

Consultation on the formation of Professional Group Panels

23rd August 2022

About this consultation

Lord Bichard's independent review of the RICS governance, strategy and purpose was published in June 2022. Governing Council has endorsed the review's findings and has committed to delivering the extensive process of reform identified by Lord Bichard.

A key review recommendation (Recommendation 29) was:

RICS should consult on the structure of its professional disciplines to inform the development of a number of Professional Group Panels, to lead the advancement of knowledge and professional development with their respective surveying sectors.¹

Accordingly, RICS now invites the views of its members worldwide to inform the implementation of this proposal.

RICS Professional Groups

Professional Groups are the high-level segmentation of the RICS membership, representing broad professional sectors that constitute surveying. They were established in 2009, replacing 'Faculties', which in turn had replaced 'Divisions' in 2000. The number of Professional Groups remains at 17 and it is intended that these should stay unchanged.

They are listed below:

1. Building Control
2. Building Surveying
3. Commercial Property
4. Dispute Resolution
5. Environment and Resources

¹ Recommendation 29, Page 50, Bichard RICS Review

6. Facilities Management
7. Geomatics
8. Machinery and Business Assets
9. Management Consultancy
10. Minerals and Waste Management
11. Planning and Development
12. Personal Property/Arts and Antiques
13. Project Management
14. Quantity Surveying and Construction
15. Residential Property
16. Rural
17. Valuation

The current purpose of Professional Groups is to support the two-way flow of communication and engagement with members in areas such as:

- CPD
- Online community
- Training
- Library and information services
- Thought leadership, research, and insights
- Professional guidance and information

Membership of a Professional Group is not linked to the membership assessment pathway, nor to eligibility for use of the Chartered Alternative Designations (such as Chartered Quantity Surveyor). Professional Group membership is also distinct from registration on post-qualification schemes (such as the Valuer Registration Scheme). These arrangements are outside the scope of the consultation.

Professional Group Panels (PGPs)

PGPs are proposed to be part of the formal governance structure of RICS and report into the new Knowledge and Practice Committee, which is to be established in accordance with Lord Bichard's recommendations. The Bichard RICS Review recommended that a member of each PGP should sit on the Knowledge and Practice Committee. Overall, these recommendations are designed to ensure a greater role and voice for the professional disciplines within the Institution's formal governance structure. Supported by the PGPs, the Knowledge and Practice

Committee will ensure member-led involvement in identifying priorities, activities, and resources. These are necessary to develop the knowledge and professional practice of members and support the activities of the Professional Groups. The Chair of the Knowledge and Practice Committee will also be a member of the RICS Board.

“The (Knowledge and Practice) Committee would have an appointed Chair who must be a RICS member and there will be seven additional members, one nominated by each of the seven Professional Group Panels with an option to co-opt additional members with specific skillsets.”²

Formation and Purpose of PGPs

It is intended that:

- PGPs will be populated according to an agreed skills matrix to reflect an appropriate diversity in terms of the Professional Groups represented by the Panel, skills, geography, and individual characteristics
- Chairs and members of the PGPs will be appointed through a transparent process to be defined by the Nominations and Remuneration Committee
- PGPs will meet at least quarterly
- The work of each PGP will be supported by RICS staff, to act as the leading point of engagement with the Chair and panel members
- PGPs will have Terms of Reference to reflect their purpose and role. They will report to the Knowledge and Practice Committee and sit within the wider RICS governance structure.

Reflecting on Lord Bichard’s recommendation and the main purpose of the Knowledge and Practice Committee, the PGPs should be, *“focused on advancing and maintaining the profession’s knowledge base and support, but not mirror the work of the Standards and Regulation Board.”³*

It is proposed that this should include:

- Advising on thought leadership, driving initiatives and change in areas such as sustainability, diversity, and inclusivity in the profession
- Identifying the current and future professional risks and development trends with the sector
- Contributing to the RICS policy and public position of key public policy issues relevant to their specialisms

² 6.52, Page 50, Bichard RICS Review

³ 6.50, Page 49, Bichard RICS Review

- Supporting the development and maintenance of relevant RICS standards and professional guidance by providing input to the Standards and Regulation Board, which has responsibility for those issues
- Ensuring that different professional groups have a sense of community and identity within RICS
- Advising RICS on its strategic partnership and collaboration with relevant sector-based bodies
- Advising on mechanisms for networking and peer learning
- Provision of ambassadorial support and championing RICS with relevant stakeholders
- Providing a source of expertise to RICS to support specific technical issues, consultations, and development of policy.

The Knowledge and Practice Committee and the Professional Group Panels will have global responsibilities. It will be important that they work and collaborate with the World Regional Boards, Professional Groups, and members to ensure a good understanding of the issues relevant to different geographic markets.

Number of PGPs

RICS proposes to create seven PGPs aligned with the Bichard RICS Review recommendations

*I believe 17 would be an unwieldy number and risks repeating the past where groups were duplicating the work of each other.*⁴

*To avoid this, I suggest that RICS consults on a more manageable number of disciplines. This would reflect the multidisciplinary nature of surveying.*⁵

A suggested list on which RICS should consult could include:

- *Valuation*
- *Residential Property*
- *Commercial Property*
- *Built Environment*
- *Construction*
- *Land and Natural Resources*
- *Planning and Development*⁶

⁴ 6.49, Page 49, Bichard RICS Review

⁵ 6.50, Page 49, Bichard RICS Review

⁶ 6.50, Page 49, Bichard RICS Review

How 17 Professional Groups are proposed to contribute to, and be represented by, 7 PGPs

Valuation	Residential Property	Commercial Property	Built Environment	Construction	Land and Natural Resources	Planning and Development
Valuation	Residential Property	Commercial Property	Building Surveying	Quantity Surveying and Construction	Environment and Resources	Planning and Development
Machinery and Business Assets		Facilities Management	Building Control	Project Management	Geomatics	
Personal Property/Arts and Antiques		Management Consultancy			Minerals and Waste Management	
					Rural	
Dispute Resolution						

As Dispute Resolution runs across all specialisms and sectors, it is proposed that it is connected to all PGPs, working in close consultation with the Dispute Resolution Service.

Special Interest Communities

The Bichard RICS Review recommends the PGPs should be part of the formal RICS governance structure but states that they are not a substitute for continuing member engagement across all specialisms represented within the surveying family, both large and small. Obvious examples are areas such as dilapidations, compulsory purchase, or party wall surveying.

It is therefore proposed that the PGPs will be supported and enriched by creating special interest communities which will sit outside the governance structure but with a strong connection into the relevant PGP, with the aim of providing a focal point for networking and knowledge sharing.

It is proposed that the PGPs will be responsible for ensuring that vibrant and relevant special interest communities are established with appropriate support. This will facilitate networking and knowledge sharing about key specialisms of surveying including:

- Access to the relevant online community
- Networking events
- Knowledge sharing through events and the community
- Insight on needs for CPD, training and support required, to support the members of the special interest community.

Consultation Questions

1. Do you agree with the proposed purpose of the Professional Group Panels? Is there anything you would add to either how they are formed or their purpose?
2. Do you support the list of seven proposed Professional Group Panels? Do you have any suggestions for changes to the list?
3. Do you agree with the combinations of Professional Groups placed within the remit of each Professional Group Panel?
4. Are there any special interest communities you would particularly encourage RICS to establish?
5. Do you agree with the purpose of special interest communities as outlined?
6. Do you have any further comments as part of this consultation?