



## Task Force on the Future Governance of FIG

### Frequently Asked Questions April 2020

During the online member consultation, a range of questions were raised over the current structure of FIG; particularly the relationship with FIG statutes. In order to deal with these issues this briefing paper provides a listing of the Frequently Asked Question (FAQ).

The intention of this FAQ is to supplement the review process and is a reference document linking questions and comments raised to the relevant item in the current FIG governance publication #66. That is referencing the **“FIG statutes, Internal Rules and Guidelines”**. To do this, the document uses the acronyms IR = Internal Rules and G= Guidelines. The responses in this document are for supplementary guidance only and have been drafted by the core team.

#### 1 Council mode of operation

*What are Council’s reporting avenues to Members, and what influence can members make?*

- Statute 5.2 The business of FIG is directed by Council under the authority of the GA, and administered by the Office
- Statute 6 deals with governance, 6.2 outlines the requirement for an annual meeting and agenda,
- Statute 6.3 provides for an agenda that itemises the discussion and powers of GA members

The short-term engagement cycle deals with the operational decisions, routinely made annually by members. The long-term strategic direction is highlighted in the 4 year Council strategy. A much longer term vision is currently being considered by the Presidential initiative called 2028 (see section 3 below).

*How do we ensure our Council (VP’s) represent the geographic regions?*

Importantly it is the GA members that votes and decides on the appointment of FIG officers, GA members are also good at ensuring regional representation from a pool of candidates available at the time of election; but It is becoming increasingly difficult to source a significant amount of nominations and certainly not always covering each region, FIG experienced this in 2014 with the nomination of only one Presidential candidate.

- 5.5 The term of office for Council members is 4 years (renewable once)
- 9.2 (IR) Four vice presidents are elected by the GA
- 9.2 (IR) Member Associations nominate officers to stand and the decision is made at the GA by a vote.

Questions arising include:

- Consideration could be given to the FIG term of office being reduced enabling officers to serve for a shorter period.
- Adjusting the nominations basis to be specifically on a regional representation either with in- region positions (e.g CASLE format) or members of the Council being

assigned to a specific region, noting at present this is achieved by the establishment of Regional networks.

- These options will need assistance in the form of an independent nominations committee.

*How Council is mandated to communicate to its members, and is it possible to better our communication channels particularly to foster more debate?*

The request for better communications and “more debate” is something to consider in greater detail because this highlights the memberships perception of being dislocated from the working of FIG. The important question; is this a result of the structure or some other factor?

First, the formal channels are mandated in our statutes. Our governance calls for annual meetings (6.1) and ensures the agenda is circulated prior to the meeting (6.2) and to publish the GA and Council meetings. Above all, the FIG office is tasked in 18 (IR):

- To publish on the web and provide annual reports,
- The main communication medium is cited as the quarterly or monthly bulletins
- To organising the publications series including practice statements

Next, the opportunity to enhance FIG’s digital structure and presence throws up several considerations.

- **Opportunities:** Online meetings are currently common place e.g Council holds email and skype meetings to complement the face-to-face meets. Also this may be replicated by commissions and working groups.
- Can we go further? This may be providing online tutorials, Webinars, the entire annual meetings? And/ or the GA business?
- **Threats:** This governance task force attempted to roll-out a communications platform to aid consultation and found that the membership was not quite ready, and reverted to an on-line questionnaire.
- **Lesson learnt:** a detailed debate is needed with the members over how such a digital platform may look and ultimately work

Regardless of any upcoming debate this action would necessitate prior assistance at a cost, from specialist IT and data communication to assist the FIG office to engage with members.

## **2. Commission Chairs and Commissions**

Regarding the commission, Statute 3, appendix 11 refer specifically to commission activity

*What are communication linkages between the Council and Commission’s?*

Although Commission chairs are encouraged to communicate via the FIG office or to individual Council members, there is a regular and established formal structure. This is the Advisory Committee of Commission Officers (ACCO):

- 12.1 (IR) ACCOs responsibility is to coordinate and advise the Council on the work of the commissions and debate other matters affecting FIG and advise the Council
- 5.4 Statute and 12.2 (IR), refers to the appointment of an ACCO representative to Council

*What are communication linkages between the Commission's work plan and Council 4 year strategy?*

The presidential lead of the 4 year strategy is approved in the year of election, immediately prior to the start of the term. Thus 2018 saw the election of our president, with the term starting in 2019. In parallel,

- 11.11 (IR), provides for commission work plans to be approved prior to the start of their term of office.

