

FIG Commission 1 (Professional Standards and Practice) Report on Activities 1998 – 2002

Prof. John R. PARKER, Australia

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ABSTRACT

The report covers the activities of FIG Commission 1 for the period 1998 to 2002. Commission 1 is responsible for Professional Standards and Practice.

During the period the Commission achieved part of its work plan including the creation and establishment of a Commission 1 Internet site on the FIG web site. A very successful output of the 'Business Practices' Working Group was the development and publication of a guide to support professionals in the task of business management, titled, "Business Matters for Professionals". Its contents include issues and information relating to business planning, quality management and quality assurance, customer service, ethics and professional conduct and information management and information technology amongst a range of matters that need to be considered in running a surveying or related business or establishing such a business in the private sector.

Many visits were made to various parts of the world by Commission members, with a strong focus on Central and South America particularly through the United Nations and the World Bank.

CONTACT

Prof. John Parker
4300 89th Ave SE
Mercer Island
WA. 98040-4132
USA
Tel. +1 206 275 2175
Fax +1 206 275 2174
E-mail: park106@attglobal.net

or

PO Box 110
Brunswick East
Victoria 3057
Australia

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1. BACKGROUND

At the FIG International Congress held in Brighton, UK in 1998 Commission 1 commenced a new Work Plan under the chair of Prof. John Parker from Australia. Commission 1 is responsible to consider matters relating to Professional Standards and Practice. In that role it has links and liaises with all the other Commissions, particularly Commission 2 (Education).

Commission 1 has terms of reference, which include:

- Ethical principles and codes of professional conduct;
- Guidelines relating to the provision of service;
- Standards of business practice and total quality management;
- Changes affecting the operation of surveying practices, their management and their professional structures;
- International legislation affecting the profession; and
- The role of surveyors in the public sector.

Commission 1 developed a mission statement to “facilitate and encourage delegates from member associations to participate in the activities of the commission which include promoting the aims and objectives of FIG and in particular professional standards; ethical principles and codes of professional conduct; business practice; provision of services; management issues; and legislation affecting the profession.”

Following on from the work that was undertaken in the previous period of the Commission under the chair of Ken Allred from Canada, particularly in the area of ethics and quality, a number of working groups, as described in the Work Plan attached as Appendix 1, were established.

The Commission has delegates from member associations in fifty-two countries and two Correspondent/Academic members.

2. PROGRESS

2.1 International Congress, Brighton, UK (1998) to Working Week, Sun City, South Africa (1999)

During and following the Brighton Congress, plans and working parties were further developed. The Annual Meeting of the Commission took place during the Working Week in Sun City, which was attended by fourteen delegates and interested people.

Each Working Group Chair presented a report on progress including Stephen Djaba from Ghana who demonstrated a mock up for a Commission 1 web site. All were very impressed with his efforts.

Working Group 1 under the chair of Klaus Rurup of Germany reported on progress on the project to look at “the public sector organisational structures that cover FIG activities and the method of providing services and the role of the private sector”. It was proposed the report of the project when published would show the different organisational structures of the survey related activities of various governments around the world including the role of the private sector in providing services to government. It was also proposed that papers would be produced on outsourcing/contracting out of government services and examples of clauses used in contracts that cover quality, timelines and liability and those that impose penalties. A questionnaire was prepared, for sending out to all FIG delegates

Working Group 2, Business Practices, under the chair of Iain Greenway of the UK (at that time, now Ireland) held a useful working group meeting and decided to develop a series of papers that would be presented at each Working Week and work towards creating and publishing by the 2002 Congress a best practice guide which would include such matters as, management, ethics, quality, and the impact of IT on business. The working groups work would be aimed at small and medium sized survey firms.

It was also agreed to try and stimulate a debate around business issues. As an initial issue it was decided to use ethics, as FIG had recently completed revising its code of ethics. As a result three ethical dilemmas were developed and published.

Seven papers and presentations from Commission 1 were made during the Working Week including joint sessions with Commission 2 and the Task Force on Under-represented Groups in Surveying.

The chair of the commission participated in:

- the Commission 2 Seminar in Wuhan, China during October 1998,
- a capacity building forum arranged by the World Bank in San Salvador, El Salvador in December 1998,
- a procurement workshop on land administration arranged by the World Bank in Washington, D.C., USA for Latin American countries in May 1999, and,
- various visits to the UN Food and Agricultural Organisation in Rome and the World Bank in Washington.

