

ETHICS

Paper for General Assembly of FIG Congress Istanbul, May 2018

**Gary Strong, United Kingdom
Chair Commission 1 WG 1.1**

Key words: Standards, risk management, professional practice, International Ethical Standards (IES), trust, client and public protection, implementation, regulation.

INTRODUCTION

In 2014 FIG Commission 1 established an international Working Group on Ethics, to review the existing FIG Ethical Principles and also to participate in the growing International Ethics Standards (IES) Coalition which had been established in November 2014. Gary Strong was appointed by the Council to represent FIG in this forum with Brian Coutts (Chair Commission 1) as his substitute.

In 1997, a paper was published by FIG, which established new Ethical principles for surveyors. It was re-published in French in 2001. For ease of reference these are reproduced at the end of this paper.

Statement of Ethical Principles and Model Code of Professional Conduct. FIG Policy Statement, 1998.
Exposé des principes déontologiques et modèle de code de conduite professionnelle 2001
<http://www.fig.net/resources/publications/figpub/pub17/figpub17.asp>

THE INTERNATIONAL ETHICAL STANDARDS COALITION

The International Ethics Standards (IES) Coalition was established in 2014, and now has over 110 professional bodies around the world, who have come together through their Standard Setting Committee (SSC) of 19 experts from around the world, to establish and publish 10 high level principles of ethics for all professionals working in the land, property and construction sectors.
<https://ies-coalition.org/>

Many member associations of FIG are also members of the IES Coalition, see Appendix 3.

The Coalition SSC has worked collaboratively with the support of the United Nations and The World Bank, to develop these high level principles, and each member of the Coalition agrees to implement them in their own jurisdiction. There has been a lot of support and interest in the work of the Coalition, and organisations who are not members of the Coalition because of the nature of their business, can opt to be Supporters. There are currently 30+ supporters.

COMMISSION 1 PROGRESS AND PLAN

Commission 1 delivered a paper in 2015 which explored the opportunities and very real benefits that could be afforded not only to professional surveyors working in land, property and construction but also to clients, the public and society more generally, by the setting, promoting and monitoring

of international standards on ethics. Progress with the development of the International Ethical Standards have been reported to each FIG Working Week General Assembly since 2015 in the Commission Reports and have been the topic of several papers and discussions in each of the Working Week Technical Sessions.

Trust between businesses and society is still at a low point and there is a real danger that focusing on targets and regulations can drive dysfunctional and unethical behaviour. Ethical behaviour must be constantly monitored, codes updated, and above all, be relevant. Commission 1 believes the 1997 principles are due to be updated. To remain relevant, it is important that FIG is seen to have adopted the latest international standards and not be relying on those published 21 years ago. The International Ethics Standards are reproduced below.

FIG adopting a code of ethics on its own is potentially of limited use and Commission 1 Working Group recognise this, and so intends taking the subject further focusing on the following issues:

- Is just having ethics standards enough? – do you produce standards and leave it at that?
Will that really get buy in?
What does adoption look like and what are the risks to an organisations or country's reputation if people just pay lip service?
- The challenges the FIG member associations face in coming to terms with the varying global definitions of what is ethical, how the various members will be challenged to implement IES with their own guidance
- How FIG Commission 1 intend to provide guidance across our many diverse types of members working in different fields of surveying
- How FIG intend to get the message across to governments, the public and other stakeholders who use members across the world and how we are looking to embed ethics standards into our constituent professional bodies membership requirements, training and (critically) regulation.

Ethical behaviours by professional surveyors is critical to both business, consumers and society in general but more needs to be done to continue trying to change what for many is 'normal business practice'. FIG Commission 1 proposes to build on the growing interest generated in KL in 2014, Sofia in 2015, New Zealand in 2016, Helsinki in 2017, and the International Ethics Standards Coalition of over 110 professional bodies globally who have now come together on this topic, to hold a workshop in Istanbul to hear updates from countries and their representatives about real life examples of ethical issues they face as surveyors in their geographies. Please register for the event and come prepared to discuss your case examples.

