

# New tool released to fight corruption

Issued by [Bluegrass Digital](#)

25 Mar 2021

In response to the many complaints received on police corruption, Corruption Watch (CW) has developed a new Veza platform that will improve transparency in policing in the country. It will place the power back in the hands of the public to hold the South African Police Service (Saps) accountable.

Corruption Watch (CW) selected Bluegrass Digital, an innovative software engineering company, to develop the new Veza platform. CW won the Google Impact Challenge Award in 2018.

This new interactive open data tool was inspired by engagements with communities experiencing police violence and was developed in response to the many complaints received on police corruption.

Veza, meaning 'expose' or 'reveal', is a first of its kind in South Africa and will improve transparency in policing in the country. It will place the power back in the hands of the public to hold the South African Police Service (Saps) accountable. The tool provides information at national, provincial and district level.

Corruption Watch's head of stakeholder relations and campaigns Kavisha Pillay says the launch of the Veza tool signifies a new era for Corruption Watch as we explore how transparency, big data and accessible technology can be used to combat corruption and advance broader social justice issues.

Since Corruption Watch's inception in 2012, innovation has always been central to our approach in addressing systemic and pervasive corruption in South Africa. Public adoption will determine the power of this tool, the more it is used and information shared, the more involved they will become in how their communities are policed and protected around the country.

Bluegrass Digital CEO Nick Durrant is upbeat about the potential of this innovative tool. "This is an exciting innovative project to be part of which has so much potential. Nothing like this exists on the African continent and from our research not many countries around the world have platforms for their citizens to access information like this.

"Veza offers so many features including integration with Google Maps, which allows us to use geolocation with various data

sources to plot police corruption trends and hotspots as well as information on all 1,150 police stations across the country such as contact information, resources, budget and personnel."

The Veza tool also enables users to rate and review police stations based on personal experiences, to compare resources of up to four stations, commend honest and ethical police officers and report incidents of corruption and police misconduct that are immediately geo-located through the tool.



Kavisha Pillay

Pillay



Nick Durrant

expressed her gratitude to Bluegrass Digital for the impeccable and professional service that was provided throughout the development of this project. "We collaborated, exchanged ideas, brainstormed and debated extensively during this process and I am really proud of the product that we have."

"The service and engagement that I had with the Bluegrass Digital team was amazing. Regardless of the time of day, they always responded to any queries, they were extremely patient and always delivered on their promises. We are so grateful to the entire team for working tirelessly to get the project completed," she explains.

"As a very satisfied customer, this has been a truly inspiring experience and I look forward to working with Bluegrass Digital on adding new features and improvements," Pillay concludes.

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