



CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY REGULATORY AUTHORITY (CIRA)

HIGH-LEVEL STAKEHOLDERS' COMMUNIQUÉ: 2026 ROLL-OUT OF DIRECTIVES AND NON-NEGOTIABLE COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS

From: Eng. Gerald T. Khonje, Chief Executive Officer —
Construction Industry Regulatory Authority
(CIRA)

To: Contractors; Consultants; Material Manufacturers & Suppliers;
Equipment Suppliers; Clients/Procuring Entities (Public &
Private); Professional Boards & Associations; Development
Partners; Academic & Training Institutions; Media

Date: January 2026

1. PURPOSE AND CONTEXT

The Construction Industry Regulatory Authority (CIRA) was established under the Construction Industry Act, No. 28 of 2025 to regulate, promote and develop the construction industry in Malawi (sections 4–5). CIRA's mandate is national in scope and binds Government and all public authorities as well as private entities (section 3).

This Communiqué provides the 2026 high-level directives, outlines mandatory non-negotiable requirements, and sets out the enforcement posture that will govern CIRA's engagement with all stakeholders.

2026 is an execution year. Our collective focus must combine awareness and measurable compliance, better project outcomes, and higher industry performance.

2. CIRA'S LEADERSHIP ROLE: REGULATION, PROMOTION AND DEVELOPMENT

CIRA will lead the construction sector through three integrated roles:

2.1 Regulation (Standards, Compliance, Protection of the Public Interest)

In line with the Act, CIRA will:

- a) Register and license firms intending to operate in the construction industry (section 5(2)(c); sections 24, 28–29).

- b) Prescribe standards for the construction industry, including safety and health standards (section 5(2)(g)–(i)).
- c) Investigate violations and impose administrative penalties, issue stop orders, and take remedial action where necessary (section 5(2)(j)–(k); sections 43–45).

2.2 Promotion (Local Participation, Fair Markets, Predictable Rules)

CIRA will drive predictable regulation that improves investor confidence, reduces disputes, and advances local participation through:

- a) Enforcement of licensing categories, thresholds, and scope of practice (sections 24, 33).
- b) Strengthened requirements on foreign firm participation, joint ventures, subcontracting, and use of licensed entities (as prescribed in subsidiary instruments and licensing conditions under the Act).

2.3 Development (Capacity Building, Industry Upgrading, Research & Innovation)

CIRA will champion sector development through structured programs aligned to national priorities:

- a) Construction Industry Development Program (CIDP) initiatives and capacity-building interventions embedded within projects.
- b) Research and innovation partnerships across academia, industry, and development partners.

3. NON-NEGOTIABLE COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS

The following requirements are mandatory. They apply across the construction value chain and will be actively enforced.

3.1 Registration, Licensing and Scope of Practice

No firm shall operate without registration and a valid license under the Act (sections 24, 28–29).

Clients shall not engage unlicensed firms. Engagement of unlicensed firms is prohibited (section 33).

A license is firm-specific and non-transferable. Allowing another firm to use your license attracts administrative penalties (section 34).

Annual renewal is compulsory. Operating on an expired license attracts administrative penalties (section 29(4)).

3.2 Compliance with Construction Standards and MIDMS

All stakeholders shall comply with construction standards prescribed and enforced under the Act (sections 5(2)(g)–(i); Part VI — Construction Standards/Compliance).

Mandatory use and compliance with the Malawi Infrastructure Delivery Management Standards (MIDMS) for public and private sector infrastructure planning and delivery.

MIDMS shall be used from project inception, feasibility, design and budgeting, procurement, implementation, commissioning, and close-out.

MIDMS is accessible from the official CIRA website www.cira.mw .

3.3 Construction Cost Indices

Mandatory adoption and utilization of Construction Cost Indices as the authoritative benchmark for:

- a) budget realism
- b) bid evaluation reasonableness
- c) variation assessment
- d) claims management, and
- e) market intelligence.

