

**Zeitschrift:** IABSE proceedings = Mémoires AIPC = IVBH Abhandlungen  
**Band:** 13 (1989)  
**Heft:** P-134: IABSE Membership 1987 - characteristics and attitudes  
  
**Artikel:** IABSE Membership 1987 - characteristics and attitudes  
**Autor:** Fazio, Carolyn Raffa / Adams, Salisbury M.  
**DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-41969>

### **Nutzungsbedingungen**

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften auf E-Periodica. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen sowie auf Social Media-Kanälen oder Webseiten ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. [Mehr erfahren](#)

### **Conditions d'utilisation**

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. La reproduction d'images dans des publications imprimées ou en ligne ainsi que sur des canaux de médias sociaux ou des sites web n'est autorisée qu'avec l'accord préalable des détenteurs des droits. [En savoir plus](#)

### **Terms of use**

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. Publishing images in print and online publications, as well as on social media channels or websites, is only permitted with the prior consent of the rights holders. [Find out more](#)

**Download PDF:** 04.07.2025

**ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>**

## **IABSE Membership 1987 – Characteristics and Attitudes**

Enquête 1987 auprès des membres de l'AIPC – Caractéristiques et attitudes

Ergebnisse der Umfrage 1987 bei den Mitgliedern der IVBH

### **Carolyn Raffa FAZIO**

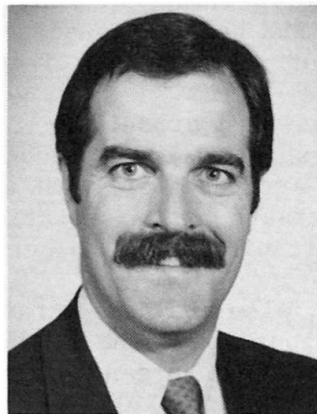
Chairman  
Fazio International Ltd.  
Washington, DC, USA



Carolyn Raffa Fazio serves as Chairman and Chief Operating Officer of Fazio International Ltd., headquartered in Washington, DC. Ms. Fazio has had extensive experience in designing membership programs, public relations activities, and resource development efforts for professional societies and trade associations throughout North America and in Europe.

### **Salisbury M. ADAMS**

President  
The Salisbury Group  
Washington, DC, USA



Salisbury M. Adams is President of The Salisbury Group, Washington, DC. Mr. Adams provides management, financial, and planning services to a variety of public and private organizations in the US, Canada and Europe.

## **SUMMARY**

In conjunction with the preparation of the Association's major long range plan, the Executive Committee of IABSE recognized the need to examine the characteristics and attitudes of IABSE members. The organization's ability to market itself successfully world-wide made it essential to understand more fully the needs and expectations of its diverse membership and the products and services of maximum value to that membership. This paper summarizes the findings of the 1987 membership survey, and presents the conclusions of IABSE's independent counsel on critical planning, marketing, membership, and organizational issues. This paper is open for discussion.

## **RÉSUMÉ**

Dans le cadre d'une étude de planification à long terme pour l'Association, le Comité Exécutif de l'AIPC a reconnu le besoin d'examiner les caractéristiques et attitudes des membres de l'AIPC. Les possibilités de développement nécessitaient de la part de l'association une meilleure connaissance des besoins et des désirs variés de ses membres, ainsi que de la valeur attribuée par ceux-ci aux services et produits offerts par l'Association. L'article présente un résumé des résultats de l'enquête 1987, ainsi que les conclusions d'un conseiller indépendant sur des points critiques de planification, marketing, membres et organisation. Les membres de l'AIPC sont invités à s'exprimer sur ce rapport.

## **ZUSAMMENFASSUNG**

Der Vorstand der IVBH bemüht sich, die zukünftigen Aktivitäten der Vereinigung den Bedürfnissen und Erwartungen ihrer vielfältig interessierten Mitglieder besser anzupassen. Er hat zu diesem Zweck eine langfristige Planung in Angriff genommen und in diesem Rahmen eine Umfrage über Charakteristiken, Verhaltensweisen und Wünsche der Mitglieder durchgeführt. Der vorliegende Beitrag fasst die Ergebnisse dieser Umfrage zusammen und stellt die Schlussfolgerungen der von der IVBH beigezogenen Beraterfirma zur Diskussion.



## 1. INTRODUCTION

The history of the International Association for Bridge and Structural Engineering begins on 29 October 1929 in Zurich. On that date, the most acknowledged representatives of government, science, and industry, gathered from fourteen states and decided upon the purposes and objectives of the Association, summarized as follows:

Collaboration between specialists from the individual states, exchange of ideas, and the publication of discoveries of a technical and practical nature and of results of test findings. Through publications and reports...congresses... personal contacts, the activities of the Association can be broadened and promoted. (Die Schweizerische Bauzeitung, 1929 edition.)

As the structural engineering environment has emerged and flourished during the past sixty years, IABSE has continued to serve the profession as an international network and forum for the exchange of ideas, theories, and experiences.

To continue its tradition of service to a wide network of professionals across borders, the leadership of IABSE recognized the need to examine carefully the characteristics and attitudes of IABSE members: Who are they? Why do they join? What are their interests and expectations? Ultimately, what is the future of IABSE and how must it plan today to serve its members tomorrow?

