RICS – global standards, the interface

by Robert P. Mahoney, RICS

Abstract

International standards are the keystone to the success of the surveying profession both nationally and internationally. RICS has recognised the importance of internationally agreed standards to client and investor confidence: how they create a framework for professionalism and a platform for the future growth of our constantly evolving profession. The creation of standards in ethics, valuation and measurement are ongoing, but it is the process of collaboration with national professional bodies such as SAGI and international bodies such as Fédération Internationale des Géomètres (FIG), UN Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) and UN Habitat that truly give them integrity and strength.

This is the interface between our profession and our present and future client base.

The presentation will outline the structure of RICS, a little of its long history (founded in 1867) and the background of the speaker Rob Mahoney, a GIS specialist and land surveyor by training, currently serving as RICS Honorary Secretary. This presentation will seek to outline the holistic approach to the surveying profession encompassed by RICS in areas of practice such as planning, minerals, valuation, geomatics, rural land management, construction and many more. Rob will speak of the unique selling point (USP) of the RICS qualification as an international passport of excellence underlined by consistent standards and the importance of working in collaboration with, and maintaining the independence of national professional bodies. RICS is recognised across the globe and has a long history in Africa; this global network of members from China to Brazil can help to influence important policymakers and decision makers at regional, national and international levels.

Rob will also outline how RICS produces an extensive portfolio of best practice guidance, leading edge research, online training, influential policy, and communications. Geomatics has traditionally, certainly in the last few decades, been heavily influenced by emerging technologies and our adept use of these within a surveying and mapping context. Geographic information systems (GIS), laser scanning, global navigation satellite systems (GNSS) and now building information modelling (BIM), have all been assimilated but this presentation will also explore how those practicing geomatics and land surveyors need to reacquaint themselves with softer skill sets such as mediation, acting as an expert witness, conflict resolution and arbitration. Rob will also outline how chartered land surveyors have retrained in these areas and how they work closely with the legal profession by bringing, not only their technical surveying and mapping skills, but also their mediation skills to bear on often difficult situations. RICS members are finding this an increasingly important area of expansion and fee earning.

The potential for development in Africa is immense not only within the borders of South Africa but also with southern Africa as a whole. Vast natural resources and the resulting infrastructural needs will result in unlimited opportunities for professional surveyors. Land is a limited asset and must be managed appropriately for the benefit of the nation and future generations. Professional land surveyors have unique skill sets and it is by harnessing these in a more collaborative and symbiotic spirit that we can capture our future.

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