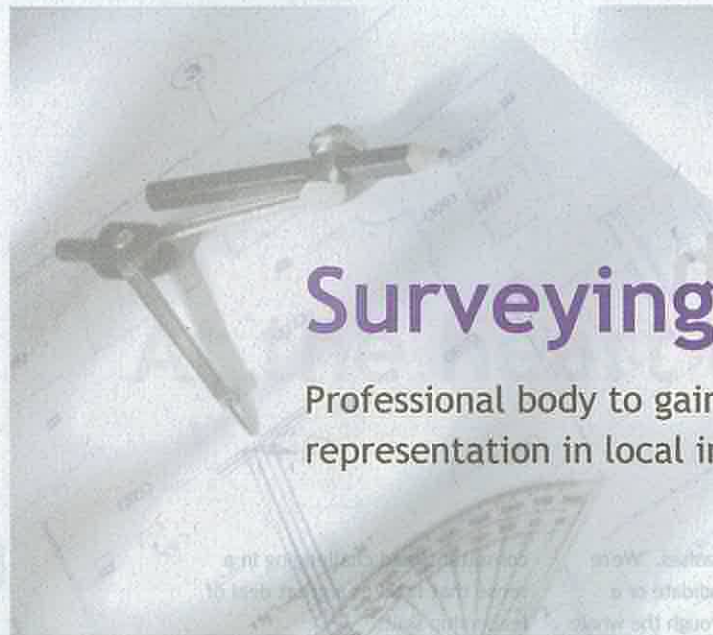


## EMBRACING CHANGE



## Surveying the future landscape

Professional body to gain new ground and increase representation in local industry

by Grace Chan

While the global downturn has affected a cross-section of professions, the Hong Kong Institute of Surveyors (HKIS) aims to maximise opportunities for its members while ultimately raising the bar for the sector as a whole.

"The current economic conditions are a challenge, since our business is intrinsically linked to the construction and property market," says Francis Leung, president, the HKIS. "The fact that fewer transactions are taking place is reducing work opportunities for surveying professionals."

However, the Hong Kong government recently announced increased spending on public works projects, as well as on 10 major infrastructure projects, and the HKIS continues its consultative role in drafting and implementing government policies related to the surveying profession.

The HKIS' work also includes

establishing codes of ethics, determining requirements for admission as professional surveyors and encouraging and facilitating members to upgrade their skills through continuous education.

"As a representative of the profession, we take responsibility for addressing our members' professional development needs and concerns," notes Mr Leung. "We work closely with the government, especially to speed up procedures such as the various methods of procurement."

Lesly Lam, honorary treasurer, the HKIS, adds, "Constantly keeping in mind the long-term development of the industry, we aim to promote best practises for our profession."

### Developing opportunities

Surveying professionals from Hong Kong are currently allowed to work in mainland China on a joint-venture basis. For this reason, maximising business opportunities on the mainland for its members features strongly on the HKIS agenda.

While the organisation has

already reached a number of reciprocity agreements with mainland institutions, it is also keen to promote discussions regarding the possibility of members being able to provide consultancy services as sole proprietors on the mainland.

This year, the institute is focusing on reviewing urban renewal strategies, and this will also be the theme of its annual conference, Mr Leung points out, saying that the HKIS provides input on a wide spectrum of matters, from legal concerns to compensation issues.

The HKIS gives advice to the government on issues related to the property and construction industry. Recent topics include the conservation and revitalisation of the historical Yau Ma Tei police station and the planning of the New Territories East development project, notes Jeffrey Wong, vice chairman, the HKIS' Young Surveyors Group.

In addition, the HKIS and its members have been actively involved in reconstruction projects for the

rebuilding of the earthquake-struck mainland province of Sichuan, Mr Leung points out.

Six years ago, the HKIS introduced a technical grade membership in response to the need for upgrading standards in the property and construction sector.

Candidates who have completed two years of supervised work and passed the assessment of technical competence examination can become qualified technical associates and are eligible for pursuing professional membership.

### Setting the pace

With more than 7,000 members, the HKIS is the only professional organisation representing the local surveying profession in Hong Kong. This year, the organisation celebrates its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary, with a party in April that will be followed by an array of special events, including a dragon boat competition, annual conference and dinner.

The HKIS hopes to improve communication with its members as

well as the government, in order to help focus its work and priorities for the year, Mr Leung stresses.

The organisation has recently set up a promotion committee to help boost public awareness of the surveying profession and to enhance its professional image.

"Surveying professionals may traditionally shy away from public exposure due to the background nature of the job, but the future development of our profession depends on the younger generation

of talented professionals and we are pulling out all the stops to encourage an interest in the field," Mr Leung says.

Promotions planned for the year include career expos and school visits, says Jo Lau, a member of the HKIS' 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary organising committee. "By giving high school students an idea of the nature of our job and mapping out possible career paths for them, we are sure to attract some young talent to the profession," she says. ■



(left to right)  
Lesly Lam, honorary treasurer  
Francis Leung, president  
Jeffrey Wong, vice chairman, young surveyors group  
Jo Lau, member of the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary organising committee  
The Hong Kong Institute of Surveyors

Photo: Lewis Wang

THEN AND NOW

### Before

- Little public awareness of the surveying profession
- Limited opportunities for surveying professionals to work on the mainland without local partners

### After

- More campaigns and activities to recruit technical members
- Exploring the possibility of sole proprietorship for Hong Kong professionals on the mainland
- New promotion committee boosts public awareness

25th anniversary  
Building our Community  
Contributing our Professionalism