Long-range planning, also known as strategic planning, is a disciplined effort to make informed decisions about the fundamental purpose, direction and objectives which shape and guide an organization, its programs and services. At the completion of the long-range planning process, IABSE will have set a course, defined the means, and prepared tools to assist its leaders and staff in fulfilling the Association's mission in an evolving environment. Long-range planning is not a one-time exercise, but a process to be reviewed and updated at regular intervals.

While the practice of long-range planning has been utilized by corporations around the world for many decades, it is relatively new to professional associations, particularly those headquartered outside North America. One international association which has taken maximum advantage of planning is the International Union of Testing and Research Laboratories for Materials and Structures (RILEM).

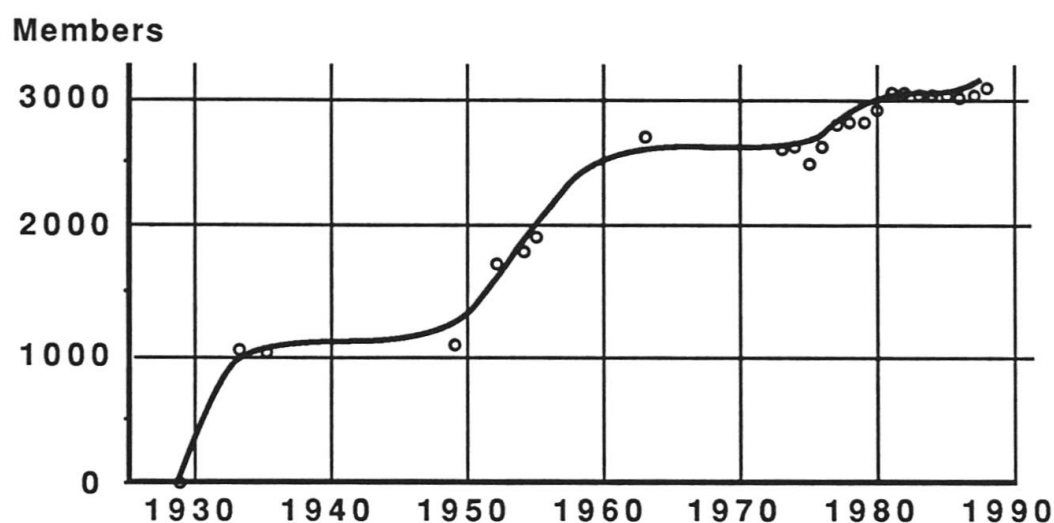
In March 1985, the Executive Committee of IABSE had a brainstorming session, which was the starting point of this planning process, now nearing completion. Because of the expertise and time commitment required of the planning process, the Committee elected to seek outside counsel to assist with the project. Fazio International Ltd., an international resource development firm headquartered in Washington, D.C., was selected based upon its extensive experience in counseling professional associations and foundations in North America and Europe.

IABSE's first Long-Range Plan will be submitted to the Permanent Committee in Lisbon, September 1989, and will be discussed more fully in future issues of IABSE PERIODICA. A discussion of the preliminary analysis and the recently completed membership survey follows these introductory remarks.

## 2. IABSE MEMBERSHIP

Total IABSE membership was stable from 1981 (3046) to 1987 (3015). However, in that same time frame, new members averaged 148 per year, indicating a great deal of turnover. Annual non-renewals have negated membership growth. Figure 1 shows

the development of membership over the years and Table 1, on the following page, presents the country of residence of IABSE members as of 1 January 1987.



**Fig. 1 Development of Membership**

In recent years, the geographical distribution of membership has slightly changed, but IABSE still has a strong European character, with 2 out of 3 members residing in Europe.

**Table 2. Membership Geography**

Country of Residence	% of Membership	
	1977	1988
Europe	67	63
America	15	14
Asia	15	19
Africa	2	3
Australasia	1	1
	-----	-----
	100%	100%

Further information on membership statement on 1 January 1987, is also included in the following four tables.

**Table 3. Membership Category**

<u>Individuals</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Individual (with IABSE PERIODICA)	1898	62%
Individual (without IABSE PERIODICA)	265	9
Junior (up to 30 years of age)	22	1
Senior (66 years and 10 years membership)	293	10
Honorary	16	1
Collective	521	17
	-----	-----
Total	3015	100%



