



Professional Practice Commission. 2010 annual meeting  
Paris (France) 14-15 October 2010

Point 8 of the agenda

## STATUS OF PRACTICE STANDARDS DATABASE AND WEBSITE

### REPORT AND CONCLUSIONS OF THE DELHI MEETING

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At the PPC meeting in Delhi, in September 2009, I reported that the database and website on practice standards, formerly developed by the COAC, was going to be hosted on the UIA Secretariat server and operated with external support from experts that were already familiar with the information.

This approach would allow the structuring of the database and the computing system used to be compatible with the rest of the IT technologies of the UIA, facilitating synergies and reducing costs.

I also identified the four basic steps necessary to move forward:  
storing the three existing databases into the UIA server,  
merging them into a single one,  
re-defining the management and visualisation software and  
defining the new management procedure of the database and the website

In addition to that, I asked the Commission members to indicate those amendments and additions to the questionnaire they deemed necessary.

The Commission members expressed agreement with the decision to have the website remain internal to the UIA and encouraged the Secretariat to move forward in accordance with the timeline. They also provided several questions to be included in the questionnaire when this would be circulated to all member Sections, recognizing that they had to be reviewed for proper wording in accordance with data collection standards.

### WORK DONE SINCE THEN

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In line with the decision above, substantial work has been done since then and the four basic phases have been carried out.

In fact, the three original databases were transferred to the UIA server and merged into a new single one using the programming language that is currently used for the UIA main database.

The new layout of the webpage is also ready. This new layout is consistent with the new graphic line of the UIA and the planned revamping of the UIA website. For practical purposes, and in order to avoid too much scrolling down, the formats by country have been divided into six themes (statistics, education, regulation, practice, procurement and transnational practice) that enable tabbed browsing through the file.

The new management and visualisation software and the new management procedures have also been prepared. Sections will be asked to fill in the questionnaire directly on line. The data they provide will be verified by the database administrator before it is published on line.



At the moment of preparing this report, the new website is ready to be made public and will be presented to Commission members at the meeting.

The new questionnaire to be sent to the member Sections has also been prepared. It has undergone three kinds of changes: some of the questions have been rephrased taking into account the experience of previous editions; others have been modified or added to taking into account the suggestions made by the members of the Professional Practice Commission; finally, new questions have been included to enlarge the content of the research regarding the guidelines that have been added to the Accord since the last version of the questionnaire.

Both, the overall work concerning the practice database and website and a new version of the questionnaire, were presented to Council at its meeting in Tokyo in July 2010. The Professional Practice Commission is kindly asked to endorse all that work in order that the new website may be made public and the new questionnaire sent to all UIA Sections.

#### FINANCING THE DATABASE AND WEBSITE

Even if the adopted in-house management system with external support is the cheapest option, some financial resources are in any case needed to carry on this work.

At the Council meeting in Tokyo, the possibility to secure external funds was discussed. There are basically three ways to obtain them:

- through sponsors
- through the users
- through advertising, banners or links to other webpages

Sponsorship for the research has been tested with no success so far. We need to further investigate and explore other sponsorship options.

On the other hand, access to the information has been free up to now. However currently there is a charge for most of the valuable information on the internet. The possibility that individuals and institutions accessing the information are charged for its use, needs to be explored.

Advertising, banners and links to other webpages seems a reasonable option to get some income.

The Commission is kindly requested to reflect on the various options and try to come to a conclusion that makes viable the continuity of this fundamental research.

Jordi Farrando  
Secretary General