



## The Future of ISPRS



### Preview of ISPRS Strategic Plan

*By Lawrence W. Fritz, ISPRS President*

Registrants to the upcoming ISPRS XIXth Congress in Amsterdam will be presented with a document prepared by the ISPRS Council entitled the "ISPRS Strategic Plan - A Vision for the 21st Century." The plan evolved from strategic planning efforts led by the ISPRS Council to review the Mission, Activities, Goals and Objectives of the Society. In addition to refining and enhancing these pursuits, the Council set forth Actions and Responsibilities needed to achieve the goals and evaluated the resource requirements for implementation. The XIX<sup>th</sup> ISPRS General Assembly will put this Strategic Plan forth for discussion and approval. The following is a summary of essential points discussed in the document for consideration by Society membership.

The Council agreed that the mission of ISPRS should be "devoted to the development of international co-operation for the advancement of **knowledge, research, development and education in the photogrammetry and remote sensing and spatial information sciences, their integration and applications, to contribute to the well being of humanity and the sustainability of the environment.**" (Bold indicates new wording)

The Goals toward which the Society must aim to keep itself viable in the 21st Century collectively form the vision for ISPRS. They are:

- Encourage and Facilitate Research and Development
- Advance Knowledge by Scientific Network Creation
- Promote International Co-operation
- Pursue Inter-Disciplinary Integration
- Facilitate Education and Training
- Enhance and Promote Applications
- Develop Recognition of The Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing and Spatial Information Sciences (P&RS&SIS)

It is recognised that to achieve these Goals requires ISPRS:

- To charge ahead strongly to take full advantage of the potential of the Internet
- To work more with those involved in the international policy arena and user community
- To enhance the direction of its S&T activities through formation of an International Science Advisory Committee (ISAC)
- To tangibly improve its S&T value to the global science community
- To strengthen its relations with UN related organisations, sister societies, public user groups and consortia
- To identify issues and take equitable and sound advocacy stances in the interests of all sectors through formation of an International Policy Advisory Committee (IPAC)

- To increase involvement of Members by clarifying roles and responsibilities
- To create an 'ISPRS Foundation' to support grants, scientific efforts and projects, and to create and enhance links with the developing world
- To value enhance activities through interdisciplinary outreach and joint collaborations
- To increase public awareness and promote the P&RS&SIS
- To improve revenue to support this broader scope of operations

To be administered in a professional, yet congenial manner Several Actions have already been successfully launched or completed. The implementation of other actions are evolving as proper methods and means are being developed. One such effort nearing completion is creation of an inter-organisational matrix of ISPRS activities with those of other organisations which identifies common areas of interest. The matrix will serve as a basis for improving relationships across interdisciplinary boundaries. The Society is a very large organisation whose Membership now consists of 169 different organisations, and is growing. Clearly, the administrative burdens for managing the Society are ever increasing and the availability of voluntary labour is diminishing. To offset this and the broadened scope of the Society, without increasing Member organisation subscriptions, a surcharge will be sought from future ISPRS Congresses and Symposia. Other efforts have begun to seek benefactors and patrons that appreciate the benefits of the P&RS&SI sciences. To improve public recognition, it has been decided that "Information from Imagery" is most descriptive of the Society's activities. The Statutes and Bylaws have been thoroughly revised to set the path for the future. An elaboration and rationale for all of these and more points are included in the document and its appendices.

As a Society formed to foster international co-operation, ISPRS provides a public forum for the advancement and promotion of S&T achievements and challenges to be shared, debated and documented. At the same time, the Society provides a social opportunity for cultural differences to be shared and synergies to develop which cultivate lasting relationships for the benefit of all. The vision of ISPRS is to be 'the' international focal point for excellence in the photogrammetric, remote sensing and spatial information sciences. Its mission and activities all have altruistic roots and it flourishes on the voluntary efforts of its Members. The success of ISPRS is contingent on the collective efforts and dedication of its Members.

## Interview with TCPs

*Note of the editor-in-chief*

Just before the Congress it is important to discuss on the future of our organisation. For that reason we have included a preview of the strategic plan of ISPRS as formulated by the Council. I have asked the Technical Commission Presidents to react to some questions related the strategic plan.

Not all TCP's were in the position to give a reaction. In the following you find the reactions of:

Ian J. Dowman, Technical Commission II President

Lukman Aziz, Technical Commission VI President

*Do you foresee any changes required in focus/enlargement of the scientific and/or professional areas and the way in which these are defined?*

### Ian J. Dowman

The most significant movement during the past four years has been the continued pace of change. I believe that the trends which we saw in Vienna have continued and that digital photogrammetry is now established to the extent that it is estimated that 25% of photogrammetric plotters in use worldwide are digital. Along side this is the strengthening links between all of the components of spatial information science: photogrammetry, remote sensing, positioning systems, geodesy and GIS. This theme of integration is also seen in the increase in the number of sensors used and the moves towards data fusion. Within Commission II we see the main areas of development within the next four years as the development of real time technologies, very much as an intercommission activity; the greater use of SAR data; further development of digital workstations, particularly on conjunction with GIS and image processing packages; data integration; transfer standards; end to end processing system and systems for database revision, again very much linked to GIS.



