

Learning from the Challenges of the Past and Readyng a Professional Association for the Future: The Case of Botswana Surveying and Mapping Association

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Key words: Professional practice; Association; Profession; Professionals; Challenges; Geomatics; Land Survey; Mapping; Economy; Products; Stakeholders; Opportunities

SUMMARY

Despite the registration of the Botswana Surveying and Mapping Association (BSMA) in the late 1990s, the geomatics professional community in Botswana had continued without a professional body that can address their various impending challenges and interests up to 2013. The BSMA started well in its inception with around 40 members and successfully joining the International Federation of Surveyors. These numbers were quite high then but they kept dwindling to its near collapse in the recent years and in the process the association could not keep its place with FIG because of failure to pay membership fees and playing any meaningful role in FIG activities. In the mist of these challenges a group of few professional surveyors continued to hold some hope for a professional body through several and varied revival processes. They managed to make an achievement on 18 October 2013 by holding a well attended meeting by geomatics professionals in Botswana where a new Executive Committee was elected through a ballot as directed by the constitution of BSMA. This in the short term suggests that BSMA had been resurrected but then in the long term things were not so clear. It is the long term which the newly elected committee of the BSMA had to tackle and come up with a useful road map. The purpose of this paper is to summarize the various efforts which were made in reviving a fading BSMA and then go on to put forward the road map suggestion to aid BSMA's growth into the future. In doing this a major paradigm shift will be considered whereby the geomatics professionals are taken to be key players in multi-disciplinary teams of decision makers on any country's economy, working within the geo-spatial realms to ensure security and continuity in fundamental national assets, land. This concept takes into great appreciation all stakeholders and suppliers of geomatics products and services in the broader context of the national economy and beyond. The paper will then go onto conclude that looking into the future the geomatics opportunities in Botswana are boundless and they can only be better exploited through an organized professional body. This means that BSMA should this time around succeed in its endeavours.