
Council response to report from Task Force on the Future Governance of FIG

First, Council would like to express its thanks and gratitude to the Task Force members and its Chair, FIG Vice President Diane Dumashie, for the work that has been undertaken since the Task Force was installed at the General Assembly in 2019. A thorough work has been done; there have been several consultations with members, and the result is a report which is useful in its conclusions and contains many valuable considerations that can be used in the further work to develop FIG.

The process leading to this report has been both creative and thorough and has been inclusive to all members in all rounds of consultation. Further Council notes those members who were willing to contribute in writing and/or attend the roundtables for which council is very thankful.

The responses that this report is based upon include many good ideas, thoughts and considerations. Not all are directly included in the report as this would have been too extensive, however all responses have been saved and will be taken into consideration and used in the further development and work.

The findings in the report are structured in three key areas:

- Governance
- Branding and Conference
- People and Volunteering

which are three central areas in the development of FIG.

FIG Council notes that overall

- *... administration and organisational structure as defined in FIG statutes broadly meets the short term needs of member associations, as identified; but*
- *to meet their future expectations, some purposeful changes are needed with regard to how these statutes are operationalised in a pragmatic way that ultimately depends upon people rather than the rules.*

Council also notes that the task force report does not recommend any immediate changes to the statutes and is conscious of the suggestions for purposeful changes and that they will be considered further.

This response will include the views of council to some of these suggestions; and will respond to what may be the next steps in order to address these in a short and also a more long-term perspective. Where immediate reaction is possible this response includes suggestions to how council sees the further steps.

Key issue A: The General Assembly

Council is aware that the format of the General Assembly could benefit from being more inclusive which is also an aim of Council. It is the hope that this will also create more engaged members who will involve in

the discussions and the work to be done.

Already in 2020, the format was intended to be amended, but this General Assembly had to be postponed. 2021 General Assembly will be online and is aimed to encourage more discussions and more involvement from delegates. It is the hope that the more interactive approach can be brought on to the future General Assemblies, independent of the future formats (on site / virtual or hybrid).

Council suggests that the concept of future General Assemblies will continue to follow the same structure as today (i.e. two days in connection with the Working Week/Congress). Due to the special situation in 2021 voting at the General Assembly 2021 will be purely online via email and specific www-link. Delegates will be given a time span of 24 hours to vote. Council will collect the experiences with the online voting.

In the future it is anticipated that voting remains face-to-face with the possibility of additional online voting for those MAs who are not able to attend the GA on site. If this will be the future it is already obvious today that the additional possibility of voting will be in real time and bound to the time zone of the country where the event takes place.

Key issue B: Increased involvement of members

FIG is dependent on active and engaged members. FIG Council agrees that the benefits of being part of and engaged in FIG must be clear to current and potential members. At the General Assembly in 2021 it is suggested to have a discussion on what are the benefits of being a member of FIG. The purpose is for members to articulate their views to the FIG office for subsequent analysis and to enable the production of clear material for use by members to their own communities as further outlined in Key issue D.

Council suggests that the experience and wished benefits will be elaborated further for all membership categories and that FIG will also work on a sharpened profile.

FIG Council is attentive to enhance the communication between FIG and its members. It is important for Council to state that the working language of the federation is English. There are interesting suggestions in the report such as the possibility for General Assembly matters to be discussed in other languages between the two General Assembly days, thereby enabling reporting back at the second General Assembly day.

Key issue C: FIG Organisational structure

The report mentions the length of the term of chair of commissions that needs to correspond better to the current conditions for volunteer work and recommends to look into a shortening of the term of office.

As here are however no specific proposals for changes for term of office in the report as this needs to be elaborated more precisely for an actual proposal *council suggests* that this should be investigated further and thought through thoroughly before a possible change of statutes

Today chairs elects are elected two years prior to their term which means that they are serving a total of more than six years which is a long time. Council is convinced that a preparation time of 1½ years is more than enough for a commission chair.

In this context Council suggests that commission chairs are elected in year 3 of a term instead of year 2 which will still give them 1½ year preparation time before they take over the post.

Key issue D: FIG Branding and Conferencing

Council agrees that the yearly conference is a Unique Selling Point. This is where FIG materialises, where people meet and exchange and new ideas and opportunities arise. Council has the interest to keep and to develop this USP to continuously match the needs of the members.

One general FIG challenge is that FIG members are entities with numerous national individual members but only few are internationally active and selected official representatives. FIG Conferences are a unique way to get closer and to become more relevant towards a larger number of surveyors and geospatial experts and not only the official representatives. In order to reach out to national surveyors, FIG and its activities is dependent on the national members to reach out to their members and help FIG to get in direct touch with all members members.

The FIG brand is more than conferencing. The brand seems to be strong within the profession but like any other brand needs to be kept and maintained. Further to this there also seems to be an admirably strong spirit and culture among surveyors from around the world, and FIG council considers the maintenance of this unique professional relationship of utmost importance. The community feeling at the main yearly conference is special and needs to be preserved.

