of **Stage Inspections** (not structures) from 7 to 4 as well as the introduction of a Risk-Based Management Developmental Stage Inspection System whereby the Council would share liability with a registered site Contractor. The system would ensure quality and safety standards are not compromised.

The reforms introduced collapsed the stage inspections undertaken by a Building Inspector as illustrated in the diagram below.



The reforms were endorsed by the Environmental Management Committee of Council and, subsequently, by Full Council in 2019. (see Annexures 1-4 attached) The reduction in the stage inspections would lead to overall reduction in time to accomplish all inspections by one month, on average, while Council's cost with respect to travel and the Client's costs (fees) would, equally, be cut.

To effect these reforms, the Team then formulated a plan of action aimed at training/sensitization of (to begin with) the Building Inspectorate and relevant Departments of Council before reaching out to the generality of stakeholders, including Contractors. The initiative would be bolstered by a public awareness campaign utilizing all available platforms – radio, television, newspapers, brochures and flyers, social media, websites, councillors ward meetings, exhibition shows, workshops, etc. The next phase would be a programme to cascade the reforms to other local authorities (both rural and urban councils) in all the provinces of Zimbabwe in a process of knowledge exchange/sharing. The Awareness Programme would require resources which the Office of the President and Cabinet is mobilizing.

It is also worth noting that, through the Team's engagement efforts with the Local Authority (the Human Resources Department, in particular), the Building Inspectorate's resource capacity levels were improved in the following areas :-

- a. The number of Inspectors was increased from 18 in 2018 to 28 in 2019
- b. The number of Records Management Officers was increased in 2019 from 1 to 5.
- c. The 5 unreliable vehicles attached to the Inspectorate were replaced in 2018/19 by 10 new ones.

All this has contributed significantly and positively to the Council's overall improvement in service delivery with regards to the processing of **Construction Permits**.