

Why Ethics Standards Are of Limited Use on Their Own for Professionals Working in Land, Property and Construction and If to Be Effective How Such Standards Need to Be Embedded, Monitored and Regulated Against.

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SUMMARY

This year (2014) I delivered a paper which explored the opportunities and very real benefits that could be afforded not only to professionals working in land, property and construction but also to clients, the public and society more generally by the setting, promotion and monitoring of international standards on ethics. A recently published report by the Chartered Management Institute, based in the UK, stated that trust between businesses and society is still at a low point and that there was a real danger that focusing on targets and regulations can drive dysfunctional and unethical behaviour. However, a code of ethics on its own is potentially of limited use and this paper takes the subject further focusing on the following issues: • Is just having ethics standards enough?– Do you produce standards and leave it at that? Will that really get buy in? What does adoption look like and what are the risks to an organisations or country's reputation if people just pay lip service? • The work that has been undertaken in the last year by the International Ethics Standards (IES) coalition and the increasing interest in this project from varying organisations, stake-holders and government. • The challenges the IES coalition faces in coming to terms with the varying global definition of what is ethical, how the scope of the project was determined and how to overcome the questions posed in the first bullet point above. • How the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) have considered the interaction between technical standards, regulatory standards and ethical standards. How we intend to provide guidance across our many diverse types of members working in different fields in surveying. • How are RICS intending to get the message across to members across the world and how we are looking to embed ethics standards into our membership requirements, and training. • Should compliance with ethics standards be reactive or proactively measured? Ethical behaviours is critical to both business, consumers and society in general but what more needs to be done to continue trying to change what for many is 'normal business practice'.