This insight will help the FIG Commission 1 Working Group shape the new guidance which will be a major feature of the workplan for 2018-22 assuming FIG adopt IES.

IES ETHICAL PRINCIPLES

In addition to the ethical principles below, practitioners are expected to observe all appropriate practice standards for their discipline. Practitioners are also expected to observe all laws and statutes applicable to their discipline in the jurisdictions where they practice, as well as all applicable international laws.

The ethical principles below are listed in alphabetical order and are all of equal importance.

1. **Confidentiality:** Practitioners shall not disclose any confidential or proprietary information without prior permission, unless such disclosure is required by applicable laws or regulations.

2. **Disclosure:** Practitioners shall make all appropriate disclosures before and during the performance of a service. If, after disclosure, a conflict cannot be removed or mitigated, the practitioner shall withdraw from the matter or obtain written consent of the parties affected to continue.
3. **Fiduciary Responsibility:** Practitioners shall be honest, transparent and trustworthy in all their financial dealings.
4. **High Standard of Service:** Practitioners shall only provide services for which they are competent and qualified and shall ensure that any employees or associates assisting with the provision of services have the necessary competence to undertake those services.
5. **Integrity:** Practitioners shall act with honesty and fairness in all their dealings, and shall not mislead or attempt to mislead. They shall base their advice on valid evidence.
6. **Respect:** Practitioners shall provide services that honor client, third party and stakeholder interests in the context of applicable rules of law and social and environmental concerns.
7. **Responsibility:** Practitioners owe a duty of care to their clients and due consideration to the rights and interests of third parties and stakeholders.
8. **Transparency:** Practitioners shall not misinform over the products or terms of service to be provided, and shall present relevant documentary or other material in plain and intelligible language.
9. **Trust:** Practitioners shall be truthful in their professional communications and recognize that their professional conduct bears upon the maintenance of public trust and confidence in the real estate professions.
10. **Verification:** Practitioners shall continually evaluate the services they provide to ensure they are consistent with the spirit and evolution of ethical principles and practice standards.

CONCLUSION

Commission 1 recommends to the General Assembly that FIG rescinds the “FIG Ethical Principles” (that is, retaining the FIG Model Code of Professional Conduct”) and adopts the International Ethics Standards (IES) given the widespread support by the United Nations, The World Bank, and over 110 other professional bodies in land, property & construction globally.

Gary Strong
UK RICS - Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors
Chair – FIG Commission 1 Ethics Working Group

APPENDIX 1

FIG Ethical Principles

Integrity

Surveyors

- maintain the highest standards of honesty and integrity towards those with whom they come into contact, either directly or indirectly; and
- accurately and conscientiously measure, record and interpret all data and offer impartial advice based thereon.

Independence

Surveyors

- diligently and faithfully execute their role according to the law; and
- maintain their objectivity and give their clients and employers unbiased advice, without prejudice or favour either towards or against other organisations or persons.

Care and competence

Surveyors

- maintain their knowledge and skills, keep abreast of developments in their fields of practice and apply their expertise for the benefit of society;
- only take on work that they reasonably believe they will be able to carry out in a professional manner; and
- exercise care in the performance of their duties.

Duty

Surveyors

- maintain confidentiality about the affairs of their current and former clients and employers unless required by law to make disclosures;
- avoid conflicts of interest;
- take environmental concerns into account in their operations and activities;
- recognise the interests of the public when providing services to their clients or employers; and
- conduct their work to the best of their ability, giving due consideration to the rights of all parties.

