

A Shift in Professional Practice: the Added Value of a National Association

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SUMMARY

Societies change continuously and so do professions due to the developments and innovations around us. These changes have a big impact on the role and position of national associations. The changing circumstances brings members with a different need for membership of a professional association.

In this abstract the response to the changing circumstances of the national association for Dutch geo-information professionals 'Geo-Informatie Nederland' (GIN) is described.

The struggle of national associations in the Netherlands

In the Netherlands the current young professionals and students are more assertive, are more and more actively involved in contributing to the development of products and services, are skilled (digital) networkers, and they want to be able to choose. They feel increasingly cosmopolitan and their training is becoming more multidisciplinary.

Professionals are looking for customization and clear added value from their national association. The identity and ambition of the national association are important. Without proper positioning the added value is not clear for members.

At the same time the national associations are under financial pressure. After the financial crisis it is difficult to raise external funds. Also there is limited influx of new members and with an ageing society the number of members is decreasing. This puts the revenue of national associations under pressure.

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These changes in conditions requires actions from national associations. In order to adapt priorities need to be (re)set and actions need to be taken.

Response of GIN to the changing circumstances

GIN understands that the definition of being a network and the added value of their national association needs to be reviewed. The association has defined steps to adapt to the changing needs of their current members and to learn about the demands of the next generation. In this paper the recommendations and actions of the board and a working group are described.