In it’s recent Sao Paulo Meeting, the Programme Committee established a New Task Group on Innovation Brokerage in Construction. Roger Courtney was appointed as the Commissions’ Coordinator. Below, you will find an introduction to the activities of the Task Group and the CV and views of the Coordinator.

**Introduction to the New Task Group**

**Objectives and Scope**

The principal research focus and original contribution to knowledge to be made by Task Group will be in comparing the roles that innovation brokers play in different national construction industries. This builds upon the work of CIB TG35 on Innovation Systems in Construction.

At varying times, and in different industries, innovation brokers can be professional institutions; universities; government-sponsored research laboratories; and industry associations. The Task Group will map the diversity of these different types of innovation brokers in the construction industry, thereby providing an original contribution to knowledge, as well as enhancing the level of international collaboration between research groups in the area.

The work of the Task Group will include:

Both explicit and tacit knowledge flows are important; innovation brokers should develop approaches to facilitate both types of flows.
The research should include the full array of innovation brokers, from professional institutions, universities, standards organisations to public organisations.

Experiences from other sectors, such as the complex systems industry model, could help in developing a framework for the construction industry.

**Current Work Programme**
The new TG will run for two years starting in July 2001. It will be launched at the International Conference on Innovation Systems in Construction, in Ottawa, Canada in June 2001. Meetings will then follow at approximately six monthly intervals - five in all - finishing in June 2003. The first meeting will be devoted to the question of setting the agenda for the international programme of research on innovation brokerage. It will define the milestones and deliverables and the planning for the work of the Task Group. The final one will review the work produced in terms of the final report, finalise the diffusion strategy, and identify the opportunities for further collaboration.

In the Task Group Meetings, participants are to present “national” pre-circulated papers written to the specification agreed by the Task Group members. The national papers will be further developed to answer the Task Group objectives.

**Output**
- The Task Group will deliver an End-Report in 2003 on:
  - The types of innovation brokers in the construction industry and
  - The current roles played by each innovation broker in different national construction industries and
  - The possible roles of these innovation brokers in the innovation of those industries
  - Recommendations on how to establish these new roles in practice

**Internal Structure**
Mr. Roger Courtney will act as the Task Group co-ordinator.

In addition, Joris Meijaard, Erasmus University, Rotterdam, the Netherlands has offered to assist in the co-ordination of the collaboration, and will be seeking support from the Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs for his expenses.

The Task Group’s work will be closely linked to a financed research project. Resources amounting to £62 000 have been obtained by Graham Winch from the UK Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (award no GR/R18734). Those resources allow for funding of the respective coordinating and other supportive activities.

**Meetings**
- Kick-off meeting, June 2001, in conjunction with the International Conference on Innovation Systems in Construction, in Ottawa, Canada
- Task Group Meeting, October 2001, University College London, UK
- Working Meeting, February 2002, Tokyo, Japan
- Working Meeting, September 2002, Cincinnati, USA, to coincide with the CIB W055/W065 Conference on the economics and management of construction
- Working Meeting, February 2003, Helsinki, Finland
- Task Group Meeting, May 2003, Building Research Establishment, UK
Introduction to the Coordinator: Roger Courtney MA MSc Mtech Cphys FinstP Ceng FCISBE MCiob

Roger Courtney is a Special Research Advisor of BRE - Building Research Establishment, Garston, Watford, United Kingdom. Research and innovation, particularly in construction, have been the central themes in his career. Following nine years as Director and Chief Executive of the Building Research Establishment, and three as Deputy Chairman of BRE Ltd. Currently, he is a Vice-President of the International Council for Research and Innovation in Building and Construction (CIB), a member of the Board, including three as Chairman of the Programme Committee, Mr. Courtney is fully familiar with the expectations of CIB in respect of its Task Groups and has personal links with principal centres of construction innovation around the world. His published papers have covered the future of building research, the relationship between procurement systems and research, the role of the construction research community in promoting sustainability, the growing maturity of construction research and the implications for funding systems etc.

The Coordinator’s views on the Commission

TG47 will build on the successful example of TG35 which, through a structured way of working, has produced a book and a conference within three years of its first meeting. Starting further up the learning curve, TG47 will seek to achieve this in two years - time compression in construction innovation studies!

Its focus will be on the role of brokers in facilitating innovation in the construction sector. Construction is a ‘complex systems’ industry - it produces its outputs through the interactions of a great diversity of players. So any change has to be acceptable to different interests - suppliers, regulators, consumers etc. CIB members often play a brokerage role, providing information and advice about possible changes that can satisfy a range of concerns. TG47 will draw on the academic literature on innovation in complex systems and relate it to the institutions and processes on construction. It will identify how innovation can be stimulated and accelerated through effective brokers and will help members of CIB to see their role in these systems. As with all the best CIB activities, it will be a bridge between theory and practice, and my aim will be to ensure that the final output offers something of value not only to the research community but also to the policy-makers who draw up and fund innovation programmes and those from industry who wish to enhance the innovation capacity of their firms.

We have a provisional programme of meetings, starting in October in London. Almost uniquely for CIB, there is (limited) funding available to support international participation in the UK meetings. So I look forward to an excellent initial meeting.