

APPENDIX B

FIG Information Policy 2007–2010

A. Introduction

An information policy concept it is necessary to have a look at the different groups that exist inside and outside the FIG. When discussing the means of implementing the information policy concept it is important to consider that the tools are correct ones for the purpose and target group. In particular when the information policy has a strong marketing aspect the target of the information policy and/or marketing campaign needs to be discussed.

This document is revised version of the FIG Information Policy Paper that was adopted by the General Assembly in Athens in 2004. The FIG Council should decide how this update should be formally endorsed and publicised.

B. Target groups

In general there are two different target groups for the FIG information policy: the current FIG members (both member associations and other members and individuals in the member organisations) and potential new members.

The objective of the information policy for the first group is:

- to inform FIG members about all activities, discussion and intentions within the FIG and
- to get the members and individuals in those organisations more active.

The objective of the information policy for the second group is:

- to increase the number of members of the FIG which is more or less implementing the marketing aspect of the information policy.

C. Information policy for FIG members

There is continuous discussion on the information gap between the FIG Council and the member organisations and especially how to transfer the information to the individual members of member associations and other members. When discussing the tools to be used it is important to consider whether the member organisations form one homogenous group or whether there are differences which need to be taken into consideration.

C.1 How to bridge the gap

There are different tools, which can be used for a better information distribution to FIG members:

Newsletters

The main information source for members and individuals is the FIG web site and the monthly FIG e-Newsletter, which is circulated by email to all who have subscribed it (free subscription through the FIG web site). This e-Newsletter includes a summary of reports of activities during the past month, event announcements and other news. The

e-Newsletter has received good feedback by being actual and bringing frequent information without a need to visit the web site.

There have also been requests for printed material or journals. The e-Newsletter is an appropriate way to inform the Presidents, member organisations and national delegates on the activities of the Federation. It also gives links to the latest news on the FIG home page, which can be used in national newsletters. The circulation of the e-Newsletter is larger than what is possible with a printed newsletter or bulletin. Further there is not lot of additional work for the FIG Office to produce the e-Newsletter with the concept and in the format that it is done at the moment. The e-Newsletter reaches developing countries better than ordinary mail as well as the developed countries. It reaches active members as well as the more or less "silent members" equally. There is no difference between the members that needs to be taken into consideration besides the fact that in developing countries not all (individual) members have access to the internet. But at least the member organisations have got the latest news from the FIG. It is the responsibility of the member organisations to find a way to distribute it further. The support of the members in this work is more or less a marketing aspect. The problem with the e-Newsletter at the moment is how to keep the distribution lists up-to-date (it is technically solved, but subscribers do not actively update their contact information).

Since the e-Newsletter contains the headlines of the latest news and gives links to the FIG home page, it is not too long, only one-three pages in printed format, which can be considered suitable. The member organisations have the possibility of choosing those facts which are most important for their organisation and members. When looking at the home page, they will probably find other things worth to draw members' attention to. Long newsletters with six or more pages, will not really reach the member organisations since they are too long and therefore will not be read. In addition most of the member organisations have their own newspaper / newsletter into which they are encouraged to extract news from the FIG web site.

Mailing forum / discussion group

FIG established two discussion groups on the home page – the first one for all members and the second one for academic members – but these have not been successful because there has not been the critical mass which is needed for active discussion. At the moment the discussion groups are taken out from active use and new means of direct communications are under consideration.

The FIG Office keeps e-mail distribution lists for the Council and Commission officers (ACCO) and for Commissions delegates (and correspondents). The information that will be distributed is decided by the Commission chair or the FIG Office. The concern is that the information will only reach those who are already active in FIG and its commissions and a mechanism for further distribution of the information is missing.

It should be discussed if further discussion groups (or on-line discussions) should be introduced for different target groups e.g. for the presidents of member associations. E.g. the presidents could be considered as a homogeneous group and they could use this forum e.g. for questions like "what is on with ...". This could be useful since it is not always up to the Council or the FIG Office to answer. However, there are some concerns that not everywhere in the world people are used to use e-mail in an easy and also non-formal way of communication. There is certain contradiction to the working methods of the presidents; they may perhaps prefer to wait for the e-Newsletter or President's letter and use this as their main source of information.

Forums during meetings

Even the best e-Newsletters and mailing fora can not substitute personal contacts. The best indication of this are the Presidents' meetings that many members consider the best part of a Working Week or Congress. It should be discussed if these meetings could take place more often, e.g. also during regional conferences. These meetings could be organised in the same manner as the Presidents' meeting during the Working Week or as a round table to avoid too big forum and to allow profound discussions. Presidents who are not able to attend be encouraged to appoint a personal deputy. The presidents must be aware that they are not excluded if they do not participate, but they should be afraid that they are missing something. A new interesting or even funny title could attract people. And if the meeting is an official topic on the agenda, it will perhaps be easier for people to get the permission to travel.