Table 1. Membership Statement on 1 January 1987

Countries	Individual	Collective	Total
<b>AMERICA</b>			
Argentina	10	1	11
Brazil	25	2	27
Canada	87	5	92
Chile	1	-	1
Colombia	-	1	1
Costa Rica	1	-	1
Dominica	1	-	1
Ecuador	1	-	1
El Salvador	1	-	1
Mexico	6	-	6
Peru	-	1	1
Trinidad & Tobago	1	-	1
U.S.A.	262	7	269
Venezuela	12	-	12
	408	17	425
<b>EUROPE</b>			
Austria	147	30	177
Belgium	58	24	82
Bulgaria	2	1	3
Czechoslovakia	15	3	18
Denmark	27	15	42
Finland	46	12	58
France	89	34	123
German Dem. Rep.	5	1	6
Germany, Fed. Rep.	290	45	335
Greece	33	1	34
Hungary	6	3	9
Iceland	4	1	5
Ireland	2	-	2
Italy	86	25	111
Liechtenstein	1	-	2
Luxembourg	6	4	10
Monaco	2	-	2
Netherlands	32	23	55
Norway	30	5	35
Poland	6	2	8
Portugal	18	9	27
Romania	4	-	4
Spain	27	5	32
Sweden	48	29	77
Switzerland	396	46	442
Turkey	14	2	16
United Kingdom	82	34	116
U.S.S.R.	25	9	34
Yugoslavia	31	2	33
	1532	365	1897
<b>AFRICA</b>			
Algeria	2	-	2
Angola	-	1	1
Cameroon	1	-	1
Egypt	14	3	17
Morocco	1	-	1
Mozambique	-	2	2
Namibia	2	-	2
Nigeria	9	-	9
Senegal	2	-	2
South Africa	32	5	37
Tanzania	2	-	2
	65	11	76
<b>ASIA</b>			
China	19	5	24
Hong Kong	7	1	6
India	134	84	218
Indonesia	13	-	13
Iran	2	-	2
Iraq	1	1	2
Israel	9	-	9
Japan	220	24	244
Jordan	2	-	2
Korea, Rep.	7	2	9
Kuwait	1	1	2
Malaysia	10	-	10
Oman	1	-	1
Pakistan	2	1	3
Philippines	2	-	2
Saudi Arabia	6	-	6
Singapore	6	1	7
Sri Lanka	2	-	2
Syria	2	-	2
Thailand	4	1	5
	450	121	571
<b>AUSTRALASIA</b>			
Australia	36	5	41
Nauru	1	-	1
New Zealand	2	2	4
	39	7	46
<b>TOTAL of all countries</b>			
	2494	521	3015

Table 4. Branch of Activity (%)

	<u>Individual</u>	<u>Collective</u>	<u>Total</u>
Consulting and design	52%	14%	45%
Construction firms	10	19	12
Education and research	25	28	26
Public authorities & corporations	7	31	11
Others	6	8	6
	-----	-----	-----
	100%	100%	100%

Table 5. Age of Individual Members (%)

≤ 40 years	9%
40 - 49 years	26
50 - 59 years	29
60 - 69 years	27
≥ 70 years	9
	-----
	100%

Table 6. Years in Membership (%)

≥ 40 years	3%
30 - 39 years	10
20 - 29 years	13
10 - 19 years	32
0 - 9 years	42
	-----
	100%

### 3. PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS

Several key points from a preliminary analysis submitted to IABSE in March 1987 by its counsel, Fazio International Ltd., are summarized below. These analyses and conclusions were based upon the findings from numerous interviews with IABSE leaders.

#### 3.1 International Presence

In the larger context of civil engineering, IABSE occupies a small place. While Association leaders comment favorably upon the technical quality of works produced, they express concern that IABSE's mechanisms to respond to critical issues have not kept pace with the needs of the profession, either in terms of content or timeliness. While the range of interests of civil engineers has broadened, IABSE has been both slow and reluctant to respond. Consequently, numerous other organizations are filling the profession's needs for technical information, standards, education, and international exchange.

#### 3.2 Long-Range Planning Issues

To proceed properly with its long-range planning process, IABSE will need to examine its relationship with its current and former membership and developments within the profession as a whole. This examination has three basic components.

Basic Question No. 1 What IABSE services and operational philosophy will be attractive to members of the profession?

Purpose: Assess information from member and non-member engineers around the world. At a minimum, questions would include:

- \* perceptions of IABSE's value;
- \* critique of IABSE services and programs;
- \* other memberships held and benefits received;
- \* major concerns regarding the future of IABSE;
- \* interest in additional services/programs; and
- \* attitudes about IABSE structure and operations.



Basic Question No. 2 What do other organizations do well? What are their capabilities and the implications to IABSE of their actions?

Purpose: Examine national, regional, and international organizations in terms of:

- \* threats and opportunities;
- \* assessment of others' services and programs;
- \* trends in management and structure;
- \* organizational strengths and weaknesses;
- \* human and financial resources; and
- \* other long-range plans.

Basic Question No. 3 What data on trends in the structural engineering profession are available from the literature and how important to IABSE are such reported trends?

Purpose: Review civil engineering and construction industry trends:

- \* construction/renovation/maintenance;
- \* computer use in engineering;
- \* environmental considerations in structures; and
- \* worldwide trends in the volume and location of engineering business.

It is important that IABSE gathers sufficient data to identify its strengths and weaknesses, to address the open questions, and to select the most appropriate course of action and scope of services for the future.

#### 4. MEMBERSHIP SURVEY

##### 4.1 Purpose of Survey

The membership survey was conducted in the spring of 1987 to obtain a reading on the attitude of the general membership on several issues which had been raised in the early stages of the long-range planning process. Enclosure 1, which appears at the end of the booklet, presents the English edition of the Questionnaire mailed to a sample of the IABSE membership. The value of this survey's results is in its use as part of the effort to focus IABSE programs and services on the needs and interests of the different segments of its current and potential membership (Basic Question No.1, above). Where the survey respondents agree or disagree on a topic, a clear indication is given for the direction of a long-range plan.