2.2 Working Week Sun City, South Africa (1999) to Working Week Prague, Czech Republic (2000)

Work continued on the work plan activities established in 1998, including the completion of the Commission 1 website and the publication of a newsletter.

The Annual Meeting of the Commission took place in Prague.

Working Group 1 who were investigating organisational matters organised a questionnaire to be sent out to all member associations seeking responses on public sector organisational structures that cover FIG activities, the method of providing services and the role of the private sector in the provision of such services. Only a minimal number of responses were received. A report was given at Working Week 2000 in Prague on the progress and results to date.

Working Group 2 looking into business practices created three ethical dilemmas and were included in the Commission 1 newsletter (along with a progress report from the Working Group), the FIG Bulletin, the FIG web site, and the journal Surveying World in the UK. There were a limited number of responses, covering a broad range of views. A paper summarising the dilemmas and relating them back to theory was presented in Prague with the aim of stimulating debate further.

Commission 1 was given the responsibility for two of the sessions in Working Week 2000, being, "Quality Assurance in Surveyor's Profession" and "Multidisciplinary nature of Surveying" and included a paper from John Parker on quality awards, continuing the debate on the topic of how such schemes and awards can be used to best effect by small survey practices. There was also a paper describing the experiences of a Czech firm in implementing a quality program.

Further discussions in Prague determined how to take forward the IT strand of the guidelines, and how to manage the process of creating the guide.

The chair of the Commission was involved with the UN/FIG workshop in October 1999 in Bathurst, Australia from which the Bathurst Declaration emanated, as well as being part of the organising committee for the international conference in Melbourne on "Land Tenure and Cadastral Infrastructure for Sustainable Development". The UN/FIG Roundtable that followed the conference involved the chair in planning and attending.

Commission 1 was an active participant in the South East Asian Surveyors Congress held in Perth in November 1999, including chairing and hosting a session.

As a result of activities by the Commission chair, FIG's Publication No 16, "Constituting Professional Associations" is now on the World Bank website, as an example of how to set up a professional association, particularly aimed at countries that maybe contemplating or implementing a land administration project.

Many of the taskforces, including, Standards, Mutual Recognition and Under Represented Groups in Surveying involved the Commission.

The chair and vice chair participated in the ACCO meeting in Denmark in January 2000 and the chair was also in attendance at the United Nations Regional Cartographic Conference Asia Pacific in April 2000. Visits by the chair included the UNFAO in Rome, the World Bank in Washington and the United Nations in New York.

2.3 Working Week Prague, Czech Republic (2000) to Working Week Seoul, Korea (2001)

The Annual meeting of the Commission took place in Seoul attended by eleven people.

The guide being produced on business practices was proceeding well under the chairmanship of Iain Greenway and includes chapters on legal frameworks, professional ethics, quality, and customer service and information technology. The intended audience are professionals setting up their own private practice survey firms - such people are likely to have received university education and practical training in surveying but will often have limited experience of business practices. The Guide will also be of use to people already in private practice, providing a benchmark against which they can check their systems and practices (the Guide will have at its heart a checklist of topics to be addressed). The Guide will include high level guidance on how practices need to be adapted between different cultures but will not attempt to provide detailed guidance relating to, for instance, the different legal systems in place in each country. The Guide incorporates documents such as the FIG Statement on Ethical Principles and Model Code of Professional Conduct, and the FIG Charter for Quality. It pulls together a range of FIG work in this area, helping raise the standard of business professionalism demonstrated by surveyors, as increasingly expected by customers and governments.

In October 2000 Commission 1 through the chair contributed and participated in the successful Commission 2 Symposium in Argentina, resulting in potentially a number of new members to FIG.

Liaison continued to occur with UN agencies, particularly the World Bank. The chair of Commission 1 represented FIG at World Bank/USAID Central American Workshop in San Salvador, El Salvador on "Training for the Quality and Sustainability of Processes" in November 2000.

The chair also attended the UN Regional Cartographic Conference for the Americas in January 2001 in New York, participated in a World Bank land administration workshop in Washington, D.C., USA in April 2001 and visited Colombia in April 2001.

2.4 Working Week Seoul, Korea (2001) to International Congress Washington, USA (2002)

A workshop was held during the Seoul Working Week to discuss the contents and the preparation of the final document of the business practice guidelines. The guidelines have now been finalised and adopted by Council. The Group has also met the Council's work plan objective to "develop strategies to encourage the surveyor to be customer-orientated and to provide a quality service".

Unfortunately due to minimal feed-back of the questionnaire and the lack of interest of the members of the Working Group very little progress has been achieved on the 'organisation' project.