Not only the regional conferences, but also other conferences and meetings should be used to organise these kind of presidents' or delegates' meetings. This should be the case especially at events that are sponsored by FIG.

The minutes and, as recommended, the resolutions of these meetings are distributed to all attendees and members. If there are questions, especially from those who are not able to participate, answers have to be published. Perhaps they can even be a good opportunity to enforce the presidents' mail forum (see above).

Regarding the objective groups at the regional conferences, there is no difference to the official meetings (General Assemblies). The only difference is that these meetings do have a regional focus influencing also the number of attending presidents (or delegates). It is possible that perhaps even more representatives from developing countries are able to take part when the regional conference takes place on their home continent. But there should not be any difference to be taken into consideration concerning developed or developing countries. It is important that the FIG President and/or Vice President(s) attend these meetings.

Encouraged by the Presidents' meetings FIG is now organising similar forums also for academic members and corporate members. It is also planned to organise a special forum also for the general directors of national mapping and cadastral agencies starting in Stockholm in 2008 and in Sydney 2010.

C.2 Information Policy for FIG members with Marketing Aspects

Proposals made above are more or less directly focused on giving the FIG members more information about the FIG policies, actual discussion and future plans. There are other ways to get FIG members moving; in most cases they have a marketing aspect.

But before looking at these in detail, the different objective groups have to be identified from the marketing perspective:

1. First of all there are the developed countries that can be divided into those that are already very active within FIG – to whom a special marketing is not needed, but instead implementing the information policy – and those that are more or less "silent members". Even these organisations normally have very experienced individual members who can bring their knowledge into FIG. Therefore it is worth building up a special information policy concept with strong marketing aspects. It seems not to be that difficult to convince these members to take part

(a) in Working Weeks, regional conferences and other events or (b) even in the work of technical commissions and working groups.

In case a) their participation will have a direct financial effect because of the higher income to FIG through the registration fees. In case b) there will not be an obvious influence on the income of FIG, but if those newly active members can help FIG to put our intentions into action, the result can be even more positive by the multiplier effect. FIG should not only look at the finances – FIG is a non-profit organisation. So, finally, this group is really worth to be one of the main objective groups of our information policy with a strong marketing aspect.

2. Secondly there are the developing countries. It is very attractive to the member associations and their members to be related to the FIG since they can take profit from the experiences of other member countries. But it is very often impossible for those members to take part in meetings, congresses or working weeks, mostly because of the costs or because it is even impossible for them to travel (or even to leave the country). In addition, for some of them it is very difficult or even impossible to get FIG information regularly since they do not have a constant access to the internet. This is important when thinking about which communication means to use.

Different means with a marketing aspect can be used, and they are focussing on these two objective groups in a different way:

FIG Information / Promotion leaflet

The FIG information leaflet will be revised in 2007 to be more market oriented and to include in addition to administrative information main points from the FIG Work Plan and about Commissions. The design will also be developed to have a more promotive layout. This leaflet will be the main marketing brochure of FIG.

Annual Review

The Annual Review summarises the main results and activities of the Federation from the previous year. It gives an overall impression about FIG both to members and partners and can be used for marketing purposes. The contents of the Annual Review need to be revisited to better serve for marketing purposes. At the same time the Annual Review will also serve as a permanent document on the FIG activities for the history.

Article of the month

The article of the month has proved to be successful and gives an option for all members, but especially for those from developing countries, to be more active (since they are often not able to travel) and to present themselves. The article of the month is proposed to be selected by the Council or the commission chairs.

FIG on-line journal

The Council has introduced the concept of FIG on-line journal. The articles to this journals will be selected from peer-reviewed papers that have been submitted to FIG conferences and other events or directly to the journal. The journal can be published one or twice a year depending on the papers available. The electronic format allows low-cost publications, wide distribution and does not limit the number of papers to be published. The process of peer-reviewing is under preparation with the Commission chairs.

Mailing lists / Mail campaigns

The group of all surveying associations is too big to be reached by personal contacts. So the presidents of member associations or other VIPs from these countries should get some support to build up their own campaigns. Depending on the special situation in the country, they should create a special FIG newsletter or page, integrated in the existing local newsletter.

Presentations of FIG work

Even though it is not commonly thought of, every presentation of the FIG and its work is a kind of information policy, but even more a marketing activity. So every opportunity should be used to talk about FIG. If it concerns really interesting facts it should further be a means of getting sleepy members moving. In general presentations can possibly activate all kind of individuals, coming from the industrial states or the developing countries. So it will depend on the content, which kind of objective group will be reached. The way of marketing also depends on delegates' interests.

General presentations of FIG and its activities are available on the FIG web site and the contents of these will be developed on continuous basis.

Personal contacts

Personal contacts are the most time-consuming means of marketing but at the same time very efficient, and for some special aims it is worth spending the time. This is the case for example to convince some specialist to be active within FIG or to get FIG more known in new regions (like e.g. in Central Asia or Latin America). In new regions the time is worth to spend since the contact persons will have a multiplier role.

