

The Secretary General's Column

A Multitude of CIB Co-Sponsorships - A Compliment for CIB but Do They Add Value?

A Form of Collaboration

Article 2.4 of CIB's Constitution states that in the achievement of its objectives, CIB will promote for international benefit appropriate collaboration with other international and national organizations.

Collaboration within CIB is a long and well-established fact and clearly enjoys the support of the majority of the membership. It finds its most obvious form in inter-Commission cooperation and the clustering of several meetings of different groups around a major CIB Conference or Symposium is now a common occurrence. The scientific and economic benefits that accrue hardly need any explanation.

But there are other ways in which the potentials of collaboration can be exploited and one such is through CIB co-sponsorship of events along with counterpart bodies of acknowledged standing in the field.

A reference to the regular Section on Forthcoming Meetings and its accompanying of events, not to mention the Calendar of CIB and Related Meetings, demonstrates the very substantial number of events scheduled to take place in 2000 under CIB Co-sponsorship. Further examination of this listing shows that already CIB has granted co-sponsorship to meetings in 2001 so the total is augmented.

Justification

But what is the rationale behind according this status to an event?

First and foremost is the consideration that membership of CIB must bring with it the means to access the maximum available amount of meaningful information.

No single organisation can boast a monopoly of knowledge and co-sponsorship of an event channels the inputs from more than one body into a collective programme.

The end product will usually far surpass what the input from a single source could achieve alone.

Secondly an unproductive and wasteful duplication of resources is avoided. There is probably no network on the international stage of research and innovation in building and construction which has the multi-facets of CIB. This makes it all the more important for the CIB membership that action is taken to monitor events being planned elsewhere and if they seem to be of professional interest, to explore the feasibility of direct CIB involvement.

Thirdly, CIB can take pride in its unique network and indeed surveys among our members show that many regard this as the prime benefit of belonging to CIB. But networking is a dynamic movement and must continually be subjected to cross-fertilisation and fresh influences if it is to retain its impetus. Co-sponsorship of events with other bodies is a vital source of renewal, (for all the networks involved it can be said!)

Fourthly, and at first sight perhaps a somewhat less obvious advantage, is the catalytic effect of CIB co-sponsorship. Frequently in recent years representatives of CIB have met informally with the other co-sponsors during the event and the result has been to initiate a joint activity of a semi-permanent nature.

These may for example, evolve into the establishment of a Joint Task Group.

A Compliment for CIB

CIB has arrived at the fortunate situation where its co-sponsorship is eagerly sought and applications are continually being received. By any reckoning that is a compliment to CIB and attests to its high standing externally. But this consideration must not stop us from taking a searching look at the reasons behind the requests. For some, the motivation is purely commercial; others see CIB as an effective vehicle for free promotion; yet others believe that the scientific validity of their event is automatically assured. Each case will be different and probably it is a combination of factors that give rise to the request.

Association With Excellence

Moreover a further note of caution is necessary.

It is the CIB Programme Committee whose prerogative it is to decide on CIB co-sponsorship.

The underlying policy is that CIB's name must be synonymous with excellence and before granting co-sponsorship, the Programme Committee will want to satisfy itself that the quality of the event in question will match the standard required.

Additionally, CIB co-sponsorship is not simply a passive endorsement.

CIB must be certain that if it does accord co-sponsored status, it will be actively involved from the start with its partners in compiling the programme, selecting the speakers, and other major issues.

Hopefully after the event is over, participants will feel that CIB co-sponsorship did actually add value and that the policy of seeking to stimulate the application of this type of collaboration justifies continuation in the future.



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