

**Report to the 31st General Assembly
FIG Working Week in Stockholm, Sweden, June 2008**

ACCO Report

Report of Activities 2007-2008

1. General

Between when the new ACCO began its term at the start of 2007 and this Working Week in Stockholm, ACCO has met three times:

- A special meeting in Bratislava in February 2007;
- At the Working Week in Hong Kong in May 2007, and
- At the Regional Conference in Costa Rica in November 2007.

A number of key issues have been addressed by ACCO so far in this new term and they are outlined below.

2 Optional Peer Review of Papers Presented at FIG Events

The most demanding new task undertaken by ACCO, has been the development of the new process for peer review of technical papers. This issue arose because of the growing requirement for University staff members to concentrate their submission of papers on conferences that offer a peer review process. Given that a significant number of papers presented at FIG events are submitted by people from Universities it was decided that FIG needed to make that possibility available or risk losing a significant number of high quality authors. It was also recognised that many conferences by FIG's sister associations and by similar professions are offering peer review of papers and that FIG also needed to keep up with accepted normal practice.

In taking on this new approach, ACCO was clear in its decision that FIG should continue to offer a forum for all professional surveyors to be able to present papers and that papers that are not peer reviewed should not be considered to be of a lesser quality. Therefore, the peer review process is being offered as optional for those authors that feel it benefits their jobs and/or their professional standing.

Having decided to proceed with an optional peer review process, ACCO also agreed that it is important that the process be sufficiently rigorous to ensure its credibility in comparison to similar processes for other events. For example, it was decided to use a so-called "double blind" process. The development of the process has turned out to be quite a large task and the Technical Programme for Stockholm is the first test of the process. In establishing the process we thought we would receive approximately 20 papers for Stockholm. In the end we received 3 to 4 times that many papers for peer review. That indicates that ACCO's decision was indeed the correct response for the needs of many of our authors but it also meant that running the process required more effort than we originally anticipated.

For Stockholm the Chairs of Commissions 3 and 5 took the lead in developing the process. The Chair of Commission 3 then took on the role of Chief Editor for Stockholm. I would commend to the General Assembly the wonderful work done by Chryssy Potsiou and her team, given the size of the task itself but especially given that this is the first time we have run the process. Similar praise is also due to the FIG Office staff, who have been very adaptable and responsive as we have built the mechanisms required to support the new process.

We have learnt quite a few good lessons from this first running of the peer review process and ACCO will examine those lessons at coming meetings and ensure that we have the best possible systems in place for the programme for the 2009 Working Week.

The President has also suggested a concept for a FIG Journal to collect key papers on particular topics into special editions of an Internet based Journal. The development of the peer review process for conference papers has laid the groundwork for this possibility and the concept will be discussed and further developed by ACCO in the future.

3 The Problem of Authors not Attending Conferences to Present Papers

Another issue related to the technical programmes at FIG Events which has been a concern for ACCO and Council has been an increase in the incidence of so-called “no shows”, where authors do not attend the conferences to present their paper. This has arisen because we have traditionally tried to allow the greatest possibility for authors to participate in FIG events. This is especially true of authors from developing countries. However, recent experiences have indicated that we have probably reached the limit of our lenience. Therefore, ACCO has made a recommendation that has been accepted by Council that the goal should be for all authors to be registered by the early bird registration date. The Office should contact speakers who have still not registered and given an ultimatum (eg one week) after which their paper will be removed from the program.

This approach is being instituted in Stockholm and ACCO will do an assessment on whether the problem of no shows improves under this more strict approach.

4 Communication and Web Site

ACCO decided in Hong Kong to include “communication and web site” as a standing item on the agenda of each ACCO meeting. This is to ensure that we continue to develop and improve communication to the members of FIG through mechanisms like newsletters, publications and particularly through the Commission pages on the FIG web site.

As well as general work to update and maintain Commission web pages, some Commissions are exploring some specific new developments. For example, Commission 2 has been doing some work on techniques for updating their web site more directly and Commission 2 is treating that methodology as a pilot project. Also, Commission 5, has been investigating web-based workspaces that may be useful for Commissions to hold virtual discussion forums and manage documents under development etc. Commission 5 is proceeding with this sort of forum as a pilot project via one of its Working Groups.

5 Operations of Individual Commissions

In general most Commission have been making good progress on their Work Plans and have been giving strong support to the development of the technical programmes for Hong Kong, Costa Rica and Stockholm. The strength of the programme for the Regional Conference in Costa Rica was especially pleasing with some Commissions (notably 4 and 5) developing targeted technical sessions with specially invited speakers, which seemed to be a very effective approach.

Unfortunately, the Chair of Commission 8, Simon Adcock has had to resign his position. I would like to record thanks from ACCO to Simon for his contributions as Chair of Commission 8 and his earlier contributions to the work of Commission 9. The issue of a replacement Chair for Commission 8 is being addressed and will be covered elsewhere in the Agenda for this General Assembly.

6 Operation of ACCO as a Whole

There has been a conscious decision to try to ensure that the Commission Chairs felt some ownership of ACCO as their forum. So for example, we have not had as many Council Members at ACCO meetings all at once as has sometimes been the case in the past. We have also set aside a time for ACCO Members to talk directly with the President about overarching issues. That has been balanced by times when only the ACCO Members are present.

Another general feature of ACCO work has been a desire to interact directly with the General Assembly wherever possible. At the General Assembly in Hong Kong there was no need for election processes so it allowed time in the agenda for the new Commission Chairs to outline their Working Groups and to also highlight some “hot topics” in the field covered by their Commission. Many General Assembly members gave excellent feedback on the value of such sessions and Council has agreed that ACCO should continue to make presentations to General Assembly when time allows. That will ensure that the General Assembly maintains a strong appreciation of and commitment to the work of the Commissions.

The Chair of Commission 3, Chryssy Potsiou has been the Commission representative on FIG Council for the first two years of this term of ACCO. She has also been of great assistance to me as the Co-Chair of ACCO. On behalf of ACCO and Council I would like to thank Chryssy for the great job she has done in Council representing her fellow Commission Chairs and the interests of Commissions generally. The position of Commission Chair is a two-year term and during the Stockholm Working Week ACCO will elect and recommend to Council the person who should hold that position for the next two years (2009-2010).

Matt Higgins

Vice President FIG and Co-Chair of ACCO

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