



## A Solid Foundation for a New Flexible Structure in IABSE's Technical Activities

Daia Zwicky

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# A Solid Foundation for a New Flexible Structure in IABSE's Technical Activities



## Daia Zwicky

Chair, Technical Committee, IABSE  
Head of the Institute of Construction and Environmental Technologies (iTEC), Professor in the School of Engineering and Architecture (Haute école d'ingénierie et d'architecture de Fribourg HEIA-FR), University of Applied Sciences and Arts of Western Switzerland (HES-SO)

*With the unanimous approval of the modified by-laws in Vancouver, the Permanent Committee of IABSE laid the foundation for reforming the organization of its technical activities. After actively supporting former Technical Committee chair Dr Christian Cremona in the conception and development of this new structure,<sup>1</sup> it is now my duty (and my pleasure!) to introduce and detail the necessary changes.*

*What is it all about? Firstly and most importantly, IABSE is and still will be the forum for the development of every kind of technical activity in structural engineering – all structures, all materials, worldwide, in the service of both the profession and society as a whole. What will change is how this technical work is organized.*

*Historically grown into Working Commissions and Working Groups on specific issues of structural engineering and/or construction materials, IABSE's technical work will now revolve around the usual life phases of any structure, from definition of the required performance through conceptual design, structural analysis and design, construction methods and processes to operation, preservation and, finally, dismantlement—all transversely connected throughout the structure's whole lifespan by issues of sustainability and recycling. With this kind of organization, IABSE will have a solid and durable foundation for flexibly welcoming any kind of technical activity related to the advancement of this most enthusing profession of ours.*

*The evolution of structural engineering, across any timescale, depends on the acquirement of new knowledge and the formulation of new and advanced techniques; today, progress is made somewhat in baby steps—our profession looks back at a long tradition, and giant evolutionary leaps and fundamental changes are unlikely to take place in the future. Thus, it is IABSE's task to collect and develop new know-how on a well-defined topic and disseminate it to the international engineering community in a timely fashion.*

*With this in mind, IABSE's "production", i.e. the creation of new know-how, is achieved via the creation of Task Groups (TGs) that are easily founded and non-bureaucratic in nature. These groups gather the right people together to work on a narrowly defined topic, generate new knowledge, and then terminate upon task completion—get in, do the job, get out, repeat. A TG can have a wide array of technical objectives, such as organizing a workshop or special session at an IABSE conference, establishing a Structural Engineering Document (SED) or IABSE Bulletin, writing a series of articles for Structural Engineering International, or creating material for IABSE e-learning. In order to have a coherent and consequential development, these TG activities shall be overseen by six Commissions, related to the structure's life phases. The Technical Committee's job is to coordinate and steer IABSE's activities across all Commissions.*

*In conclusion, as all of you know where the action takes place, I am very much looking forward to being informed soon—by the different Commissions—about the creation of a large number of new Task Groups. Let's advance our wonderful profession together!*

**Daia Zwicky**

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<sup>1</sup>See also the report on Technical Committee Meeting, Zurich 2018; in the IABSE News section of this issue.