*Ian J. Dowman*

The integration of processes, as well as of data, is of paramount importance. The development of links between LH Systems SOCET Set and Laserscan Laboratories Lamps2Gothic package so that photogrammetric data can be captured straight into an object oriented database is a good example of this type of development. In order to make this type of system work, data has to be transferable between systems, so standards are crucial.

The present structure of ISPRS can cope with this type of development, but it has to be more flexible. The system of commissions and working groups is excellent in a number of ways. There is a clear line of responsibility between Council, Com-mission President and Working Group

chairs; there is a clear requirement to hold a commission symposium and working group meetings and workshops and there is slack in the system to allow for the fact that we are all human and sometimes cannot do everything that we commit to. The weakness of the present system is overlap, and too many meetings. This is not entirely a bad thing because if organisers are not too ambitious, it means that excellent work can be done in small meetings and people may get to one meeting whilst they cannot get to others, but better co-ordination would help. The problem does not lie entirely within ISPRS, as ISPRS activities overlap with those of other organisations who have their own structure and their own agendas.

A solution may be more intercommission working groups and more formal planning between commission presidents, maybe directed by Council. This would need to be done in such a way that the independence and drive of working group chairs is not lost, but that there is a more planned programme of ISPRS meetings and a chance to integrate these with meetings of other organisations.

### Lukman Aziz

With respect to TC VI I would say yes. This is due to technology driven and pressure in the profession due to changing of requirements. As we live in highly complex society, profession today's is fully integrated, dynamic as well as varying. The approach used to do the works is not a single but multi-disciplinary. The education sector in many cases is driven by industry. What they really want is how to sell their product as much as possible. Their never think how education staff's trying hard to fulfil the curriculum. In developing countries the situation is even worse because the teaching staff are not well equipped. Technology such as GIS, GPS has revolutionised the tools available to the people engaged related with ISPRS profession. As a profession we have not been as responsive as possible in educating ourselves in the use, management and administration of these new technology such as GIS and GPS. In short neither society nor the professions are immune to change.



*Lukman Aziz*

*In 5 years from now, what should be the role of ISPRS in an international context?*

### Ian J. Dowman

ISPRS has done remarkably well in the last 8 years in raising its international profile, and this trend must continue.

We have influence within the United Nations organisations, seen in our role in UNISPACE III, and we are a member of international organisations such as CEOS. It is also significant that important regional organisations are members of ISPRS, and want to be part of ISPRS. The challenge for ISPRS is to make a difference on the international scene. To stimulate governments and international organisations to see the importance of spatial information, to invest in data and systems to process the data to help all manner of infrastructure problems, and to stimulate these organisations to have effective means of delivering solutions which can be implemented on the ground. ISPRS must continue in the direction which it going and must further assert itself in the international scene.

#### **Lukman Aziz**

From TC VI point of view, since its nature, the role of ISPRS in international context is to organise the interdisciplinary and regional activities. In our society we can see that some countries are more developed and other countries are less developed. It is therefore that the share from developed countries is demanding. This can be started for example to stimulate academic intercommunication, making full use of the societies in providing information, promote the benefit of society, etc. For sure this is no an easy task. The ideal situation is that all member countries get the benefit / win-win solution.

*Do you think that the ISPRS organisation is prepared for the next decade in terms of structure, the number/type of commissions and workshops, the type of members, the financial mechanisms, etc.?*

#### **Ian J. Dowman**

I have already dealt with the scientific structure in answer to the first question. The big question is whether ISPRS can continue on the basis of voluntary labour. FIG has established a permanent office and seems to benefit from it. What are the advantages and disadvantages? In a nutshell the advantages are that the mundane administrative tasks are done by professionals, ensuring efficiency, timeliness and continuity, this allows the Council to concen-

trate of policy, scientific direction and influencing decision makers;. (This is not to suggest that the current officers are not efficient, they are, but there are other calls on their time, and people who can devote so much time to ISPRS will not always be available.) The disadvantages are the cost and the danger of creating a structure in which the power resides with a salaried employee, rather than with an elected executive. One of the tasks of a permanent 'manager' could be to seek additional funds to support ISPRS activities. A manager should have time to do this, whereas the elected officers do not. I do not know how much it would cost to run a permanent office, nor how much subscriptions would have to increase. ISPRS is not as well off as FIG, but it would surely be worth looking at this again, and assessing whether a structure could be devised which would allow Council the ability to direct without worrying about the administration.

#### **Lukman Aziz**

ISPRS should prepare it. As we experience since 50 years ago every council term the name of TC always change. It's depending on the progress in technology, science or profession. For me the present structure of ISPRS is good enough and flexible to meet the challenge. The room for change is there. So I don't think that the number/type of commission should be extended. With regard to workshop I think it would be better to focus in regional context, say South East Asia, Middle East. It is cheaper and close to the actual situation. As the profession now is move toward integration, make the workshop not to specific but in integration manner. Try to relates the workshops not too specific but more widen area. The society should support the opportunity of conducting the workshops in various developing countries.

In some countries there are some effort to merge surveying, mapping, photogrammetry and Remote Sensing Association. Pros and contra may happen, but for countries with less recognition of surveying, mapping, photogrammetry professions the idea of merging is better. This may be true to developing countries. The society should consider this situation and maybe as a consequence the membership fee ought to be lower.