3.4 Joint Ventures and Subcontracting Requirements

Contractors, consultants, suppliers, and clients shall comply with applicable joint venture and subcontracting requirements, including incorporation of these requirements in:

- a) tender documents and procurement plans
- b) evaluation criteria
- c) contract conditions, and
- d) project execution arrangements.

CIRA will assess compliance through licensing conditions, project registration checks, inspections, and audits.

3.5 Levy Payment and Statutory Fees

Levy is a statutory obligation. CIRA will impose a levy on firms or classes of firms and on clients by order published in the Gazette (section 22).

Firms and clients shall pay applicable fees and levies as required. Failure to pay attracts recovery measures, interest, and administrative penalties, and may result in license enforcement action (Part VI — Licensed firm to pay fees and levies).

3.6 Infrastructure Technical Audits and CIRA Quality Audits

Clients/procuring entities must incorporate Infrastructure Technical Audits into project lifecycle governance, including at critical milestones (design readiness, construction quality checkpoints, completion, defects liability).

CIRA will conduct quality inspections and audits, and may issue directives, administrative penalties, and stop orders where projects contravene the Act (sections 44–45).

3.7 Infrastructure Asset Audit/Survey and Maintenance Alignment

All Ministries, Departments and Agencies, Local Authorities, Statutory Corporations, and major asset-holding institutions shall conduct Infrastructure Asset Audits/Surveys to establish:

- a) an inventory of national infrastructure assets
- b) asset condition and risk rating, and
- c) prioritized maintenance and rehabilitation plans.

Asset inventory and maintenance planning must align to the National Infrastructure Maintenance Strategy and be integrated into annual budgeting and public investment planning.

3.8 Capacity Building Embedded in Projects

All significant projects shall incorporate capacity-building interventions aligned to the Construction Industry Development Program (CIDP), including:

- a) training targets
- b) mentorship and skills transfer
- c) structured internships/apprenticeships
- d) technology transfer plans, and
- e) measurable local participation outcomes.

3.9 Research, Innovation and Materials Standards

Stakeholders shall actively promote research and innovation in methods, materials, safety, sustainability and productivity.

CIRA, in consultation with appropriate authorities, will enforce compliance by material manufacturers and suppliers with standards applicable under written law (section 39).

3.10 Digital Compliance and Automation

As CIRA embraces automation, all stakeholders shall adopt digital engagement for:

- a) registration and licensing
- b) renewals
- c) project registration and compliance reporting
- d) levy payments
- e) audit scheduling and evidence submission.

Digital non-participation will not excuse non-compliance.

3.11 Transparency and Accountability

Licensed firms and clients must act transparently and accountably across the project life cycle (section 43(2)).

CIRA expects stakeholders to leverage on the Infrastructure Transparency Initiative-CoST and other disclosure frameworks, including Information Platform for Public Infrastructure (IPPI) at www.ippi.mw , to publish material project information, prevent undue influence, and enhance public trust.

3.12 Project Registration and Information Provision

All projects shall comply with project registration requirements as prescribed.

Firms and clients must provide information and documents relating to existing or proposed projects when required by CIRA; non-compliance attracts administrative penalties (section 43(1) & (4)).

4. STAKEHOLDER-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS AND EXPECTATIONS

4.1 Contractors

Contractors shall:

- a) Maintain valid registration and licensing; operate strictly within licensed scope (sections 24, 28–29).
- b) Comply with MIDMS and applicable technical standards.
- c) Implement joint venture/subcontracting requirements where applicable and maintain traceable subcontractor compliance.
- d) Participate in technical audits and provide full access to records and sites (sections 43–44).
- e) Pay levies and fees on time.

4.2 Consultants (Design, Supervision, Technical Auditing, Management)

Consultants shall:

- a) Maintain valid licensing and operate within licensed scope.
- b) Ensure designs and supervision align to MIDMS and prescribed standards.
- c) Provide audit-ready documentation throughout the project life cycle.
- d) Promote integrity in procurement and contract administration and support disclosure.
- e) Pay levies and fees on time

4.3 Material Manufacturers and Suppliers / Equipment Suppliers

Manufacturers and suppliers shall:

- a) Hold valid licensing where applicable and comply with registration requirements.
- b) Comply with materials standards under written law, subject to CIRA oversight (section 39).
- c) Ensure transparency in sourcing, testing certification, delivery verification and traceability.
- d) Participate in audit and inspection processes and submit required documentation (sections 43–44).