The Public Interest

1. The first duty of surveyors is normally to their clients or employers but as professionals they also have a duty to the public. Surveyors are fact finders and providers of opinions and advice. It is important that they are diligent, competent, impartial and of unquestionable integrity in ensuring that the information they provide is true and complete and that the opinions and advice that they give are of the highest quality.
2. The work of surveyors has cumulative and long-term effects on future generations. Many of the functions of surveyors, even those performed for private clients, are by their nature functions that have a lasting impact on society. Most information becomes public information at some point in time and may be used for purposes other than those for which it was initially intended. The information recorded by early surveyors and explorers has, for example, subsequently been used for the expansion of geographical knowledge and for land development. Similarly, land management systems designed for today create an environment in which future generations will live, work and play. The principles of sustainable development require surveyors to work as much for the future as for the present.
3. Clients, employers and the public must be confident that surveyors have exercised objectivity in arriving at their professional opinions. These obligations may sometimes appear to be in conflict with the obligations that surveyors owe to their clients, their employers and their peers. Surveyors have a duty to the truth, even when it may not be in the best interest of their clients or employers.
4. All surveyors, whether they be private practitioners, employees in the private sector, public servants or educators, should discharge their professional duties and adhere to ethical principles in accordance with the following model code of professional conduct.

FIG Model Code of Professional Conduct

FIG recommends the following code of conduct as the minimum to be expected of all professional surveyors.

1. In general, surveyors

- exercise unbiased independent professional judgement;
- act competently and do not accept assignments that are outside the scope of their professional competence;
- advance their knowledge and skills by participating in relevant programmes of continuing professional development;
- ensure that they understand the fundamental principles involved when working in new areas of expertise, conducting thorough research and consulting with other experts as appropriate; and
- do not accept assignments that are beyond their resources to complete in a reasonable time and in a professional manner.

2. As employers, surveyors:

- assume responsibility for all work carried out by their professional and non-professional staff;
- assist their employees to achieve their optimum levels of technical or professional advancement;
- ensure that their employees have proper working conditions and equitable remuneration; and
- cultivate in their employees integrity and an understanding of the professional obligations of surveyors to society.

3. When dealing with clients, surveyors:

- avoid any appearance of professional impropriety;
- disclose any potential conflicts of interest, affiliations or prior involvement that could affect the quality of service to be provided;
- avoid associating with any persons or enterprises of doubtful character;
- do not receive remuneration for one project from multiple sources without the knowledge of the parties involved;
- preserve the confidences and regard as privileged all information about their clients' affairs; and
- maintain confidentiality during as well as after the completion of their service.

4. When providing professional services, surveyors:

- seek remuneration commensurate with the technical complexity, level of responsibility and liability for the services rendered;
- make no fraudulent charges for services rendered;
- provide details on the determination of remuneration at the request of their clients; and
- do not sign certificates, reports or plans unless these were prepared and completed under their personal supervision.

5. As members of a professional association, surveyors:

- do not enter into arrangements that would enable unqualified persons to practise as if they were professionally qualified;
- report any unauthorised practice to the governing body of the profession;
- refuse to advance the application for professional status of any person known to be unqualified by education, experience or character; and
- promote the surveying profession to clients and the public.

6. As business practitioners, surveyors:

- do not make false or misleading statements in advertising or other marketing media;
- do not, either directly or indirectly, act to undermine the reputation or business prospects of other surveyors;
- do not supplant other surveyors under agreement with their clients; and
- do not establish branch offices that purport to be under the direction and management of a responsible professional surveyor unless this is actually the case.

7. As resource managers, surveyors:

- approach environmental concerns with perception, diligence and integrity;
- develop and maintain a reasonable level of understanding of environmental issues and the principles of sustainable development;
- bring any matter of concern relating to the physical environment and sustainable development to the attention of their clients or employers;
- employ the expertise of others when their knowledge and ability are inadequate for addressing specific environmental issues;
- include the costs of environmental protection and remediation among the essential factors used for project evaluation;
- ensure that environmental assessment, planning and management are integrated into projects that are likely to impact on the environment; and

encourage additional environmental protection when the benefits to society justify the costs.

