

Shaping the Strategic Direction of the Surveying Profession in Sri Lanka

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SUMMARY

Surveying as a career has been revitalized over the last two decades with the boom of the construction industry and requirements of the rapid technologies in mapping in the developing countries. The profession has reacted to these increasing demands with the emergence of new career trajectories to enable the profession be more specific in offering extended services. However, the respective local professional institution and authorities have not adapted to these changes and absorbed these practitioners in a satisfactory level. In the meantime, due to the increasing demand, many academically non-qualified people have entered the market along with other professionals and thereby have encroached the boundaries of the surveying career. No studies have been undertaken to determine the necessary measures that the surveying sector should take to meet these challenges. This study investigated the emerging trends within the land surveying profession, its relevance and future directions in Sri Lanka.

This study employed a two-stage, qualitative and quantitative research design. The first stage employs in-depth interviews with selected surveyors, educators, business professionals and government bodies followed by an online survey of all surveyors and selected educators and business professionals. Altogether, 143 responses were collected. Here, four career paths were identified including Geomatics, Geoinformatics, Hydrography, and Construction as future trajectories in the profession. To become a professional surveyor, one should have a general understanding of all of the above paths. In future, more and more sophisticated measurement techniques such as laser scanners, drone surveys, and advanced GNSS will gradually overtake conventional survey techniques. Currently opportunities for continuing professional development (CPD) courses are limited and it is suggested to organize such events more frequently with the collaboration of the academic institutions. The professional institution, practitioners and academia must work collaboratively and closely towards a common goal to uplift the profession. With this

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study, it is shown that academics should be equally recognized and a separate path 'Academic Route' should be created in the professional association. The respective professional associations should work together and clearly lay down each other's professional boundaries to minimize professional encroachment ,and; the important thing is not to overlap each other's professional services and due respect must be given. In addition, relevant acts and legislation must be revised where necessary, to suite the modern world. Whenever, a trainee enters the profession, they should be properly guided and mentored, until they achieve professional status. A list of qualified and suitable mentors and surveying agencies must be identified and published by the respective institution. In addition, clear definitions and benchmarks for the new competencies and competency levels for Srilankan practitioners considering these new and emerging global trends must be declared.

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