



AAK | PROMOTING EXCELLENCE
IN THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT



**ARCHITECTURAL ASSOCIATION OF KENYA (AAK) MEETING WITH THE ENGINEERS BOARD OF
KENYA (EBK)
ON 15TH FEBRUARY 2024
AT EBK OFFICES IN FORTIS SUITS, UPPERHILL**



Introduction

AAK and EBK held a consultative meeting to discuss pertinent issues affecting the construction industry and areas where the two organizations can collaborate to make a positive impact. Led by the president, Arch. Florence Nyole, the AAK team included council members from the Engineers Chapter Eng. Paul Karara, Ms. Muguru Wairimu, Eng. Jacton Mwembe and Eng. Nashon Tambo, as well as the Research and Advocacy team, Ms. Michelle Ouma, and Ms. Mary Ngaruiya.

EBK team included Eng. Erastus K. Mwongera, the Chair of the board, Eng. Margaret Ogai, the registrar/CEO, Eng. Grace Onyango, the Director of Capacity Building and Accreditation and Mr. Elijah Muriuki, the Finance Manager.

About EBK

EBK is the regulatory body mandated by the Engineers Act of 2011 to register engineers and engineering consulting firms, regulate engineering professional services, set engineering standards, and develop and

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improve the general engineering practice.

EBK has several functions and powers to ensure the quality and integrity of engineering education and practice, including, among others:

- Approve and accredit engineering programs in public and private universities and other tertiary-level educational institutions offering education in engineering;
- Establish the Kenya Academy of Engineering and Technology, whose purpose shall be to advise the National and County Governments on policy matters relating to engineering and technology;
- Assess, approve, or reject engineering qualifications of foreign persons intending to offer professional engineering services or works;
- Establish a school of engineering and provide facilities and opportunities for learning, professional exposure, and skills acquisition, and cause continuing professional development programs for engineers to be held;
- Develop, maintain, and enforce the code of ethics for engineers and regulate the conduct and ethics of the engineering profession in general
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EBK is currently engaged in various activities that aim to improve the transition rate of engineers from the graduate to the professional and consulting engineers levels. EBK is also working towards being a signatory to the Washington Accord to enable the recognition of Kenyan engineering education and professional competence. This will allow free mobility for Kenyan Engineers who can practice internationally. At the same time, the Kenyan educational institutes will become centers of excellence that attract international students and export Kenyan-trained engineers internationally.

About AAK

Established in 1967, the AAK is an umbrella association for eight professions in the built environment, including Architects, Town Planners, Quantity Surveyors, Engineers, Landscape Architects, Environmental Design Consultants, Construction Project Managers, and Interior Designers. AAK brings together national and county governments, the private sector, and academia. It also links professionals and stakeholders in the wider construction industry, including policymakers, manufacturers, real estate developers, and financial institutions.

AAK is organized into three committees: Memberships and Communications, Research and Advocacy, and Finance and Administration. Our Research and Advocacy activities aim to improve excellence in the

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built and natural environment, involving policy advocacy, research, partnerships with like-minded organizations, and public sensitization on industry matters.

The association has undertaken numerous activities towards this end, including conducting research on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on housing, which led to the development of the Healthy Homes Guidelines and Checklist framework. The Integrated and Inclusive Framework for Kenya (3iF) is another framework that AAK produced in collaboration with Kounkuey Design Initiative (KDI), Akiba Mashinani Trust (AMT), and Arup Group to promote the co-designing of infrastructure projects with the target residents.

AAK also produces publications such as the Status of the Built Environment Report, an annual report that gives an account of the happenings within the built environment, including the cost of construction, development control processed, land and property market dynamics, and infrastructure development, among others. The most recent report was released in December 2023.

There are several advocacy campaigns that the association runs to create awareness about construction health and safety. The *Je, Una Mjengo? Campaign* promotes professionalism in construction processes, while the *Mulika Mjengo Campaign* aims to empower the public to identify and report unsafe construction sites so that AAK puts the relevant authorities to task.

Areas of Partnership and Collaboration

1. Enhancing Compliance in Building Safety

AAK and EBK can work together to ensure compliance with professional standards. Over the years, both organizations have continuously advocated for the engagement of professionals in construction projects.

Both organizations acknowledged that the shortfalls in development control negatively impact the built environment industry significantly. This is one avenue that EBK and AAK can collaborate in to push for seamless development control, as most compliance challenges are due to poor development control.

AAK will share information collected on Je, Una Mjengo? initiative with EBK to help the EBK in their mandate of enforcing the code of ethics among engineers.