APPENDIX 2

International Ethics Standards (IES)



International Ethics Standards (final).pdf

[click on the icon above to launch the pdf](#)

APPENDIX 3

IES members

The latest list of professional bodies and non-governmental organisations that have signed up to develop and implement the International Ethics Standards:

A

- [Australian Property Institute \(API\)](#)
- [ABRI Foundation](#)
- [American Society of Appraisers \(ASA\)](#)
- [American Society of Farm Managers and Rural Appraisers \(ASFMRA\)](#)
- [Appraisal Foundation \(TAF\)](#)
- [Arab Union of Surveyors](#)
- [Asian association for Investors in Non-listed Real Estate Vehicles \(ANREV\)](#)
- [Asia-Pacific Real Estate Association \(APREA\)](#)
- [Asian Real Estate Association of America \(AREAA\)](#)
- [La Asociacion Espanola de Analisis de Valor \(AEV\)](#)
- [Asociacion Espanola de Geometras Expertos \(AEGEX\)](#)
- [Asociacion Profesional de Sociedades de Valoracion \(ATASA\)](#)
- [Association for the Advancement of Cost Engineering \(AACEi\)](#)
- [Association of Estonian Surveyors](#)
- [Association of International Property Professionals \(AIPP\)](#)
- [Association of Residential Managing Agents \(ARMA\)](#)
- [Assoimmobiliare](#)
- [Australian Institute of Quantity Surveyors \(AIQS\)](#)
- [Associazione Società di Valutazioni Immobiliari per le Banche \(ASSOVIB\)](#)

B

- [Botswana Surveying and Mapping Association \(BSMA\)](#)
- [British Czech Chamber of Commerce](#)
- [British Polish Chamber of Commerce](#)
- [Bulgarian Chamber of Professional Valuers \(KPO\)](#)

C

- [Câmara Brasileira da Indústria da Construção \(CBIC\)](#)
- [Canadian Institute of Chartered Business Valuators \(CICBV\)](#)
- [CGATE](#)
- [Chartered Association of Building Engineers. \(CABE\)](#)
- [Chartered Institute of Architectural Technologists \(CIAT\)](#)
- [Chartered Institute of Building \(CIOB\)](#)
- [Chartered institute of Housing \(CIH\)](#)
- [Chartered Institution of Civil Engineering Surveyors \(ICES\)](#)
- [Chartered Institute of Procurement & Supply \(CIPS\)](#)
- [Chartered Institution of Water and Environmental Management \(CIWEM\)](#)
- [China Electricity Council](#)
- [China Institute of Real Estate Appraisers and Agents \(CIREA\)](#)

- [China Real Estate Valuers Association \(CREVA\)](#)
- [Colegio Oficial de Ingeniería Geomática y Topográfica \(COIGT\)](#)
- [CORFAC International](#)
- [Commonwealth Association of Surveying and Land Economy \(CASLE\)](#)
- [Council of European Geodetic Surveyors \(CLGE\)](#)
- [Counselors of Real Estate \(CRE\)](#)

D

- [Dubai Real Estate Institute \(DREI\)](#)

E

- [Engineers Without Borders](#)
- [ETEK, the Cyprus Scientific and Technical Chamber](#)
- [European Association for Investors in Non-Listed Real Estate Vehicles \(INREV\)](#)

F

- [Federação Nacional dos Corretores de Imóveis \(FENACI\)](#)
- [Fédération Nationale de l'Immobilier \(FNAIM\)](#)
- [French- Polish Chamber of Commerce](#)

G

- [Ghana Institute of Construction \(GIOC\)](#)
- [Ghana Institute of Planners \(GhIP\)](#)
- [Ghana Institution of Surveyors – GhIS](#)
- [Ghana Real Estate Professionals Association \(GREPA\)](#)
- [Green Building Council – Croatia](#)
- [Green Building Council – Poland](#)
- [Green Building Council – Romania](#)

H

- [Hellenic Association of Realtors \(HAR\)](#)
- [Hong Kong Association of Property Management Companies \(HKAPMC\)](#)
- [Hong Kong Institute of Surveyors \(HKIS\)](#)
- [HypZert](#)

