

UNDERSTANDING MAIN CONTRATOR'S GB RATINGS

In South Africa, GB ratings refer to the General Building class of works within the Construction Industry Development Board (CIDB) grading system. This rating is a mandatory requirement for contractors bidding on public sector projects, certifying their capability to perform building projects (such as residential, commercial, or industrial buildings) up to a specific financial value.

The grading is presented as a combination of a digit (1 to 9) and the letters "GB" (e.g., 4GB, 9GB).

Components of the GB Rating

The Class of Works (GB): Stands for General Building. This covers the construction, renovation, alteration, or refurbishment of permanent structures such as schools, hospitals, offices, and residential dwellings.

The Grade (1–9): Represents the maximum tender value limit of a project a contractor is permitted to undertake.

- Grade 1 is the lowest (smallest projects).
- Grade 9 is the highest (unlimited project value).

CIDB GB Rating Thresholds (Approximate)

As of 2026, the GB rating determines the maximum tender value (including VAT) that a contractor can handle:

- 1 GB: Up to R500,000
- 2 GB: Up to R1,000,000
- 3 GB: Up to R3,000,000
- 4 GB: Up to R6,000,000
- 5 GB: Up to R10,000,000
- 6 GB: Up to R20,000,000
- 7 GB: Up to R60,000,000
- 8 GB: Up to R200,000,000
- 9 GB: No limit (unlimited)

Why GB Ratings Matter

Proof of Competence: It verifies that a contractor has the necessary track record (completed projects) and financial capacity (capital/turnover) to finish a project.

Tender Eligibility: Public sector clients (government) are legally restricted from awarding contracts to builders who do not have the appropriate CIDB rating.

Risk Management: It ensures that smaller contractors are not overwhelmed by massive projects, and larger projects are handled by firms with sufficient resources.

Additional Designations

PE (Potentially Emerging): If a rating includes PE (e.g., 5GBPE), it means the contractor is emerging and can be awarded a project one level higher than their rating if they are provided with support.

Multiple Classifications: A contractor can have different ratings for different types of work (e.g., 9GB for building, 8CE for Civil Engineering).