

EDITORIAL

CIB Publications

What do you mean by Quality?

The CIB Membership will no doubt be aware that a special Ad Hoc Committee set up for the purpose has been looking into the CIB Publishing Operation. This forms part of the wider project currently underway to formulate a new Strategic Plan to take CIB forward into the next Millennium.

Clearly there has to be a policy for CIB Publications since they are the principal means for giving permanent record to the output of Commissions and Task Groups thereby making it available to the external world, hopefully for eventual translation into practice.

Right at the very start the Ad Hoc Committee identified a series of basic issues considered fundamental to its deliberations on what should be the realistic objectives and long term aims of CIB's Publishing Operation.

- To what extent should it be conducted in a commercially profitable way?
- Should CIB direct itself to producing Publications that are relevant to industry and practice, even if this means setting up a completely new line of Publications?
- How can the overall appearance and presentation be made more attractive?

These and indeed others are vitally important questions and it is the task of the Ad Hoc Committee, assisted by the views and advice of the Membership, to come up with meaningful answers to them.

But one aspect has already emerged prominently from the Committee's discussion and that is that a pre-condition for achieving a lasting viability in the publishing operation is to:

Focus attention on improving the scientific quality of the contents of CIB Publications and setting in place an effective system of peer review.

If the outside world is to be convinced that there is real worth and benefit in what CIB produces, it has to be made clear that these Publications have satisfied a strict pre-determined set of criteria.

Before progress can be achieved there must be agreement on what the concept of quality actually means.

By way of stimulating discussion among members I should like to offer the following:

The Quality of the Contents of CIB Publications can be expressed by the ratio:

$$Q = \frac{\text{What is asked by the client}}{\text{What is offered by the supplier}}$$

This brings us immediately right into the middle of a number of related questions such as:

- Who really is the client?
- To what extent do different target groups require different answers and do CIB Publications even reach the target groups?
- Is the number of publications sold in itself a valid yardstick of their intrinsic quality?

How far do CIB Publications go towards meeting the scope and objectives of CIB?

We do have preliminary answers but before the Ad Hoc Committee gets down to formulating policy, it wants to hear the views of the membership.

Your advice is sought not only on the matter of quality but on any aspect of the CIB Publishing Operation - Editorial, Commercial, Artistic

Please send your comments to the CIB General Secretariat who will be pleased to transmit them to the Committee.

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Chairman Ad Hoc Committee on Publications