I

- [International Facility Management Association – International \(IFMA\)](#)
- [IFMA – Poland](#)
- [Indian Institute of Quantity Surveyors \(IIQS\)](#)
- [Indonesian Society of Appraisers \(MAPPI\)](#)
- [Institute for Corporate Governance in the German Real Estate Industry](#)
- [Institute of Estate Agents, Singapore \(IEA\)](#)
- [Institute of Philippines Real Estate Appraisers \(IPREA\)](#)
- [Institute of Quantity Surveyors Indonesia \(IQSI\)](#)
- [Institute of Real Estate Management \(IREM\)](#)
- [Institute of Residential Property Management \(IRPM\)](#)

- [Institution of Civil Engineers \(ICE\)](#)
- [Institution of Structural Engineers \(IStructE\)](#)
- [Institution of Surveyors of Uganda](#)
- [Institution of Surveyors of Kenya \(ISK\)](#)
- [International Consortium of Real Estate Associations \(ICREA\)](#)
- [International Cost Engineering Council \(ICES\)](#)
- [International Housing Coalition](#)
- [International Real Estate Federation \(FIABCI\)](#)
- [International Society of City and Regional Planners \(ISOCARP\)](#)
- [International Right of Way Association \(IRWA\)](#)
- [International Valuation Standards Council \(IVSC\)](#)

J

- [Japan Association of Real Estate Counselors \(JAREC\)](#)
- [Japanese Society of Independent Appraisers \(JASIA\)](#)

L

- [Landscape Institute \(LI\)](#)
- [Lonja De Propriedad De Bogota](#)

M

- [Middle East Council of Shopping Centres. \(MECSC\)](#)

N

- [National Association of Realtors India \(NAR India\)](#)
- [National Association of Valuers of Serbia \(NAVS\)](#)
- [National Order of Surveyors of Senegal \(ONGRES\)](#)
- [National Real Estate Association of Bulgaria](#)
- [National Society of Professional Surveyors \(NSPS\)](#)
- [New Zealand Institute of Building Surveyors \(NZIBS\)](#)
- [New Zealand Institute of Quantity Surveyors \(NZIQS\)](#)
- [Nigerian Institution of Estate Surveyors and Valuers \(NIESV\)](#)
- [Nigerian Institute of Quantity Surveyors \(NIQS\)](#)
- [Nigerian Institution of Surveyors \(NIS\)](#)

P

- [Philippine Association of Realty Appraisers](#)
- [Philippine Institute of Certified Quantity Surveyors \(PICQS\)](#)
- [Property Institute of New Zealand \(PINZ\)](#)
- [Proprogressio](#)

R

- [Real Estate Institute of Australia \(REIA\)](#)
- [Real Estate Insitute of Botswana](#)
- [Real Estate Institute of Victoria \(REIV\)](#)
- [Real Estate Syndicate of Lebanon](#)

- [Real Property Association of Canada \(REALpac\)](#)
- [Royal Architectural Institute of Canada \(RAIC\)](#)
- [Royal Institute of British Architects \(RIBA\)](#)
- [Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors \(RICS\)](#)
- [Royal Institution of Surveyors, Malaysia \(RISM\)](#)
- [Royal Town Planning Institute \(RTPI\)](#)
- [Russian Society of Appraisers](#)

S

- [SECOVI-SP](#)
- [Singapore Institute of Building Limited \(SIBL\)](#)
- [Society of Chartered Surveyors Ireland \(SCSI\)](#)
- [Society of Engineers \(UAE\)](#)
- [Society of Property Researchers \(SPR\)](#)
- [South African Geomatics Institute \(SAGI\)](#)
- [South African Property Owners Association \(SAPOA\)](#)

T

U

- [Union of Construction Economists \(UNTEC\)](#)
- [Union Mediterranean des Geometres \(UMG\)](#)

Z

- [Zentraler Immobilien Ausschuss \(ZIA\)](#)