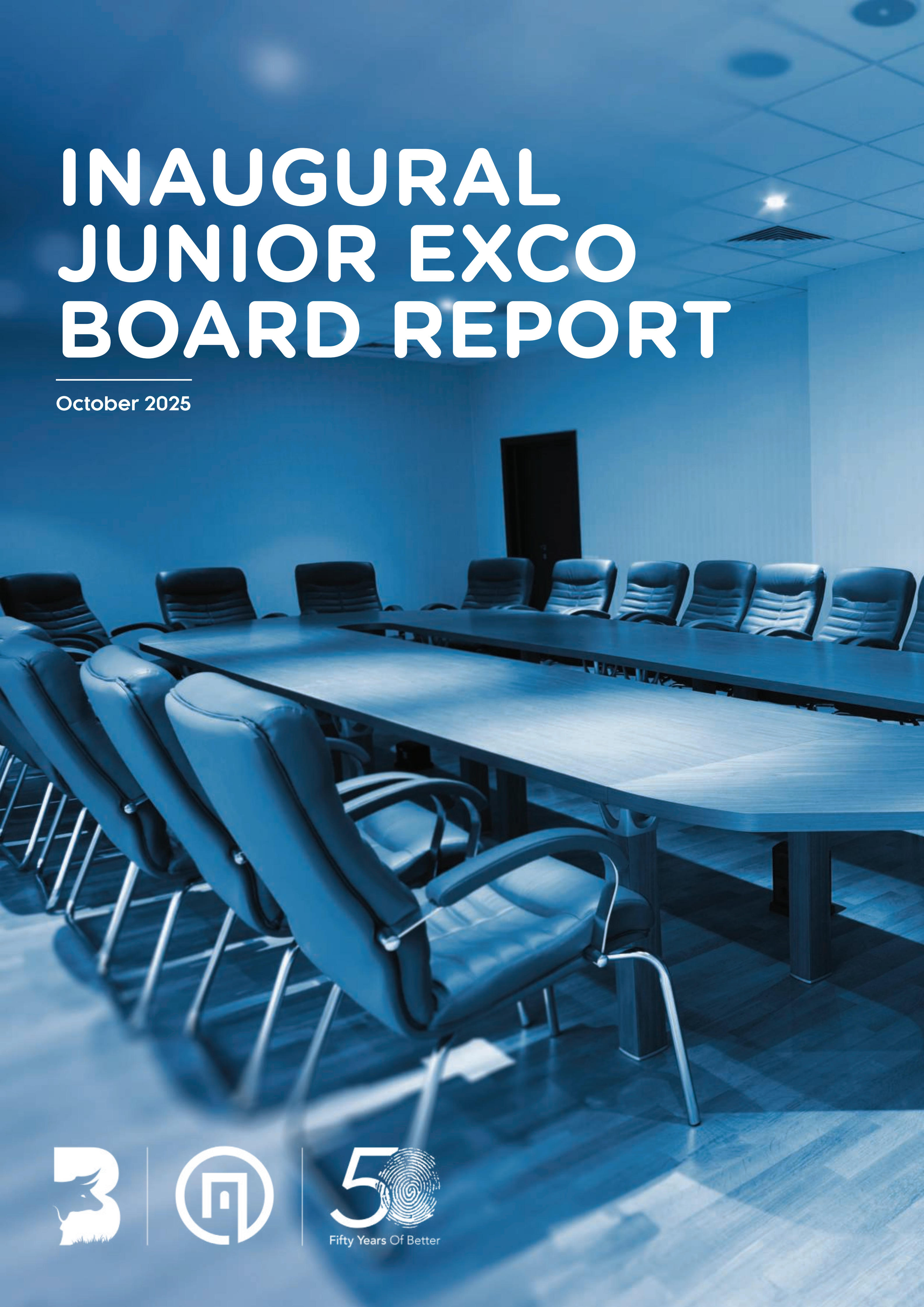


INAUGURAL JUNIOR EXCO BOARD REPORT

October 2025

Fifty Years Of Better

Inaugural Junior Exco Board Report

Contents

Chairman's Note

If 5 years back, prior to joining Botswana Insurance Company was told that I will one day be at the helm of its Junior board, setting a successful model for shadow board leadership both within the BIC Group and Insurance Industry, I would have taken such words with a healthy dose of scepticism. But 5 years later, that is a reality, a glory that was not visible in hindsight.

