



International Federation of Consulting Engineers
The Global Voice of Consulting Engineers

Consulting Engineers and the Environment

FIDIC Briefing Note

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Background

The international engineering federation FIDIC (the International Federation of Consulting Engineers) believes that its member associations and their members should strive to achieve the highest degree of quality and standards.

FIDIC has always had policy statements that it expects its members to follow to ensure high standards of service in the infrastructure industry. These standards are reflected in FIDICs contracts, policy work, events and committees.

Consulting Engineers and the Environment

The endangered environment

There is a growing awareness that the earth cannot continue supporting increases in population and consumption. Engineers have contributed to the quality of life through the provision of better water supplies and sanitation, and by the development of natural resources, food, energy, and communication and transportation systems.

Engineers and the environment

Engineers should provide leadership in achieving sustainable development — development that will meet the long term needs of future generations of all nations without causing major modification to the earth's ecosystems.

This role of the engineer should result in:

- Careful evaluation of the environmental benefits and adverse impacts of proposed projects.
- Conservation of energy.
- Reduction in the use of non-renewable resources and increased re-use of materials.
- Reduced waste production through improved industrial processes, better transportation and distribution systems, and recycling of waste products.
- Sound agricultural and other land-management practices.
- Restoration or improvement of damaged land, polluted water supplies, and disturbed ecosystems.
- Effective transfer of environment knowledge and experience.

Ethics and responsibilities

Worldwide steps are required to protect and improve our environment. The effort must involve government, the public and the private sector. The goals of engineers should include a commitment to achieve sustainable development giving priority to the short term and long term welfare, health and safety of the community whilst also considering regional, global and cumulative effects of projects.

FIDIC recommends

- Member associations maintain their knowledge on global environmental trends and issues
- Member associations engage and discuss environmental problems with professionals from other disciplines.
- Member associations and their members provide information to clients, the public, and government about environmental problems and how adverse effects can be minimised.
- Member associations should engage in activities that promote the protection of the environment, sustainability etc
- Member associations should encourage and promote appropriate courses in all forms of environmental education.
- Member associations should promote research and development relevant to protecting and improving the environment.
- Member associations should recommend that environmental studies be performed as part of all relevant projects.
- Engineering firms should evaluate the positive and negative environmental impacts of each project
- Engineering firms should develop improved approaches to environmental studies. Environmental effects should be considered early in the planning process.
- All parties should raise awareness that engineers can reduce but not always eliminate adverse environmental impacts.
- Everyone should work to prevent or minimise the adverse environmental effects of projects in all phases - initial planning, design, construction, commissioning, operation and decommissioning

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Endnotes