



CIB NEWS ARTICLE

International Council for Research and Innovation
in Building and Construction

Providing a global network for international exchange and cooperation in research and innovation in building and construction, in support of an improved building process and of improved performance of the built environment.

June 2010

Around the Task Groups and Working Commissions

TG81 - Global Construction Data

Introducing New Task Group

A new Task Group, TG81 on "Global Construction Data" has been established. Dr. Stephen Gruneberg, University of Westminster, UK has been appointed as Coordinator of this Task Group.

A short description of the Task Group and its Coordinator follows below.

Background

The global population explosion has already had a major impact on the need for new construction throughout the world. Coupled with the improvements in health, standards of living and expectations of continuing improvements, it is vital that a global perspective is adopted on the impact of population growth on construction in the wider context of meeting the needs of people while controlling for pollution and sustainability.

The first step in this mission is the gathering of economic data in a systematic and readily accessible way. Over the years many commentators have remarked on the quality and accessibility of international construction data. For example, Ruddock and Lopes (2006) pointed out the difficulties associated with construction data in an international context and Pellicer, Pellicer and Eaton (2009) refer to distorted, unreliable data caused by subcontracting, undeclared work and other issues, weakening the value of making international comparisons. In their study of Eurostat data, the main difficulty for them was accessing relevant information for each of the relevant EU member states. Their findings were incomplete, because of data constraints. They called for future studies "to contribute to the global knowledge of the construction industry." (Pellicer et al, *ibid*, p 595)

The international dimension of the CIB creates a real opportunity to establish an understanding of construction activity throughout the world. By collecting the data new sources of information will become available for policy and decision makers at a

national and international level. It will permit much greater research and understanding of the problems facing the global construction community and will enable good practice to spread more readily from one country to another.

The construction data to be gathered will include construction output, construction firms, construction employment and will cover issues such as productivity, health and safety, training, skills, plant and equipment, company accounts, contractual methods used, prefabricated content, materials, carbon issues, and the contribution of construction to national income.

To achieve this on a worldwide basis will require discussion concerning the definitions of terms used in different countries and issues regarding inconsistencies and non-compatibility of construction data at an international level.

Aims and Objectives

The aim of this Task Group is to gather as much statistical information as possible about all the regions of the world. Eventually this will enable us to produce useable tables on the many different aspects of construction covered by existing national statistical offices.

It is hoped that by using this data and gathering it together the data collecting practices of different countries will be improved by showing support and increased use of national and published data. Only then can countries compare their own performance and productivity with other countries to see what improvements if any can be made. These objectives are entirely consistent with the aims of the CIB.

Work Programme

The programme will comprise several stages or phases. In the first year a global audit of data and availability will be carried out. This phase will involve a meeting to establish what data is required and this

meeting will be followed by the second stage, which will involve locating the sources of data needed to meet those needs.

In the second year the third stage will be the actual collection and co-ordination of the data gathered. Clearly there may be copyright issues and issues regarding charges for data and all of these problems will have to be discussed with a view to making as much as possible available to researchers and especially members of the CIB.

During the third year the fourth stage will be presenting the data and will involve the setting up of a publicly available website. Once such a website is established, it will be a matter of managing it and continually updating the material from around the world. Alongside the website further dissemination will consist of an annual digest of global construction data in the form of a CIB Publication.

Introducing the new Coordinator

Stephen Gruneberg



Prior to the University of Westminster Stephen Gruneberg was a Lecturer at University College London and a Research Fellow at the University of Reading.

His main areas of interest are global construction, the economics of the construction industry and policy issues related to construction and urban regeneration.

Teaching

- Construction Economics
- Property Economics

Research and Consultancy

Stephen's research activities are focused on economic theory applied to the construction industry and, more recently, global construction. He has written papers on the growth and survival of construction firms and developed a UK benchmark model to estimate the size

of construction markets for particular types of building and structures within different countries.

In the past Dr. Gruneberg has undertaken consultancy work for a number of organisations, including the Office of Government Commerce, (now HM Treasury), KPMG and ConstructionSkills.

External Activities include:

- Chair of the Labour Finance and Industry Group
- External examiner
- Visiting Fellow at Northumbria University
- Member of the executive committee of the Association of Researchers in Construction Management (ARCOM) responsible for international liaison.

Additional Information

For additional information about the CIB TG81 contact the Coordinator: Stephen Gruneberg
S.Gruneberg@westminster.ac.uk.

You can find more information on the activities of CIB TG81 at www.cibworld.nl -Databases-select "Go to Database" – in the shown search engine: type TG81 in the field "Commission number".