Corrupt planning decisions made today have long-term and often intractably negative impacts on a city’s future. Urban planners play a pivotal role in fostering integrity in urban development as their professional realm straddles the worlds of both public administration and private development.

Compromising the public good for personal, professional, or political gains – also known as corruption – is a global challenge. The New Urban Agenda calls on all countries to ‘promote capacity development programmes to help sub-national and local governments in financial planning and management, anchored in institutional coordination at all levels, including environmental sensitivity and anti-corruption measures.’

However, municipal officials, political decision makers, civil society advocates and built environment practitioners have very few practical tools that help them to better understand and effectively address urban planning corruption.

Urban planners are uniquely positioned to address corruption risks in urban development. Therefore the question of how we can ensure that urban planners act as a force for public good, is central to this research project.

Instead of testing standard anti-corruption measures we examine a rather under-explored, yet promising route, the activation and promotion of professional integrity and the professional structures that enable it. The insights generated through this research will be relevant for policy and practice across Africa and will inform broader integrity strategies that focus on professional communities and their professional bodies.
THE PROJECT
The project focuses on how professional communities of planners in South Africa and Zambia live up to their roles as drivers of integrity. The project takes a three-pronged approach illustrated here:

- Examine current integrity landscape in urban development and planning
- Build on a mapping of existing mechanisms and practices to develop, promote and enforce integrity as a professional norm
- Identify public roles and responsibilities practicing planners in South Africa and Zambia see for themselves, as well as the pressures they face at the intersection of the public and private sector

A qualitative action experiment built around a targeted training intervention for planners in Zambia, including a feedback mechanism that surfaces and harnesses different and potentially conflicting expectations around the role, responsibilities and everyday practices of planners.

THE TEAM

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR
Prof Vanessa Watson
is a professor of city planning in the School of Architecture, Planning and Geomatics at the University of Cape Town (UCT). She holds degrees from the Universities of Natal, Cape Town and the Architectural Association of London, and a PhD from the University of Witwatersrand, and is a Fellow of UCT.

vanessa.watson@uct.ac.za
+27 (0)21 650 2387
www.africancentreforcities.net/programme/gi-ace/

CO-PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR
Dr Gilbert Siame is a lecturer and researcher at the Department of Geography and Environmental Studies at the University of Zambia and the director of its Centre for Urban Research and Planning. He holds an MA and PhD in City and Regional Planning, both from UCT.

RESEARCHER & PROJECT COORDINATOR
Dr Laura Nkula-Wenz is a lecturer at the African Centre for Cities and the project’s research coordinator. She holds an MA and a PhD in Urban Geography, both from the University of Muenster/Germany.

SENIOR PROJECT ADVISOR
Dr Dieter Zinnbauer works on emerging policy issues and innovation in the areas of governance, urbanisation and technology. He holds a PhD in Development Studies from the London School of Economics.

SENIOR PROJECT ADVISER
Stephen Berrisford is an Associate Director at Pegasys and leads its Cities practice. He serves as an Adjunct Professor of the African Centre for Cities and holds a Master’s in Land Economy from the University of Cambridge, Master’s in City and Regional Planning and an LLB from UCT.