##### 4.2 Sample and Response Rate

Of the 2558 current individual members a 20% sample (512) was selected. 202 responses were received within three months, a 39% response rate. From a pool of 604 former members, a 34% sample (204) was drawn. 28 responses were received within three months, a 14% response rate. The number of responses from current members is sufficient to support conclusions, but the low number of replies from former members limits the reliability and usefulness of statistical findings.

Sample characteristics matched reasonably well to the overall membership characteristics regarding age, type of job, and residence. Respondents who were former IABSE members seemed comparable to the sample of current members.



#### 4.3 Method and Analysis

A frequency tabulation was run on all questions in the survey. For those attitude questions to which 25% or more of the respondents answered the question differently from the others, selected cross tabulations were run using variables that might clarify which sub groups of the sample differed from another. Cross tabulations were also run on certain selected questions where the divergence was minor but the question was deemed important enough to warrant further examination.

To have sufficient responses in each cell for the cross tabulations, some categories of responses were added together:

- o Question No. 1 - Country of Residence. Four regions of the world were defined as follows (no reply came from the countries not mentioned):

'Europe':	Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Fed. Rep. of Germany, Finland, France, Greece, Italy, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, The Netherlands, United Kingdom, U.S.S.R., and Yugoslavia.
'North America':	Canada and U.S.A.
'East Asia':	Australia, China, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, Philippines, and Thailand.
'Other Countries':	Argentina, Brazil, India, Iran, Israel, Mexico, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, South Africa, Syria, and Tanzania.

- o Question No. 4 - Current Job Description. "Researcher" and "Professor" responses were counted in one cell.
- o Question No. 5 - Current Employer. "Consulting engineering firm" and "Construction company" responses were counted in one cell.
- o Question No. 9 - IABSE PERIODICA. "Read 1 to 5 articles per year" and "Read 6 to 10 articles per year" responses were counted in one cell.

There are limitations upon the conclusions which can be drawn from these survey findings. First, there is often a self selection bias in surveys of this type; the bias most likely being in favor of IABSE. Second, due to the broadness of the questions asked, the conclusions which can be drawn are necessarily broad as well. Third, due to the sample size and distribution, particularly among countries, the margin for error may be quite high. However, these findings are more than adequate to assist IABSE in its long-range planning and in developing more specific membership surveys in the future.

#### 4.4 Results: Current Members

There was agreement among a high percentage of current members responding that IABSE meets their needs with high quality publications and a mission and purpose which is appropriate for today's structural engineer. For the question concerning what respondents liked most about their IABSE membership, respondents from 18 countries who had an opinion answered as follows:

- o Information sharing: 34%
- o International contacts: 33%
- o Publications: 22%
- o Meetings: 10%





There was also agreement that younger engineers would benefit from membership in IABSE.

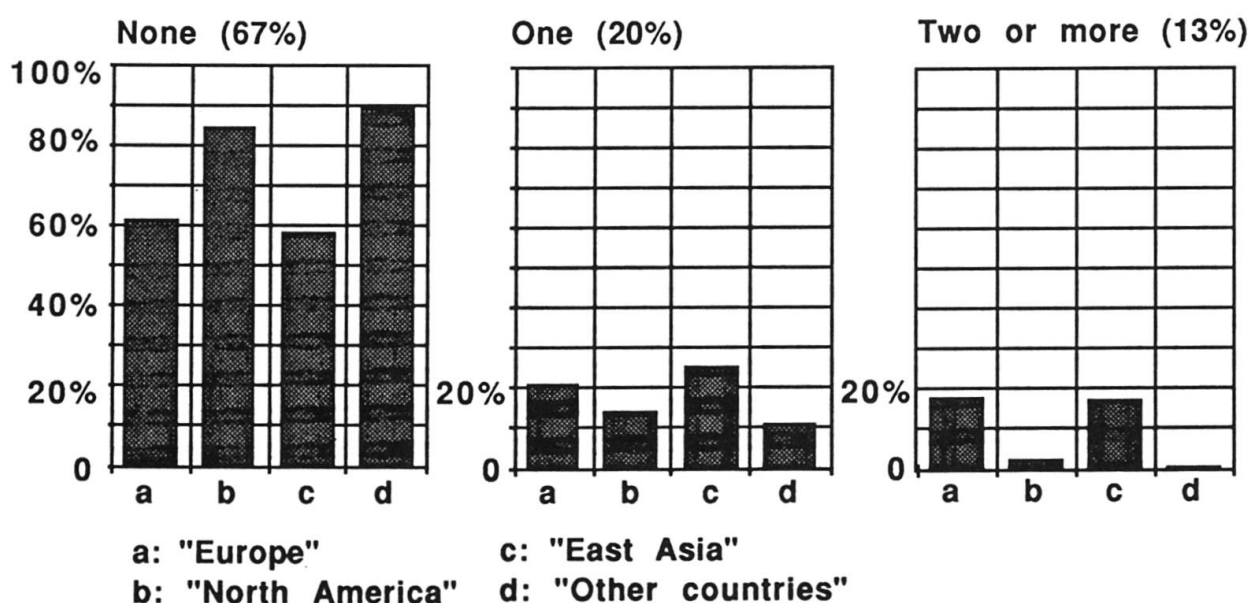
When asked whether IABSE should increase its membership fees to raise more revenue for operations, a majority of respondents broadly disagreed. Only 5% of researchers and professors agreed, and 5% of the under 45 age group agreed. Those who had attended one or no conferences outside their home country disagreed more often than those who attended two or more. This reaction was consistent with the finding that 69% of members pay their membership fees personally.