4.4 Clients / Procuring Entities (Public & Private)

Clients shall:

- a) Engage only registered and licensed firms (section 33).
- b) Integrate MIDMS, Construction Cost Indices, and technical audits into project governance.
- c) Budget realistically using cost indices and enforce quality compliance through contractual instruments.
- d) Remit retention funds as required under the Act and applicable guidance (section 42).
- e) Support asset auditing and maintenance alignment across portfolios.

4.5 Professional Boards and Associations

Professional bodies shall:

- a) Strengthen professional ethics, continuous development, and disciplinary collaboration.
- b) Partner with CIRA in standards development, competency assurance, and joint enforcement where mandates intersect.

4.6 Development Partners

Development partners shall:

- a) Align project pipelines, procurement requirements and reporting systems to MIDMS, cost indices, and audit requirements.
- b) Support capacity building, innovation, and digital transformation initiatives.
- c) Promote transparency and disclosure to strengthen public confidence.

4.7 Academic and Training Institutions

Institutions shall:

- a) Align curricula and training programs to industry needs and CIDP priorities.
- b) Partner in applied research, materials testing innovation, and productivity enhancement.

5. COMPLIANCE, DISCIPLINE AND ENFORCEMENT POSTURE

CIRA will regulate with firmness, fairness and predictability. Non-compliance will attract decisive action.

5.1 Administrative and Regulatory Measures

CIRA may apply the following measures, as provided under the Act:

- a) Administrative penalties for contraventions, including failure to provide required information and documents (section 43(4)) and other breaches.
- b) Suspension or cancellation of licenses where licenses were obtained through fraud/misrepresentation, where conditions are breached, where firms act in contravention of written law/codes, or where professional misconduct is proven (section 30).
- c) Deregistration of firms for persistent non-compliance or other grounds set out in the Act (section 31), with restoration strictly as permitted by the Act (section 32).
- d) Stop orders on projects that contravene the Act (sections 5(2)(k) and 45).
- e) Inspections of premises, sites and documentation (section 44).

5.2 Offences and Penalties

Operating without a license and other offences fall under Offences and Penalties (Part VIII). CIRA will pursue enforcement in collaboration with relevant institutions, including prosecution where applicable.

Compliance is not negotiable. It is a legal obligation and the foundation for safe, durable and value-for-money infrastructure.

6. 2026 IMPLEMENTATION PRIORITIES

During 2026, CIRA will prioritize:

- a) Industry-wide compliance drive on registration, licensing and project registration.
- b) Operationalization and enforcement of MIDMS across project lifecycles.
- c) Adoption of Construction Cost Indices in procurement and contract management.
- d) Intensified inspections, quality audits, and technical audit integration.
- e) Levy compliance strengthening and sustainable regulatory financing.
- f) Infrastructure Asset Audit/Survey acceleration and maintenance alignment.
- g) CIDP-aligned capacity building and measurable local participation.
- h) Digital transformation and automation of regulatory services.
- i) Transparency initiatives and disclosure culture strengthening.

7. CONCLUSION AND CALL TO ACTION

CIRA's mandate is clear: to regulate, promote and develop the construction industry for the benefit of Malawi (section 5(1)). The built environment must be safe, durable, resilient, and delivered with integrity.

Accordingly, I call upon every stakeholder to:

- a) comply fully and immediately with the non-negotiable requirements set out herein,
- b) strengthen professionalism and ethical conduct,
- c) embrace transparency and digital engagement, and
- d) partner with CIRA to build a modern, competitive and resilient construction industry.

Signed:



Eng. Gerald T. Khonje, PMP
Chief Executive Officer
Construction Industry Regulatory Authority (CIRA)