To have led a Junior Exco at a Group level is not just a responsibility but a privilege I am forever grateful for. Working with a diverse group of talented and committed individuals not only made the task of leadership easier but invigorating and fun. In team settings, I am always reminded of the empirical evidence presented by Daniel Coyle in his pièce de resistance, The Culture Code, of how Massachusetts Institute Of Technology (MIT) graduate students were outright defeated by a bunch of pre-schoolers in a tall structure building game using spaghetti sticks. The secret code to successful teams is unity as well as laying aside status management for a greater good. And I couldn't be prouder to mention how team camaraderie and unity inspired us and fused passion into our systems to work together for a common good.

The Board Members fully bought in to the board mandate. No individual was a liability that needed to be carried but all proved to be an indispensable unit in building a fortified structure of the BIC Group Junior Exco whose mandate was impact that could be measured in numbers. To the Group CEO and his team, on behalf of the Junior Board, we are immensely grateful for bringing this innovation of shadow board to life and empowering it with the tools to execute its mandate. To the BIC staff, your buy-in buoyed our success as we could not carry out any project successfully without your explicit and implicit permission.

After a successful tenure, it is now time to hand over the baton. Just like Hosea uttered, "The glory of this latter temple shall be greater than the former", the next cohort of the Junior Exco is poised for greater exploits and their successes will not only be heard within the BIC Group corridors but will reverberate both within the insurance industry and across the Financial sector of this nation. To Pearl, madam Chair of the next Board, I implore you to lead with grace, ethically conduct yourself in a manner that is enviable to the younger generation and become a beacon of hope not only within BIC Group but beyond. To lead a group of intellects is a rare honor and your greatest role transcends making Board decisions to coordinating a cross functional team to deliver excellent results. I wish you nothing but the best.

Thank You.

Founding and outgoing Chairman

Thato Mazula

Executive Summary

To say the inaugural BIC Group Junior board did a good job will be an understatement. The leadership prowess, team camaraderie, technical aptitude and support from senior management all contributed to a successful tenure of the outgoing board. Tasked with the mandate of bridging the gap between management and staff, the shadow board proposed a “buddy system”, an innovative approach for cutting cross-departmental silos and enhancing team collaboration by forming and bringing together cross functional teams. These teams, via the buddy innovation challenge, came up with solutions to identify business problems, in line with three innovation typologies: product innovation, process innovation and organizational innovation. The Community Social Responsibility program (CSR) was not implemented due to under-budgeting, a key learning for future boards in terms of prudent budget planning and allocation.

Introduction

This board report aims to give comprehensive information on the Junior Exco board that was established in November 2019. However, due to interruption caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, it was only until June 2023 that the board formally executed its mandate following the signing of the Board charter by the Group CEO, Mr Newton Jazire. This landmark moment paved way for extraordinary exploits as demonstrated by the calibre of the board leadership and subsequent projects carried out. In terms of board composition, the balance was beyond gender but equally representative of the diverse skills within the BIC Group. The board profile will be elucidated in more detail in section 10 of this report. The leadership of the board entailed chairperson, vice chairperson and secretary whose roles are divulged in section 10 of this report. The board’s tenure was 15 months, during which they demonstrated both technical and leadership skills, ranging from projects planning and coordination to enhancing cross functional team collaboration. With skills in economics, strategy, finance and law, the board created units for tackling the various aspects of board requirements, spanning from project management to Public Relations and Communication.