Above all,

- 11.1 (IR) General Assembly has oversight of their work and work plans

*What are the Commission Chairs communication channels across the FIG organisation?*

Formal communication by commission chairs:

- **To Council** is via the appointment of an ACCO representative (each has a term of 2 years)
- **To other commissions**, cross fertilisation of ideas and practices is encouraged, leading to joint working groups, and also joint WW technical sessions
- **To Task Forces/ Networks**, see next Question
- **To Members**, reports to FIG General Assembly, newsletter updates, commission annual meetings and ultimately via individual's involvement

*Could Commission, Task Forces and Networks work closer together? And could this also include the Permanent institutions?*

Collectively, these are FIG operational platforms and the remits and outputs of each are established by vote at the GA, with each subsequently reporting direct to Council and to the GA members. Each operational platform is described in the Internal Rules:

- **Task force** is a start and finish platforms, i.e. they carry out special technical assignments, projects and studies 13 (IR),
- **Permanent institution** is specialised and aims to pursue specific on-going tasks 14 (IR)
- **Networks** have evolved over the past few years, often forming their remits as a result of a task forces

Although these platforms are populated by members, it can be clearly seen that each has quite distinct remits. The matrix structure attempts to reflect the existing FIG structure which is relatively flat and hierarchical.

At times, there are instances where work may overlap, i.e. to achieve a common purpose, and this is encouraged. Examples include:

- Commission 1 activities align closely with for example, this task force on governance.
- The Africa regional network (2009-19) originated and worked to bring together through its annual meetings, member associations, young surveyors network, academics and corporates.

*How are working groups selected and populated*

The intention is that commissions are not a 'select group of people'; but populated by volunteers from across the membership who may come forward on an individual basis and/

or be encouraged to do so at the behest of their member association 11.2 (IR). The chair also appoints vice chairs to lead on working groups 11.10 (IR)

Commission chairs may seek out specialty expertise but not as a pre-requisite for involvement. Further, the chairs terms of reference encourage a global reach of members in the working groups alongside their other duties (See G 'Responsibilities of Commission chairs)

*What is the basis of Chair selection and who nominates?*

- 11.8 and 11.9 (IR) The chairs are voted into office by the GA
- 11.8 Chairs may be nominated by Council if no applications are made by Members

*Are there are too many smaller and/ or inactive commissions*

- Statutes Appendix A, The FIG definition of the 'functions of the surveyor' reflects our broad profession and divides our functions into eleven subject areas of the land, built and natural environment sectors.

Further

- 11.1 (IR) each commission is responsible for rolling out activities that cover these functions

Over different FIG terms it is likely that some commissions will be more active than others, and some will always remain larger than others. FIG task force 2015/18 did review and consult on this matter, submitting its report to GA who agreed to retain the 10 commissions for the time being (see Item 2, link 2017 below)

### **3. Member associations**

*Is it possible to increase the impact of Member association's in their respective countries, and also promote "horizontal relations" between members"?*

FIG's unique selling points are the FIG annual working weeks and 4yearly Congresses. These bring together our global members. Further, members are encouraged to disseminate the information and deliberations gleaned from attendance (see G 'FIG Members and their commission delegates'), also facilitated by all conference material (where supplied) uploaded onto the FIG web site in the Resources section/ proceedings section, see <https://fig.net/resources/proceedings/index.asp>,

FIG has also provided a pdf brochure on the 'benefits of FIG membership <https://fig.net/members/introduction/benefits.asp>

- IR 2- 6 defines our membership categories, with all welcomed to participate in the FIG operational platforms/ activities.

*Can member associations be encouraged to be more involved?*

- 2.3 (IR) encourages regular member involvement
- G Member guidelines highlights and encourages engagement
- Spearheaded by the annual President meetings held at the FIG WW, engagement with member associations is encouraged. In Hanoi, a new approach was trialled, that will hopefully make these sessions more interactive and useful
- Council is always wishing to hear from members on how things may be improved.