However, there were areas for which respondents generally agreed that there could be some improvement. For the question regarding what members would like to see changed about IABSE, 18 countries were represented in the responses.

- o Organizational issues: 19% (including cost, responsiveness to members and organizational structure)
- o More practical: 18%
- o Better international promotion: 15%
- o Nothing: 12%
- o Cooperation with other organizations: 8%
- o IABSE PERIODICA: 10% (more often, more articles, more practical, multi-lingual)
- o More research oriented meetings/seminars: 7%
- o Regional meetings and information: 7%

Of particular note was the attitude that IABSE should cooperate more with other organizations on issues and programs of mutual interest, and hold meetings closer to member's country of residence. This latter attitude was reinforced by survey results on attendance at IABSE conferences. 67% of survey respondents reported not having attended conferences outside their home country, 20% of respondents had attended one conference and 13% of respondents had attended two or more. Figure 2 presents the breakdown of these respondents by region of the world.

**Fig. 2 Members having attended IABSE conferences outside their home countries**



Topics about which there were differences in opinion of 25% or more among the current members include:

- o 57% agreed that IABSE membership fees are low relative to the value they place on their membership; 30% disagreed, and 13% had no opinion.
- o 46% agreed that they can easily justify the expense of attending IABSE meetings; 38% disagreed, and 16% had no opinion.
- o 43% agreed that IABSE membership is not broad enough; 27% disagreed, and 30% had no opinion.
- o 31% agreed that the focus of IABSE on structural engineering is too narrow to increase membership; 55% disagreed, and 14% had no opinion.
- o 30% agreed that IABSE is little more than a top professional club; 52% disagreed, and 18% had no opinion.
- o 30% agreed that IABSE PERIODICA focuses on the university professor, not on issues of concern to the practicing engineer; 55% disagreed, and 15% had no opinion.
- o 28% agreed that IABSE congresses and symposia focus on academic topics, not on issues of concern to most practicing engineers; 55% disagreed, and 17% had no opinion.
- o 14% agreed that to raise more revenue for its operations, IABSE should increase the membership fees; 65% disagreed and 21% had no opinion

Respondents identified as important the following trends, listed in order of frequency: design development and new technology, 32%; computer-aided engineering, 12%; rehabilitation, repair and maintenance, 9%; design problems, 7%; environmental issues, 7%; material modeling and research, 7%; education and international exchange, 5%; legal/professional problems and risks, 4%; and structural deterioration and failure assessment, 4%.

#### 4.5 Results: Former Members

A survey was also conducted among former IABSE members. Due to the very low response ratio, information gathered from these responses has implications for the long-range plan only in a narrative sense. The statistical value is limited.

The reasons stated by former members for non-renewal of membership, included:

- o Conference attendance too expensive;
- o IABSE PERIODICA did not meet my needs;
- o IABSE membership fees too high;
- o Other financial reasons;
- o Other field of activity;
- o Very much a club;
- o Retirement;
- o Language problem;
- o New employer would not pay;
- o Other organization memberships offered more;
- o IABSE not keeping up with times;
- o Structural engineering focus too narrow; and
- o No consideration for developing countries.



Former member responses regarding what about IABSE they would like to see changed were similar to current member, except on the topic of publications, 25% of the former members responding indicated a need for change versus 10% for current members. Former members' perceptions of areas for change were more narrowly clustered. Cost issues were, however, listed by 16% of the former members responding while it was not mentioned by current members.

The following characteristics seemed to have some bearing in the reasons stated for non-renewal of IABSE membership:

- o The under 45 age group was more likely to state that conferences were too expensive.
- o Those who did not have projects abroad were more likely to state the reason as fees too expensive, whereas those who did have projects abroad were more likely to perceive IABSE as a club to which they did not belong.
- o Engineers perceived IABSE as a club to which they did not belong, more so than researchers and professors. Engineers were also more likely than researchers and professors to state that the IABSE PERIODICA did not meet their needs.
- o Those who regularly read the IABSE PERIODICA stated more often their reason for non-renewal as the expense of the conferences, as opposed to those who read the IABSE PERIODICA rarely. Those who read the IABSE PERIODICA regularly also more often stated as the reason for non renewal as the fact that membership fees are too high, as opposed to those who rarely read the IABSE PERIODICA.
- o Those who stated that the IABSE PERIODICA did not meet their needs, were more often those who rarely read it.

It is important to note that the average age of former member respondents was approximately the same as the average age of current members in the sample.

#### 4.6 Segment Analysis

Perhaps more important were the survey results which showed differences between segments of current membership. These results support some potentially interesting conclusions for planning programs and services, membership growth, and marketing IABSE.

One variable of membership which showed important results was the country of residence. For several questions there were noticeable differences in the way respondents from the different regions answered and are presented in Table 7.

There was less variation in attitudes by other descriptive characteristics of the member. These variations tracked, as one would expect, with a member's: age, interest in international versus local country matters, academic versus practitioner interests, interest in conferences versus publications, and employment status. These results serve to highlight the different segments of the IABSE membership. Some of the more noteworthy results were:

- o 68% of the respondents under the age of 45 stated that IABSE should consider doing more for its members, versus 39% of the respondents over age 65.

