Learning from the Challenges of the past and Readying a Professional Association for the Future: The Case of Botswana Surveying and Mapping Association

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INTRODUCTION

- Registered in August 2001
- Main objectives
  - High standards in property measurement and delineation
  - Promoting usefulness of Surveying and Mapping to public
  - Emphasis on Continued Professional Development
  - Self regulation
  - Development of professional fees/tariff schedule
  - Certification and Accreditation
- BSMA did have a vision and mission of some measurable degree

The BSMA THROUGH THE AGES

- Registered in August 2001
- Attracted around 40 members in the early years
- Dwindling membership versus increasing number of Geomatics professionals in the country
- Tremendous challenges which led to BSMA existing in name only by 2006
- The situation worsened up to until 2013
- The BSMA suspended from FIG
- Defined on the basis of the following;
  - BSMA Organizational Structure
  - The Paradigm
  - The BSMA Challenges
  - The Role of Department of Surveys and Mapping
THE BSMA ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

- Fundamental Structure organs are
  - Executive: running BSMA with specific mandate of affiliating it to FIG
  - General Meeting: Annual and Special
  - Chapters: Promotion of Geomatics outlook in Botswana

- Chapters are made up of:
  - Cadastral Survey
  - Cartography, Remote Sensing and GIS
  - Engineering, Topographical and Mine Surveying

- Membership: Six types being Fellow, Professional, Technical, Probationer, Honorary and Student

THE PARADIGM

- Three major spheres of influence
  - Government involvement with the geomatics profession obscuring the role of the professionals from driving their own interests
  - New generation professionals owing to technological advancement of our times: They questioned relevance and name of Association
  - Voluntary nature of the BSMA; Lack of regulatory framework compared to other professionals bodies like Law, Accounting, Real Estate, Architecture and Engineering

- Mutating into various challenges
- The need for a paradigm shift
Prominent challenges were identified as the following:
- Low membership
- Indifferent members and prospective-member commitment
- Unpaid subscription fees by members for a period of at least over 7 years
- Lack of sustained financial resources
- Poor turnout to meetings which rendered the association inactive
- Lack of self-regulation
- Lack of Visibility
- Lack of legal muscle
- Lack of vision and strategic direction
- Several attempts to revive the efforts of BSMA had proved futile until 2013

A government of BotswanaSurveying and Mapping Agency.
Organized a Geomatics Professionals Workshop in February 2013
Request successfully made to present BSMA challenges
A new name versus BSMA came up
Professionals agreed to revive what is existing
A working committee established with mandate to reviving BSMA
Working Committee delivered on its mandate in October 2013
New BSMA Committee installed according to BSMA constitution
The work of the New BSMA Committee

- Saw need to work on BSMA relevance
- Evaluation of the points inform paradigm alluded to earlier
- A positive approach adopted informed by the following;
  - To re-register BSMA with FIG
  - To increase the BSMA membership
  - To Establish the BSMA Chapters
  - To come with a Regulatory Framework
- A lot of financial resources required to do the above
- Focus on honorable intentions
- Success were realised

Success of the Committee

- Re-admission to FIG in 2014 and attending FIG conference in 2015
- Collaborations with several national organizations have been opened and are being natured
- Membership is growing though slowly the situation is promising
- Working alongside government to draft a practitioners act
- A road map has been established and it is being developed on number of fronts
- Public awareness program is being pursued
- A communication strategy is being developed and it has started with the establishment of a web site [www.BSMA.co.bw](http://www.BSMA.co.bw)
CONCLUSION

- Following challenges noted from UK institutions (Lenton 2012);
  - Membership
  - Profile
  - Relevance
  - Commercial
  - Constitutional
  - Economic
  - Resource
  - International
- Focus on the following;
  - Road Map for BSMA
  - Regulatory Framework
  - Encouraging Positive paradigm shift