



SRI LANKAN CONSULTING ENGINEER



Newsletter of the Association of Consulting Engineers, Sri Lanka
(Founded in 1980, Incorporated by Act No. 42 of 2003)

A Member Association of
the international Federation
of Consulting Engineers

December 2004

Issue 12

KEEP IN TOUCH WITH THE ASSOCIATION OF CONSULTING ENGINEERS, SRI LANKA

COUNCIL MEETINGS & ACTIVITIES

The council for the year 2003/04 has met 13 times till the end of Nov'2004. The period from June'04 to Nov'04, has been most productive 5 months for ACESL.

We have been able to review the existing rules & develop the new rules and regulations in keeping with Incorporation Act. These Rules will be circulated early next month to all Members & Member Firms to further improvements and adopt at the Annual general Meeting in January 2005.

The council has revisited the ACESL's Professional Fee Structure prepared in 2002 and is planning a seminar to get views of a wider cross section. Adherence to the fee scales recommended in the document by the Member Firms when bidding for consulting assignments is debatable.

The Seminar on "Water Supply and Sanitation – Challenges and Opportunities" held at the Trans Asia Hotel on 24th September was a great success according to most of the participants.

This Seminar was wholly sponsored by the following member firms.

1. Engineering Consultants (Pvt) Ltd,

2. Ceywater Consultants Ltd, and

**3. Central Engineering Consultancy
Bureau,**

The seminar was inaugurated by Hon, Minister of Urban Development & Water Supply Hon. Dinesh Gunawardena. Key note address was made by Mr T. G. Perera Past President , ACESL & Council Member. Country Director, Asian Development Bank Mr. Alessandro Pio

and Chief Representative JBIC Mr. Shinya Ejima also delivered speeches.

There were altogether nine presentations from the most eminent & practicing in the disciplines integrated with water The presentations were followed by a lively discussion and question time and was summed up by Mr. T.P. Ranaweera, Council Member. This summing up would be presented in the next news letter due to lack of space in this issue. Vote of Thanks was delivered by Mr Upali Delpechitre, Hony Treasurer.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

The president Mr. W.M.S.C. Piyadasa attended the FIDIC Annual Conference 2004 in Copenhagen in Sept 2004.

The Council has planned to hold an open seminar to present Dr. Perera's paper on Kinowledge Infrastructure at the IESL Auditorium on the 17th Dec'2004. Please note to be present as this topic is gaining much recognition within the Consultancy profession.

FOREIGN DELEGATION

Mr. Richard Kell , FIDIC President and Mr. Kok kin Min, Chairman ASPAC during their short visit to Colombo met the President and 5 Council Members of ACESL at Taj Samudra on 14th. Oct'2004. Among matters discussed were current challenges, FIDIC activities and how best these relate to ACESL. Mr Richard Kell made a brief presentation on above and FIDIC's Business Integrity System.

MEMBERSHIP

Present Membership of the Association stands as follows :

Members - 54

Member Firms- 14

NB: It is regrettable to notify that few Members and Member Firms have not paid up their subscriptions for the year 2004. They are kindly requested to make their outstanding payments early. Final reminder will be sent out shortly.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Notice of the AGM of ACESL has been sent to all the Members and Member Firms. The date has been fixed for the 21st Jan'2005 and will be held as usual at the IESL Committee Room commencing at 5.15PM.

The Council has decided to invite all present at the AGM for a Fellowship and Dinner immediately after at the IESL Members Lounge. Your Presence is highly appreciated. Please note the date in your new Years Diary. Don't Fail to Participate.

NEWS From FIDIC

FIDIC OBJECTIVES

The Strategic review Task Force of FIDIC proposing for reformulation and expanding FIDIC's objectives passed a motion supported by the Executive Committee at the Annual General assembly to amend the existing FIDIC's objectives.

The amended Objectives are as follows:

The objectives of the Federation are to :

Represent the Consulting engineering industry globally.

Enhance the image of consulting engineers.

Be the authority on issues relating to business practice.

Promote the development of a global and viable consulting engineering industry.

Promote Quality

Actively promote conformance to a code of ethics and to business integrity.

Promote commitment to sustainable development.

FIDIC has revised the annual subscription fees from 2005 as adopted at the Annual General assembly held in Copenhagen during Sept'2004. This motion moved by the EX-Co was accepted by 63 voting for and 15 against Sri Lanka noted against the motion.

As notified to you in the last News Letter, this is one reason we have to increase our subscription fees as from next year. Especially with the fast depreciating Rupee this is a heavy burden on our budget.

CCI NEWS

Chamber of Constriction Industry of Sri Lanka held the Annual Sessions on 9th and 10th August 2004 at Colombo Plaza -Grand Ballroom.

