

Climate Change? It's all about Geomatics!



A close study of the consequences of climate change reveals opportunities for Geomatics, argues Chris Preston, chair of RICS Geomatics Professional Group.

One of the fantastic things about our profession is the vast array of varying areas our work can take us. The FIG has recently published an article entitled "Climate change and the role of surveyors." I have to say that I started to read this and thought, is this really relevant to us? But I was surprised to find that it grabbed my attention. We all cannot have failed to notice the numbers of natural disasters in the form of droughts, floods, storms and hurricanes (cyclones and typhoons) that afflict low lying and coastal settlements. Extreme weather can hit any part of the world but the effects are more severe in least developed countries and it creates "climate refugees."

Surveyors can play an important part in establishing, quantifying and managing climate change. Our core skills of geoinformatics, land management and development, building, land law, real estate and business administration as well as social competence are required. Other aspects include the use of geo-information for energy related issues. Which areas are suitable for geothermal energy, wind power, which roofs are suitable for the production of solar energy? How can networks be optimised for the transport of energy? 3D city models enable simulation of noise and emissions or changes in urban microclimates. 3D landscape models enable the prediction of areas and buildings that would be affected by flooding allowing supporting measures to be initiated. Surveyors should be involved in disaster risk management but little evidence of our involvement seems to filter back to our shores apart from via the great work of the MapAction charity. Perhaps our international colleagues can address that by writing articles for GW?

Indian Opportunities

RICS Modus' November feature on India made for some interesting reading. Apparently the country needs 5 million new workers in real estate every year but only a million people with the required knowledge are entering the market. India apparently possesses many professionals trained in civil engineering or architecture but they do not have the vocational training and learn on the job. One of the hurdles to doing business in India is that such people are good technically but have to be taught commercial and financial skills. Conventional engineering people working in industry do not have management skills and often those working in the technical domain do not have the requisite technical skills. "Techno-managerial skills" are needed. What about Geomatics? Do our courses cover these so called "techno-managerial skills?" If they do not are we equipping our future business leaders properly?

Identifying Flying Objects

I really hope that we can come to some sensible conclusion about our term to use for drones. Everyone knows what is meant by this term but we persist in using the various UAV, UAS, RPAS, SUA (UK Civil Aviation Authority favoured). Surely the important thing is that a common understanding is reached. Most are now aware of the restrictions to drone use but it seems that in some places the local inhabitants take it upon themselves to make them unwelcome. A project in a mountainous area of Ecuador suffered from the offending drone being attacked by hawks who felt the drone was a competitor.

As ever, please get in touch on items in this column or any others.

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