*Is it possible for individuals to become known as experts in their subject areas?*

- Being involved in FIG network provides member and individual's visibility, the ability to share and contribute to innovation and to build leading edge thinking by encouraging collaboration between associations, academics, and the corporate membership base.
- A key activity of FIG is to create a global network in our community, annual meetings, facilitating face-to-face meetings and helping to build relationships that continue engagement 'on line throughout the year.
- Opportunities exist across the whole range of activities run by commissions and networks. This collaboration enables international contacts to be built, and helps facilitate the building of individual expert status.
- Involvement in working groups and leading on producing good practice is an excellent way to increase profile
- Commission 1 activity on professional development may also be a further opportunity. A new working group may consider this in more detail

## **2. Previous FIG Member Consultations**

FIG has a history of review and member consultation over the governance structure of FIG

- 2004 A new task force on the Commission structure was established at the GA 2004 item 11 [http://www.fig.net/organisation/general\\_assembly/agendas\\_and\\_minutes/2005/minutes/minutes.asp](http://www.fig.net/organisation/general_assembly/agendas_and_minutes/2005/minutes/minutes.asp).
- 2006 An interim report was presented at the GA in Munich 2006 item 16 [http://www.fig.net/organisation/general\\_assembly/agendas\\_and\\_minutes/2006/agenda\\_app/app\\_16\\_gov\\_rep.pdf](http://www.fig.net/organisation/general_assembly/agendas_and_minutes/2006/agenda_app/app_16_gov_rep.pdf).
- 2007 The proposed changes to the statutes and internal rules were adopted at the GA 2007 in Hong Kong item 17 [http://www.fig.net/organisation/general\\_assembly/agendas\\_and\\_minutes/2007/app\\_17\\_statutes.pdf](http://www.fig.net/organisation/general_assembly/agendas_and_minutes/2007/app_17_statutes.pdf).
- 2015 A new task force on Commission Structure (chaired by Mikael Lilje) was presented at the GA 2015 in Sofia item 15.2 [http://www.fig.net/organisation/general\\_assembly/agendas\\_and\\_minutes/2015/agenda\\_app/15\\_02\\_task-force\\_Commissions.pdf](http://www.fig.net/organisation/general_assembly/agendas_and_minutes/2015/agenda_app/15_02_task-force_Commissions.pdf). A proposal for radical change was presented at the GA 2016 item 3.4 [http://www.fig.net/organisation/general\\_assembly/agendas\\_and\\_minutes/2016/agenda\\_app/13\\_04\\_TF\\_commission\\_structure.pdf](http://www.fig.net/organisation/general_assembly/agendas_and_minutes/2016/agenda_app/13_04_TF_commission_structure.pdf). This was eventually redrawn at the GA 2017 item 13.4 [http://www.fig.net/organisation/general\\_assembly/agendas\\_and\\_minutes/2017/agenda\\_app/13\\_04\\_FIG\\_TF\\_Commission\\_Structure.pdf](http://www.fig.net/organisation/general_assembly/agendas_and_minutes/2017/agenda_app/13_04_FIG_TF_Commission_Structure.pdf) ... and, under item 25, the President established a new group of volunteers among the members to contribute to the definition of a Terms of Reference for a future Working Group on a review of the overall FIG Governance.
- 2018 The ToR was presented at the GA 2018 in Istanbul item 14 [http://www.fig.net/organisation/general\\_assembly/agendas\\_and\\_minutes/2018/agenda\\_app/14\\_FIG\\_governance\\_terms\\_of\\_reference\\_2018.pdf](http://www.fig.net/organisation/general_assembly/agendas_and_minutes/2018/agenda_app/14_FIG_governance_terms_of_reference_2018.pdf) o
- 2019 the current Task force presented its work plan to GA 2019 and commenced work.

### **3. Governance and Strategy**

Aim: To Clarify on FIG 2028, which is the Presidents 'think tank' initiative versus the Task force on Governance 2021. With the advent of the FIG 2028 initiative the distinguishing terms of reference for each initiative are defined as follows:

- **FIG 2028:**  
Refers to the visionary processes by which a body assures itself that the long-term interests of its stakeholders\* are satisfied.
- **FIG Task Force 2021:**  
The Task Force on Governance refers to the short-term process (2 year horizon) by which a body plans, organises, implements and monitors its day to day operations and administrative matters, and if a change is required to its statutes.

\* In the context of FIG these stakeholders include; the Members (the Member Associations, Affiliate Members, Sponsors and Academic Members), specialist interest groups (Commissions and Task Forces), the clients of surveyors, the employees of FIG, and the general public at large.

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