The inaugural board kickstarted their mandate execution with a climate survey and analysed the results to glean insights employee sentiments. With a response rate of more than 50%, the sample size was good enough to make inferences into the organizational health. From the survey results of the two entities that make up the BIC Group, Botswana Insurance Company (BIC) and Insure Guard (IG), the Board came up with three projects for the reminder of their tenure; buddy system, buddy innovation challenge and CSR Initiative. The buddy system sought to break departmental silos by grouping into teams, individuals from various departments, to interact and chat about work in an informal setting over a light breakfast. Successor to the buddy system, a build-up on this idea was the buddy innovation challenge that sought to engage diverse groups, an essential ingredient of innovation, to identify gaps and solve them with an innovative solution. The innovation typologies considered were product innovation, process innovation and organizational innovation. The top teams that won (they were only two prizes; gold and silver) proposed solutions that were aligned with process innovation. The winner was awarded an P8,000 cash prize while the runner-up was consoled with half the prize money. The third project, CSR initiative did not hold due to time constraints as a lot was happening within the BIC Group during the 2024 calendar year. The project was geared towards identifying and adopting a less priviledged community and donating clothes while simultaneously planting seeds of future CSR projects.

The board met once a quarter which was increased to once a month during the project phase as a lot needed to be accomplished. The two major board meetings were planning rendezvous, to set the tone for the rest of the tenure as well as decide on the projects to be undertaken. To tackle the various needs and ensure successful project management, the following sub-committees were created in the board: Finance Committee, Project Management Committee and Public Relations and Communications Committee.

Board Mandate

The Board mandate, as stipulated in the Board Charter, is to bridge the gap between management and staff relative to communication, innovation and process gaps.

As a bridge between management and staff, the Junior Exco's main purpose is to identify existing gaps that affect all internal stakeholders and propose solutions to narrow, and at best, close such gaps such that uniformity of purpose prevails within the organization. And the purpose being, to **make lives better.**

The Board mandate empowers the Forum to close the vertical gap of communication, as prior to the Junior Exco, company initiatives and strategy were communicated at completion stage, where senior management communicated an initiative long after it had been executed. In 2024, leveraging on the Junior Exco concept of buddy system, the CEO's office in conjunction with the Human Resources (HR) department, adopted a bottom-up strategy approach. Instead of cascading strategy from the higher powers, the prevalent top-down approach, a PESTLE strategy session was organized and teams on the ground played a pivotal role in formulation of the Group's strategy for the next three years. This is a testament to the Board's effectiveness in bridging the communication gap. As pertains to the innovation and process gaps, the buddy innovation challenges proved to be an excellent solution in addressing such gaps.

The smart system solution, which is currently in the review and implementation phase, was not only brilliant in idea phase, but holds revolutionary potential in transforming the BIC Group and cementing it as the cynosure of innovation within the insurance industry in Botswana. This therefore behoves all stakeholders in decision making capacity to ensure that this does not become one of the great ideas that die a stalemate death by never seeing the light of the day.

The smart system, beyond being a tremendous idea in theory, has addressed horizontal gap(s), i.e a gap between departments at a staff level. The next cohort of the Junior board will face the mammoth task of addressing a vertical gap, i.e between senior management and staff initiatives that caters for the three generations within the BIC workforce.

Board Projects

A number of projects were slated for 2024 calendar year, but due to time constraints and significant Group initiatives, only two projects were successfully completed.

01

Buddy System

The first of such projects was the Buddy System. During one of the major board meetings held in the BIC training room, the Board receded from their formal operations and engaged in a brainstorming session. The survey results enlightened the board to the fact that there is a huge horizontal gap in the Group. From simple things like dearth of courteous behavior, which may be taken lightly by various individuals due to ethnic differences to obsession on key departmental KPIs at the cost of disregarding other departments work loads, the Board focused much of its strategy on closing the horizontal gap and foregoing the vertical gap.

