SAIA
South African Institute of Architects
Suid-Afrikaanse Instituut van Argitekte

National Secretariat
Sandton, Johannesburg
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Policy on the Use of AI in Submissions

Applies to all work submitted to SAIA for digital and/or print publication

Purpose and scope

SAIA welcomes submissions that use AI tools responsibly, provided a named person stands behind every word and image, and any material use of AI is declared. This policy applies to all work submitted to SAIA for digital and/or print publication, including contributions to the SAIA Library through the Call for Papers and project submissions to Works.

It covers papers, essays, reviews, project texts, drawings, photographs, renders and any supporting material. It applies to authors, co-authors, photographers and the practices submitting on their behalf.

Principles

- **Human authorship.** Authors are people, not tools. An AI system cannot be listed as an author or co-author.
- **Accountability.** The named author is fully responsible for accuracy, originality, citations and permissions, whatever tools were used.
- **Transparency.** Readers should be able to tell what is the author's own thinking, and whether an image records a real building or depicts one that does not exist.
- **Truthful record.** SAIA's publications are a record of South African architecture. Built work must be shown as built.

Using AI in written work

AI may assist with writing, but the ideas, argument and conclusions must be the author's own.

Use	Allowed?	Declare it?
Spelling, grammar and language polishing	Yes	No
Translation, e.g. from Afrikaans or isiZulu into English	Yes	Yes
Summarising your own notes or restructuring your own draft	Yes	Yes
Searching for or organising literature	Yes, if every source is checked against the original	Yes
Drafting substantial passages of text	Only if revised and verified by the author	Yes
Generating the argument, findings or analysis	No	—
Generating references or quotations	No	—

Every reference must be one the author has read. AI tools are known to invent sources and quotations; a fabricated citation will lead to withdrawal of the work.

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Images, drawings and renders

Photographs of built work must be real photographs of the building as built. AI may not add, remove or alter architectural content in them.

- **Permitted without declaration:** routine photographic correction — exposure, colour balance, perspective correction, cropping, and removal of dust or sensor marks.
- **Permitted with declaration:** removing transient elements such as vehicles, signage clutter or people for privacy; AI upscaling or noise reduction.
- **Not permitted on photographs of built work:** adding or changing landscaping, sky, materials, furniture, people, context buildings or any part of the building itself.
- **Concept images and renders:** welcome for unbuilt, competition and speculative work, and for theoretical papers. Each must be captioned "AI-generated image" or "AI-assisted render" and name the tool used.
- **Drawings:** plans, sections and elevations must be the project's own drawings. AI-generated or AI-redrawn drawings may not be presented as the project's documentation.

The photographer's credit stays with the photographer. Where an image has been edited with AI, the caption should say so.

Not permitted

- Listing an AI tool as an author or co-author.
- Presenting AI-generated text, images or drawings as the author's own original work without declaration.
- Fabricated, unverified or AI-invented references, quotations, data or project facts.
- AI-altered photographs presented as a record of a built project.
- Uploading other people's unpublished work, client documents or personal information into public AI tools in preparing a submission.
- Imitating a named architect's, photographer's or writer's work in a way that misleads readers about who made it.

Declaration on the submission form

The submission form carries one required question and a free-text field.

Did you use AI tools in preparing this submission? (required)

- No, other than spelling and grammar checks
- Yes — please describe below

If yes, which tools did you use, and for what? For example: "DeepL to translate the abstract from Afrikaans; Photoshop Generative Fill to remove parked cars from images 3 and 7."

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Confirmation (required checkbox)

> *I confirm that I am responsible for the content of this submission; that all references are real and have been checked; that photographs of built work show the building as built; that any use of AI is declared above; and that I grant SAIA the rights set out in the SAIA Policy on the Use of AI in Submissions.*

Where work is published, a short note appears at its end, e.g. *"The author used AI-assisted translation for parts of this text."*

Rights granted to SAIA

By submitting, the author grants SAIA an irrevocable, perpetual, worldwide and royalty-free right to edit, alter, adapt, reproduce and publish the work, in whole or in part, in any medium, print or digital, now known or later developed. Authors and photographers will be credited.

SAIA will not use, license or supply submitted work for training AI models without the author's written permission.

How SAIA uses AI with your submission

SAIA holds itself to the same standard it asks of authors.

- **Review stays human.** Editorial and acceptance decisions are made by people — the Editorial Committee and its reviewers — not by AI.
- **No uploading to public AI tools.** Reviewers and staff may not upload submissions, or the personal information in them, to public AI tools that retain or train on content.
- **Limited administrative use.** SAIA may use AI tools under its control for tasks such as checking formatting, generating alt text for accessibility, or suggesting tags. Staff check the results before publishing.
- **Personal information** is processed in line with the Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA) and SAIA's privacy notice.

If the policy is not followed

Undeclared or prohibited use of AI is handled in proportion to its seriousness.

1. Before publication: SAIA may ask for clarification or revision, or decline the submission.
2. After publication: SAIA may add a correction note, replace images, or withdraw the item.
3. Serious or deliberate misrepresentation by a member may be referred under SAIA's Code of Conduct.

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Editorial Committee, as AI tools are changing quickly. Questions can be sent to ceosaia@saia.org.za.

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