Table 7. Percentage Response by Region of World

Respondent Characteristics and Attitudes	Europe	North America	East Asia	All Other
under 45 years of age	16	10	38	28
no involvement in international project	37	67	54	78
belong to one or more international organizations	28	10	17	6
professor/researcher	26	42	50	11
not attended IABSE conference outside of country of residence	61	85	58	89
attended 2 or more conferences outside of country of residence	18	3	17	-
AGREE that IABSE should consider doing more for its members	46	42	61	71
DISAGREE that IABSE is little more than a top professional club	64	39	44	22
DISAGREE that the Swiss location and emphasis for the Secretariat, President, and Administrative Committee works best	8	10	30	12
DISAGREE that IABSE PERIODICA are of the highest quality	10	11	22	25
AGREE that IABSE focus on structural engineering is too narrow	30	19	48	47
AGREE that membership is not broad enough	45	26	59	50
AGREE that IABSE PERIODICA focus on university professor not on issues of concern to the practicing engineer	32	21	22	47
DISAGREE that IABSE Congresses and Symposia focus on academic issues not on issues of concern to the practicing engineer	54	59	65	47
DISAGREE that expenses for attending IABSE meetings are easily justified	30	49	53	50
DISAGREE that membership fees are low relative to the value placed on membership	18	41	52	58



- o 50% of those who did not attend conferences outside of their home country agreed that IABSE should consider doing more for its members.
- o 78% of the respondents who had attended two or more conferences outside their home country agreed that IABSE membership fees are low relative its value to that member.
- o 67% respondents over age 65 respondents agreed that they could easily justify expenses of attending IABSE meetings, versus 37% of the under 45 age group.

There were differences in the views of respondents who had served on a committee and those who had never served. In general, committee members viewed IABSE in a more positive way, which is consistent with the fact that they are more active in the Association. Table 8 presents the topics on which there were more noticeable differences.

Table 8. Percentage Responses by Committee Status

Respondents Attitude	Committee	Non Committee
=====	=====	=====
AGREE that younger members would benefit	96	78
DISAGREE that Symposia focus on academic topics, not on issues of concern to practicing engineers	74	53
AGREE that membership is not broad enough	56	41
NO OPINION that membership is not broad enough	15	32
AGREE that if IABSE held meetings closer to member's country of residence respondent would attend more	63	77
AGREE that expenses for attending IABSE meetings are easily justified	65	43

Academicians may be over represented on committees: 52% of the respondents who had served were researchers and professors, whereas their percentage within the overall membership is 26%.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

### 5.1 Membership Views of IABSE

In general, the respondents attitudes were favorable toward IABSE, i.e., mission, needs, IABSE PERIODICA, and the value they perceive to their membership. However, on selected survey questions, a noticeable percentage of respondents would like to see changes. These issues should be considered as part of a long-term plan:

- o Looking for opportunities to do more for members.
- o Increasing the breadth of membership.
- o Expanding the focus beyond structural engineering.
- o Increasing cooperation with other organizations.
- o Providing members with practical information on a timely basis.

It should be noted that respondents rarely listed the specialty focus of IABSE as something they liked about their membership. Therefore, there is potential for IABSE to add new or modified services and products that would meet the needs of other specialties or generalists, while still preserving its structural engineering focus and without losing current membership. Particularly, IABSE should consider doing more to be attractive, current, and useful to younger members and to practitioners in general.

## 5.2 Services

As IABSE has grown, it has become exposed to and has had to encompass an increasing number of cultural differences. IABSE must respond to these cultural differences or risk losing members to national or other specialty organizations. IABSE information and services can not be homogeneous in content or delivery if they are to meet the needs of the world community, as standards of excellence may vary from country to country. Some countries use IABSE as a specialty information source, while other countries want it to be a single source that meets more of their overall practical engineering needs. There are different needs for information in different parts of the world. Language may be an important issue for information users, particularly where Spanish is the predominant language or in countries from which members will not travel to a meeting or leave for an engineering project. Also, IABSE may be too oriented toward its European members.

Conference attendance data suggest that this service is not broadly available to the wide base of membership, and therefore is of little value to many. Also, cost is a significant barrier to conference attendance. Clearly, an opportunity exists in conference services to improve access, heighten membership value, and increase membership.

There are trends to which a significant number of respondents agreed IABSE should give its attention. Further assessment of the implications of these trends in terms of IABSE services and their variation in different parts of the world, is fully warranted.

Doing more for members involves both the range of services and the means of delivering them to the user. Though the survey did not, by design, focus on specific services which IABSE could provide to its members, the survey results indicate clearly that there is room to increase the number and type of services as part of a strategy to increase membership and fee revenue.

The timing and availability of technical and professional information is an important factor to the satisfaction of members. Therefore, it would be worthwhile to explore service delivery options such as:

- o Teleconferencing,
- o Audio and/or visual tapes of conference speeches and panels,
- o Cooperative efforts with national organizations, and
- o Additional publications with different foci, i.e., practical versus academic.

