



**June 2020/edition #11**



### **Message from the CIB President Keith Hampson**

Dear Colleagues and Members,

Thank you to the more than 100 people who attended last week's Board meetings, joint sessions with Working Commission Coordinators, or General Assembly. The upside of our necessary decision to hold all the sessions as online meetings was that so many more people were able to participate than usual, and I am most grateful to Thorkild Ærø and his colleagues at Aalborg University in Copenhagen for hosting us and doing such a fine job with the technology.

I would not like to see all our meetings revert to this format, of course we lose the benefits of the relationship building and side conversations which can take place over 2-3 days of face-to-face time. But we showed that we can be efficient in dealing with important but relatively routine business to free up face-to-face time for strategy sessions and other value-adding activities which are not as effective when online - and let's not forget, there was a significant saving of cost and time for everyone. So, we are left with some important thinking to do, to contemplate 'hybrid' meetings in future where we can seek to gain the benefits of both approaches. I look forward to working with Péter Tóth in Budapest, Hungary, and our new Vice President Mark Hastak in Purdue USA, who have kindly offered to host our next two meetings. In partnership with a number of our Commissions, between now and October we will be holding webinars or supporting other conferences using similar technology, see for example the Salford University event on June 29<sup>th</sup> referred to [here](#), so I think we will find the standard for such meetings moving forward at a pace.

In the rest of this newsletter you will find reports on all the key sessions last week, including the joint sessions with Coordinators to improve communication and collaboration between Commissions and the Board, the new Membership & Marketing strategy, and ideas for developing more 'Student Chapters' as early career researcher or young professional groups around the world. The tone of all these sessions was overwhelmingly positive, enthusiastic, and supportive, and I hope we can work together to do justice to the energy and commitment that was shown by so many. Here's to an exciting second half of the year!

## From Don Ward, CIB CEO



### New Membership & Marketing Strategy

One of the key papers discussed and approved at the Copenhagen Board meeting last week was a new membership and marketing strategy developed by Ron Wakefield, as Chair of the Membership and Communications Committee, and myself.

Our starting position is that our members pay an annual subscription, govern our activities, provide our resource engine in terms of unpaid input to working commissions, board etc, and in return you expect benefit and value from this participation. We recognise that members add value in a number of ways including intellectual input and effort to develop products and services, most notably the outputs of the Working Commissions; access to data for research; active governance; and brand value, credibility and influence with external stakeholders.

A strong CIB requires a strong membership, recent years have seen a decline and we need to turn this around. During the formulation of this strategy, the effects of the global Covid-19 pandemic led to serious revisions, and to focus on the retention of existing members by improving our membership proposition and its communication and trialling some new services. The target that we originally had in mind for growth has been reduced, not due to a lack of ambition but reflecting the view that our members and prospects face challenging times ahead. Our strategy focuses on the next 12 months, with retention as the priority, with the aim to move to a second phase of recruitment and hopefully growth.

The 2020 members' survey informed the new strategy, thank you to all who responded, the results are reported below but it is worth noting the extra comments made at the end. I hope you can see where these have been addressed in the strategy to help us improve or add to our marketing messages.

#### Extra comments in the members survey April 2020

- Importance of publishing, in indexed/refereed journals (6 mentions)
- Rationalise commissions, new themes/'challenge-led not discipline-led' (5)
- Better engagement with Student Chapters
- More activities, more opportunities to engage
- Too many members with the "wrong motivation"
- Value of network/accessing ideas also relationships (6)
- Value in conferences – but now need to rethink (3)
- Improve website and communications (3)
- Competition from other organisations and structures, CIB differentiation (4)
- Fee too high/value too low (6)
- Focus on a supporting/ facilitating role
- Opportunity for a lobbying function
- Help access research funding
- Increase CIB profile
- Engage industry not just academics

In the next year we will:

1. **Improve communication** of benefits and value 'internally', starting with a new improved CIB website.

2. **Focus on retention**, with customer relationship management and engagement with each existing member, particularly Full & Associate Members.
3. **Trial new services** say 2-3 and assess impact and value for our members.
4. **Limited new recruitment**, targeting organisations who existing members feel will respond to the current membership proposition.

**External PR** will also play a part in 2021 to improve the profile of the organisation, its work and benefits and value for members 'externally', which will support both continued retention and a planned recruitment campaign. But let us address priorities 1)-4) first and then we will have some good success stories to promote.

The Programme Committee working with our Commissions and the 'Student Chapters Committee' (possibly to be renamed) both have important roles to play in developing the new added-value services to be trialled, and we will prioritise this work over the summer so that the trials are well underway by the time of the next Board Meeting in October. I look forward to working with you all on this.

We welcome feedback on these and any other aspect of this strategy at any time, and any comments should be [addressed to me](#) in the first instance, I can then discuss with the Membership and Communications Committee.

## From Michael Behm, Programme Director



### CIB Coordinators and Board Session

Thirty CIB Co-ordinators attended virtual meetings with the CIB Board on June 3 and 4. The overarching aim was to set in motion better communications and collaboration between CIB's Working Commission Co-ordinators and the CIB Board. This collaboration is not a one-off activity but seen by all as the start of an ongoing process to improve the value added for Working Commissions and Members.