The Annual Session was inaugurated by the Prime Minister Hon. Mahinda Rajapakse and Minister of Trade, Commerce & Consumer Affaires Hon. Jeyaraj Fernandopullai was the guest of Honour.

President, Vice President and Hony. Secretary participated at the Annual Sessions.

TCDPAP News

Annual Conference of the Technical Consultancy Development Programme for Asia and the Pacific (TCDPAP) was held from 11th to 14th October 2004 at India Habitat Centre, New Delhi, India.

The Association was represented by Mr Bhatiya Senaratne Hony. Secretary and Dr. Chandana Perera of the University of Moratuwa.

The theme of the conference was "Development of Knowledge Infrastructure: Role of Consultants".

The country paper was presented by Dr. Chandana Perera.

The Role of Consulting Engineer in the Construction Industry

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The construction industry in Sri Lanka plays a vital role in the economic development of the country. It provides employment opportunities and significantly contributes to the gross national product (GNP). Further it aids capital formation by contributing to the fixed assets of the National Economy. The industry is also closely linked with other sectors of the economy such as production of building materials, fuel, transport and various other ancillary industries. Consulting engineers have been playing an important role in the control and the management of this industry particularly during the last two decades, which witnessed an unparalleled construction boom in the country's history.

Since independence in 1948 till about the late seventies the Sri Lankan economy was highly centralized and the bulk of the construction activities were handled by the government institutions such as the PWD (subsequently Building and Highways Departments) Irrigation Department and to a lesser degree by the Railways and Electricity Departments. Most of these projects were executed through open competitive tendering procedure and the construction was carried out by contractors both local and foreign. The investigation and designs were carried out by the departments themselves mostly through in-house designs. In those days very rarely private consultants were employed for public sector works.

Since 1978, particularly after the housing complexes boom, both the architects and consulting engineers were drawn into play a pivotal role in the construction industry as independent consultants. Investigation, pre-feasibility studies, designs, contract documentation and construction supervision fell within their areas of responsibility and the private contracting firms carried out the construction work. Compared to the architects, the consulting engineering profession was

somewhat slow to respond to the opportunities at the start since they were already employed in the government institutions and reluctant to change their career mid-course. However, as years passed, consulting engineering industry grew and at present there are several consulting engineering firms handling several projects both large and small.

Expertise can be said to be the core attribute of a consulting engineer. By his or her competence and specialized knowledge in the relevant field he or she is expected take an objective decision on engineering matters without any bias either personal or social. During construction period in adjudicating on contractual matters the consulting engineer invariably holds a quasi-judicial position. Further he also can play a role in minimizing disputes. Normally a consulting engineers opinion will be a pre-requisite before imitating action towards arbitration. When it comes to large and complex projects consulting engineering firms comprising of experts in different fields are engaged.

The construction boom that started in the later seventies in Sri Lanka particularly the housing developments would not have registered the phenomenal success has it not been for the role played by the consulting firms including both engineers and architects. The historic Mahaweli Project, which was completed in record short time would not have been possible if not for the role-played by the consulting engineers (both foreign and local).

Both the FIDIC and ICTAD contract documents clearly have recognized the role of the Independent Consulting Engineer and defined his role in administering the contract. While the role of the consulting engineer in the designs stage is to ensure economics and constructability, his role assumes a quasi judicial function during the construction contract administration.

During the last two decades or so, world over, the construction industry has undergone radical shift both in structure and contract formulation. Turnkey and Build Operate contracts are gradually seeping into the construction industry. Shortage of public funds institutional constraints and lack of

efficiency in the public sectors culminated in this transformation. In Sri Lanka too, this trend has begun and several such projects are on the drawing board. Private sector initiatives are needed to give the necessary boost to the growth of these types of contracts.

These changes are offering both a challenge and an opportunity to the consulting engineer. The traditional role of the consulting engineer will come in for a re-orientation since he will be called upon to be a partner rather than an independent consultant. It is the author's view in such project formulations and execution a good consulting engineer should be able to strike correct balance between his professionalism and the role he has to play as a team member in such ventures. In turnkey projects the tendency to cut corners is always there and therefore he has to effectively resist such commercial compulsions and put the project on an even keel. In the 'Build operate project the long term sustainability and operator-ability should be his main concern and also should work towards the correct economics between the capital and operational costs of the project.

The formation of the Association of Consulting Engineers (which has been incorporated now by the act of parliament) is a singular pointer to the emergence of the Consulting engineers' profession's as a vital lynch pin in the construction industry and its growth.

This Newsletter has been sponsored by :

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E- Mail addresses of Members

All members are kindly requested to furnish their E- Mail addresses and Fax numbers, so that important notices could be sent to members without delay.

Request for Articles

Members & Member firms are kindly requested to submit short articles (A4 size) for publication in the News Letter. The articles could be about projects in progress handled by the Firms, or matters relating to consulting industry.

Please send in your articles direct to
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