D. FIG Marketing

In general there are different objective groups in the marketing of FIG; they have to be defined before talking about the marketing means.

D.1 Definition of the objective groups

1. Nearly every surveyor around the world is organised in his/her professional association, but not all these associations are FIG members. One goal for the marketing could be to increase the number of FIG member associations. This is worth a try, but the limited number of organisations within this objective group requires a special marketing concept (see below).
2. Secondly there are the companies that should become FIG corporate members and therefore are a main target group, at least all global players. For FIG it is a big advantage if many of them will become corporate members, not (only) because of the membership fees but because of activities and other benefits that can be of advantage to FIG members.
3. It also benefits the companies to become a corporate member, which can be seen from e.g. the education and grant programmes created with ESRI and Intergraph. The major companies expect marketing effects by being members and getting special benefits during exhibitions and events. If in addition they can be convinced to be sponsors of events or sponsor the FIG Foundation, this is even better for FIG.

4. Within the first main objective mentioned above, the academic members have to be mentioned. They do not increase the income of the FIG a lot, but they are very necessary for FIG if it wants to develop into a modern organisation since they are the leading educational and research institutes.

So as a conclusion to the objective groups of our marketing, there are three different groups outside the FIG, the member associations, the companies and the academic members. Those that are already active within the FIG will not be the objective of the marketing, a special concept for them is not built up.

So finally the marketing concept should concentrate on three different objective groups:

- new member countries,
- new corporate members,
- academic members.

It should be evaluated if it is worthwhile having a marketing plan for the mentioned objective groups.

D.2 What can we offer / Marketing tools

The question “what can we offer” is closely related to the FIG goals and the future profile of the federation.

FIG is a non-profit organisation, so the main focus of our marketing is to be known all-over the world as the leading organisation within the surveyors’ world. It will not be enough that people know that FIG exists but they should consider the FIG as the first and most competent source of information that they can use to solve their daily problems. FIG has to be present as a modern organisation, also oriented towards new technologies. At the same time FIG as a world-wide actor has to take more responsibility in international affairs e.g. in implementing the Millennium Development Goals. It is absolutely necessary that we become an attractive organisation to the developed countries as the competent provider of information in a broader sense. FIG should provide recommendations and introduce good practices. For developed countries it must be interesting to take part in the FIG activities.

D.3 Marketing for the objective groups

Some of the above mentioned groups are very important but small. Therefore it has to be considered whether it is worth building up marketing campaigns only for them. In general, different means have to be discussed:

Personal contacts

Personal contacts, which are less anonymous and therefore more promising, should be used for all three groups. The focal point in FIG could be the Council, the Commissions or the chairs of the working groups. There is enough information about the aims and activities of the FIG on the web. In addition we have the FIG promotion leaflets (in different languages). Everything beyond these must be explained and discussed with the decision-makers of the associations, the companies or the academic institutions. This is possible because the number of candidates is limited. Personal contacts are the best way to proceed even if it takes time. In this work the existing PowerPoint presentations can be used.

Within the objective groups, the universities, already FIG members or not, should be considered as a special sub-group. They are in general interested in very specific spheres. Which university is active in which specific research field is mostly known by the working groups. So it will be most promising to contact them by the related working group of the concerned commission.

Supporters

To reach the developing countries, whether they are already FIG members or not, is more or less a financial question since they will be happy if they can take part in congresses, working weeks and so on and in this way benefit from the experiences of others.

Since the FIG has not the funds there is a need from others to help. The big member associations and the big corporate members could create a godparent relationship (sponsorship) for a limited time (e.g. for the first two years) for a member association from a developing country. FIG should identify who are the big players and also to create the criteria who should be adopted. The sponsorship should cover the costs for taking part in the congresses, regional conferences, working weeks and so on and should be linked to certain duties and obligations for the adopted member (persons), for example to present a paper during a sponsored conference. The rules have to be created. In the same way, the contacts to the United Nations can be used to get some financial support, and the World Bank projects to promote FIG.

By this, members from developing countries shall be able to attend the FIG events or events sponsored by the federation. They will have a multiplier effect within their countries, even in a double sense: they take profit from the exchange of experience and the reports presented during the conference, bringing it to their country, and in this way they will be advertising the FIG.

Presentations

In general, presentations of FIG, its basic ideas and how it is working is the best marketing that we can have, so we should use every opportunity. The presentations at national or regional events are very good examples! In addition, since people can contact the speaker after the presentation, it is possible to continue with personal contacts, an even more promising but of course limited way.

By presentations all defined objective groups can be reached. So it should be one of the FIG aims to have a presentation at every conference of importance to FIG. They can be given by anyone more or less involved in the work of the federation. FIG should keep an updated list of strategic conferences and to look for people going there.