



Jacques Smith of  
GoConsult

## Aspasa leads review of aggregate specifications

Aggregate grading specifications are currently being reviewed by representative bodies in order to move the construction industry in southern Africa towards tighter specifications that can be uniformly adopted by all sectors.

**A**t the helm of the review process is the Aggregate and Sand Producers Association of Southern Africa (Aspasa) which is seeking a common grading system to be used across the board when ordering or specifying aggregates for any purposes. At present buyers can quote either SANS, the outdated TMH, or other specifications when ordering materials, leading to considerable confusion among suppliers and users alike.

“We have been approached by the country’s major users of aggregates, including roads agencies, metropolitan and smaller municipalities, as well as major consulting engineering firms to move the industry towards a common standard,” says Nico Pienaar, director of Aspasa. “Aggregates make up by far the largest component by volume of materials used for most construction projects – such as in concrete, road construction, stabilising of ground and so on.”

### Widely varying methods

“But different professions have adopted their own standards and this leads to problems wherever projects overlap or where responsibility for projects is shared among companies who use different standards.

“In other instances it may disadvantage suppliers who produce products in accordance with opposing standards and have equipment geared to producing aggregate products to these standards. In the past aggregate suppliers have supplied aggregates to a certain specification yet their products have been rejected at great cost and we want to avoid this where possible.”

Speaking at a specially convened Aspasa workshop, civil engineer Jacques Smith of GoConsult says that formalisation of uniform specifications is required and that appropriate tests and training need to be developed to ensure these can be accepted and implemented across the board.

### Consistency is needed

“Sampling methods need to be agreed upon and best practice should dictate that all sampling be done in collaboration between the supplier and parties responsible for specifying the materials. With the right processes and procedures in place it becomes easier to comply with clients’ requirements and also to keep record of what was supplied.”

Pienaar says laboratories will also have a role to play and will need to work according to strict criteria laid out in the specifications to test materials. The adoption of uniform standards is the only means of ensuring consistent quality of materials are produced to meet increasingly stringent requirements for building materials. The association is therefore investigating the use of an independent professional laboratory that will be used in the event of disputes arising to ensure fairness.

“We therefore urge all industry bodies across the construction sector, as well as consulting engineers, civil engineering contractors, civil engineers, architects and specifiers – to contribute to this process and to support Aspasa in bringing about constant improvement in the supply of aggregates,” he concludes. ■