The first session focused on brainstorming and discussing ideas. Co-ordinator meetings on May 11 and 12 guided the discussion. The implications of the post pandemic / covid19 world on Commission research activity was a topic frequently discussed and woven into many topics brought forward. Six major ideas came to the forefront. On Day 2, after reflection and group emailing on Day 1 meetings, more discussion ensued; eventually meeting attendees were asked to choose three as priorities from the list of six. Developing outcomes, Key Performance Indicators and measures of success were viewed as a need across all the ideas.

The ranked order of priority was:

1. Initiate a programme of activities focused on debating and producing a thought leadership report on the implications for the post covid / pandemic world in: 1) Built environment industry sector; 2) Commissions' research/innovation agenda; 3) CIB members' businesses; and 4) CIB's priorities and working methods.
2. Establish a more diverse CIB Publishing strategy and options for open access indexed publishing of CIB proceedings (this is in process).
3. Initiate new methods of achieving cross-commission collaboration/integration and involving other research disciplines, e.g. medicine. Review the CIB's 3 priority themes: Sustainable construction; 2) Integrated design and delivery systems; and 3) Resilient urbanization.
4. Initiate mechanisms for enhanced communications internally – YouTube channel, wikis

5. Create suite of programmes focusing on early career researcher and young professional value, and better research matchmaking across the world – workshops, short courses, funding opportunities, etc.
6. Create a 'relaunch' of our social media, branding, and communication activity, starting with website overhaul in the summer.

Continued collaborations will be viewed as successful as will the pursuit of funding mechanisms for Commission Programmes. Interested members should contact their [Commission Co-ordinator](#).

### **Student Chapter Board Discussions**

"Let's embrace early career researchers and young professionals!" That was the theme that embodied discussions amongst Co-ordinators & Board Members.

CIB President Keith Hampson affirmed his commitment and vision seeking novel ideas and new members to reinvigorate CIB research and students as a foundation for that vibrant research. Growing and enhancing student value amongst CIB member Universities remains a core value and is seen as a foundation for the future of CIB research.

The Board expanded its vision to include early careers scholars, such as post-doctoral researchers and newly minted faculty, and young professionals in industry and practice. Board members recommended renaming the Student Chapter Committee to Early Career Researcher Committee embracing this new philosophy. Professor Albert Chan, Hong Kong Polytechnic University, and Professor Srinath Perera, Western Sydney University, spearhead this effort.

### **CIB – Coming Together/Apart in Copenhagen**



In the beginning of June, Aalborg University had the pleasure of hosting several successful CIB meetings: the general assembly for all members, joint meetings of the CIB Board with CIB Working Commission Coordinators, and a board meeting over two sessions.

The Copenhagen meetings were meant to be conducted physically, and we were looking forward to seeing all participants at our lovely campus by the harbor side in the city center. To the planned mini seminar: a hackathon with the construction industry, our researchers and students battling in innovation and sustainability. To dinners and drinks on warm summer nights here in lovely June.

Unfortunately, in March, the COVID-19 situation forced us to cancel the planned activities and replace parts of the programme to be hosted online. The CIB Officers, Secretariat and the University worked hard to facilitate this – especially to make it work with all the different time zones. Tired of not being able to meet physically and worried about whether we could do it effectively online, our conclusion after the meetings was clear: the online meetings were a success.

We had no breakdowns and only very few reports about invited people having difficulties logging on to zoom, missing sound or video. Most attendees shared high quality video pictures and sound. The form was a bit formal in the online version, however, we had time for laughs, personal greetings, and chats.

CIB were together but apart, and in an efficient and constitutive way. Conclusive proof that CIB can surely benefit from the positive experience of holding meetings online. One scenario could be more frequent meetings – efficient, with more participation and

engagement. Fewer physical meetings - but more appreciated. Indeed, a more cost effective and climate-friendly practice and a growing necessity for the construction sector as well as CIB members. On that note, I am looking forward to seeing you all online and physically again – the latter perhaps here in Copenhagen?

**Thorkild Ærø**

**Vice Dean at the Faculty of Engineering and Science at Aalborg University  
CIB Board Member**

## **Membership Survey Report**

We would like to thank the 146 people who responded to our membership survey in April. Please find [attached](#) a copy of a short report on the findings, this has provided the foundation for a new Membership and Marketing Strategy to be considered by the Board at its meeting in June. We will also feed in the results to the ongoing work of the Programme Committee with the Working Commissions and the Student Chapters Committee, as the survey reinforced the value placed by members on both activities.

With thanks once again, please feel free to direct any further comments to [Don Ward](#), Ron Wakefield as chair of the Membership & Marketing Committee, or indeed any other Board member if you prefer.



*For further information on this newsletter or any other aspect of CIB's work, please contact Debbie Gray, Membership & Marketing Manager, at [debbie.gray@cibworld.org](mailto:debbie.gray@cibworld.org) or +1 (613) 727 1481 x100.*