Editorial

doi: 10.1680/stco.2007.8.2.55

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Shaping tomorrow's concrete construction specifications, codes and standards

fib, with its founding organisations CEB and FIP, has a long tradition of creating, collecting and disseminating knowledge on all aspects of concrete structures. *fib* has gained a strong reputation for the highly technical contents of its publications. Such publications include the proceedings of *fib* conferences and workshops as well as the *fib* journal. However, the main output of *fib* is through the *fib* commission and task group reports published as technical reports, guides to good practice, and recommendations. These reports contain a wealth of information, knowledge and experience on most aspects of concrete construction. Many of these reports have become standard references in the concrete construction industry.

fib has a Special Activity Group which is working presently on a new *fib* Model Code. This Model Code will contain the latest developments in material technology, design, construction, maintenance, and so on, of concrete structures. The idea is to create a new *fib* Model Code which covers all aspects of concrete structures from initial concepts up to final dismantlement of a structure at the end of its life. A topic of particular interest is

the life-cycle design and durability of concrete structures. Previous Model Codes have become the basis for standards/codes in Europe and elsewhere. With the new Model Code *fib* wants to continue this tradition.

All that work is produced by volunteers who contribute to and benefit from exchanging experience and best practices with colleagues from all around the world. In fact access to *fib* task groups is not restricted and anyone who is interested can contribute to this work. A strong point is that *fib* brings together all parties involved in construction, such as owners, administrations, academia, designers, construction companies and materials suppliers. This has permitted a most valuable exchange of information away from contractual and political constraints, and has resulted in well balanced specifications and recommendations which are well adapted to use in practice. Many of these specifications and recommendations have later become part of national and international standards.

Over the last 20 years of my personal involvement in *fib* commissions and task groups I have noted that the number of members from practice (designers, suppliers and, in particular, construction companies) has gradually reduced. This is an unfortunate development which is often justified with the competitive environment in which these companies have to work: 'What does the company receive in return for the investment of time and expense of employees participating in *fib* work?'

In the short term, I find access to information, knowledge and contacts with

eminent experts from around the world most beneficial for participants in *fib* commissions and task groups. However, probably more important for the profession and concrete construction industry is the medium term effect of their work in *fib*. As mentioned above, many of the specifications and recommendations of *fib* later become parts of national and international specifications, codes and standards. The concrete construction industry, and in particular therefore contractors, have to assume their responsibility not only during actual construction but already in the early stages of preparation of specifications, codes and standards which will later regulate their work. This is a process which takes many years from the start to final implementation. Being absent in the early stages of the process often will result in no influence on the contents at all.

I strongly believe it is in the best interest of the entire concrete industry, and in particular construction companies, to actively assist the work of *fib* in shaping future generations of concrete construction specifications, codes and standards. Comprehensive, reliable and easy to use specifications, codes and standards will improve the confidence of owners to specify and build concrete structures and to enhance the image of concrete structures as the preferred choice of material for versatile, beautiful and durable structures. Shaping tomorrow's concrete construction specifications, codes and standards is also preparing tomorrow's business environment and concrete construction industry's ability to compete with other materials and technologies.