Examples of other service ideas which can be drawn from other associations and which might guide IABSE are:

- o On line data bank,
- o Peer consultations,
- o Dealing with logistical problems of members in gaining access to services, e.g., foreign exchange problems or airline discounts,





- o Awards, and
- o Scholarships.

IABSE has a good base of services and members upon which to build. But, its range of services is narrow and members do not have access to all of them. Therefore, if a member loses interest in the one service he/she is getting, it is very easy to not renew the membership.

### 5.3 Membership Segments

Services need to be varied by membership segment. There are two primary market segments of IABSE members: those who go to meetings or serve on committees (to be called participants), and those who look to IABSE as a source for written information (to be called readers). The latter may be interested in going to meetings, but the cost will always be prohibitive for most of them. However, the information provided to them through written reports and IABSE PERIODICA is probably important in its own right, not just as an alternative to going to meetings. The "readers" use IABSE as an international reference source with local applicability that would not be available to them within their own country. This group poses some interesting challenges for IABSE products, marketing, and membership recruitment.

The "participants" can be subdivided into two groups. First, there are those who are advancing in the profession and are willing to make a personal investment of time and money to develop an international network of peers and to have their own names become better known within the profession. Second, there are those who have achieved success professionally and financially, and who do not have to ask for time off or travel reimbursement. This latter group is probably older, and could be closely aligned with what is called the "club." For them, peer contact is the stimulant not a necessity.

Further segmentation of these two primary groups can be based upon regions of the world, interest in international business development versus local projects, academic versus practitioner, age, and language facility.

To expand membership, IABSE will have to respond to more specified market segments. This means tailoring its services, operating policies, organization, governance structure, affiliations, and focus of activities to meet the characteristics, needs and interests of these market segments.

Several key findings can be drawn from the survey to guide deliberations on the market segments.

1. The Canada/U.S. and the All Other group of countries are really markets unto themselves. To expand membership, IABSE will have to come up with new approaches for each.
2. Those who are able and willing to travel consistently to attend conference are a limited market for IABSE. This sector of members tends to be represented by the core membership of IABSE and individuals with an academic or research interest. An additional market for conferences is the practicing engineer from the host and nearby countries.
3. IABSE has to look seriously at services for those who will never go to conferences. This will involve taking a more flexible approach, perhaps including more professional development opportunities.



4. The self-employed are more likely to join IABSE than non-self-employed because the former group values the conferences. There is a potential for expanding membership in other parts of the world by focusing on the self-employed.

5. Researchers, professors, and senior professionals with management responsibility are better markets for immediate joiners.

6. To increase interest in IABSE around the world IABSE must find ways to involve more people in its activities. The Far East market is interested in a broader membership and service, better readings, more direct involvement in the Association, and more access to meetings.

7. The perception of IABSE as a club is a serious but not a fatal problem. This perception must not be allowed to grow further or it will constrain marketing and membership recruitment results, especially in parts of the world where new membership is possible. To contain this perception, committees need to broaden their sense of what members and potential members want and need from their IABSE membership.

8. Clearly, the academic segment of IABSE is very important, not only as a source of members and fees, but also as the source of active participants who make possible the committees, conferences and publications. However, some of the changes which IABSE may consider to increase the value of membership to practitioners around the world may come as a result of changing certain traditions, operations, organization, or other aspects of IABSE. If IABSE is to be the meeting ground for academicians and practitioners, then the orientation to each group's needs and interests and the type and delivery of services will have to be balanced out.

#### 5.4 Planning Issues

A primary area of emphasis for IABSE in developing its long range plan must be marketing. Marketing issues include what will be marketed and to whom. Survey results indicate that services will have to be tailored to the needs of segments of the membership, as well as to the needs of new members. The list of trends identified by respondents should be a good starting place for assessing options, especially for trends where both current and former members agreed.

Another important issue is affordability or cost. For example, the younger engineer may face serious limits on fees or travel expenses. The value of their membership may be very much constrained by the fact that their benefit is limited to what they read in the reports and IABSE PERIODICA. It will be helpful to view the issue of cost in relation to the unit of service delivered, not in terms of the total membership fee. Whereas the cost of attending a meeting is large per unit, and for which there can be little increase, the fee for other services per unit may be lower with greater room for increase. If the perception of the value of the service can be enhanced with a lower marginal cost increase, IABSE would have an opportunity for both a membership and revenue increase.

Lastly, the delivery of services is important as well. If the cost of travel is too high, it may be necessary to consider such approaches as teleconferencing from the Congresses to cities around the world. Not only is access the issue, but also timeliness. The lag time between presentations at a conference or a new technical finding and the production of a report is too long. The dissatisfaction of practicing engineers with the IABSE PERIODICA may be a reflection of this time lag. Further, this could be an important issue for marketing to the large pool of practitioners outside of Europe who are not now IABSE members.



### 5.5 Summary

Members may want more but are not immediately willing to pay higher fees. 70% of those who want IABSE to do more do not agree that IABSE should increase the fees in order to raise revenue. Fee increases will be strongly opposed unless perceptions of membership value are increased. Fees and related issues are often problematic for members outside of Europe. Revenue increase will have to come from membership enrollment increases, or increased participation of current members via new services or service delivery approaches.

