

# **The Future of Our Professional Work Governance Task Force: Supplemental Memorandum (March 2020)**

## **Executive Summary**

During 2019 the Governance Task force consulted with FIG members on the strengths, weaknesses and opportunities and threats (SWOT) of our organisation. The purpose of these insights was a prelude to inform the main themes and options for changes (if any) to our organisational statutes, with continuing discussions during 2020.

In addition, as part of this exercise additional ideas and comments from our members were encouraged, asking them to consider their view of the changing industry landscape, the future trends and impacts.

The purpose of this supplementary memo is to overview member's insights for three reasons:

- First and for the purposes of the task force remit, it creates a shared understanding of the future currently faced by our profession.
- Second, it may be used by member associations (MA's) to promote consideration of what their individual members require of their own organisations given the future work landscape
- Finally, it provides a basis for FIG to facilitate a wider discussion between MAs

This memo is an overview of material gleaned from FIG members who responded to the SWOT consultation exercise. It takes the observations from questions 7 to 9 and then references these to thinking from leading authors as well as land and property professionals. Clearly the information here is not exhaustive; indeed it is work in progress. It is a start and enables members to look at their own associations and hopefully gather some insights on how they might wish to continue to best serve their own membership as well as society.

## **Call to Action**

It is hoped that you find this piece thought provoking and encourages you to lead your own members down a path of scenario engagement. You are encouraged to share with us your own thinking and your own Member Association's material, do let us know and this may be upload to the task force web site at the end of June2020.

This memo first overviews the importance of future scenario planning in the context of our professional work, it then sets out the early insights from FIG members and using tables enables cross referencing of these observations with leading international thought leaders.

## **1. Overview**

As stated by Susskind (see Table 3), the future has already arrived; it is just not yet evenly distributed, in particular the impact of technology, digitalisation and artificial intelligence (Ai). We are discovering numerous ways in which digital technologies, sustainable methodologies and agile business practices may provide our profession with new approaches and tools to deliver. But underlying our effectiveness to change is that we tend to underestimate the potential of tomorrows applications by evaluating them in terms of today's enabling technologies.

**Why this is important:** Because the stark, interdependent challenges posed by rapid technological innovation, the climate emergency and food insecurity are all by products of one prime movement which have started to define the 21st Century: humanity's mass migration from the countryside to the city. The scale of this change is considered unprecedented.

As professionals in the land, built environment and natural resource sector our profession is at the forefront of change. But are we stepping-up to the challenge? Can we adapt, and be sufficiently agile to remain relevant in society development?

Over the first quarter of 2020 there has been, literally, a seismic shift in the way societies organise in how we live, work and communicate. Notwithstanding that the material overviewed here, has been gathered over the past 2 years, it remains relevant now, perhaps even more so.

## **2. Early findings: *What our members think***

Three questions in the online questionnaire (2019) encouraged answers to the query of the profession's future in vision, challenges and trends.

A high level synopsis of the comments received have been tabulated in Appendix A, these are edited thematically to provide industry insight into our sector and points to the ways in which the profession may need to respond. These may be grouped in four broad headings (Table 1):

- The whole of our profession needs to recognise change
- Technology is a defining factor for the profession
- Changing business models
- Professional Development is a life long journey

Further, to continue to be able to respond to changing conditions it is vital that the FIG structure enables the organisation to respond quickly and effectively, whilst at the same time ensuring that appropriate levels of accountability exist. This sentiment is reflected in the establishment of the task force on Governance (2019- 2021) and crucially, reinforced by further observations on the challenges faced by the organisation of FIG (Table 2)

The ability to innovate as an organisation and a profession is an increasing imperative. There are big issues that we as individuals and member associations need to understand and engage. These are highlighted by a range of industry and academics on the national and international scale. To respond effectively it is helpful if we think strategically, partner in different circles, engage with an open mind and above all lead with confidence and conviction. The starting point is to understand the magnitude and impact of change across our sector.

It is not surprising to find that our own members are attuned to changes and trends at both the national as well as the global geopolitical level.

Appendix B Table 3 is an (early) reference list drawing on thought leaders found in our own member cohort; but also drawing on leading authors. The information used here is work in progress; but it does corroborate some of the issues highlighted by FIG individuals comments (Table 1 & 2).

You are encouraged to share with us your own thinking and if you have materials that you would like to share, do let us know and this may be upload to the task force web site and to contribute to the conversation. To begin the conversation in this supplemental memo, the author has drawn from publically available material the FIG Member Association, the RICS, who have proactively considered the future of the profession.

Table 3 provides links to references that may be of interest in relation to the future of the profession and place of work from the perspective of:

- Geospatial Information
  - UN GGIM and their May/ June 2020 webinar series
- How Professions function and organise
  - The Future of the Professions: how technology will transform the work of human expert. Richard Susskind & Daniel Susskind
  - “Innovators are not always welcomed” (Economist, Susskind and Bootle)
- The relationship of governance, power and decision making
  - Understanding “New Power” by Jeremy Heimans and Henry Timms

In conclusion, it is clear that demographic trends, shifting economics and the 4<sup>th</sup> technological industrial revolution are disrupting the land, natural and built environment sector’s skills supply. Our profession has a chance to innovate and lead; but to achieve this goal we will need to ensure that we adapt and offer true value to those seeking our services.

As an organisation of members drawn from national associations, academics, corporate organisations and corresponding individuals, FIG can facilitate this conversation with the help and active input of its members who collectively will provide vital insights.

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Appendix A – Table 1 & 2

Appendix B – Table 3

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