CIB Membership Satisfaction Survey 1999

Introduction
This Report summarises the outcome of the comprehensive Membership Satisfaction Survey, which was executed in 1999.
The Membership Satisfaction Survey was designed to obtain the views of defined sectors of the membership on specific issues and aspects related to each of these topics:

The five sections are:
1. The Overall Evaluation of Membership
2. The CIB Membership and Fee System
3. The Benefits of CIB Membership
4. The Relevance of the CIB Scientific Programme
5. The Effectiveness of the CIB Communications Network

This article is the final one in a series of four. The three other articles highlighted specific sections in the survey and were published in earlier issues of the Information.

This article commences with a series of Recommendations formulated on the basis of the results of the Survey, an overview of the Methodology of the Survey and the actual Response Rates in the Survey. Then, it provides the information on the results of section 1 of the Survey, that have not been published before. These results are stated in the main body of the article.

Recommendations
At this stage Recommendations are intentionally relatively few in number and are formulated in such a way as to allow the necessary specific discussions on each to take place prior to defining the implementation action.
To review in detail all components of CIB’s range of benefits and services in the light of members’ evaluations as expressed in the Membership Satisfaction Survey and to initiate appropriate policy decisions for the future.
To review in consultation with Coordinators and Members of the Programme Committee the future role of the PC Liaison.

To review the requirements for and implications of institutional support in the effective discharge of the task of Coordinator.

To continue and intensify efforts to make CIB more meaningful for industry and practitioners.

To continue to investigate ways to facilitate access to CIB's activities and services for those members whose participation is restricted by economic and other constraints.

To continue to develop and update electronic information services, and to devise ways to facilitate members' use of these.

To compile an inventory of those Commissions which already operate electronic services with a view to extending their application to a wider membership (e.g. e-meetings etc.).

**Methodology Of The Survey**

Careful planning went into the way in which the Survey was to be executed. It was necessary to devise a methodology, which guaranteed the provision of meaningful and representative responses on the topics under analysis without placing an excessive administrative burden on members, most of whom are already overstretched.

It was decided to use what is known as the Likert Scale which is a well established tool in Surveys. In essence this asks respondents to select one out of five pre-determined options which corresponds most closely to their opinion on a given statement.

These options are on the following graduated scale:

1. = Strongly Disagree
2. = Disagree
3. = Neutral
4. = Agree
5. = Strongly Agree

By assigning a number between 1 and 5 according to the chosen options on the scale, an 'average' rating for a number of responses could be calculated. Where appropriate the viewpoint of the Member's Organisation rather than his or her individual opinion was sought. Ample opportunity was given to respondents who wished, to add supplementary comments and suggestions of their own.

**Actual Response Rates In The Survey**

An accurate measure of how representative the input is must be a critical factor in any survey. Here a note of caution must be injected before proceeding to draw too definite conclusions from the CIB Members' Satisfaction Survey. The response rate turned out to be somewhat disappointing.

To cite actual numbers for the principal Target Groups addressed they were:

- **Full and Associate Members**
  340 Questionnaires sent out - 37 responses received or (around) 11%

- **Individual Members**
  193 Questionnaires sent out - 19 responses received or (around) 10%

- **Coordinators**
  75 Questionnaires sent out - 18 responses received or (around) 24%

- **Members Active in Commissions or Task Groups**
  190 Questionnaires sent out - 34 responses received or (around) 18%
For the sake of accuracy it should be pointed out that certain respondents refrained from answering every Question and this accounts for the slight discrepancies that appear in this Report.

**Part 1: The Overall Evaluation of Membership**

*Objective*

The objective of this final part of the Survey was to obtain a representative picture of how from an overall perspective CIB Members rated their Membership.

*Definition of subject*

Members were asked to perform their evaluation based on two specific considerations. These were:

- Is CIB Membership professionally rewarding for their Institution?
- Does CIB Membership make a beneficial input to their work?

Their answers to these two questions should take due account of the scientific, organisational and managerial aspects involved.

**Conclusions - Full, Associate And Individual Members**

- **Overall Evaluation Of Membership**

  Results show an overall positive situation with 79% of all members who replied expressing their satisfaction. Translated into quantitative terms provides confirmation of this.

- **From Full Members and 74% of Individual Members expressly stated their satisfaction.**

  - It is noteworthy that in contrast to these favourable evaluations, several members stated that the fees were out of proportion to the benefits. These included some respondents whose overall evaluation was clearly positive.
  - 14% of Full and Associate Members who replied and 10% of Individual Members were neutral.
  - Significantly 3% of Full and Associate Members who replied and 16% of Individual Members gave a negative rating.

*Comments - Full, Associate And Individual Members*

The overall assessment of membership was the key question in the Survey and so supplementary comments to responses were especially significant.