Arising from the UN Regional Cartographic Conference for the Americas, the chair, representing FIG is responsible for organising a workshop in Mexico in October 2000 on behalf of the UN, PC IDEA and FIG. A visit was made to the UN in New York, the World Bank and USAID in Washington and INEGI in Aguascalientes in Mexico in July 2001 by the chair and Prof. Stig Enemark as preparation for the workshop.

Commission 1 participated and was represented by the chair at the conference in Nairobi, Kenya in October 2001 organised by Commission 3.

The ACCO meeting in Denmark in October 2001 was attended by the chair and vice chair. At the ACCO meeting in Seoul, the chair was elected to represent commission officers at Council meetings for 2002. As a result the chair participated at the Council meeting in Washington in December 2001. At the same time visiting the World Bank.

Commission 1 was also invited to participate at the annual conference arranged by the registration body of Namibia (SURCON). Mr. Iain Greenway was able to represent the Commission and presented the keynote address and was guest speaker at their dinner.

At the Washington Congress Commission 1 is responsible for four technical sessions and two joint sessions, a total of 33 papers. It is hoped the papers will provoke discussion, particularly the one on knowledge management in session TS1.1.

The Annual Meeting of the Commission is scheduled to take place in Washington during the Congress.

3. OUTPUTS

The key output of the Commission has been the preparation and publication by the Business Practice Working Group under the chair of Iain Greenway of “Business Matters for Professionals”. This FIG publication is published as a guide to support professionals in the task of business management”.

As the forward to the guide says “FIG Commission 1 (Professional Standards and Practice) has developed this Guide to provide advice to surveyors in running businesses. It is particularly targeted at individuals starting up in business but it will also provide a useful source of information to those already responsible for a business. Although the Guide is primarily focused on the issues facing private businesses, much of the content will be very relevant to public sector operations, particularly those operating as quasi-businesses with identifiable customers. If there is a demand, further Guides will be produced, tailored to different business sectors.”

“The Guide is designed to be of use around the world. It does not pretend to cover the detail of issues in every country and region: instead, the Guide highlights particular topics that a business needs to address, provides frameworks for doing so and suggests sources of additional information. The Guide also incorporates as reference material the FIG Charter for

Quality and the FIG Statement of Ethical Principles and Model Code of Professional Conduct, and makes reference to some other key documents.”

“The Guide is structured with a brief introduction followed by two overview chapters, one covering the context of a business and the other overviewing business planning issues. Further chapters deal with particular topics, and a checklist summarises the key elements, which a business should ensure that it has in place. Each of the chapters is designed to be self-standing whilst still building to a coherent overall picture.”

“The Guide builds on the work of a Commission 1 Working Group led by Chris Hoogsteden which produced the paper ‘Management Matters’ at the XX FIG International Congress held in Melbourne in 1994, and on work between 1994 and 1998 led by Ken Allred (on ethics) and John Parker (on quality).”

“Inevitably, the Guide will create questions as well as provide answers. An early port of call for such questions should be the relevant national professional association/ institution, which will generally have material or advice relevant to the particular country and discipline.”

A copy of the contents page of the guide is included as Appendix 2.

4. CONCLUSION

The Commission did not achieve all it set out to do due to insufficient participation in some of the Working Groups. To those who did participate and made a contribution, may I say thank you. However I do believe the Commission has produced something significant, which I hope, will be of use to member associations and their members. The guide for business management is already meeting a need, but can be expanded and revised in the future as business trends dictate.

The contacts established through involvement with FIG and in associated activities with various countries through the United Nations and the World Bank have all added a positive image of FIG, particularly in Central and South America.

I would like to thank member associations for the opportunity of chairing Commission 1 and would particularly like to thank all those who assisted me in my role as chair of the Commission.

Work Plan – Commission 1

Terms of reference

- Ethical principles and codes of professional conduct
- Guidelines relating to the provision of services
- Standards of business practice and total quality management
- Changes affecting the operation of surveying practices, their management and their professional structures
- International legislation affecting the profession
- The role of surveyors in the public sector.

Mission statement

Facilitate and encourage delegates from member associations to participate in the activities of the commission, which include promoting the aims and objectives of FIG and in particular professional standards; ethical principles and codes of professional conduct; business practice; provision of services; management issues; and legislation affecting the profession.

Working Group 1.1

Title: Organisation

Policy issues:

Public sector organisational structures that cover FIG activities, including the management philosophy behind the structures and the method of providing services and the role of the private sector.

Outsourcing/contracting out of government services.

