

THE SECRETARY GENERAL'S COLUMN

Your Input Please!

Over a relatively short period in the recent past CIB Members have received several requests to supply CIB with certain items of information. It would hardly be surprising if some members begin to wonder what underlies these requests and why there are so many of them in a short period coming close on the heels of each other whereas in the past such requests were rather uncommon. Even a fairly simple response to a survey or questionnaire calls for some resources to be diverted to the purpose. And if they cannot see the rationale behind these demands they may be forgiven for hesitating to expend the time needed.

Hopefully when members have read what follows, they will be convinced that a representative and successful conclusion to the projects underway will be to their benefit and will be one more step towards making CIB membership as meaningful as possible.

Update CIB Member Entries

In November 1996 the Designated CIB Contacts of all CIB Full and Associate Members and all Individual Members were asked to update the information in their CIB Member Entry. The aim of this operation was more than the necessary update of this information in the internal CIB Information System. A secondary aim was to update and complement the information on Members in the CIB Home Page to the extent that the Home Page itself can develop into a trustworthy global access point to information on building and construction research. And a third aim of this operation was to render the lists of Members per CIB Working Commission and Task Group more reliable.

Sustainable Construction Projects, Publications and Contacts

In January 1997 the Designated Contacts of all CIB Full and Associate Members were asked to supply CIB with information on ongoing projects, recent publications and contact persons in their organisation in the field of Sustainable Construction. The objective of this operation was twofold. Firstly to let the special CIB Coordinating Committee for Sustainable Construction have the data necessary to assess the possible need for setting up new CIB Activities in this field. And secondly the information will be included in a data base to be linked to the CIB Home Page. The aim of this data base is to allow everyone in the world to search for this information in order to establish contacts with persons who are active in their own field of research and development and just as important to prevent unnecessary duplication of research.

Best Practices for Sustainable Construction

In the Section "CIB and the Environment" of this Issue of the CIB Information Bulletin the Joint Coordinators of the Task Group TG16 "Best Practice for Sustainable Construction" are asking CIB Members to supply them with descriptions of best practices in which they are involved. These can take the form both of brief descriptions and more extensive case studies. The response will be the basis for a CIB Publication on Global Best Practices for Sustainable Construction that will be presented in conjunction with the CIB World Building Congress in 1998 in Sweden.

Strategic Plan CIB 1998 - 2001

In June 1997 as the outcome of considerable focussed discussion a draft will be available of the Strategic

Plan for CIB during the period 1998 - 2001. A concise summary of the salient parts of this Plan will be published in the CIB Information Bulletin and CIB Members will be invited to request the full text and to supply the CIB Officers with their comments. Based on these comments a final version will be made for submission to and discussion by the General Assembly to be held in June 1998 in conjunction with the CIB World Building Congress. Behind this invitation of course, is the desire to come up with a Strategic Plan that is more than just the ideas of the CIB General Secretariat, the small group of CIB Officers and the CIB Board, but something that enjoys the maximum possible support from the Membership at large.

So it is certainly not coincidental that in a short period CIB Members are being contacted to provide an explicit input in ongoing activities. Some things in CIB are changing and these requests for members' input are a logical indication and result of that.

Firstly, in general CIB as an organisation is becoming more active and because CIB is no more and no less than a membership organisation successful progress can only come about through direct communication and agreement with the members wherever possible and appropriate.

Secondly, in the past virtually all CIB Activities were channelled via specific Working Commissions and Task Groups. Today, however, many of the new activities cannot be linked to only one Commission because they are of a more general nature and of interest and benefit not only to a defined group of experts, but to the Membership at large.

For the operations mentioned to be successful and for these ongoing changes in CIB to have any chance, however, all members really must supply us with their input. If they don't, then the respective operations will end up being little more than an attempt to be included in the CIB annals.

Wim Bakens