These are reproduced below and it may be noted that some respondents who had given a positive assessment did not feel constrained from expressing critical comments and vice versa.
Evaluation of the present balance between fees and benefits:

- The 'whole' fee can be expensive for a busy/active Department. However long term benefit can be gained from short-term expense.
- Coordinators have to rely on departmental funds to attend Coordinators' Meetings - a contribution from CIB would help in this.
- Beneficial to myself and my Institute.
- Good value for money.
- Balance is acceptable.
- The fee for an Organisation like CSTB is probably at its maximum when compared to the scientific return that results from participation in CIB.
- It is becoming increasingly difficult to fund travel to meetings. Our local funding situation is much tighter now.
- It all depends on the effort that the Member Organisation puts into CIB.
- Up to now we cannot make a realistic assessment.
- We are still relatively new in CIB so we have not yet taken advantage of all available benefits. We would be very sensitive to any increase in fees.
- In my case the benefits are very difficult to measure. I am particularly interested in the topic of education and I make use of my CIB experience in my training institute.
- Fee is quite expensive - benefits depend on current tasks.
- International contacts are always beneficial and the Individual Membership Fee is not too high. However the general costs in order to participate are rather high.
- My former employer liberally supported my participation. Membership Fees are on the high side. In the future access to the specialism will make it a balanced benefit vs. costs decision.
- Gaining knowledge/education is always equated with expenses. More benefits, more expenditure. Therefore as an Individual Member I can be choosy in a way as to which specific activity I should attend or participate in. But, of course, there is always a limitation on the chosen activity.
- Costs far exceed Financial benefits. Benefits remain illusive. One hopes that they will eventually result in more than just intellectual benefits.
- Fees are higher than benefits. (Two responses)
- For me there are very few benefits or value in CIB Membership.
- Time is what is at a premium.
- The only benefit for an IM is to participate in the WG Meetings.

Evaluation of input to member's work from scientific, organisational and managerial aspects

- Satisfied in general with the present situation.
- It's all pretty good for me - keep up the good work.
- In our view CIB does a very good job and we are strong supporters.
- For my previous Institution membership was beneficial. For my present Institution it is not really beneficial.
- My Institution is happy with its CIB membership and it is trying to make it more effective and stronger.
- Publications, Commissions and the Journal are very good. Also Conferences are fine.
- The ability to interact with other professionals is the best opportunity which one can hope for and CIB is able to facilitate that.
- This assumption cannot be measured since the benefit is indirect (outside the field of paid consultants).
So far I mainly did work on preparing the ground. Now that I am genuinely independent I shall reap the harvest (networking, liaising etc.)

As of now I cannot say whether it is beneficial or not (although I am positive it will be) since I have not yet experienced all the activities.

Membership has had no effect on my work at any time.

Possibly some items are beneficial for us - we suppose that the benefits of CIB membership could increase.

Suggestions for increasing the value from membership and for short term actions by CIB to improve its Services:

- Value would be increased if more of our Staff could participate in CIB sponsored research projects and also in CIB activities.
- First of all we have limited possibilities due to our financial restrictions.
- Besides joint meetings (taking place in the same location) try Net Meetings to decrease costs and attract those members who cannot travel easily.
- Achieve a better balance in membership as between Researchers and Industry. The UK and Northern Europe are over represented. The rest of the world is under represented.
- The main problem for members in developing countries is to cope with the expenses of sending delegates to WC & TG Meetings. A more effective use of economic facilities may solve this problem.
- It would be better if CIB could provide more support to members in developing countries.
- CIB should provide more electronic information to its members.
- More on-line information.
- By encouraging large institutions especially in highly developed countries to sponsor deserving Individual Members with limited financial means to actively participate and further broaden their knowledge and skills in CIB related activities. Also by giving free publications/books to Individual Members who have limited access to these materials.
- IMs should receive at least some Proceedings free of charge.
- Try to interest younger professionals.
- Reduce Fees and allow IMs membership in multiple TGs.
- Assist our Group to make links to other CIB Groups that have an obvious synergy.
- By more active participation in Symposia and WCs. Service is sufficient in my opinion.
- There is a Treasure Trove of knowledge within CIB and money-making activities should be encouraged. Ad hoc teams for special tasks (internationally) should be "sold/recommended" to Industry. Do things that are worthwhile but for a profit. Let us change from a prophetic organisation to a profit-oriented one.
- When developments have taken place in a field of interest to a member, he should be automatically informed by e-mail or, for instance, be sent a concise list of developments with links to sites where you can obtain more detailed information. Each member should facilitate this procedure by recording his specific area of interest.
- Activities in the form of e-mail Groups. Internationally based work groups.
- More support should be given to meetings of WCs and TGs.