Inspired by successful models of behemoths such as KPMG and blue-chip companies in the Fortune 500 list of the American Stock Exchange, culture revamp strategies were researched. The Buddy System was adopted, based on a concept that when a new hire joins one of these big companies, he/she is made to feel at home from the first day. Departmental silos are virtually non-existent and cross-functional synergies aims at improving both employee well-being and the company bottom-line. This will then create an indelible impact on the new hire and loyalty will become automatic when employee perks is complemented by a great organizational culture. At the heart of the BIC Buddy System was creation of 8 groups that had a representative from each department, whose aim was to physically convene once a week and discuss work in an informal setting over a light breakfast. From understanding the technical aspect of each employee's role to grasping the schedules and KPIs of various departments, not only is employee empathy developed but teams will come to tolerate other teams role and have a firm grasp of how each team member contributes to the success of the BIC Group.

The Buddy System groups were a resounding success. Teams met at their required times and the buy-in was impressive from both management and staff. Team leaders (Board members although participants were exempt from being team leaders) did a stellar job by coordinating the meetings and driving meaningful engagement, and deriving paramount feedback from their team members. An allocation of P200 was used for each Buddy meeting and the funds, as already stated above were utilized for light breakfast. Venue meetings ranged from the Recreation Room to the Meeting Room. To avoid minimum disruption to work-flow and customer service, no two teams were allowed to have their Buddy Session at the same time.

02
Buddy Innovation

A successful ingredient for disruptive innovation is diversity. While homogeneity is naturally okay for sustaining innovation, disruptive innovation requires incongruous elements to come together and bring different perspectives to a common problem and a solution reached once the optimal level is attained. The late Professor of Innovation at Harvard Business School, renowned for his work on corporate innovation, Clayton Christensen made a clear distinction between disruptive and sustaining innovation. Disruptive innovation new and bold solutions that upends the existing different models, resulting in a new product, process and at its best, creating a new industry. The latter, sustaining innovation concerns incremental improvements to already existing products and services.

The aim of the Buddy Innovation challenge was to focus on innovative solution(s) that are disruptive in nature as opposed to sustaining. Building on the Buddy System initiative, the Board utilized the same groups for an innovation challenge and the intensity of brainstorming sessions were prophetic in terms of solutions that were generated from the Buddy Innovation sessions. The Buddy Innovation was set up in a Shark-Tank style kind of competition where the Senior Exco were the judges and each group allotted 20mins of presenting their proposed solution and justifying why It needs to be selected for execution.

The One system proposal which focused on process innovation bested the smart system innovation solution to scoop the Gold Award. The former focused on integrating the integral systems; Pure and papertrail into one to ensure a seamless processing environment from Underwriting to Claims. The Silver Solution, the smart system envisioned a system that could generate documents that are manually edited and send automatic communication updates to both internal and external stakeholders for an efficient workflow.

Key Successes

To correctly measure the success of any initiative, It is prudent to adopt the "before and after" approach. That is compare the state of things before the Board involvement and state of affairs after the completion of the Board tenure.

At the commencement of the Board tenure, a climate survey was conducted and the results gave the Board a hint of the organizational temperature at both a horizontal and vertical level. It would have been wise to conduct a final survey at the close of the tenure and compare the results of the initial survey with the final one to measure progress. But nonetheless, the project carried out and the employee sentiment post the Board tenure suffice to measure progress and success.

1. Buddy System

The Buddy System was an immense success as it brought together people who would not ordinarily have any form of dialogue. From meeting over a light breakfast to chatting about work in an informal setting created group synergies which are pivotal to driving the BIC Group's strategic direction.

2. Buddy Innovation

It is one thing to have a gift and entirely different ball game to utilize your gift and realize benefits from it. The innovation challenge sought to reap the dividends of intellectual potential resident in each BIC Group employee. It is a known fact that the BIC Group is renowned for producing the best underwriters in the short-term insurance space and the innovation challenge was geared towards cultivating and bringing to the fore skills beyond underwriting. The mind-blowing solutions that were proposed during the Shark Tank day presentations were testament that the innovative capabilities of many have been dormant and only required a platform for exposure. We trust many more such platforms will be created in the future.

