

# FIG Council work plan 2019 – 2022

## “Volunteering for the Future”

### Vision

Surveying is a modern profession acting worldwide for a better infrastructure for our society and planet earth. The International Federation of Surveyors (FIG) wants to keep, and even improve, its role as the premier non-governmental organisation that represents the interests of surveyors worldwide.

### Introduction

Over the last 30 years, our profession has gone through a series of significant changes and innovations. The main technical advancements are the introduction of GNSS, laser scanning, and digital photogrammetry in conjunction with the use of UAVs. The global localisation of the place where we “are” has become child’s play, thanks to the technology of communication and GNSS.

Decades ago, a surveyor’s typical service (mainly maps) was only partly accessible and generally reserved for military and state administration purposes. This has changed radically. Today, geo-information and related products are seen as a public good and beneficial for the well-being and betterment of society. Additionally, we can observe that the modern geo-data products are increasing in quality and are becoming increasingly available, free of charge, to the user.

In our daily lives, we have also encountered changes introduced not only by technical progress but also through political and social transformations. For example, long-distance travelling is much easier today than it was before 1990. There are almost no insurmountable walls left between different countries. Access to other countries has become much easier in general. At the same time, the cost of travel has gone down significantly. Statistically speaking, in the year 2000 every citizen would use an airplane once every 43 months. Today, every citizen uses an airplane once every 22 months. Flying has never been more accessible and affordable.

Sociologists say that we are living in one global world. In other words, our daily lives are more similar than they were in the past. We wear similar clothes, listen to the same music, and watch the same series on TV or Netflix. Although our societies are becoming more and more aligned with each other, we can still observe a trend of increased individualism. During the last decade, it has become increasingly difficult to convince people to do volunteer work for organisations like the local football club, the choir, or a professional organisation.

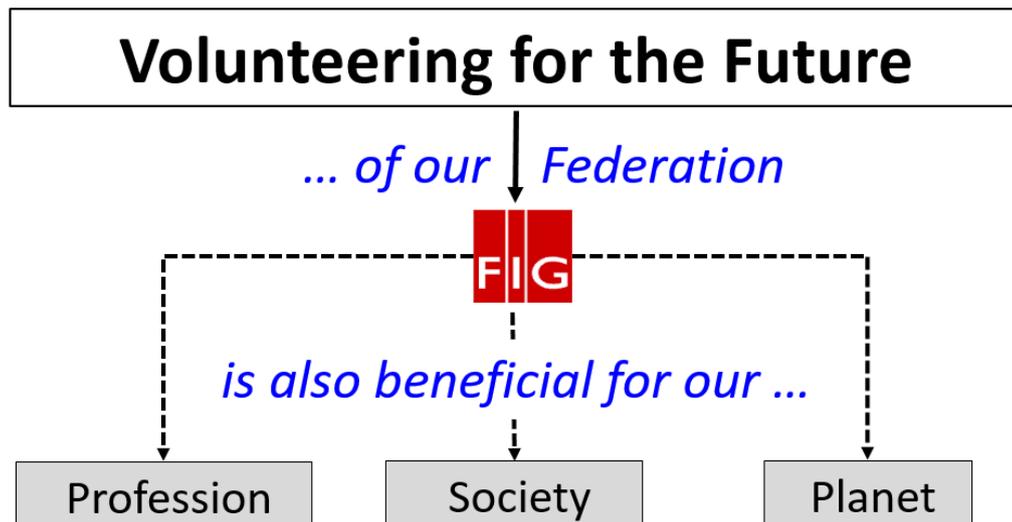
Our professional and private lives have become computerized. With the modern communication technologies like the internet, smartphones, email, and social media, most of us are and want to be present everywhere, 24 hours a day.

We are also encountering an overall acceleration in the technical world. Digitalisation is one of the buzzwords we encounter nearly everywhere. Innovations are appearing faster and the life cycles of products and entire product groups are becoming significantly shorter. This trend of accelerated changes will not stop in the future. We will continue to adapt our professional and personal lives to these changes.