FIG Council sees an overlap to Key issue B and the importance of knowing and being able to communicate the benefits of FIG for the different membership groups. The culture among those who are acquainted with FIG is very strong. This strength of FIG should be transmitted and promoted in wider circles. The TF report and members' written comments contain many good ideas and suggestions for improvements which will all be considered, such as e.g., the carbon foot print of the conferences (like the special tree planting event in connection with the Congress in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia)

Specifically, the FIG Regional Conferences are mentioned in the report. Council agrees that the Regional Conference Concept has proven to be good and useful. The last Regional Conference (RC) was in 2012 in Uruguay. Council is attentive to the fact that the different FIG events must not compete against each other. We are facing a time with many offerings, many different conferences (e.g. the World Bank Conference has grown bigger over the past years) and on the other hand the trend is less time and money to spend on conferencing.

Council is in general very positive towards future RCs but there should be a distinction between a RC and a working week. This distinction might be that there will be a thematic focus and the fact that only a few Commissions (and not all) will be involved; that other languages can be taken into consideration where it makes sense; and to give the possibility for smaller associations to organise a FIG event for which a Working Week might be a too big step.

Council suggests that there will be a specific focus on defining benefits and how to strengthen the brand of FIG both among those who are acquainted with FIG and also to other stakeholders. There is an ongoing work on the development of the FIG Working Weeks and Congresses which will be intensified to match the needs and wishes of various stakeholders and to secure a healthy business model.

Key issue E: Establishment of an Engagement Committee

FIG Council is attentive to the idea presented in the report of an Engagement Committee and would like to elaborate on this idea.

Council suggests installing a committee with members appointed by Council who will create interest, motivate and encourage qualified people and member associations to apply for volunteer senior posts in FIG. Importantly these members will act independently of Council.

The aim of the engagement committee will be to:

- ensure an ongoing influx of volunteers for the official posts in FIG
- address the search for potential senior candidates in a proactive way
- promote diversity and inclusion in all aspects e.g. region, gender equality, age

More specific, the tasks of the committee members will be to:

- foster and encourage individuals' engagement to stand for senior officer levels in FIG, above all to be an open process to encourage people to come forward.
- work closely with Council; yet maintain independence
- ensure that people are not discouraged or hesitating to contact and, or to have any fear about coming forward.

The engagement committee is suggested to be appointed by Council and to meet regularly (online) throughout the year.

It is important to note that the engagement committee does not make any valuation or selection of interested candidates, the aim of the committee is purely to create interest and to motivate members and individuals to step forward and to provide information about the posts.

Appointed in June 2021, the committee could assist in promoting the search for the next President and two Vice Presidents (to be elected in 2022) and to help search for new commission chairs for the following term (2027-2030) that should be elected in 2025 (following the new suggestion of council to postpone the election of commission chairs elects by one year).

Key issue F: Increase activity within commissions

The report of the TF is asking for more support regarding the introduction of the new Commission Chairs at the beginning of their term of Office and greater networking opportunities among chairs of all officer positions are facilitated. FIG Council is attentive to the needs to support and guide commission chairs. The Commissions, Networks, task forces and Permanent Institutions are vital for FIG, and also the fact that there are volunteers who want to and can see the benefit of engaging.

Council (and the entire FIG-family) is expecting that incoming Commission Chairs are familiar with our activities, customs, procedures. This is needed due to the nature of the work and the fact that almost everything within our federation is based on volunteering.

Council encourages members to be more attentive to appoint good official representatives and to support their work in a commission. It is quite crucial that new commission chairs do have a history within the commission and that they already have a solid knowledge of the work of the commission and key contacts. Due to the complexity of the organisation within and around FIG it takes time to build up such a knowledge and network. It is therefore Councils' hope that commission chairs are found from within a commission. Still, they need proper introduction to their tasks. Council also considers the work to get new people into the commissions of high importance and that commissions are not looked upon as closed entities for a few selected persons.

Council suggests to work together with ACCO to define ways to engage more people in the commissions, to maintain their involvement and to make the way towards the positions of chair, vice chair etc. and also to work with ACCO to improve the communication and networking among ACCO.

Key Issue G: Encouraging the involvement over generations

Council agrees with the findings of the report that getting young surveyors involved and keep them within FIG is a focus area. YS has increased significantly over the past years and, today, forms a strong and vibrant network. The development of the Volunteer Community Surveyor Programme (VCSP) is one example of this impressive and vibrant development as well as the regional meetings and online activities.

Council strongly supports the ideas in the report to bring young and "seasoned" surveyors together and to work on a way to keep surveyors actively engaged in FIG over a longer time period. One discussion theme in the General Assembly session 3 on the Task Force on Governance findings will be on this topic.

Strategic oversight

Council agrees that the continued work both on governance and the FIG 2028 think tank strategy should become a full standing Council led, strategy sub group.

Council suggests establishing a working group under Council to work that has already begun towards a FIG Strategy 2028.

Concluding remarks

Again, FIG thanks both the Task Force and also those who have contributed to the consultations for their extensive work and ideas. FIG Council and Office want to continue this work, to select some of the short-term ideas for immediate implementation, and to include some of the longer-term ideas into the work leading towards the FIG 2028 strategy.

Council suggests that apart from the suggestions for direct actions in this response, the next step onwards will be that FIG Office will work on the input from this report and the responses that form the basis of the report together with the ideas that they have collected in various contexts. This work might give an overview on what can be done on a short term and what can be longer term ideas and goals.