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Agrément South Africa, the SABS and the CSIR

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Application for approval of building plans must be made to the local authority which applies the National Building Regulations (NBRs) when considering such applications. Compliance with the NBRs may be demonstrated by

- meeting the relevant deemed-to-satisfy rules of the current South African Bureau of Standards (SABS) Code of Practice 0400: *The Application of the National Building Regulations*, when using a conventional method of construction, or
- a valid Agrément certificate when using a non-standardised or innovative building system
- a rational design by a competent person.

Certain products require formal approval, for example where they are to be used in critical applications or large public works such as sewerage systems. In other instances public authorities may be less concerned about compliance than specifiers (eg architects), owners and consumers.

There are two independent organisations in South Africa that are concerned with technical approvals - the SABS and Agrément South Africa. While the former operates in a wide range of areas, the latter confines its activities to the building and construction industries.

The activities of the two organisations are largely complementary: the SABS deals with standards and codes of practice which relate to conventional products, and cooperates with international organisations for standardisation, while Agrément South Africa assesses innovative, non-standardised construction materials, products and systems and maintains links with the World Federation of Technical Assessment Organisations (WFTA), the Union of European Agrément (UEA) and other Agrément-type organisations.

The CSIR also provides the staff of the Technical Agency which serves the Board of Agrément South Africa.