Over the last 30 years, FIG has become an organisation, which now acts on a global scale. If we want to keep our position as the premier international representation of surveyors, we cannot ignore the dramatic changes in technology and society that have occurred in the last decades in order to stay relevant for our profession and society.

## The motto of the term 2019 to 2022

The motto of the term of office 2019 to 2022 is “*volunteering for the future*”. This slogan is on the one hand short and catchy but on the other hand, it can and should be interpreted in several ways.



Two questions arise at this time.

- Why is volunteering so important today?
- What should people volunteer for?

The willingness to volunteer has significantly declined across the board over the last decades. Finding volunteers for the local choir, football team, or other initiatives is becoming increasingly difficult. The same trend has occurred for professional organisations on a local, regional, national, or even international level, like FIG. This is a mass phenomenon, which is noticeable on all the continents. The increasing individualism of our globalised society has been identified as a reason for the declining interest in volunteering.

The second question “what should people volunteer for” can be answered in two related levels. The most important object (first level) of interest is our Federation itself.

### **Volunteering for the future of FIG**

FIG is a global organisation representing and promoting the interests of our profession and of all surveyors worldwide. The brand “FIG” is currently well known but this will not automatically continue. If we want to maintain our leading position as a professional organisation, we need volunteers and ongoing support on all levels. These commitments and personal involvement are achievable in many different ways.

The most common possibilities are as follows:

- To promote FIG in our personal professional environment
- To encourage and motivate our colleagues to participate in future FIG events and activities.
- To participate in FIG Working Weeks and Congresses.
- To contribute actively to our events, by giving presentations, writing publications and participating actively in the work of our Commissions, Working Groups, Networks, and Task Forces.
- To assume responsibility as the Officer of a Commission, Network or Task Force.
- To support the next generation of FIG members.

The second level of interest is an interesting side effect of the first one.

Today, our profession is regarded as a necessary and important part of the infrastructure for a better and more sustainable life. This has led to some interesting and motivational side effects. Being active for FIG is also beneficial for our profession, society, and planet Earth. This is the second-level answer to the question “what should people volunteer for”.

In summary, the motto can be refined as follows:

**Volunteering for FIG means volunteering  
for our profession, society and Earth at the same time.**

FIG-Council has identified two major targets for the next few years.

## **The major Targets of the Council 2019 – 2022**

The Work Plan of the FIG Council will focus on two major targets:

- Making FIG “Fit for the Future”
- Promoting the relevance of our profession together with our partners

The first target looks inside FIG and tries to improve and adapt our structure, strategies and activities to future needs.

The second target is not a new goal. It is a continuation of previous targets from former Councils. This is normal and even expected for the pursuit of a sustainable long-term strategy.

## Target 1: Making FIG “Fit for the Future”

In 1998, the FIG General Assembly decided on a large constitutional change from the “Bureau system” to a Governance system, based on the principle of individual and personal votes. Part of the Bureau system was an office which “wandered around” because it was run by the President and his Council members. At the same time, the GA introduced a permanent office which has resided since then in Copenhagen, Denmark. Both measures improved the attraction, quality, and performance of FIG.

During her last term of office, President Potsiou (2015-2018) installed a Task Force with the objective to investigate the FIG’s Commission structure. This was the first time since 2005 that our structure was at least partly reviewed.

From the Council’s perspective, there are several reasons to continue the review process. They can be summarized into two main positions:

- The review process has been focusing on the structure of the 10 Technical Commissions. It is sensible to extend the review to FIG’s entire structure.
- Independently from FIG’s structure, we have to ask the general question: “Is FIG fit for the future?” The related questions are as follows:
  - Is the format of our events (Congress, Working week, etc.) still up-to-date?
  - Is our way of communicating still valid?
  - How can we attract the next generation of surveyors?

The action plan related to Target 1 consists of several measures.

### - Task Force on Governance

Council will install a Task Force (TF) on Governance. The objective of this working group is to investigate the entire governance structure of FIG. Within two years’ time, the TF should present the results of their analysis including proposals for potential changes and modifications.