Chair: Klaus Rürup (Germany).

Specific projects:

Documentation showing different organisational structures of various governments around the world.

Paper addressing the management philosophy, including the role of the private sector in the provision of services.

Paper on outsourcing/contracting out of government services.

Draft clauses for possible inclusion in contracts relating to the contracting out of services with respect to management performance matters.

Workshop(s): n/a

Publication(s): See Specific projects – papers to be presented at FIG working weeks and on the commission home page.

Timetable: Conclude work by the time of the FIG working week, 2000.

Beneficiaries: International agencies, governments - particularly in developing countries and countries in economic transition.

Working Group 1.2

Title: Business practices

Policy issues:

The importance of ethics in business.

The impact of information technology on business practice.

The provision of quality services and products, in particular the role that total quality management, quality assurance and quality awards criteria can play in the management of an organisation.

ISO standards that may affect the management and business practices of surveying organisations.

Chair: Iain Greenway (UK).

Specific projects:

Promote the importance of ethics in business.

Monitor and provide constructive comment on (i) the impact of information technology on business practice and (ii) relevant ISO standards (in collaboration with the FIG task force on standards).

Research and promote all aspects of quality relevant to the management of surveying businesses.

Produce a series of papers and/or reports to bring the foregoing issues to the attention of member associations and for discussion at FIG working weeks.

Workshop(s): n/a

Publication(s): See Specific projects, which may eventuate in a FIG publication.

Timetable: Conclude work by the time of the FIG working week, 2001.

Beneficiaries: Surveying businesses.

Working Group 1.3

Title: Internet site

Policy issues:

Develop a commission home page, to disseminate news about its activities and provide access to various databases of information.

Chair: Stephen Djaba (Ghana).

Specific projects:

Create a user-friendly easily accessible site with links to and from other FIG home pages. Thereafter maintain and develop the commission home page, linkages to other relevant home pages and new pages or other networks for special projects, to keep commission delegates, other FIG members, users of surveying services and the public involved in and informed about the work of the commission.

Workshop(s): n/a

Publication(s): n/a

Timetable: Create site during 1999.

Beneficiaries: International agencies, member associations, surveying businesses, and individuals.

Other activities

Professional practice (individual), covering

- assistance to the FIG task force on under represented groups in surveying
- personal professional development, in collaboration with the Commission 2 working group on CPD and management skills.

Beneficiaries: Individual surveyors.

Policy issues:

Establish and chair a joint working group with Commission 3 on access to relevant data with particular regard to the implications of intellectual property and copyright (including the WTO's work on trade-related aspects of intellectual property rights (TRIPS)).

Chair: Chris Hoogsteden (New Zealand).

Commission officers and chairs of working groups

Chair: Prof. John Parker

PO Box 110

Brunswick East

Victoria 3057

Australia

Email park106@attglobal.net

Tel + 1 206 275 2175

Fax +1 206 275 2174

4300 89th Ave SE

Mercer Island

WA. 98040-4132

USA

Vice-Chair: Klaus Rürup
Droste-Hülshoff Strasse 8
D-46236 Bottrop
Germany
Email klaus.ruerup@t-online.de
Tel + 49 20 411 8830
Fax + 49 20 411 88316

Secretary: Paul Harcombe
Land Information Centre
PO Box 143
Bathurst, NSW 2795
Australia
Email harcombe@lic.gov.au
Tel + 61 2 6332 8208
Fax + 61 2 6332 8217

Working Group 1.1
Chair: Klaus Rürup
Droste-Hülshoff Strasse 8
D-46236 Bottrop
Germany
Email klaus.ruerup@t-online.de
Tel + 49 20 411 8830
Fax + 49 20 411 88316

Working Group 1.2
Chair: Mr. Iain Greenway
13 Hazelbury Park
Clonee
Dublin 15
IRELAND
E-mail: igreenway@compuserve.com
Tel. + 353 1 802 5316
Fax + 353 1 820 4156

Working Group 1.3
Chair: Stephen Djaba
Geotech Systems Ltd
P.O. Box GP 14727
Accra
Ghana
Email Stephen@ghana.com
Tel + 233 21 245945 (work)
Tel + 233 21 766819 (home)
Fax + 233 21 236475

Joint Working Group with Commission 3 on access to relevant data
Chair: Prof. Chris Hoogsteden
University of Otago
P.O. Box 56
Dunedin
New Zealand
Email hoogstc@albers.otago.ac.nz
Tel + 64 3 479 7605
Fax + 64 3 479 7586

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