

The Secretary General's Column

CIB AND THE INDUSTRY: A CHALLENGE WORTH TAKING UP

Research Community - Industry: How ?



In the new Mission Statement as it is defined in the Articles in the new CIB Constitution on Purpose, Scope and Objectives it can be clearly inferred that CIB wants to operate as a platform for exchange between the global research community and the Industry. It would be well worthwhile to give some more in-depth thought as to how this strategic objective can be achieved.

We justifiably pride ourselves by saying that almost 20% of our Institutional Members do represent the Industry. And indeed we see among our varied Membership Construction Companies, Architectural Firms, Materials and Component Producers, Engineering and Consultancy Firms, Construction Law Firms and Insurance Companies and Banks, to say nothing of a substantial number of Professional Associations. However, a more searching analysis serves to demonstrate that in by far the majority of cases it is the researchers or at least research related persons in those organisations who are taking an active role in our Activities. In other words, it is often not the practitioners and seldom the general managers and yet these are the very people who most frequently take the decisions as regards priorities for their firms' research and innovation and other future oriented investments.

When we talk about "The Industry" usually we implicitly have in mind those practitioners and general management. What CIB includes in its Membership however are the "Researchers in the Industry". These Researchers in the Industry can indeed play a significant role in bridging what is often regarded as the gap between research and practice, but in many cases they are not "The Industry".

Two-fold Objectives

How then could CIB become a platform for exchange with "The Industry"?
I think there is something of a dual objective here.

One part of our objective is to provide meaningful support to our Members in their goal to interact with The Industry. And a second part is for CIB itself to seek for an interaction with The Industry.

Assisting our Members can be achieved - among other ways - by utilising the CIB potential for coming up with products which are of obvious relevance to the Industry and which by their nature cannot be produced by a single Member Institute. If, subsequently, such products are offered by a Member to Industry in the Institute's own country, this would likely prove to be a material contribution to that

Member's aim to establish an interaction. A number of CIB Commissions have in fact already taken up this challenge of producing Industry relevant products and some others are a long way down the road towards doing so.

The twofold purpose of helping our Members to interact with The Industry and profiling CIB itself as a partner for The Industry will be reinforced by certain new types of Activities which CIB has initiated. Both the **Pro-Active Approach** and the **Technology Project** are examples that fall squarely into this category. It is my sincere hope that the CIB Membership will recognise their intrinsic potential importance and so will be stimulated to take the decision to become directly involved.

Wim Bakens