3. Cultural influence

It is unanimously agreed that culture is very hard to change, due to its complex nature, many experts are baffled on how to approach the task of culture revamp. Culture is not the communication and messages passed on by senior management on proper conduct within the organization. It is rather, the actions and attitudes of senior management that trickles down to the least employee and influence how they view and behave within the organization. Leaders must therefore be consistent in terms of alignment of their actions to their message. A divergence sends confusing signals to the rest of the team. One key task of Junior Exco was to enforce a culture of respect and tolerance for other people's work. During and post the projects, employees understood and respected the roles of other team members , be it core or support function.

Areas Of Growth

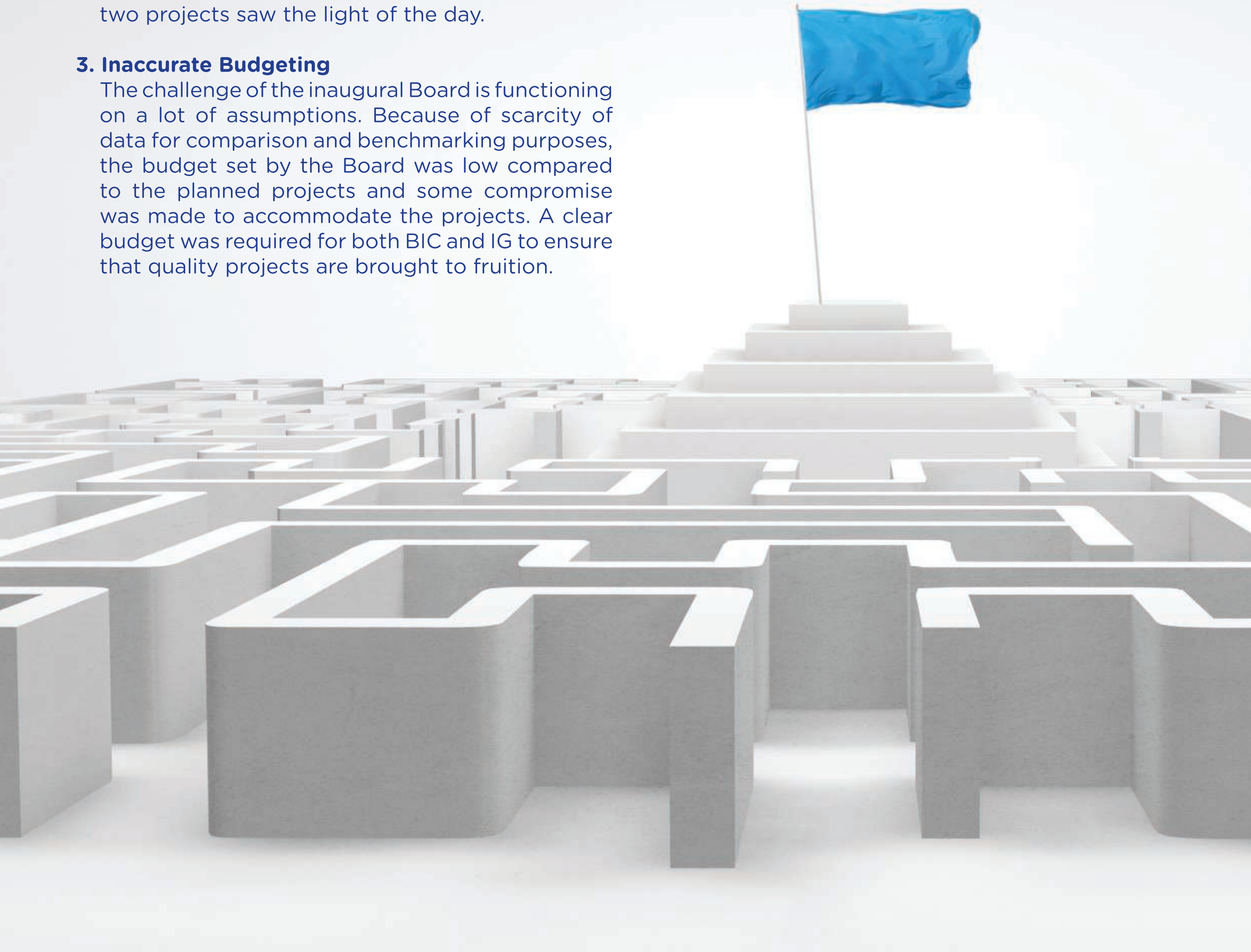
Every endeavor is laden with its series of ups and downs. Even the builders of Rome had their own share of challenges, hence the term, Rome was not built in a day. Below are some challenges encountered by the Board:

1. Staff Buy-In
Despite a buy-in of more than 50%, some staff members were not fully convinced in the mandate of Junior Exco. Some perceived It with a suspicious lens of Management extension to probe into employee work tasks and report cases of low productivity. With such clear understanding, the results the Board anticipated, measured against the mandate were not fully realized.

2. Time Constraints
The Board had numerous projects in the pipeline. A lot of brilliant solutions were not executed to the tenure length. There are trainings the Board was supposed to attend, employee upskilling programs which were conceived for the benefit of staff, CSR initiative but due to time limits, only two projects saw the light of the day.

3. Inaccurate Budgeting
The challenge of the inaugural Board is functioning on a lot of assumptions. Because of scarcity of data for comparison and benchmarking purposes, the budget set by the Board was low compared to the planned projects and some compromise was made to accommodate the projects. A clear budget was required for both BIC and IG to ensure that quality projects are brought to fruition.

4. Project Management Skills
Despite the variety of skills brought to the table due to the technical background of Board members, one skill was in short of supply. Project management and by extension strategic planning was non-existent in the skill set of the Board. Had the Board possessed these skills, all projects could have been implemented. The various aspects of the projects such as time, finances and project owners could have been addressed and all projects completed within the time frame set.



Junior Exco Leadership Handover:

Passing the Baton to the New Cohort

In a moment that marked both continuity and fresh beginnings, the outgoing Junior Exco Chairperson officially handed over leadership to the new cohort Chairperson in a brief but meaningful ceremony held earlier this month.

The outgoing Chairperson, Mr. Thato Mazula reflected on the journey of growth, collaboration, and purpose that defined their term. Under their leadership, Junior Exco made significant strides in strengthening team collaboration, amplifying innovative ideas, and supporting company wide initiatives. In his remarks, he expressed gratitude to fellow team members and senior leadership for the support extended throughout their tenure.

Stepping into the role is Ms. Pearl Masike, who now assumes the mantle of Junior Exco Chairperson for the new cohort. The incoming Chairperson outlined a bold vision focused on collaboration, continuous learning, and making a lasting impact. She pledged to build on the solid foundation laid by their predecessor while embracing new opportunities to drive meaningful change.

The handover symbolized not only a transition in leadership but also a continued commitment to cultivating future leaders within the BIC Group.

We congratulate the outgoing Chairperson on a job well done and wish the incoming Chairperson a successful and inspiring term ahead.

Conclusion

This report was a comprehensive account of the BIC Group Junior Exco. Against the backdrop of a compelling mandate to be a bridge between management and staff, projects such as the Buddy System and Innovation challenge brought the mandate to life. A cultural revamp was the bull's eye for the outgoing cohort but despite making some significant strides, much remains to be accomplished in this area. From the inadequate skills highlighted in the challenges section, a key lesson for the future Board is to invest heavily in their project management and strategic planning and analysis skill set. Support from Senior management from both a financial and mentorship perspective is paramount in ensuring a shadow Board achieves its mandate.

We trust that this report has been informative and will serve as both a learning curve and a baedeker for action for all Junior Exco Boards across the country.

Appendix 1: Board Profiles

Thato Mazula
Chairperson

Aobakwe Kwape
Vice Chairperson

Dessma Kgomotso
Secretary

Keletso Simanyana
Member

Ontlametse Gabana
Member

Bongani Sigwele
Member

Ewetse Tjazha
Member

Theo Keitseng
Member

Lame Monare
Member

Boipelo Gaesi
Member

Paul Mogotsi
Member

Appendix 2: Special Moments