2. Advocacy

A unified voice from professionals will be critical in pushing for reforms in the built environment, especially in the areas of engagement of professionals in projects and promoting quality projects in the industry. Collaboration with other Kenyan professional regulatory bodies, such as the Board for Registration of

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Architects and Quantity Surveyors (BORAQS), is also critical to ensure seamless relationships across the professions.

EBK and AAK can collaborate in public education and sensitization activities such as the AAK Je, Una Mjengo? and Mulika Mjengo Campaigns.

3. Strengthening Engineering Education and Research

Knowledge exchange and joint research initiatives will be important to fill the significant information gap. EBK is in the process of putting in place its research and advocacy structures and will benchmark AAK to leverage AAK's successful model while tailoring it to suit EBK's specific goals and objectives.

AAK will support EBK in its quest to have engineering programs offered at Tertiary Institutions accredited by the Board.

EBK can work with AAK to address the issue of the low transition rate from graduate engineers to professional engineers to consulting engineers. Alarming, the number of professional engineers and consulting engineers currently stands at 562 and 2891, respectively, compared with 21,663 graduate engineers.

4. Trade in Services

EBK's efforts to attain a signatory status to the Washington Accord, implement the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCTA agreement), and establish a Mutual Recognition Agreement across Africa are commendable. AAK supports EBK in these efforts so that professional engineers can easily work across borders. AAK will further sensitize all professionals about these efforts during engagements such as the AAK Convention.

As a member of KEPSA, AAK is involved in making an offer for the AfCTA. Both organizations need to work together as built environment professionals attain a common stand for the country's position to ensure our offer opens more markets to our members while protecting our professionals from unfair competition in instances where the offers made by other countries do not reciprocate our offer.

Kenya is a pacesetter among East African countries, which will be crucial in setting precedence. In addition, numerous opportunities are coming up. There is a need for all professionals to position themselves strategically to ensure they are not left out. EBK and AAK will work together towards this.

Appropriate, accredited training will be key to navigating the free trade environment.

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5. EBK Engineering Partnership Convention and the AAK Annual Convention 2024

EBK and AAK should continue collaborating during their events to deliberate on matters affecting the built environment while increasing networking opportunities for members. This includes participation in plenary sessions, technical sessions, and panel discussions. AAK actively participated in the EBK Engineering Partnership Convention 2023. AAK will invite EBK leadership to the AAK convention scheduled for August 2024.

6. Continuous Professional Development.

In 2023, a mishap led to AAK not receiving accreditation for the events held in the year. AAK Engineers Chapter held three good events that were quite educative with a promise for PDUs. EBK acknowledged this and assured that the PDUs would be awarded accordingly.

In regards to the AAK 2024 application for being accredited, EBK noted that the proposed programs for the year 2024 had been approved, and official communication will be given. However, some requisite documents were not appended as required. AAK is to provide these documents before formal accreditation as a CPD provider.

EBK also urged AAK to take up other opportunities that earn CPD and PDU points, including mentoring young engineers.

7. Scale of Fees

AAK supports EBK's efforts towards ensuring fair remuneration for engineers. EBK can also work with BORAQS & the National Construction Authority (NCA) to know the projects professionals are involved in and enforce the scale of fees.

EBK and AAK agreed to collaborate in pushing to ensure the terms of engagement of professionals in the Affordable Housing Program are in line with Legal Notice No. 20 – Scale of Fees for Professional Engineering Services.

8. Projects Registration

AAK proposed that EBK can work with NCA to have all projects undertaken by Engineers registered, not only building projects. The information can be shared across the two bodies to obviate the need for the laborious registration of projects with EBK again.

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EBK also challenged AAK members to be forthright with information on their projects instead of EBK having to rely on NCA for the information.

9. Engineers' Tools of Trade

AAK raised concerns about many engineers not receiving their stamps and engineers' IDs from EBK. This is forcing engineers to make their stamps, thus creating an opportunity for unscrupulous quacks to forge engineer's stamps for use on important documents such as letters and reports. AAK also raised the concern about the delay in the release of Engineers' practicing licenses.

EBK assured that they are in the process of digitizing the issuance of licenses to and thus eliminate delay in receiving the license. EBK will also expedite the production of identification cards and stamps.

Way Forward

- AAK will submit the pending documents to complete its application for accreditation as a CPD provider for 2024.
- EBK will accredit AAK and provide PDUs retroactively for events held in 2023.
- It was agreed that the two organizations should meet frequently, also including the Institute of Engineers of Kenya (IEK) to ensure that more professionals are brought on board in deliberations around improving the built environment.
- The organizations will collaborate with BORAQS to discuss the various cross-cutting issues.
- EBK and AAK will support each other by participating in their respective annual conventions.
- AAK should support EBK in increasing the transition rate by mentoring the younger engineers and sharing good experiences.

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