### - FIG 2028 – Long-term-strategy

Council will start a working group with the title FIG 2028. Together with all the FIG’s stakeholders, Council would like to develop a long-term strategy for the future. The year “2028” is a good choice because in that year we will be celebrating 150 years of FIG.

### - Special support for the YS- Network

Over the last ten years, the Young Surveyors Network (YSN) has become a success story. We have participated in fresh and inspiring sessions and activities organized by our young surveyors. These positive activities should be continued. However, there is an unsatisfying observation: once the active and successful young surveyors left the network, only a few of them were seen afterwards at our events as normal participants. Most of them have disappeared.

We have to improve the transition process from the YSN to the FIG. Together with the young surveyors, Council will try to improve the process of transition from the YSN to FIG.

- **Making our events more interesting and attractive**

- Council will analyse our events over the next few years and introduce adjustments to those events if needed.
- The Peer Review System (PRS) has proved its usefulness in terms of quality assurance and attractiveness, especially for young authors.
- The plenary sessions are seen as an inspiring high-level platform for all participants. They will also serve as a platform of exchange with our partners and stakeholders of our profession.

- **Making our Commissions and Networks stronger**

Commissions and Networks are central to our technical work. They build FIG's professional knowledge and know-how. Looking at the Commissions' typical projects, there have always been work items with different life cycles. Some projects were ad-hoc with a very limited lifespan. Others were mid-term or even long-term projects, which were still unfinished at the end of the term of office.

Council is convinced that it is sensible to establish in each Commission a kind of succession planning in order to ensure that the work in the next term can continue without repeating the work that was already done. Over the next two years, Council will prepare and discuss the succession planning together with the Commissions.

In relation to Networks and Commissions, there are two more action items:

- Council will ensure that the Commissions' work plans are aligned with the FIG's vision, with each other, and with Council's work plan; and
- Council will encourage the FIG's members to send not only their national delegates, but also some of their national experts in related fields of work.

- **Secure FIG's financial stability**

It is Council's task to secure FIG's financial stability. Our member associations are reporting a declining number of subscriptions, which has a negative impact on our financial income.

During the last term of Office, we wanted to enlarge our base of corporate members. Unfortunately, this attempt was not successful.

Therefore, Council has to monitor thoroughly our financial status. In addition to this, we have to continue promoting the advantages of being or becoming a member of FIG.

## Target 2: Promoting the relevance of our profession together with our partners

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015, provides a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and in the future. At its heart are the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), from which more than 200 indicators were derived. The majority of these Goals, targets and indicators rely on geo-referenced data. Therefore, Council decided to evaluate how our profession can contribute to fulfilling the SDGs.

The action plan related to Target 2 consists of several measures.

### - Task Force on SDGs

Council will install a Task Force (TF) on SDGs. The goals for this TF are as follows:

- To identify the professional fields in which surveyors can contribute the most to fulfilling the SDGs.
- Once these professional fields are identified, the TF should propose ways in which our community can contribute to fulfilling the SDGs.
- The TF shall coordinate (together with Council and the Commission Chairs) the SDG activities within the Commissions.
- To compile a FIG publication on the surveying community's potential contributions towards fulfilling the SDGs.

Maintaining the significance of our profession remains an important target for our Federation. Council will continue to keep and strengthen our partnership with UN agencies, the World Bank, other international agencies, and sister organizations. Council will engage in the following activities:

- Review all existing Memorandums of Understanding, in particular those with the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, the UN Human Settlement Programme, and the UN Office for Outer Space Affairs.
- Review and develop new Memoranda of Understanding with our sister organisations.
- Discuss and develop new Memoranda of Understanding with other international agencies like UN Global Geospatial Information Management, or a professional organisation that offers a beneficial collaboration.
- Cooperate with regional surveying organisations like Arab Union of Surveyors (AUS), ASEAN-Federation of Land Surveying and Geomatics (AFLAG), Aso-

ciación Panamericana de Profesionales de la Agrimensura y Topografía (AP-PAT), Comité de Liaison des Géomètres Européen (CLGE), Fédération des Géomètres Francophone (FGF), Mediterranean Union of Surveyors (UMG). The goal is to improve the status of all surveyors on a local, regional, and international level.