To increase membership or to increase the perceived value of membership, IABSE should consider committing to some combination of programs, products and services, service delivery plans, membership outreach efforts, and cooperative ventures with other organizations in advance of revenue, thereby going at risk. IABSE's need to make choices and select actions with optimum potential, responsiveness to market needs, and flexibility from IABSE volunteer leadership and staff.

Finally, IABSE should examine the potential for long range development of a financial program based upon voluntary contributions to specific programs by interested individuals and corporations around the world.



**International Association for Bridge and Structural Engineering**  
**Association Internationale des Ponts et Charpentes**  
**Internationale Vereinigung für Brückenbau und Hochbau**



**IABSE**  
**AIPC**  
**IVBH**

**MEMBERSHIP SURVEY**

**Individual Members of IABSE**

Enclosure 1

Please type or print all answers

**Part I**

1. Country of Residence \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Age \_\_\_\_\_

3. In the past three years, have you been involved in projects in a country outside your home residence ?

Yes: \_\_\_\_\_ No: \_\_\_\_\_  
(In percentage of your working time: \_\_\_\_\_ %)

4. Current Job Description (check one box only)

- |  |                                       |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> Consulting Engineer          | <input type="radio"/> Professor       |
| <input type="radio"/> Researcher                   | <input type="radio"/> Project Manager |
| <input type="radio"/> other, please explain: _____ |                                       |

5. Current Employer (check one box only)

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="radio"/> self employed               | <input type="radio"/> construction company          |
| <input type="radio"/> public authority            | <input type="radio"/> educational institution       |
| <input type="radio"/> consulting engineering firm | <input type="radio"/> other, please explain : _____ |

6. List of other national and international professional organizations in which you hold individual membership :

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

7. List of other membership organizations from which you benefit because your employer belongs :

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____



## Part II

8. Check the IABSE conferences you have attended :

- |                                       |                                       |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> 1986 Tokyo      | <input type="radio"/> 1983 Venice     |
| <input type="radio"/> 1985 Luxembourg | <input type="radio"/> 1982 Washington |
| <input type="radio"/> 1984 Vancouver  |                                       |

9. Check the level of your interest in the IABSE PERIODICA :

- ☐ Read every issue completely
- ☐ Read selected articles upon topics presented
- ☐ Read 6 to 10 articles per year
- ☐ Read 1 to 5 articles per year
- ☐ Rarely read IABSE PERIODICA
- ☐ Do you refer the IABSE PERIODICA to others to read ?
- ☐ Yes      ☐ No

10. Check the level of your interest in the other IABSE publications :

During the last three years I read one or more articles in the series

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="radio"/> IABSE REPORTS                    | <input type="radio"/> IABSE CONGRESS REPORTS |
| <input type="radio"/> Structural Engineering Documents |  |

11. On which of the following IABSE Committees/Commissions have you served during the last three years :

- |  |                       |
|--|-----------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> Executive Committee    | Number of Years _____ |
| <input type="radio"/> Technical Committee    | Number of Years _____ |
| <input type="radio"/> Permanent Committee    | Number of Years _____ |
| <input type="radio"/> Working Commission     | Number of Years _____ |
| <input type="radio"/> Other Committee: _____ | Number of Years _____ |
| <input type="radio"/> No Committee           |                       |

12. Who pays your IABSE membership fees ?

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="radio"/> Your employer               | <input type="radio"/> Yourself personally |
| <input type="radio"/> Other, please explain _____ |   |

**Part III**

13. Indicate if you agree or disagree with each of the following :

very much agree  
agree  
disagree  
no opinion

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| A. IABSE's mission and purpose are appropriate for today's civil engineering profession                              | <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> |
| B. IABSE keeps up with the needs of civil engineers  | <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> |
| C. IABSE membership fees are low relative to the value I place on my membership                                      | <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> |
| D. IABSE has become little more than a top professional "club"   | <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> |
| E. Younger civil engineers would benefit from IABSE membership if they would join                                    | <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> |
| F. I can easily justify expenses of attending IABSE meetings   | <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> |
| G. IABSE Staff/Committee structure serves the membership's needs   | <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> |
| H. Having IABSE's Secretariat, President, and Administrative Committee all in Switzerland works best                 | <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> |
| I. The IABSE PERIODICA are of the highest quality  | <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> |
| J. IABSE's focus on structural engineering is too narrow to increase its membership                                  | <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> |
| K. If IABSE held meetings closer to my home, I would attend more   | <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> |
| L. IABSE should consider doing more for its members  | <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> |
| M. IABSE should cooperate with other organizations on issues and programs of mutual interest                         | <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> |
| N. To raise more revenue for its operations, IABSE should increase its membership fees                               | <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> |
| O. IABSE membership is not broad enough  | <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> |
| P. IABSE Periodica focus on the university professor, not on issues of concern to the practicing engineer            | <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> |
| Q. IABSE congresses and symposia focus on academic topics, not on the issues of concern to most practicing engineers | <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> |

**Part IV**

14. What do you like most about your IABSE membership ?

15. What would you like to see changed about IABSE ?

16. Name one or more important trend in civil engineering to which IABSE should respond.

17. Further propositions, comments, remarks

=====

**Optional Section :      Complete if you wish**

Name :

Title :

Employer :

Address :

City :

Country :

Postal Code :

Telephone :

I would be pleased to assist IABSE further with its study : \_\_\_\_\_